

Matins for the Monday after the Eighth Sunday after Trinity Sunday

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

July 26th, 2021

SE Pastor's Conference

Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC

Simpsonville, SC

Pastor Jerald Dulas

You Are the Body of Christ

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear brothers in Christ, in our Lutheran Confessions, in the Augsburg Confession, we teach that the Holy Ghost works where and when He pleases to those who hear the Gospel. He knows how to reach each person. The Holy Ghost adapts Himself to each person. He sees the dispositions of each one. He sees into each person's reasoning and conscience, what we say, what we think, what we do, and what we believe. He is able to take each part of the whole Body of Christ—the whole Church—and arrange each part in such a way that the Church be blessed and edified. He builds up the Church according to His own good will and purpose.

St. Paul in the reading from his First Epistle to the Church at Corinth uses the illustration that the Church—the Body of Christ—is made up of different parts. Just like a human body has different parts—an eye, teeth, hands, noses, feet, and the like—the Church is made up of different parts. Some are Apostles, some are prophets, some are teachers. St. Paul makes the point to the Church at Corinth that the Lord God has established and appointed these Offices. These men in these Offices all work to build up and establish the Church. The Holy Ghost knows well how to use each individual man in the Office to build and plant the Church.

In a human body some parts, as St. Paul writes, seem weaker. Some parts of the body are unrepresentable; some have more honor than other parts of the body, others have less honor. But all the parts of the body work together for the good of the body. Each part of the body is necessary to have a whole body. If there are no eyes, how can one see? If there are no hands, how can one reach out and touch? If there are no ears, how can one hear? If there are no feet, how can one walk on the path? Certainly, all of these parts have a physical use that is seen if they are not a part of the body, or are damaged in some way. There are many who are blind, lame, and deaf in this world whose bodies are damaged. But St. Paul is talking about these in a spiritual sense. If the Body of the Church is blind, how can she lead people into the way of truth? If the Body of the Church is deaf to the pure preaching of the Word of God, how can people believe? If the Body of the Church is lame, how can she walk in the way of the Lord? Each part of the Body of Christ is important, whether it be an honorable part of the Body, or a less honorable part of the Body.

The so-called, by St. Paul, less honorable parts of the Body of Christ, are still important parts of

the Body of Christ, for without them, the Body cannot fully function the way that it was meant to function. In short, there are no unimportant parts of the Body of Christ. And I believe this is St. Paul's point, that those who view themselves as having a lesser role in the Body of Christ; who may believe they are unimportant, are still very important within the Body of Christ, for the Church cannot operate properly without them. On the other hand, those who are given a greater role within the Body of Christ, ought not think more highly of themselves than they ought. Those in greater roles within the Body of Christ would not be able to perform in that greater role if it were not for the parts of the Body that are in the lesser roles. Each part of the Body of Christ, supports and builds up the other parts of the Body. Each part works for the greater good of the Body.

The Holy Ghost has arranged each part of the Body of Christ—all of her members—in such a way that all those who are brought into the Church by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace are strengthened and edified in the way the He sees fit to create and sustain faith and life in those who hear the Gospel. The Holy Ghost has been doing this since the beginning. There were first prophets, who would preach and proclaim and prophesy about the coming of the promised Messiah. The Messiah that was promised in the Garden of Eden after our first parents fell into sin. They preached a message of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins. They called people to repent of their idolatry and false worship; to repent of their sinfulness, and rejoice in the salvation found in the promise of the Lord God—the promise of a coming Savior that would redeem all of them from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

When that Messiah came in the Person of our Lord + Jesus Christ, the true and Only-Begotten Son of God, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our flesh and blood; when the Head of the Body of the Church took upon Himself a body like unto our bodies, He called unto Himself twelve Apostles. These He spent three years teaching and instructing in the holy Scriptures. These He also sent out into the world after He had perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, and suffered our punishment on the tree of the holy cross to baptize all nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. All those they baptized became members of the one Body of Christ. All the baptized are members of the Body of Christ. The Holy Ghost has brought them into the Church through the means of the washing and regeneration of the Holy Ghost. These members have been clothed in the white robes of our Lord's righteousness. Both the honorable and less honorable members are all clothed with the righteousness of the Christ. We are all members of the Body of Christ. We are all the Body of Christ.

By the work of the Holy Ghost all nations have been brought into the Church. Indeed, the Church is sustained through the continual preaching and teaching—of the continual calling into repentance for the forgiveness of sins—of the pastors and teachers of the Church; those whom the Apostles appointed to be their replacements in the Church. So that the Church remains an ever-living thing. Our bodies will grow older and weaker. Some parts of our bodies will stop working, some will work less efficient than they once did. Our bodies will eventually give out and die. This is our condition as poor, sinful beings. This is the condition that we inherited from our first parents Adam and Eve. We will die along with our bodies.

The Church, however, will never die. For the Church is the Body of Christ; the Christ Who raised Himself up after three days of death. This Christ—this Lord + Jesus—lives and reigns for all eternity. All those who cling to Him and His works and merits in faith—who have become a part of the Body of Christ through faith—will also live with the Lord + Jesus, and all the saints and angels, for all eternity. The Body in which we live is an eternal Body. This human body will die and pass away. But the Body of Christ will never die or pass away, it will live forever in Heaven. This is the promise and reward for those who in faith have been brought into the Body of Christ by the working of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost works faith in those who hear the Gospel when and where He pleases. For He knows how we think, He knows how we reason, He knows our own conscience, and He applies the

Gospel to each one of us to create and sustain faith in us that clings intently to the Head of the Body, the Lord + Jesus Christ. He also sends out pastors and teachers, who have their own strengths and weaknesses to preach the pure Word of God in all of its truth and purity, and to administer the Sacraments rightly according to the institution of the Christ. He sends us out to baptize and teach all nations, especially the individual part of all nations to which we have been called—the local parish.

My dear brothers in Christ, some of us have greater roles within the Church. Some of us have lesser roles in the Church. But we are all a part of the Body of Christ. We all are called to preach the pure Word of God, and administer the Sacraments rightly. The Holy Ghost uses each one of us for the benefit of the Church as a whole. We all have our individual spiritual gifts. They are called spiritual because they come from the Holy Spirit. These spiritual gifts are gifts that the Holy Spirit—the Holy Ghost—gives to each individual for the building up of the Church when and how He sees fit. We do not need to assess for ourselves which spiritual gifts we have, as some are wont to do, for the Holy Ghost works where and when He pleases in those who hear the Gospel. He uses us as He sees fit to plant, build and enlarge the Church.

We have been called into the Office to do the task of preaching and administering the Sacraments. We have been called to preach repentance toward the forgiveness of sins; to preach the Law that all men are sinners in need of the grace of the Lord God who are unable to save themselves by their own works, and to preach the Gospel that that grace is found only in the One and Only-Begotten Son of God, our Lord + Jesus, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Lord of all those who cling to Him in faith. All of us who cling to Him in faith are the Body of Christ. We are the Body of Christ. You are the Body of Christ. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!