

Hampton Homily – Jan. 27, 2019

“We don’t need them”
We’re better off without them”
“We’re just fine the way we are”
“I am not the one who needs to change....THEY are!”

Exactly the mindset St. Paul is combatting!

Beginning of letter to Corinthians – people saying we belong to this person or that person, this group or that group! – Divisions, cliques – this or that cultural group, ethnic group, socio-economic group

BUT IS CHRIST DIVIDED? Paul asks

In Christ there is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, rich or poor!

These divisions not unique to community in Corinth! (Ephesians, Galatians, Romans etc.)

And NOT unique to early Christianity either! Something, because of our human brokenness and fallenness we’ve struggled with all throughout the ages right down to here and now

“We don’t need them”
We’re better off without them”
“We’re just fine the way we are”
“I am not the one who needs to change....THEY are!”

BUT – Paul says: “the EYE cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you’ nor the head to the feet ‘I don’t need you’”

You may be many parts but **YOU ARE ONE** Body...St. Paul is ***ABSOLUTELY CONVICTED that our UNITY in Christ is DEEPER than ANYTHING that DIVIDES!***

Paul says: “As a body is one, though it has many parts and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also in Christ”

“For in the Spirit we were ALL baptized into the ONE BODY, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free persons, all given to drink of the one Spirit

For all ONE BODY, whether in Ackley, or Eldora, whether Hampton or Iowa Falls; whether Iowa native or from out of state; whether white or latino; whether democrat or republican; whether I go to this school or that school; whether I am of this family or that family...

We are ONE Body!

But the question is: do we REALLY believe that? We say we do....every week we say the Creed: “I believe in ONE, holy CATHOLIC and apostolic Church”...part of the ONE church, CATHOLIC (Universal), THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!!!! “Catholic” meaning “universal”; part of the ONE Church throughout the world, that transcends borders; transcends ethnic, cultural, language, and national lines! What an incredible and beautiful thing this is...

But do we really believe that? Do we truly live into that reality? Do we recognize that we are BETTER together, and that we are LESS with those who are not here?

...now look around for a moment...and note WHO is NOT here – not as a JUDGMENT! (“Oh, I didn’t see you in Church on Sunday, you heathen!” ☹ No)

But, rather, those who are NOT here, to realize that we are LESS without their presence and their gifts! we are better WITH them

...part of the MISSION of Christ – continue to invite those in, to outreach...not b/c we want numbers to look good on paper, NOT because we want more money...NO!

BUT b/c we are BETTER with them...part of EVANGELIZING, is showing others, that they are loved and valued and that we feel our COMMUNITY is LESS without you! That their presence is MISSED when they are gone! And to recognize (and help them recognize) that they have GIFTS to offer to our community AND to the MISSION of CHRIST!

By the way, we are working on renewing STEWARDSHIP Committee to address this very thing...how do we invite other in to more fully live the mission of Christ, use their gifts?

-Shameless plug for committee

-BUT this is NOT just the work of the committee – outreach, invite, dialogue, serve, and love! ALL of us to share in this work, to outreach and invite people to come to this place and want to come back because they feel loved, valued, and cared for...they EXPERIENCE the love of Christ ; and to invite them to share their gifts!

Now here is a pet peeve of Fr. Kevin...there have been times when I am talking to someone of the Catholic Church, and they are going on about how the Church should be doing MORE for THIS or THAT, or the Church needs to BE MORE this or that: For example, “the Church needs to be doing more to serve the poor” or “the Church needs to be doing more to evangelize”

And I agree...but what BOTHERS me, is such people are talking like they have no skin in the game...like they are not PART of the Church...

...so I say to them “AND WHO ARE YOU! YOU are the CHURCH! You think the Church needs to be doing more to serve the poor? I agree! Now GO and do it! Do more to serve the poor, and bring others into the work with you! You think the Church needs to be doing more to evangelize? I agree! Now GO and do it! And bring others into the work with you!”

How do we live more fully into the Mission of the Church? How do we invite others to more fully live into these apostolates! Maybe there is something you are passionate about, and you can live that passion for the mission in an existing ministry or apostolate! OR maybe there is something you are passionate about, a need of our community that is not being served or an aspect of the mission of Christ that we are not fully living into as a parish...and maybe that means you starting a NEW apostolate, to help us as a Church live more fully into the mission of Christ, to live as the Body of Christ!

So how can we live more fully as the Body of Christ? As the anointed ones, with the Spirit of the Lord upon us, so that we can proclaim glad tidings to the poor, liberty to the captives, freedom to the oppressed, and sight to the blind,

That the world may know the Living God....