

Chapter 6: We Are United in Faith



Introduction

How do you feel when you see two friends arguing with each other? or two family members yelling and fighting? It is not a good feeling when people argue. Jesus wants all people to be joined together in our love for God and our love for one another. This is especially true for his followers, the members of the Church.

There are certain truths that unite all Christians. One truth is that God the Father created everything. Another is that Jesus Christ is both God and man. Another is that Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection save us from our sins. Still another is that we receive the Holy Spirit to guide us and strengthen us. These and other truths unite us in faith and love.

Scripture Story: Jesus Prays That His Followers Will Be United

Just before his death, Jesus had a final meal with his followers. After that meal, he prayed a long prayer. Let's read part of it:

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one: I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me."
(John 17:20-23)

There are many people fighting one another in our world. Jesus wants his followers to be different. He wants us to show the world that even though we are all different, we can still love one another.

Jesus does not want anything to keep us from loving one another. He prayed that we would all be one. When we are one, we will not hurt one another with words or actions. Other people will notice our love and joy and want the same thing for themselves. This is the way the Church adds new members and keeps growing.

United in Baptism

The Sacrament of Baptism unites all Christians. Baptism is necessary for God's saving power to bring us to new life. We do not live this new life alone. We live it as members of the Church, which is also necessary to help us live our new life.

Baptism does many things for us. Through the grace of Baptism, all our sins are forgiven. Through Baptism we are all born into a new life with God. Through Baptism we all become children of God and brothers and sisters to Jesus Christ. Through Baptism the Holy Spirit comes to live in each of us. Through Baptism we become members of the Church. And through our Baptism, Jesus calls us to continue his work of spreading God's love to all the people of the world.

Some Christians baptize people as adults only. The Catholic Church baptizes adults, children, and infants. The saving work God does through Baptism does not depend on us, so even a baby can be baptized. This has been done since the time of the first Christians.

Here is an interesting fact. Usually only a priest or deacon can baptize someone. But in an emergency, anyone can baptize. The person must want to do what the Church does at a regular Baptism and must pour water over the baptized person's head three times, saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Baptism*, number 60).

God's Treasure of the Eucharist

One of the most important signs of our unity is the Eucharist. When we receive Communion, we are connected to the other people who go to Mass at our local church. We should remember that attending Mass also shows our connection to the millions of Catholics attending Mass around the world. Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ and sharing his love unites all the members of the Church, both here on earth and in Heaven. We call this unity in Christ the Mystical Body of Christ.

Another sign of unity in the Mass is the Profession of Faith. The Profession of Faith is said during the Liturgy of the Word after the homily. We proclaim either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed, which are statements of the truths of our faith. When we say a **creed**, we proclaim our belief in God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), God the Holy Spirit, the Church, and life in Heaven. You may not understand everything we say in the Creed right now, but you will grow to understand it more fully in the coming years.

Things to Remember

- Jesus wants his followers to be united in faith.
- The Sacrament of Baptism unites all Christians as brothers and sisters in faith.
- Proclaiming together the Creed, our Profession of Faith, is a sign of our unity.
- The Creed expresses our shared belief in God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), God the Holy Spirit, the Church, and life in Heaven.