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Unity in the Body of Christ

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> മുഖ്യ വാക്യം
> John 15:12 – "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
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> വായനകൾ
> Isaiah 2:1-4; Psalm 122; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; John 15:9-17

24 Sunday after Pentecost

UNITY SUNDAY

Introduction

Unity is not just a good idea – it is a gospel imperative. The unity of believers is the visible sign of Christ's presence in the world. As we observe Unity Sunday and remember the Communion of Churches in India (CCI), we are reminded that the church, though diverse in expression and tradition, is one body in Christ. The call to unity is more pressing than ever in our divided world. Jesus' final prayer for His disciples was "that they may all be one" (John 17:21), and this vision remains the heartbeat of Christian witness and mission.

Our texts today guide us to understand and live out this unity:

- Psalm 122 reveals the joy and peace of gathered worship.
- Isaiah 2:1-4 envisions a united world under God's instruction.
- 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of unity in diversity within the body.
- John 15 commands us to love as the foundation of unity.

Let us explore what it means to live in unity with four reflections.

1. Worship as the Wellspring of Unity (Psalm 122)

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (v.1). Psalm 122 speaks of joy and peace that flow from worship in God's house. Unity begins in the presence of God. When the tribes of Israel came together to worship in Jerusalem, they came as one people. Worship is not merely a personal experience; it is a communal reality that transcends barriers. In today's context, when churches across denominations gather in shared worship, they affirm that the God they serve is not divided. The peace and unity described in this Psalm must be reflected in our assemblies and ecclesial bodies. Let us ensure that our worship fosters inclusion, forgiveness, and hospitality. The more we seek God's presence together, the more we will be united in spirit and mission.

2. A Vision of Peace and Harmony (Isaiah 2:1-4)

"They shall beat their swords into ploughshares... neither shall they learn war anymore" (v.4). Isaiah paints a hopeful picture of a united world where nations no longer fight, but walk

together in the light of the Lord. Unity is not just for the church; it is God's vision for all creation. The mountain of the Lord becomes a gathering point for all nations – an image of inclusive and peaceful worship. In India, where social, cultural, and religious diversities are enormous, the church has a prophetic role to play in modelling and advocating for peace and reconciliation. CCI, representing the Church of North India, Church of South India, and Mar Thoma Syrian Church, is a signpost pointing toward this Isaiah vision. Are we willing to lay down our swords – of pride, prejudice, and division – for the ploughshares of collaboration, dialogue, and mutual understanding?

3. One Body, Many Parts: Embracing Diversity in the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12–27)

"For just as the body is one and has many members... so it is with Christ." (v.12). Paul's metaphor of the body is a powerful image of unity amidst diversity. Each member is important, and no one can say to another, "I have no need of you." The body functions only when every part honours and serves the other. In the CCI and within the Church of North India, this truth is deeply relevant. Whether diocesan, regional, linguistic, or liturgical differences exist, we are one body. A Tamil-speaking CSI congregation and a Hindi-speaking CNI parish both participate in the same Body of Christ. Unity is not uniformity. The strength of the body lies in its variety working together for the common good. Let us value each gift, each tradition, and each member, working together to build Christ's church.

4. Abiding in Love: The Commandment of Unity (John 15:9–17)

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love." (v.9). The deepest foundation of unity is love. Jesus calls us not simply to tolerate one another, but to love one another with the love He has shown us. This love is self-giving, sacrificial, and sustaining. He calls us friends, not servants, and He invites us into a relationship that transforms how we see and treat others. Christian unity is more than organizational – it is relational. It springs from our mutual connection to Christ, the True Vine. A church that abides in Christ's love becomes a visible sign of the Gospel. Our programs and structures will fail without love, but when love abides, the world will know we are His disciples. Let us commit anew to love one another, across denominational and cultural lines, just as Christ has loved us.

Conclusion

Unity is not a distant dream – it is a divine calling. The Communion of Churches in India is not just an organization; it is a movement of faith rooted in love, nourished by diversity, and driven by the Gospel of Christ. As the Church of North India, we are called to be bridge-builders in a fractured world. Unity begins in worship, grows in vision, thrives in diversity, and is perfected in love. Let us be bold to live as one body – praying together, walking together, and working together – for the glory of God and the healing of the world.

Prayer

Gracious God, We thank You for calling us into the Body of Christ. Forgive us for the times we have allowed division, pride, and indifference to hinder our witness. Help us to seek unity in our

worship, pursue peace in our communities, and honour the diversity of Your people. May we abide in Your love and live as one body with many members. May the Church in India and across the world rise in spiritual unity to proclaim the Good News with boldness and humility. Bind us together, Lord, with cords that cannot be broken. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who prayed that we may be one, Amen.