

FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM: This week are taught the importance of unity in a community. Paul is speaking now in Corinth to a Greek community and is trying to help them understand that in Christianity harmony is the only way it can succeed. We may look around the world today and say that the Christian Church is doing well, but I would argue that point. In every town or every city we see the division of Christians by the large number of denominations that exist; and in many cases each one expressing that they somehow have a corner on the truth. This is certainly not the Church that Christ founded. If one is to look at a map it is obvious that he or she can travel to a destination using more than one route, but the important thing is that they get there. I think that if Christ was to come again he would be disappointed in how we have handled the Good News he gave us. We have created divisions and done violence to each other. Over the years more people have been killed in the name of Religion than in any of the Wars that have taken place throughout history. Not a very good advertisement for a Church that preaches love, tolerance and forgiveness.

In our present day the old "my way or the highway" attitude isn't working any more. We are more educated, we ask more questions and I think most of us have a better sense of justice. The Church; rather than being an obligation, should be the vehicle that helps us to travel safely and securely through earthly existence to what awaits us when we are called home to be with a loving God.

In my time as a priest I have seen too many people who at the end of their lives feared God and what would happen to them when they died. The message we need to send out as Christians is that love and trust go a lot further than fear; and that the end of our lives should not be fearful but rather peaceful. We need to get the message out that as long as each of us tries our best there is nothing to fear, we will close our eyes here on earth and will open them to see a loving Father waiting to welcome us home. But we must "All be united in one purpose, and agree with one another. There must be no divisions among us, for we are all followers of Christ." Christ cannot be divided, that is

something that we have done on a human level.

When we have been able to reach this point in our Christian living, we will then understand the message in Matthews Gospel of the loaves and the fishes - it is more than just multiplying bread and fish - it is recognizing that we all have something to share - whether from abundance or from what little we have; we are all dependent on one another. Listen to the words of an old hymn "In Christ there is no East nor West, nor North nor South, just one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide world!" I think that just about sums it up.

Let us pray:

Loving Jesus, you came so that humanity could be united in purpose, yet we have divided ourselves. You founded a Church that was one, yet we have divided it because of our human weakness. Help me to respect all people regardless of colour or creed and let me see in them what you see in me; their sincerity. As I travel through life professing to be a follower of yours remind me that no matter what; I am called to live in peace and harmony with my brothers and sisters. We all travel the same road of life, and at times have our own turns, hills and valleys, but in the end our goal is to be with you forever, and I believe this to be true. Amen