

Dear Friends,

Beloved, Jesus Christ is our salvation, he is the high priest through whom we present our offerings and the helper who supports us in our weakness. Through him our gaze penetrates the heights of heaven, and we see as in a mirror, the most holy face of God. Through Christ the eyes of our hearts are opened, and our weak and clouded understanding reaches up toward the light. Through him the Lord God willed that we should taste eternal knowledge, for *Christ is the radiance of God's glory, and as much greater than the angels as the name God has given him is superior to theirs.*

So then, my brothers, let us do battle with all our might under his unerring command. Think of the men serving under our military commanders. How well disciplined they are! How readily and submissively they carry out orders! Not everyone can be a prefect, a tribune, a centurion, or a captain of fifty, but each man in his own rank executes the orders of the emperor and the officers in command. The great cannot exist without those humble conditions, nor can those of humble conditions exist without the great. Always it is the harmonious working together of its various parts that ensures the well-being of the whole. Take our own body as an example: The head is helpless without feet; and the feet can do nothing without the heart. Even our least important members are useful and necessary to the whole body, and all work together for its well-being in harmonious subordination.

Let us, then, preserve the unity of the body that we form in Christ Jesus, and let everyone give his neighbor the deference to which his gifts entitle him. Let the strong care for the weak and the weak respect the strong. Let the wealthy assist the poor and the poor man thank God for giving him someone to supply his needs. The wise man should show his wisdom not by his eloquence but by good works; the humble man should not proclaim his own humility, but leave others to do so; nor must the man who preserves his chastity ever boast of it, but recognize that the ability to control his desires has been given him by another.

Think, my brothers, of how we first came into being, of what we were at the first moment of our existence. Think of the dark tomb out of which our Creator brought us into his world where he had his gifts prepared for us even before we were born. All this we owe to him and for everything we must give him thanks. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

From a letter to the Corinthians by Saint Clement I, pope and martyr

