

## **ENGLISH – 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORD TIME – JAN 18 2026 - CDM**

"To those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ..." [1 Cor. 1:2] This passage of the Holy Bible prepares us next week that will begin the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church informs us that the mission of the Church embraces a requirement of its catholicity. "The Church's mission stimulates efforts towards Christian unity. [RMiss 50] Indeed, 'divisions among Christians prevent the Church from realizing in practice the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her sons who, though joined to her by Baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore, the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all its aspects.'" [UR 4 # 8] (C.C.C. # 855)

During today's First Reading from the Book of Isaiah, [Is. 49:3, 5-6] the chapter opened with the second of the Suffering Servant Songs, this one being addressed to the Gentile nations. The Lord expressed His love for Israel, indicating that through that nation, He the Lord would be glorified. [Is. 49:3] Through Israel, the grace of God would shine forth worldwide.

Through Isaiah, the Lord prophesied that He would bring Jacob back to Him, uniting it with Israel in order that both people may be united as one. This prophecy would be fulfilled through Jesus Christ, the Servant of God, who would be formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. [Is. 49:3] As biblical history tells us and our recent celebration of Christmas, by the birth of the Lord Jesus within the Jewish people, its tribes were united as one people.

In His infinite Wisdom, the Heavenly Father saw that it was "too small a thing that Jesus should be His Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel." [Is. 49:6] Not only would Jesus be given as a light to the Jewish people, but also to all the nations, that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth. [Is. 49:6] This objective of the Heavenly Father, an act of grace, love and mercy, set in motion the progressive Divine Plan that would implement the ministry of

salvation to all mankind.

Today's Second Reading from the First Letter to the Corinthians [1 Cor. 1:1-3] affirms that it is the Divine Will of God that His people be united. Through St. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, [1 Cor. 1:1] the Church of Corinth was urged to be united. While touching on the subject of St. Paul, it should be noted that while he was not one of the twelve apostles, he was an authentic apostle by virtue of His Divine Calling.

St. Paul emphasized that by virtue of their Baptism into Christ Whom God had made our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, [1 Cor. 1:30, 6:11] the faithful are called to be saints with those of every place. By their admission into the Body of Christ through faith in Jesus and the Sacrament of Baptism, the faithful are "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" [Exo. 19:6] just as Israel was a holy nation by Divine election. In Christ, the faithful compose the Israel of God, forming a sacred assembly, the community of the Lord.

This truth is further affirmed by the words of Paul where he states, "together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours." [1 Cor. 1:2] To call on the name of the Lord as seen in the Old Testament is an expression of faithful unity in adoration. [Ps. 99:6; Joel 2:32]

Speaking to the Church of Corinth, St. Paul emphasized to the local faith community that it must be united together with all those in every place, those of the universal Church. This was stressed because of the division that existed in the Christian community of Corinth. The believers were called to be united with both their Lord and the Lord of the others, this meaning that both, the God of the universal Church and the God of the local Church of Corinth was the One and same God. Furthermore, the unity of the faithful was identified by their common adoration of Christ.

The Second reading concludes with the statement, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." [1 Cor. 1:3] As some of you may be aware, the standard salutation in many of the letters of St. Paul expresses a desire of grace and peace upon the believers. The expression of grace echoes the gracious goodness of God. Peace is the fruit of the salvation that God gave us through Christ. It includes the

forgiveness of sins and our reconciliation with God as well as harmony with others for the successful unity of the Body of Christ. While we strive for peace, it must be realized that perfect peace will only be realized when the redemptive work of Christ is completed, at His final coming.

After the Last Supper, Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father of you and I. He said, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. I ask not only on behalf of these (the Apostles) but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one. As You, Father, are in Me and I am in You, may they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. The glory that You have given Me I have given them, so that they may be one, as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me." [Jn. 17:19-23]

Because of the perfect unity of the Father and the Son, this including the obedience of the Son to the Father, at the Baptism of Jesus, the Heavenly Father said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." [Mt. 3:17] God is pleased with those who obey the teachings of the Lord Jesus, those who are of one mind.

When we speak of Christian unity, we speak of two things. We speak of (1) unity within the Holy Catholic Church and of (2) unity of the Christians of different denominations.

Unity within the Church can only be achieved when the faithful are obedient to their pastors, their Bishops and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. To be in unity with the Church means to accept and defend all the teachings of the Church without exception. It does not mean to take what one likes and to reject what one dislikes. Rejection leads to division and disharmony, such being the fruit of Satan who seeks to destroy the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church that was instituted by Christ on earth.

Since Vatican II, in the spirit of Ecumenism, much human effort has been placed towards reuniting our separated brothers and sisters from different denominations so

we may all be one in Christ. Were these efforts the fruits of Ecumenism?

In defining Ecumenism, the Catholic Church states, "Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time." [UR 4 # 3.] Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: "That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us,... so that the world may know that you have sent me." [Jn 17:21; Heb 7:25.] The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit. [Cf. UR 1.]" (C.C.C. # 820)

To effectively help to bring about Christian unity, we are called to personally commit ourselves to walk in harmony with the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church.

We are called to live holier lives according to the teachings of the Gospel.

We are called to have a change of heart through an openness of mind so we may pray in private and together for the unity of Christians as Jesus intended it to be.

We are called to learn about each other so we may have a true understanding of each other, where we are coming from, what we believe, and what we hope for.

We are called to ensure that our priests, our shepherds, have a full understanding of the ecumenical goal of the Church so they may lead the faithful accordingly.

We are encouraged to meet the Christians of different Churches and communities for the purpose of knowing and understanding one another. Our theologians are encouraged to meet with the different Churches and communities to know and understand the teachings of one another in the hope of determining if we are saying the same thing but in different ways. If we are not saying the same thing, may both parties seek to understand what the other one is saying so the truth may be

understood in the unity of the Spirit of Christ.

And finally, where services are provided to mankind, be it in teaching, nursing, helping the poor, we are called to work with one another.

In simple words, we are called to truly shine in the love of Jesus by acting as civilized human beings towards one another. The days of declaring war between Catholics and non-Catholics are finished. The days of refusing to talk to someone because he was a non-Catholic are finished. With such behaviours, there never was and never will be any hope of unity. By communicating with one another as true Christians and by educating ourselves regarding the beliefs of other Churches, we are opening the door for the Spirit of Christ to truly unite us in one mind according to His Divine Plan.

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