

Pentecost Sunday (A) The Greatest Enemy of Unity is... my Ego.

During this Easter season we have been hearing our Lord telling us that he wants us to be united. He has stated for us to be one, for us to be one body, to be one as he and the Father are one. I think that we value unity, **but we might not know how to achieve it.** Think about how we use unity or being united... we have the United Nations... whose goal is to create a sense of unity among different countries... we have the United Way... whose goal is to unite people in helping others... we are in the United States... unified with the goal of creating one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all (ring a bell? Pledge of allegiance).

Why do we want to be united?

Zebras have unique patterns, their patterns are like our fingerprints in that they are all different, but one of the interesting things about their patterns is that they help them camouflage against predators. When they are all running together in a herd, they become one big animal, they don't lose their identity, they don't lose their uniqueness but their uniqueness becomes their unity. When lions see them all together, they can't distinguish if it is one big animal or many, so they don't attack, but if the zebra runs out on its own, it becomes prey to the lion. There is safety in unity... equally we know that in unity there is protection, there is strength, there is economies of scale.

Is unity what we see?

If we look around, we can say that we have the opposite of unity... Not every nation participates in the United Nations, and not all the nations in the United Nations are united... we say one nation under God, indivisible but is that what we see, is that what we live... **So why the dichotomy?** Why if we know we need to be united... we are not? What about our families are they united? Our church?

It all goes back to the beginning, think about Adam and Eve's sin, they sinned because they wanted to be like God, they wanted to know the difference between good, evil and they wanted to make their own decisions. **Their egos got in the way...** Fast forward a few generations and we find ourselves in the plains of Shinar, the people were all united, spoke one language, they decided to build a tower to reach the skies with the purpose of making a name for themselves... We know this tower as the tower of Babel and because they wanted to make a name for themselves, they were acting on their own behalf, they were dispersed and were not able to communicate anymore. **Their egos got in the way...**

Unity is such an important part of our life that one of **Satan's main tactics is to divide**, he aims at dividing the world, countries, communities, churches, families and individuals.

Similar to the lone Zebra, he knows that if we are not united to the body, we are easy prey. Our Lord tells us that a divided kingdom can't stand, that he who does not unite, separates, he tells us to remain in him, he tells us that we are to be one. **But how can I be one with my family, friends, church, community, if we are all different, if we think differently, if we are not the same?**

Unity does not mean sameness, it doesn't mean that your identity is gone or sacrificed for the group. After the resurrection our Lord couldn't wait to come back to our midst and to give us the gift of the Holy Spirit. We were not physically present when he breathed the Spirit on the Apostles, but he made it so that we can receive the Spirit through baptism and seal it through confirmation. The holy spirit becomes the glue, it becomes what unites us, what helps us stay united... When the Lord tells us to remain in him, to be one with him as he is one with the Father... He is telling us to be united through the Holy Spirit... To leave our ego on the side... to let go and let God...

St. Paul states that we have different gifts, different workings, we are different parts of the body, but what unites us is that together we are the body of Christ, together we have the same spirit, same Lord, same God.

We were created for communion, for unity, because we were created for God, who is one with the Son and the Holy Spirit. We attempt to find unity by looking for similarities with other, looking for groups, functions, clubs, people who share the same vision we might have, and we aim at uniting, but at times we fail... **why**, because we let our egos get in the way... We are united until we don't agree with something, we are united until we feel unheard, we are united until we are not... The Holy Spirit is our uniting factor, it is the glue that will help us stay united as we will be one body...

The Holy Spirit allows us to be in Christ, with Christ and through Christ as proclaimed during consecration. This unity keeps my ego in check as I know that it is not me but Christ who lives in me... this unity protects me from being the lonely Zebra, a prey to the lion... this unity gives me function... gives me purpose. Today we celebrate the coming down off the Holy Spirit on the Church, we celebrate the ability to be united, the antidote to the ego... We celebrate each and everyone of you, who has decided to stay united... at times it is easier to stay home today... it is easier to be a lone ranger... it is easier to do your own thing... yet you have responded to the call of the Holy Spirit, you have decided to stay united...

We are united as one body, we are united by the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul stated we all have different gifts and charisms to building up the church... As a community, as a church, we need your charisms, your God given gifts... we need YOU...don't abandon the herd...