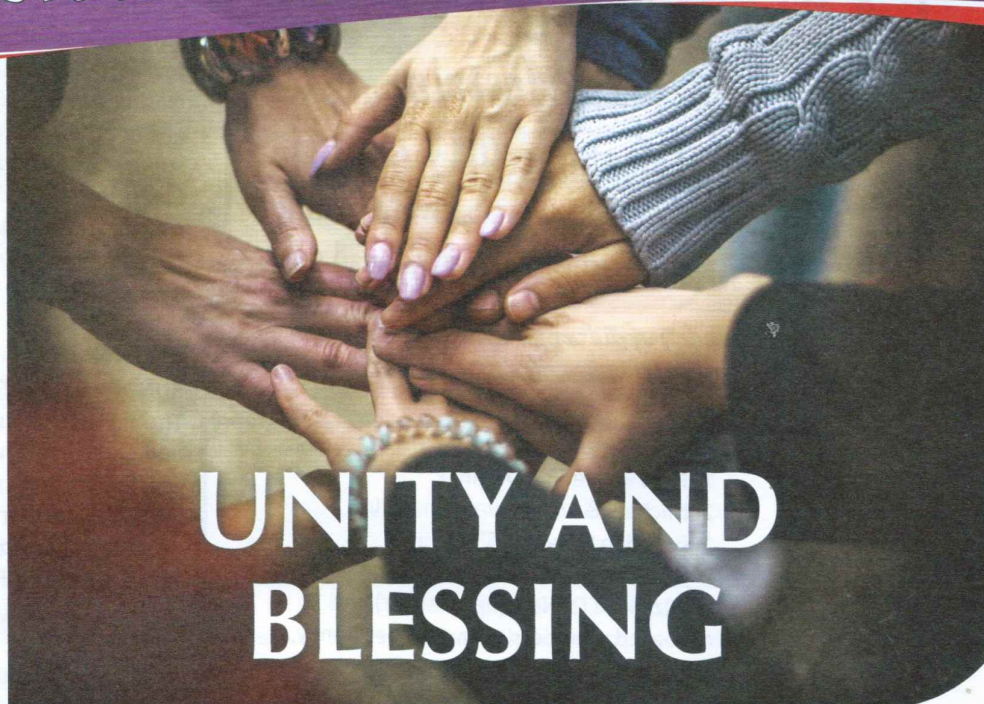




Psalm 133 begins with the words, 'How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity!' It concludes with the observation, 'For there the Lord bestows his blessing'. In other words, the graces and gifts of God, which we need both for ourselves and others, will be released into our lives to the extent that we are of one mind and heart with members of the community, whether living or dead.

On many occasions St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, stressed the importance of unity. In Romans 15:5-6 he said, 'May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He echoed that sentiment in Philippians 2:2, 'Be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind... Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ.' Paul endorsed that point in 1 Corinthians 1:10 when he said 'Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers and sisters, be compassionate and humble.'



UNITY AND BLESSING

During Advent we can ask the Lord to search our minds and hearts in such a way that we become aware of those thoughts, feelings, attitudes and dispositions that fracture the bonds of unity with other people, such as resentment, un-forgiveness, antipathy, ill-will, antagonism, envy or jealousy. Although your dispositions might be quite understandable, e.g., if another person had treated you repeatedly in an unjust and hurtful way, nevertheless, the Spirit of the Lord would urge and empower you to forgive the person – not because he or she deserved such forgiveness, but because the Lord has forgiven you,

even though you did not merit or deserve such mercy. As Ecclesiasticus 28:2-4 says, 'Forgive your neighbour a wrong, and then, when you pray, your sins will be forgiven. Can people hold on to their anger against others, and then look for healing from the Lord? Can they refuse to have mercy on people like themselves, and then pray about their needs?' Of course, the answer is no. As Psalm 133 reminds us, blessing is released to the extent that we live in union with others. Jesus said, in Luke 6:38, 'The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.'

— Pat Collins

After the Consecration

The mystery of faith.

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command ...

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

**For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Showing the Host to the people, the priest says:

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

Lord, I am not worthy ...

Communion Antiphon (Bar 5:5; 4:36)

**Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights,
and behold the joy which comes to you from
God.**

Prayer after Communion

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery, you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Reflection

Recall when your spirits have been lifted by the kind words or gestures of another.



Lesson

People who do not give up are helped by God.



Prayer

Lord, may our gratitude for your love inspire us to be generous to one another.