

Second Sunday after Easter

The Unity of the Church

“There shall be one fold and one shepherd” (John, 10:16)

Today there are in the world many religious organisations claiming to represent Jesus Christ. With the passing of the years these various Christian sects are ever increasing. Many non-Catholics apparently look on this as a very desirable situation, as a proof that Christ's religion can assume many different forms. But this was not the attitude of Christ Himself. He made it very clear that He intended to establish only one religion, which all men were obliged to accept. He willed, in the words of today's Gospel, that there be “one fold and one shepherd.”

History furnishes abundant proof that the Church which Christ established is the Catholic Church. Only the Catholic Church can trace its existence back in an unbroken line to Christ and His apostles. The many other Christian denominations found in the world today originated with men-most of them since the sixteenth century. Hence, they cannot claim to be the true fold of Christ. We Catholics have received the great privilege of membership in this one true Church; hence we should not hesitate to assert courageously that the Catholic Church is the only true Church of Jesus Christ.

The true Church of Christ possesses what is called internal unity. This means that Our Lord promised that His Church should be one in faith, one in sacraments and sacrifice, and one in government. We see this unity fully verified in the Catholic Church. All Catholics throughout the world believe the same doctrines, receive the same sacraments and participate in the same sacrifice of the Mass, and are obedient to the Holy Father, the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter to whom Christ gave the duty to rule the Church in His name.

Every genuine Catholic should remember that it is his duty to promote this unity of the Church, so dear to the heart of Christ, who prayed that all His followers would be one (John, 17:21). Hence, all Catholics must be staunch in upholding the teachings of the Church, receiving the sacraments and assisting at Mass, and, above all, manifesting perfect obedience to their diocesan Bishop and the Pope.

Practical Application

Prove your appreciation of membership in the one true Church by living a practical Catholic life. Never yield to the modern fallacy that it makes little or no difference what church a person may belong to or what religious beliefs he may profess.