



**January 27, 2013**  
**The Third Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*"As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ."  
1 Corinthians 12:12*

Dear Friends;

One day my sister Johanna was complaining to my brother John. Her big toe on one of her feet was hurting a lot. John asked her what she had to eat the night before. She had eaten some shellfish. To which John responded welcome to the Schmit family you have gout. He said he had gout Ron has it and looks like she has it too. When Johanna told me the story I recalled how painful it was and how one toe can affect the whole body. All the parts affect the others.

The image of the body is what Paul uses to describe the Eucharistically-gathered Church. When Paul speaks of Christ in this passage he is not referring to the historical person of Jesus, but the Risen Lord who is present in his people. When Paul speaks of the body of Christ he is not primarily referring to the Eucharistic bread and Cup (to which Catholics automatically default) he is, first of all, referring to the body of believers who are now the body of the Risen Lord in the world.

Our faith, baptism and Eucharist join us together as one in Christ's body. We are all given the mission of proclaiming the coming reign of God. The way we do this best is be of one mind and heart in our mission. Our love and commitment to each other is the best way to announce the gospel.

Some years ago Pope John Paul II wrote a very important letter that is often overlooked, *Ut Unam Sint*—That All Be One. The title of course is taken from Jesus' farewell prayer for his disciples in the Gospel of John. In this letter John Paul identifies the greatest challenge to Christianity, in the third Christian Millennium, is unity. He said that the divisions within Christianity are a scandal.

For Christians to more effectively proclaim the Gospel they must work to overcome those things which divide us. He also stated that he realized that one of the biggest obstacles to unity is how the papacy is presently exercised. And he invited theologians and bishops to reflect on how the role of pope could be changed to be a positive force for Christian unity.

Ecumenism—how Christians come together—was an important focus of the Second Vatican Council. We have learned that if Christians are going to come together we must follow a process. This process includes dialogue; praying together and working together for justice all of which lead us to conversion—change of heart.

This week we concluded the week of prayer for Christian unity. I am happy to say that at St Anne we are dialoging, working and praying together with our fellow Christians. For over twenty years, we have prayed at Easter, we operate Vacation Bible School, the ministers meet monthly and recently the Delta Christian Food Pantry.

Paul's vision also challenges us to see no matter what our role all are important. All must work together for the common good. The toe is no less important than the finger. The person who services our car, or picks up our trash is as important as our doctor or stock broker or a member of congress.

We must all build on those things which bind us as one. For the Christian it is our faith in the Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit that binds us as we proclaim God's coming Kingdom. We are all in this together if one suffers we all do, if one is honored everyone's joy is magnified!

Peace,

*Fr. Ron*