

## That We May All Be One

This may not pertain to everyone, but ALMOST everyone was very happy when the Boston Red Sox finally won the World Series in 2004. We became almost nonchalant when they followed this with “Rings” in 2007, 2013, and 2018. I may have shared with you that Mark and I met in 2004 and married in 2007. We thought for sure we had something to do with this. But, I digress; the Red Sox were one team with many individual players who, by their contributions, made the team appear as one.

In today’s Gospel, again part of the Last Supper discourses in John’s Gospel, Jesus prays in the presence of his disciples. They may have interpreted it as an end to their incessant quarreling about their own position of power, or which of them the Teacher loved most. But, Jesus prays that they may band together to spread the Good News. He is also trying to teach them the beginning part of the Trinity, something that is still a mystery for us today. This message is also important for us today. Whatever things we encounter, we know that we can be stronger as one.

That does not mean, however, that we lose our identity or individuality. Jesus does not stop being Jesus, nor does the Father stop being the Father, because they are one. Oneness is less about numbers and quantity and more qualitative. Jesus and the Father are one because they love and give themselves to each other. Oneness is a quality of life – God’s life. Jesus’ prayer for oneness is ultimately that we would be and live like God.

Oneness is not about eliminating differences. It is about love. Love is the only thing that can ever overcome division. Over and over, Jesus tells us this.

Our love for God, neighbor, self, and enemy reveals our oneness, and the measure of our oneness, our God-likeness, is love. In love, there may be differences, but there is no division.

God’s love knows no boundaries. God loves male and female, rich and poor, gay and straight, Hispanic and Anglo. God loves Christian and Muslim, conservative and liberal, educated and uneducated. God loves young and old, heaven and earth, divine and human. God loves sinner

and saved, orthodox and heretic. All are loved fully, completely, and uniquely as each needs.

God does not even draw boundaries between Jesus and us. If we think God loves Jesus more than anyone else, we have missed the point of the Gospel. God loves you the same as he loves Jesus. God loves your neighbor the same as he loves Jesus. God loves your enemy the same as he loves Jesus. If that is how God loves, how can we do anything less and still call ourselves Christians?

For far too long, we have dealt with each other through our boundaries, differences, and divisions. You can see where that has gotten us. You need only look at the world, read the newspaper, or watch the news. When we deal with others through the divisions we label, do violence, and hunker down to defend our position. There is no oneness in that.

Though Jesus is praying to the Father, you and I will, in large part, be the ones to answer Jesus' prayer. We answer his prayer every time we choose how to love, who to love, and where to love. It is time we answer Jesus' prayer and deal with one another in love. May it be so.

