

So this week --- another cartoon. This one, by Charles Schultz in his Peanuts comic strip – has Linus, the one with the blanket, sitting on the couch one afternoon watching his favorite show on television.

In comes his sister Lucy, demanding that he change the channel to her favorite show on television.

“What makes you think you can walk in here and take over,” asks Linus.

“These five fingers,” says Lucy. “Individually they’re nothing. But when I curl them together like this into a single unit, they form a force that is terrible to behold!”

“Which channel would you like?” Asks Linus. As he walks out of the room, he looks at his fingers and says, “Why can’t you guys get organized like that?”

Why can’t you guys get organized – could be a question easily asked by many about us Christians in general --- and some may want to ask about our local community of St. George/St. Jude in particular.

Now please don’t think I am going schizophrenic on you and ask doesn’t he know he just talked about diversity last week – and now he is going to talk about getting organized and showing unity this week?

Because, yes I said last week that diversity should not be seen as a threat – for at the very core of God’s being, as well as a quality of all God’s creation --- is diversity – the fact or quality of being different.

And diversity is not the enemy of unity – rather hatred, intolerance, and simply the lack of appreciation for that which is different – is the enemy of unity.

And while we need to admit we are a diverse lot when we gather at Mass: just look at the person next to you: that person is not the same as you. They don’t look the same, they don’t talk the same, they do things differently, see things differently, and understand things differently than you do ----- we are also called to be in unity with one another in our faith: to model the unity of the Trinity while also acknowledging each person of the Trinity’s uniqueness: *And we, though many, throughout the earth – we are one body in this one Lord.*

Now there is a difference between UNITY and UNIFORMITY. . . UNITY means the state, quality, or condition of accord or agreement: having a common purpose or goal.

UNIFORMITY means always the same, unchanging, unvarying; being the same as another, or others; identical.

In the Church, as the Body of Christ – we are called to unity not uniformity. --- And our common purpose or goal is to be the ongoing presence of the risen and ascended lord in the world today – moving our world closer to the values of the kingdom of God – so as to make the kingdom more present in our midst. (That’s worth repeating)

No one knew this principle of unity among diversity better than the Super Apostle Paul who wrote such things in his letter to the Romans as:

“For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and each individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them.” [Romans 12:4-5]

Or in his letter to the Corinthians: “There are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you’ nor the head to the feet ‘I do not need you.’ Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it.”

[1 Corinthians 12: 20-21, 27]

Or in his letter to the Colossians: “And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were called in one body. And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” [Colossians 3: 15, 17]

We need to appreciate diversity: the varying gifts and talents that each of us brings to this place. We need to encourage and build one another up and not dismiss or discount the gifts anyone brings to the community. And we need to use those variety of gifts for our common purpose or goal: to be the ongoing presence of the risen and ascended lord in the world today.

#### SO WHY TALK ABOUT ALL OF THIS ON THE FEAST OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST?

Because the Church teaches us that the Eucharist is both the model and the means for us to achieve our lofty goal!

The Eucharist is our model, for it takes many individual grains of wheat to make the one bread we eat. . . And it takes many individual grapes to make the one cup we drink.

The grains of wheat need to be ground – and the individual grapes need to be crushed. And we who are many need to undergo the same processes so as to achieve our goal. Ouch! That doesn’t sound like much fun: grinding and crushing. And it isn’t – but it is necessary otherwise we keep doing our own individual thing.

So every time we pray sincerely: thy kingdom come, they will be done – not mine kingdom or your Kingdom – but God’s kingdom – that’s the grinding.

And every time we stop asking “what’s in this for me” and begin to start asking “what helps to build up the body of Christ” – that’s the crushing.

Every time we don’t quickly ask “what do I want to do?” but take the time to pray and reflect and ask “what does God need for me to do?” That’s the grinding.

And every time we are the first to offer hospitality, forgiveness, compassion & understanding and the last to criticize, judge or say “but we’ve always done it this way.” That’s the crushing.

Grinding and crushing -- both very hard ego things to endure so as to change and grow --- and that’s why the Eucharist is also the means to achieving our goal: for every time we eat Christ’s body and drink his blood – we become what we consume. By receiving the Eucharist often, over a life time, little by little, Sunday by Sunday, week by week, we are transformed more and more into the image and likeness of Christ: who once prayed, “Father, let this cup pass from me – but rather your will, not mine, be done.”

*Gentile or Jew. Servant or Free. Woman or Man. No more.*

Join me:

*One bread, one body. One Lord of all. One cup of blessing which we bless. And we, though many, throughout the earth. We are one body in this one Lord. . .*

And so we pray: Loving God, help this to be so. By our reception of the Eucharist today – may we become more like Christ than we were yesterday or last week.

Help us to get organized and use the many diverse gifts this community has been blessed with so that we can be the ongoing presence of the your risen and ascended son in the world today -- and moving our world closer to the values of your kingdom --- so as to make your kingdom more present in our midst. May we always pray sincerely: thy kingdom come, they will be done. AMEN!