**Baptized into One Body**

***12****Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.****13****For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.****14****Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

***15****Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.****16****And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.****17****If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?****18****But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.****19****If they were all one part, where would the body be?****20****As it is, there are many parts, but one body.* (1 Cor 12:12-20)

 All Christians are baptized to be one body, to serve using God’s granted gifts. Greetings dear brothers and sisters in Christ as we talk today about an important purpose of the rite of baptism. A little while ago we had a baptism, which brought us great joy. We baptized that child with a distinct purpose because we hope that one day, he will express his faith clearly standing in front of us here and will be confirmed as a member of our church. That goal, however, is much greater than simply being a member of our church, in our limited understanding. Based on the Apostle Paul’s writings, we get baptized “into one body”, in other words, to become one body (functioning together as a healthy human body normally does). Let’s talk, then about this important purpose.

 No matter how different gifts of service may be from each other, we are still baptized to be one in Christ. As a background, note that the church in Corinth was going through significant upheaval. They had moral issues, internal power struggles, and a generally chaotic atmosphere as a church. Paul was writing to bring a modicum of order and holiness into their corporate church life. However, it was extremely important to lead them to harmony and cooperation as well. Each member had a gift, but those were to be used for the growth of the whole body, of the church of Christ, and not so that church would be done as a collection of disconnected individuals who happen to be in the same room. It was necessary that the members of the body perform their duties for the encouragement of each other. In other words, the “ears[[1]](#footnote-1)” of the church were to fulfill their role to help the “mouths[[2]](#footnote-2)”. The “hands[[3]](#footnote-3)” needed to help the “feet[[4]](#footnote-4)”, and not consider themselves unfit or rejected because of their unique way of serving. God purposely designed that church be with differently gifted people in the same gathering, so that He could show them (us, really) His multifaceted, immense goodness. God has worked in such great and varied ways that He needed to have those ministries distributed among people so that those who used their gifts and those who were served by them would know Him more.

 When a sports team works together, no matter how different each player’s role may be, there is success. In soccer, the forward that normally shoots on the opposing goal cannot get down on his own goalie. Or, in basketball, the tallest man on the team cannot criticize the smaller teammates or feel bad that he or she is not bringing the ball up after rebounding the ball on defense. In any company, the worker cannot complain about his or her position, if there is buy in to the company principles and purpose.

 Today, we as those who have been baptized have a purpose. It is to be one body in Christ. It is not enough to know about baptism or our faith. It is not enough to simply have gifts. Rather, we are to be together, as one body, using our varying gifts to help each other out as members of Christ’s Body, the church. Graces or gifts are not for ostentation, but rather to teach, to heal, to unite, and to always show the love of God.

 Today, if you are a writer, write to strengthen the people of God.[[5]](#footnote-5) If you are a builder, build for the glory of God. If you love to give testimony of the Lord, give them with love, to get glory for God, and thus encourage the brothers and sisters in their faith. If you are a physician, serve the body of Christ, to bring healing to her.

Whatever your gift is, may you use it to unite the Body of Christ. May your gift never disconnect, divide, or bring any confusion or darkness – and may it never bring glory to yourself.

May you use the gift you’ve been granted for unity, and may Jesus Christ alone receive the glory.

 All Christians are baptized to be one body, to serve using God’s granted gifts. The Lord Bless you – Amen.

1. Those listening to God’s voice for direction for the church. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The teachers of the Word of God. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Those with gifts of hospitality or practical hands-on service gifts. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Those with gifts of bringing the Gospel with them wherever they go. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The church of Jesus – APC, in your case. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)