

There is a striking contrast in the readings today.

In the Gospel, Christ prays for unity.

In the first reading, Paul stands in the middle of division, accusation, and chaos.

The Church is always living between those two realities.

Christ desires unity.

The world produces fragmentation.

St Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin.

Two groups stand before him: Pharisees and Sadducees.

One believes in the resurrection.

The other denies it.

And Paul suddenly cries out:

“It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.”

Immediately the assembly explodes into argument.

Confusion.

Division.

Violence almost breaking out.

And in the middle of it all stands Paul.

Calm.

Because he knows something the others do not.

The resurrection is true.

And once that is true, everything changes.

Then comes a beautiful moment.

That night, the Lord stands beside Paul.

Not far away.

Beside him.

And Christ says:

“Take courage.”

Not:

“You will escape suffering.”

Not:

“This will become easy.”

Take courage.

Because courage is not the absence of fear.

It is fidelity in the middle of fear.

And then Christ says:

“As you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome.”

The mission continues.

Chains do not stop it.

Opposition does not stop it.

Confusion does not stop it.

The Gospel continues moving toward the heart of the empire itself.

Then the Gospel opens the deepest prayer of Christ before His Passion.

And what does He ask?

“That they may all be one.”

Not superficial unity.

Not unity built on ignoring truth.

The unity of divine life itself.

“As you, Father, are in me and I in you.”

That is staggering.

Christ desires His Church to share in the communion of the Trinity.

Unity rooted in truth.

In grace.

In shared divine life.

And this is why division wounds the Church so deeply.

Because division always flows from sin.

Pride.

Ambition.

Falsehood.

Self-will.

Hell divides.

God unites.

And perhaps this becomes especially important now.

Because modern life fragments everything.

Families divided.

Communities divided.

Politics divided.

Even the human person divided interiorly.

And many people no longer know what unity even means.

The world tries to create unity through slogans, systems, and power.

But unity without truth collapses quickly.

Only Christ can unite the human heart fully.

And then comes one of the most extraordinary lines in the Gospel:

“Father, I desire that they also... may be with me where I am.”

That is the final goal of salvation.

Not merely moral improvement.

Not earthly success.

Union with Christ forever.

Heaven.

Christ desires His people to share His glory.

That is why He goes to the Cross.

And today the Church remembers St Christopher Magallanes and his companions.

Priests and martyrs killed during the persecution of the Church in Mexico.

They died because they refused to abandon Christ and His Church.

The world tried to silence the Faith through violence and fear.

But martyrs reveal something powerful:

A soul united to Christ becomes stronger than death.

And that returns us to Paul.

Standing before division and hatred.

And to Christ.

Praying for unity while walking toward Calvary.

The Church always lives in that tension.

Surrounded by division.

Called into communion.

And this unity is not created by human effort alone.

It is sacramental.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity.

One Body.

One Lord.

One Church.

That is why the devil attacks the Mass so fiercely.

Because the Eucharist gathers scattered humanity into communion with Christ.

And yet the Gospel also warns us quietly.

A person can stand externally near the Church while interiorly divided from God.

Unity must reach the heart.

A divided heart cannot know peace.

A soul trying to serve both Christ and the world will eventually tear itself apart.

So today Christ speaks very personally:

“Take courage.”

Because many hearts are tired.

Many Catholics feel discouraged by division in the world and even within the Church.

But Christ still stands beside His people.

Still praying for them.

Still strengthening them.

Still drawing souls toward unity in Himself.

And the final word of the Gospel is astonishingly tender.

Christ says the Father loves His disciples because they have loved Him.

The Christian life is not cold obedience alone.

It is communion of love.

The Father drawing souls into the very life shared eternally with the Son.

That is heaven already beginning.

And that is why the saints and martyrs could endure everything.

Because once a soul truly belongs to Christ,

even suffering cannot divide it from Him.