

Seeking the Good of All

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we continue our journey through Ordinary Time, the Church invites us to reflect on the wisdom of Saint Clement, Pope and Martyr, one of the earliest successors of Saint Peter. Writing to the Christian community in Corinth at the end of the first century, he addressed a Church wounded by division and reminded them of a truth that remains as urgent today as it was then: **“Seek the good of all, not personal advantage.”**

These words are not merely a lesson from history; they are a living invitation to examine our own hearts.

Through Baptism, we have become one Body in Christ. We gather around one altar, profess one faith, share one hope, and are nourished by the one Bread of Life. Each time we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, the Lord draws us into communion not only with Himself but also with one another. Our unity is not something we create; it is a gift we receive from Christ and a gift we are called to cherish, strengthen, and protect.

Yet we also know how fragile that unity can be. Because we are human, we are often tempted to place our own preferences, opinions, or interests before the good of the community. Division rarely begins with dramatic events. More often, it takes root quietly—in wounded pride, harsh words, gossip, impatience, resentment, or an unwillingness to forgive. We may convince ourselves that these are small matters, but over time they weaken the bonds of charity that unite us. Saint Clement asks with sorrow, **“Why do we tear apart and divide the Body of Christ?”**

It is a question every Christian, beginning with me as your pastor, should prayerfully ask. As your pastor, I, too, must examine my conscience. Do I always lead with humility? Do I listen with patience? Do I seek the good of the entire flock before my own preferences? The Gospel calls all of us—not only priests or parish leaders, but every baptized believer—to continual conversion. None of us is exempt from the daily work of becoming more like Christ.

The world in which we live is marked by polarization, suspicion, and conflict. Too often these attitudes find their way into our families, our workplaces, and even our parishes. But the Church is called to be different. Our parish should be a place where charity overcomes criticism, forgiveness triumphs over resentment, and truth is always spoken with love. The unity we share is one of the most convincing witnesses we can offer to a divided world.

Saint Clement reminds us that true greatness is found not in recognition, influence, or having our own way, but in humility and service. The greater the gifts God has entrusted to us, the greater our responsibility to place them at the service of others and for the building up of the Body of Christ. Every ministry, every act of service, and every hidden sacrifice should reflect the heart of Jesus, who **“came not to be served but to serve.”**

I invite every member of our parish family to renew your commitment to our common mission. Together, let us continue building a parish where **every person is loved, everyone belongs, hearts are transformed by Christ, and all are sent to proclaim the Gospel.**

- Pray each day for the unity of our parish.
- Speaking words that encourage rather than divide.
- Choose forgiveness over resentment.
- Support one another with patience and charity.
- Ask not, *“What do I want?”* but rather, *“What does Christ desire for His Church?”*

When each of us seeks the common good before our own interests, the parish becomes more than an organization; it becomes a living sign of the Kingdom of God. Visitors encounter not simply a welcoming

community but the presence of Christ Himself. Children learn what Christian love looks like. Those who are wounded find healing. Those searching for God discover a home.

Before receiving Holy Communion, let each of us pause and ask the Lord to remove anything from our hearts that separates us from Him or from one another. May the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament of unity, continually transform us into the Body of Christ we receive, so that our communion at the altar may be reflected in our daily lives.

Entrusting our parish family to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, I pray that the Holy Spirit will renew us in humility, deepen our love for one another, and strengthen us always to seek the good of all rather than our own advantage.

May our parish truly become a community where every person is loved, everyone belongs, hearts are transformed by Christ, and all are sent forth to proclaim the Gospel with joy.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Fr. Vilaire Philius
Pastor