

Homily For Tuesday of the 24th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II

St Peter's 8:30AM/7:00PM Masses - Sept. 13, 2022

1 Cor 12:12-14,27-31 "We were baptized into one body and all made to drink of one Spirit."

Psalms 100:1-5 "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. He made us and we are his."

Luke 7:11-17 "The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother."

One Body In Christ

Introduction

There was a very bright guy in my all boys High School who was running for student body president. His campaign slogan was "interdependence of the students upon the students." I remember him well because the guy running against him was promising to get drinking fountains added in the hallways. I could understand the words he used but, no matter how often he repeated that concept, I just never got it. What's he saying? He wants us to be independent? Is he advocating some kind of rebellion? I think most of us were in the same boat. We just couldn't really appreciate the way he described his vision of a school where students depended on each other, trusted each other, saw ourselves as working together to achieve something for the common good. We could understand the guy who would champion new water fountains, so we voted for him. Now I think, what a shame.

1 Corinthians

The smart guy with the vision should have used St. Paul's image of the physical body with many parts, with Christ as the head and all of us as members of his body, many parts all contributing to the common good. After all, it was a Catholic High School.

In the world, and even in our language, the Church is almost exclusively talked about in its identity as a human organization or institution, perhaps with a religious component, but basically human. The Pope is a head of state with membership in the United Nations. Leaders of the Church are sometimes corrupt

or do wicked things. Churches are buildings which have a certain place in society. The people need a different place to go on Sunday morning.

However, the greater and more proper identity, from which that human institution gets its life, is mystical and spiritual, but with a physical presence. The world wants to reduce us to just what we do in the body. Today's first reading uses the image of a body but it gives that body a supernatural meaning.

Just before this passage, Paul recites the words of the institution of the Eucharist: This is my body, broken for you. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you. Now in Chapter 12, he talks about the Church as the Body of Christ, flowing from the Eucharist. The unity we have should be visible in human relationships, but it is rooted and supported and nurtured and founded in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist does two things. It defines the Church as built on the sacrificial love of the one who comes from God and IS God. But it also defines us within the Church. Paul focused on interdependence using the image of a physical body. Christ is the head and we are the parts. We have unity in the diversity of those parts. Diverse, yet every part is necessary. God has made it so the gifts of all people contribute to the whole body. That makes us interdependent. We have to care for each other because we are part of Christ, who is caring and compassion and self sacrificial love in himself.

Luke

When we come to the Gospel passage, there it is. There is a crowd following Jesus, so they are seeking a kind of unity with him. Then there is another crowd following a woman and her dead son in a funeral procession. This is a fantastic image Luke presents. Two crowds, which run into each other and now form one crowd around Jesus. Those who know Jesus and those who don't, mingle. Both witness the miracle of him raising a young man back to life.

What do they witness but Jesus touching the pallet that the young man is on. So God reaches out and touches what is dead and by the word, "RISE" brings the lifeless to life. We recognize that, as with the raising of Lazarus and other similar

miracles, the ultimate resurrection of Jesus from the dead is being foreshadowed. Our new life in Christ, through baptism and through entry into eternal life, are also envisioned.

It says that Jesus gave the man to his mother. Jesus gives the son back to his mother, restoring that relationship. It also restores the mother to a secure place in the community. Jesus is the great reconciler. Everything he does intentionally restores people to relationship with each other and with God.

The Greek for the word Jesus uses is exactly the same word we hear at the empty tomb: He is not here. He is risen. Everything he does is a sign of the kingdom of heaven, where all are fully alive in him.

St. Augustine said about this event: "The widowed mother rejoiced at the raising of that young man. Our Mother the Church rejoices every day when people are raised again in spirit. Jesus seeks us out who knows us to be dead spiritually. Only he can bring us back to life."

St. John Chrysostom

Today, we celebrate the feast of St. John Chrysostom. In 4th century Antioch, one of the great centers of the Church from earliest times, John was trained as an orator. That means he learned how to convince people of pretty much anything at all, with the use of fine words and images. After his conversion to Christianity, he used that gift on behalf of the Good News. He was an incredible preacher, and was famous for eloquent sermons, which apparently captivated people for up to two hours. For this he earned the title 'Golden Mouth'.

Call To Conversion

Today, we are still one body in Christ. What remains is to live out that great mystery. For this, the psalmist gives an awesome refrain for us to declare. Let us not be ashamed to be one body in Christ. Let us make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *Those who are wise will shine brightly like the splendour of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.*

Collect: *O God, who willed that St. John Chrysostom should be illustrious by his wonderful eloquence, grant that, instructed by his teachings, we may be strengthened through his example.*

1 Corinthians: *Just as the body is one and has many members, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body and were all made to drink of one Spirit. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, then teachers, deeds of power, gifts of healing, assistance, leadership and tongues.*

Psalm: *Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his. Give thanks to him and bless his name. For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Luke: *Jesus went to a town called Nain and a large crowd with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. With her was a large crowd. The Lord had compassion for her and said, "Do not weep." Then he came forward and touched the pallet. The bearers stood still. Jesus said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them and they glorified God saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favourably on his people!" This word about Jesus spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.*