

## Pastor's corner – January 30, 2011 – Prayer for Christian Unity

In the past few decades our world has become smaller in the sense that we are earlier and more in detail aware of what is going on in the rest of the world, even to the extent that it can be instantaneous and that we acquire that knowledge first hand. Yet, have we also grown more understanding, more willing to overcome and accept differences and recognize our common values and ideals?

This Week of Prayer for Christian Unity reminds us that **Christian Unity is not an option but rather a commandment, a sacred duty, which Jesus left us as his heritage in his prayer: “That all may be one (John 17:21-23).”** He suffered and died for that unity. Christians should be united to give common testimony in a world which is ever more secularized. **And we must do so both in word and in deed: “We, though many, are one body in Christ (Romans 12:5).”**

In a world which has become so obsessed with security we sometimes have a tendency to lock ourselves in and to isolate ourselves from others. However, thus separated from one another, our circle of relationships (as a couple, family, parish community, etc.) can become so small that we are isolated from valuable social and spiritual contacts. **And yet we need these to grow, to develop into the people God intended us to become.**

As we relate to others, we find ourselves drawing upon one another's gifts and talents. As we well know none of us can be self-sufficient. Throughout our lives we look to others to meet our need for food, clothing, love, encouragement, support. An ancient Roman story tells how the parts of the body rebelled against the belly, saying “you live in luxury while we have to serve you. In the future you can fend for yourself.” So they let the belly starve. But soon the whole body began to fail and the others realized too late how foolish they had been.

I suspect that the Apostle Paul had that story in mind when he compared the relationship of one member to another within the Christian community to the various parts of the human body which depend upon one another for their very existence (cf. I Cor. 12:12-26, a passage which ends with: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.”)

At the end of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, let us join in worship together with other Christian communities. **We bring the flavors, colors and textures of the Christian traditions from which we come in order to weave them into that wonderful mosaic which the family of God is called to become. We do not lose our distinctiveness, but neither do we remain unchanged.** Each is enhanced and enriched by sharing with others in the Body of Christ. Together with Christ and with one another we have a rich flavor that we could not have if we were apart. **Challenged, encouraged, and empowered by His Spirit let us overcome our anxieties and fears, and let us continue to pray and work actively towards**

**that reconciliation and unity which Christ wished and died for. Together we can be by word and deed a concrete sign of hope for a world which is in such great need of signs of hope.**