



Christian Education

A series of Sermons and Occasional Papers
From the clergy and members
of Holy Trinity Church
Forbes Park, Makati

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Title: **"With One Accord"**
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Readings for this Sunday:

First Reading Exodus 3:1-6
Second Reading Romans 8:12-17
Gospel John 3:1-16

In the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, represented among others by the churches of Greece and Russia, the day of Pentecost is considered the feast of the Trinity. That is because identifying the Holy Spirit as a distinct presence completes the revelation of the Trinity as three Persons in one Godhead. For that reason, what I'm going to say today has as much to do with Pentecost as it does with our special feast day today: Trinity Sunday.

On that first Pentecost Day 2,000 years ago, the apostles and (it is presumed) the Virgin Mary among others are gathered in that upper room, waiting for they-know-not-what- but faithfully waiting all the same. The book of Acts puts this very simply: "they were all together in one place." In the old King James Version, it sounds even nicer and is more correct, at least compared with the Greek original: "they were all with one accord in one place." That suggests not only that they had come together, but also that they had done so on purpose and that they all agreed on that purpose.

The more I have thought of that verse, the stranger and more wonderful it sounds. Why? Do you realize what is special about that? Do you know how hard it has been ever since for the Christian Church to get together for *anything*? Here in the book of

Acts we hear about this little bunch- and it can't have been that large- single-mindedly following the command of Jesus: "[Don't] leave the city, but wait there for the promise of the Father...the baptism of the Holy Spirit." It's been like trying to gather up chickens in a barnyard ever since!

Consider, for a moment, the challenge of simply getting our 7:30 congregation and our 9:30 congregation to do anything at the same time and place, and perhaps the true wonder of the cooperation of this earliest of parishes becomes clear! There have been wars and crusades and persecutions and schisms by and between fellow Christians for most of Christian history. And that's not even mentioning vestry meetings! "Together" and "of one mind" have proved two of the most inaccurate terms to apply to the Christian Church. And it truly makes me wonder what would happen here at Holy Trinity if all of our members not only showed up for an event, or a service, but that they did so "with one accord", "of one mind", in other words: that we all really, honestly got along.

Today, the Church in general, and our parish in particular is blessed with many gifts. The Holy Bible is one of them, so are the Sacraments, our worship, music, outreach work. There are teachers, office staff, artists and workers of every kind and on all levels of the Christian Church. And that doesn't begin to mention all the "things" that we possess, like buildings and grounds and the income from pledges and fund-raising projects that allows the parish and the Church at large us to pursue its ministry.

But more than all of that, and more pleasing to God, would be if we could act a little more like that first congregation at Pentecost, when they waited patiently for God to show His hand and start the winds of inspiration and change to blow. Most importantly for them, and for us, they were all together "with one accord", ready to work and witness in union with each other: not in competition, not with self-pride.

It is very important to remember what the mystery of the Holy Trinity tells us about God: that He is a "community of love" in constant relationship, constant movement, constant cooperation within Himself. And that is the pattern for all Christian life. It

remains the standard for the Church as it continues to witness to God the Father, who made us, God the Son, who died for us and made us His Church, and God the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to “be” the Church and act like the Church in the best sense of that word: Christ’s Body, God’s Chosen People, *together* and *of one accord*.