

The churches, the peace process and reconciliation Some frame the North's conflict as ethnic, rather than sectarian, but the continued involvement of both churches in mediating for peace reveals.

The tranquility described may have been due, partly to the absence of any leading men among the opponents of the new society; partly, perhaps, to public excitement being diverted to the insane attempt of Caligula to set up his statue in the Temple at Jerusalem--an attempt from which he was only dissuaded by the earnest entreaties of Herod Agrippa, whom he had raised to the dignity of King of Judaea, but who happened at the time to be at Rome, and of Petronius, the Pr? The latter was influenced by great showers of rain falling from a clear sky, after a long drought, in answer to the prayers of Israel Jos. Such prayers, made at a crisis in which believing and unbelieving Jews felt an equal interest, may, probably, have suggested St. Throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria. It is the first intimation since the opening of the apostolic history of the existence, not of disciples only, such as had gathered round our Lord during His personal ministry, but of organised religious communities, in the towns and villages of Galilee. We may think of such churches as formed in Capernaum and Tiberias, in Chorazin and the two Bethsaidas, perhaps even in Nazareth. The history is silent as to the agency by which these churches had been founded; but looking to the close relations between St. Philip, and to the probability that the latter made Caesarea his head-quarters for the work of an Evangelist, we may legitimately think of him as having worked there as he had worked in Samaria. It is not improbable, however, that here also, as in that region, he may have been followed, after he had done his work as an Evangelist, by the Apostles to whom it belonged to confirm and organise. See Note on Acts 8: Were edified; and walking. The passage is noticeable for the appearance of the word "edified," or "built up," in the sense in which St. Paul had used it 1Corinthians 8: Luke here, and in 2Corinthians 5: The comfort of the Holy Ghost. John , should be described by the kindred word of paraclesis, and equally natural that this connection should re-appear in the two English words of "comfort" and "Comforter. Pulpit Commentary Verse Especially Paul had another breathing-time, which may have been the more required if, as is thought, one at least of the five scourgings mentioned in 2 Corinthians Matthew Henry Commentary 9: Believers are apt to be too suspicious of those against whom they have prejudices. The world is full of deceit, and it is necessary to be cautious, but we must exercise charity, 1Co The Lord will clear up the characters of true believers; and he will bring them to his people, and often gives them opportunities of bearing testimony to his truth, before those who once witnessed their hatred to it. Christ now appeared to Saul, and ordered him to go quickly out of Jerusalem, for he must be sent to the Gentiles: The persecutions were stayed. The professors of the gospel walked uprightly, and enjoyed much comfort from the Holy Ghost, in the hope and peace of the gospel, and others were won over to them. They lived upon the comfort of the Holy Ghost, not only in the days of trouble and affliction, but in days of rest and prosperity. Those are most likely to walk cheerfully, who walk circumspectly.

Doctrine and Covenants For three years the church prayerfully studied the words of counsel given in The Holy Spirit confirms the church would be blessed by considering this counsel for inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants.

While difficult challenges have arisen from outside the church, the most dangerous have always been from within. For from within arise the false teachers, the peddlers of error who masquerade as teachers of truth. False teachers take on many forms, custom-crafted to times, cultures, and contexts. Here are seven of them you will find carrying out their deceptive, destructive work in the church today. Sponsor Become a Patron The Heretic The Heretic is the most prominent and perhaps the most dangerous of the false teachers. Peter warned against him in his second letter. The Heretic is the person who teaches what blatantly contradicts an essential teaching of the Christian faith. He is a gregarious figure, a natural leader teaching just enough truth to mask his deadly error. Yet in denying the faith and celebrating what is false, he leads his followers from the safety of orthodoxy to the peril of heresy. He continues his evil work today, sometimes by contradicting the truth and sometimes by adding to it. He may reframe the doctrine of the Trinity, as Arius did in the third century and as Oneness Pentecostals do today. He may, like Marcus Borg and other prominent scholars, deny the virgin birth or the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Charlatan The Charlatan is the person who uses Christianity as a means of personal enrichment. Paul charged Timothy to be on guard against him. The Charlatan is only interested in the Christian faith to the extent that it can fill his wallet. Simon Magus was motivated by the love of money when he tried to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit Acts 8: Since him, the Charlatan has appeared in many forms, always seeking prominence in the church so that he can live in extravagance. When Pope Leo X famously commissioned Tetzel to sell indulgences, the profits not only funded the reconstruction of St. In the s, televangelist Robert Tilton brought in tens of millions of dollars each year by exploiting the vulnerable and gullible. The Prophet The Prophet claims to be gifted by God to speak fresh revelation outside of Scripture's new, authoritative words of prediction, teaching, rebuke, or encouragement. John offered an urgent warning about him. Later, John declared that God has spoken fully and finally in Scripture and offered the most solemn warning against anyone who claims to bring revelation equal or contrary to Scripture. The Prophet appears throughout the history of the church. As early as the second century, Montanus and his disciples claimed to speak on behalf of the Holy Spirit. Today the airwaves are chock-full of people claiming to speak in the name of God through the power of the Spirit. Personal prophecies are just a phone call away. Sarah Young, author of the top Christian bestseller of the decade, boldly claims that her book contains the very words of Jesus. The Prophet continues to speak, to lead astray. The Abuser The Abuser uses his position of leadership to take advantage of other people. Usually, he takes advantage of them to feed his sexual lust, though he may also desire power. The Abuser claims he is tending souls, but his true interest is ravishing bodies. When he is not pursuing illicit sexual pleasure, he may be domineering people to gain power, abusing them on his path to prominence. He unapologetically uses and abuses others to feed his lusts. Tragically, the history of the Christian faith features countless Abusers. For centuries, the papacy was little more than a corrupt power struggle. Today it seems that every week, we learn of another leader who has been found guilty of sexual sin with men, women, or even children. Meanwhile, we hear sad tales of survivors who have been abused and cast aside by a leader craving power. The Abuser carries on his work. The Divider The Divider uses false doctrine to disrupt or destroy a church. He gleefully divides brother from brother and sister from sister. Jude warned about him: The Divider is devoid of the Holy Spirit whose first fruit is love and whose special work is holding believers together in the bond of peace Galatians 5: This false teacher brings strife, not love. He generates factions, not unity. He desires discord, not harmony. Congregations and denominations have often been splintered by the Divider as he promulgates his lies. He sometimes makes a minor doctrine into the mark of Christian maturity, causing factions to arise within the body. He may slyly introduce unbiblical doctrines, or he may undermine the ordained leadership. He does it all for the perverse satisfaction that comes with destruction. The Tickler The Tickler is the false teacher who cares nothing for what God wants and everything for what men want. He is the man-pleaser rather than the God-pleaser. Paul thought of

him as the ear-tickler: The Tickler craves popularity and praise from the world. Therefore, he speaks much of happiness but little of sin, much of heaven but nothing of hell. He gives them only what they want to hear. He preaches a partial gospel which is no gospel at all. The Tickler is as old as the church itself. Today he is Joel Osteen, pastor of the largest church in America, who is known equally for his toothy smile and his vacuous content. He preaches an empty gospel to a packed out church. The Speculator Finally, the Speculator is the one obsessed with novelty, originality, or speculation. Teaching focused on speculation displaces the sure and steady doctrine of Scripture. He grows weary of the old truths and pursues respectability through originality. Today, as in every age, the Speculator obsesses about the End Times, and somehow his failed predictions dissuade neither himself nor his followers. Recently we saw him obscuring the clear message of Scripture to search for hidden codes in Scripture. Sometimes he plants himself in academia, where one of his recent masterpieces is a re-imagined God who is unable to see and know the future. Well did Paul label the Speculator a contradictory, irreverent babbling 1 Timothy 6: His priests do not peddle a different religion, but a deadly perversion of the true one. His troops do not make a full-out frontal assault, but work as agents, sneaking into the opposing army. Therefore, we must always remain vigilant.

Chapter 3 : Mass and Confession Times - Our Lady of Peace Shrine and Church

Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church! We are a community that is called to connect with all people with specific focus on children, seniors, and people in need in the south metro area.

He will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, prince of peace. Isaiah 9 The father of John the Baptist, Zechariah, spoke of the birth of his own son: He will give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1 A heavenly choir sang praise to God on the occasion of the birth of Jesus: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace. Luke 2 The teaching ministry of Jesus began with a word spoken on the mountain of the Beatitudes in the Galilee: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5 In the midst of the storm, as the disciples faced persecution and uncertainty and fear, Jesus spoke to the winds and the waves, and to the disciples: Let not your hearts be troubled Neither let them be afraid. This year, as last year, we are in the midst of wars and rumors of wars. This year, as last year, we see violence and destruction and oppression. This year, as last year, we can look within and sense uncertainty and fear, and, if we are honest, the absence of peace. Most of us want peace. Not everyone wants peace, but most of us want peace. The dissonance comes because there seems to be so little of it. Our time could be described in the words of the eighth century prophet, who critiqued those who would go around announcing, "peace, peace, when there is no peace. And I find myself returning this year with the same word, the same gift, the same prescription: It was the dream of the prophets. It was the hope of his parents. It was the message of his preaching. It was the legacy of his passover. But we know so little peace in our world, in our community, in our lives. So, what do we do with this dissonance? How do we resolve it? One response is to say that we are not peaceable people, that we do not really care enough about peace to make it happen. This would be the problem. But this is not quite right. Because peace is not something we can create or invent. Some people sentimentalize peace. Peace is like a warm blanket or a hot bath or a sedative. Some people compartmentalize peace. I think of the homes in Latin America, in neighborhoods I have walked through, the walls lined with cut glass bottles, the jagged edges exposed, to separate those inside from those outside, to keep the peace. Could we have peace if we just built a gigantic wall? In the land where the prince of peace was born, his ancestors on both sides have little desire for peace, although the multitudes of Palestinians and Israelis want peace. It turns out that peace is something different. Here is a definition. Peace is a right relationship with God. And a right relationship with God always places us into a right relationship with each other. And here is a further conviction. We do not make it a right relationship. God has already done that. God has already made peace with the world. The early Christians could look back at Jesus, in the same way the prophets looked forward, and they could see the peace that he had made possible on this earth: We read in Ephesians 2: In Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. Ephesians 2 He is our peace. Peace is not a human achievement. Peace is a gift from God. And here we find ourselves much closer to the prophets, much nearer to the people we meet in the gospels. We are praying for this gift, eagerly awaiting this gift of peace. Advent is a time of transition. In the 40th chapter of Isaiah, the prophet speaks of a transition, of change. The season of punishment has ended; now is the time of restoration and renewal. Go to the top of a mountain and shout it out for all to hear. Those who have been wounded are now the very ones who will comfort others. In the epistle reading for today, the third chapter of II Peter, there is a further reflection on this transition. A thousand years is like a day with God. The transition seems slow in coming. We wait for this gift, but it does not appear. We want this promised peace, but where is it? God is not slow, the scripture reminds us, but God is patient, patient because of our stubbornness and sinfulness. God wants us to repent. God is interested in our readiness to receive the gift. God is not slow, but God is patient. Patience is surely a part of what is needed in this season of Advent, in a culture that begins to sing Christmas carols on November 1, in a marketplace where people are trampled on their way to the X-Box aisle. Patience requires our waiting. But Advent is all about patience and waiting, whether you are a five-year old boy obsessed with a special gift or a grandmother

counting the days until reunion with family. I love the comment by Henri Nouwen: So waiting is never a movement from nothing to something. You are to conceive and bear a son. They have received something that is at work in them, like a seed that has started to grow. This is very important. We can only really wait if what we are waiting for has something to something more. We are able to wait for peace because we have glimpsed it here and there, now and then; and for the follower of Jesus, the prince of peace, something is already growing in us, a hunger and a thirst for a new world. We "wait with a sense of promise. The longing of his people. The fulfillment of his promise. I live not far from the mountains of Western North Carolina, and I try to spend as much time there as I can! Ruth and Billy Graham were traveling through these same mountains one afternoon, and they encountered several miles of road construction. There was one-lane traffic, there were detours, it was a little frustrating. Finally, they came to the end and they saw a road sign. Ruth Graham turned to her husband and said, "Those words, on that road sign, that is what I would like to have printed on my tombstone. Thanks for your patience. We are in a time of transition. We wait with a sense of promise. Do not be demoralized if the world does not seem to be a very peaceful place. Do not be discouraged if anxiety rules within your heart and confusion pervades your mind. Those who walked with God before us knew this same dissonance, and yet they listened for a harmony at the heart of the universe, they took the bread and the cup into their hands as grace, they gathered for Sunday worship with fellow believers, they discerned a truth that was the joy of human desiring, they dreamed about a peace the world could neither give nor take away, a gift, about to be revealed to us: Brothers and sisters, God is not slow, but God is patient. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come. O God, our hope is in you and our dream is for peace in this world. Hear our prayer in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Chapter 4 : God's Guidance for Christians in Conflict - Mark D. Roberts

Scripture Reading—“Doctrine and Covenants a-d Community of Christ, a divine vision is set before you. Presented over the years through various inspired phrases and symbols, it is expressed now through initiatives in harmony with Jesus Christ's mission.

Safety consists not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God. Society of International Law, in London, states that during the last 4, years there have been only years of peace in spite of good peace treaties. In the last 3 centuries there have been wars on the continent of Europe alone. Laney, Marching Orders, p Peace that Jesus gives is not the absence of trouble, but is rather the confidence that He is there with you always. Griffith- Thomas entitled "The Power of Peace. The Nature of Peace 1. Peace of a quiet conscience Rom. Peace of a restful mind Phil. Peace of a surrendered will 4. Peace of a hopeful heart Isaiah Peace of loving fellowship II. The Source of Peace 1. Peace with God Rom. The God of peace Rom. The peace of God Phil. The Lord of peace 2 Thess. The Duration of Peace " Griffith, The Power of Peace. Long ago a man sought the perfect picture of peace. Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide. Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner. The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace? A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil. Berit Kjos, A Wardrobe from the King, pp. The Personnel Journal reported this incredible statistic: In its study, the periodical discovered that of years of recorded history, only years saw peace. Moreover, in excess of peace treaties were made--and broken. Peace is such a precious jewel, that I would give anything for it but truth. Duke University did a study on "peace of mind. Nursing a grudge was a major factor in unhappiness. An unwholesome preoccupation with old mistakes and failures leads to depression. Cooperate with life, instead of trying to run away from it. Resist the temptation to withdraw and become reclusive during periods of emotional stress. Accept the fact that nobody gets through life without some sorrow and misfortune. When there is too wide a gap between self-expectation and your ability to meet the goals you have set, feelings of inadequacy are inevitable. Self-centered egotistical people score lowest in any test for measuring happiness. A former president of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and historians from England, Egypt, Germany, and India have come up with some startling information: During this period there have been 14, wars, large and small, in which 3. The value of the property destroyed would pay for a golden belt around the world The remainder ended in the economic collapse of the countries involved. In , Nicholas Ridley was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need.

New International Version Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

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Introduction This is one blog series I wish were completely unnecessary. I wish conflict among Christians were a relatively insignificant problem. I wish we who believe in Jesus could experience the unity he commended to us John But all of this is, I admit, wishful thinking. The fact is that Christians often have a hard time getting along with each other. This has been true from the earliest days of the church. The Apostle Paul, who planted the church in Corinth, wrote what we call 1 Corinthians to the believers there principally because of internal conflict in the church. By the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, the tension was largely between Paul and his church. Even in a healthy church, such as the one in Philippi, conflict was a problem. Thus Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians: But the more I have studied the early church, the more I have come to recognize the manifold problems that plagued the first Christians. Among these, conflict played a central role. Perhaps one of the most discouraging things about studying church history, from the first century onward, is to see just how often Christians have been mired in disputes and strife. Not a happy story, not at all. This was not what Jesus intended, to be sure. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. To be sure, there are times when followers of Jesus do love each other in an exemplary way. But, far too often, such love is marred by conflict, tension, and outright meanness. And, far too often, we have not dealt with these problems in a loving way. This series will be relevant, I believe, to one-on-one relationships and to denominational disagreements. My hope is that when we experience conflict in the church, we will be prepared to deal with it in a way that honors God and strengthens Christian community.

Dealing with Conflict Among Christians: Now this is always a good starting point, the best there is, in fact. There are several reasons why. First, in times of conflict our natural human emotions often try to dictate our behavior. We feel anger and want to lash out. We feel fear and want to defend or attack. We feel wronged and want to get revenge. The copy of the Gutenberg Bible in the U. Chief among these ways is the desire to win. We can also be tempted to use human schemes to defeat our opponents. We rally the troops. We get out the vote. We play the victim. We undermine our opponents. We hold grudges, and so forth and so on. So we need the Bible to show us different ways to operate in times of conflict: The biblical combination of ethics and theology helps to shape our thoughts, feelings, and actions. But even if your church is in a blessed season of harmony, you may be able to direct others to the biblical guidance I will convey. Moreover, if you take seriously what I will share with you, you may very well help your church stay out of serious conflict. Today, however, I want to print the entire passage and then offer some guidance for how to let it impact your heart and your actions. If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Ask the Lord to speak to you through this section of his Word and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Prayerfully, slowly read this passage. Read it at least three times. If possible, read it aloud. Let each

word sink in. Be attentive to what God is saying to you personally. Let the Lord speak to you about you. As God convicts you, go with it. Talk to him about it. Confess if you need to. Ask for his help to obey if you need to. Take time to talk with the Lord about how this passage should impact your life. If you are able to do so, share with at least one other believer what God has been saying to you through Philippians 2. Be open to encouragement and or correction from this believer or these believers. Ask them to pray for you as you move to the next step. Act upon what God has said to you through this passage. Be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only James 1: You may find it very hard to do what God wants you to do. He will provide the strength you need if you depend on him. Yes, I have a few things I want to say about this passage. But right now I think I should get my words out of the way. What you need most of all is the Word of God, brought to life by the Spirit of God. My reflections will come in due time, and that time will be tomorrow. May the peace of Christ be with you. Your gut instinct is to win the battle, to be vindicated, to prevail over your opponents. But this text speaks of being agreeable, humble, and considering others as better than yourself. Philippians 2 begins with a series of ethical injunctions that could be paraphrased: These imperatives are summarized in verse five: Rather, Paul shows us quite clearly in verses what it means to think like Jesus: This is a tricky text for a variety of reasons. For one thing, the language is rather unusual for Paul and therefore difficult to interpret. This fact, combined with the poetic structure of the passage, has led many scholars to propose that Paul is quoting an early Christian hymn, something he did not write. This explains the uniqueness of the language. Ruins of the ancient forum in Philippi. Photo used by permission of HolyLandPhotos. What is this big picture? Moreover, this passage paints a shocking picture of a divine being who not only became human, but also chose to die a most humiliating and painful death by crucifixion. One cannot imagine a more startling and unsettling image of humility and self-sacrifice. How might our conflict with others be different if we took seriously the humility of Jesus? How might we react to those who wrong us if we were to reflect upon the self-giving love of Christ? Having the Mind of Christ: Part 2 Throughout the ages, commentators and preachers have seen Philippians 2: In this gospel text, Jesus literally humbled himself, doing that which an actual slave would ordinarily have done. He did this to teach his disciples how they were to love each other, in anticipation of his ultimate act of love on the cross. In Philippians 2, Paul uses the image of the humble, self-sacrificing, serving, crucified Christ to teach the Philippians believers how they ought to treat each other. Philippians 2 raises all sorts of tantalizing theological questions about the nature of Christ. In what way was he equal to God? In what sense did he empty himself?

Chapter 6 : Daily Prayer for Peace â€™ 22 August

Founded in , Our Lady of Peace Parish is a Catholic parish in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia located in Milmont Park, PA. OLP Parish merged with Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish in Mass is held at Our Lady of Peace Church and Notre Dame de Lourdes Church.

Doctrine and Covenants Section Doctrine and Covenants For three years the church prayerfully studied the words of counsel given in The Holy Spirit confirms the church would be blessed by considering this counsel for inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants. This document is offered humbly for that purpose as an expression of our cherished principle of Continuing Revelation. Guidance refined some sentences. In several instances, it also added content for reasons known to God. I also considered prayerfully what portions of the words of counsel applied specifically to when they were given and did not necessarily need to be in the Doctrine and Covenants. So some sentences have been removed. Those sentences either have fulfilled their purposes, or the concepts they highlighted are expressed sufficiently elsewhere in the Doctrine and Covenants. The testimony I offer is assurance that God, the eternal One, lovingly and patiently guides the church according to divine purposes. Let us be grateful for that guidance. To the councils, quorums, and orders, to the World Conference, and to the church: Community of Christ, a divine vision is set before you. Lovingly invite others to experience the good news of new life in community with Christ. Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them. Undertake compassionate and just actions to abolish poverty and end needless suffering. Pursue peace on and for the Earth. Let nothing separate you from this mission. Continue to align your priorities with local and worldwide church efforts to move the initiatives forward. Additional innovative approaches to coordinating congregational life and supporting groups of disciples and seekers are needed to address mission opportunities in a changing world. Listen to the testimonies of those responding generously. Let gratitude show you the way. When defined by faith, love, and hopeful planning, including resolving unwise debt, capacity to respond becomes much greater than initially assumed. Stewardship as response to the ministry of Christ is more than individual giving. It includes the generosity of congregations and jurisdictions that give to worldwide ministries of the church to strengthen community in Christ in all nations. Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion. More fully embody your oneness and equality in Jesus Christ. Oneness and equality in Christ are realized through the waters of baptism, confirmed by the Holy Spirit, and sustained through the sacrament of Communion. Embrace the full meaning of these sacraments and be spiritually joined in Christ as never before. However, it is not right to profess oneness and equality in Christ through sacramental covenants and then to deny them by word or action. You do not fully understand many interrelated processes of human creation. Through its wonderful complexity, creation produces diversity and order. Be not consumed with concern about variety in human types and characteristics as you see them. Be passionately concerned about forming inclusive communities of love, oneness, and equality that reveal divine nature. Oneness and equality in Christ do not mean uniformity. They also mean full opportunity for people to experience human worth and related rights, including expressing God-given giftedness in the church and society. Regarding priesthood, God calls whomever God calls from among committed disciples, according to their gifts, to serve and reach all humankind. Priesthood policies developed through wisdom and inspiration provide a clear way for disciples to respond to calling. Nothing in this instruction should be construed to lessen the importance of the sacrament of evangelist blessing for individuals. Beloved Community of Christ, do not just speak and sing of Zion. Live, love, and share as Zion: This burden and blessing is yours for divine purposes. Trust in this promise.

Chapter 7 : Sermon Illustrations

Fr. Patrick J. O'Doherty is pleased to welcome you to the parish of Queen of Peace in Ocala, FL. Mass times for Queen of Peace are below. Also, if you need directions to Queen of Peace, please [click here](#).

First Visit to an Orthodox Church: Some of these differences are apparent, if perplexing, from the first moment you walk in a church. Others become noticeable only over time. During the early part of the service the church may seem to be in a hubbub, with people walking up to the front of the church, praying in front of the iconostasis the standing icons in front of the altar, kissing things and lighting candles, even though the service is already going on. In fact, when you came in the service was already going on, although the sign outside clearly said "Divine Liturgy, 9: In an Orthodox church there is only one Eucharistic service Divine Liturgy per Sunday, and it is preceded by an hour-long service of Matins or Orthros and several short preparatory services before that. There is no break between these services--one begins as soon as the previous ends, and posted starting times are just educated guesses. Altogether, the priest will be at the altar on Sunday morning for over three hours, "standing in the flame," as one Orthodox priest put it. As a result of this state of continuous flow, there is no point at which everyone is sitting quietly in a pew waiting for the entrance hymn to start, glancing at their watches approaching 9: Orthodox worshippers arrive at any point from the beginning of Matins through the early part of the Liturgy, a span of well over an hour. This is distracting to newcomers, and may even seem disrespectful, but soon you begin to recognize it as an expression of a faith that is not merely formal but very personal. Of course, there is still no good excuse for showing up after 9: Stand up, stand up for Jesus. In the Orthodox tradition, the faithful stand up for nearly the entire service. Expect variation in practice: No one minds or probably even notices. Long-term standing gets easier with practice. To say that we make the sign of the cross frequently would be an understatement. We sign ourselves whenever the Trinity is invoked, whenever we venerate the cross or an icon, and on many other occasions in the course of the Liturgy. Some people cross themselves three times in a row, and some finish by sweeping their right hand to the floor. On first entering a church people may come up to an icon, make a "metania"--crossing themselves and bowing with right hand to the floor--twice, then kiss the icon, then make one more metania. This becomes familiar with time, but at first it can seem like secret-handshake stuff that you are sure to get wrong. We cross with our right hands from right to left push, not pull, the opposite of Roman Catholics and high-church Protestants. We hold our hands in a prescribed way: Here as elsewhere, the Orthodox impulse is to make everything we do reinforce the Faith. Can you figure out the symbolism? Three fingers together for the Trinity; two fingers brought down to the palm for the two natures of Christ, and his coming down to earth. This, too, takes practice. We do sometimes prostrate. This is not like prostration in the Roman Catholic tradition, lying out flat on the floor. To make a prostration we kneel, place our hands on the floor and touch our foreheads down between our hands. At first prostration feels embarrassing, but no one else is embarrassed, so after awhile it feels OK. Ladies will learn that full skirts are best for prostrations, as flat shoes are best for standing. Sometimes we do this and get right back up again, as during the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, which is used frequently during Lent. Other times we get down and stay there awhile, as some congregations do during part of the Eucharistic prayer. Some kneel, some stand with head bowed; in a pew they might slide forward and sit crouched over. Standing there feeling awkward is all right too. In Orthodoxy there is a wider acceptance of individualized expressions of piety, rather than a sense that people are watching you and getting offended if you do it wrong. One former Episcopal priest said that seeing people prostrate themselves was one of the things that made him most eager to become Orthodox. With Love and Kisses We kiss stuff. When we first come into the church, we kiss the icons Jesus on the feet and other saints on the hands, ideally. When we talk about "venerating" something we usually mean crossing ourselves and kissing it. We kiss each other before we take communion "Greet one another with a kiss of love," 1 Peter 5: In Orthodoxy different cultures are at play: Greeks and Arabs kiss on two cheeks, and Slavs come back again for a third. Follow the lead of those around you and try not to bump your nose. The usual greeting is "Christ is in our midst" and response, "He is and shall be. The greeting is not the one familiar to Episcopalians, "The peace of the Lord be with you.

Chatting and fellowship is for later. Blessed bread and consecrated bread. Only Orthodox may take communion, but anyone may have some of the blessed bread. In the preparation service before the Liturgy, the priest cuts out a section of the seal and sets it aside; it is called the "Lamb". The rest of the bread is cut up and placed in a large basket, and blessed by the priest. During the eucharistic prayer, the Lamb is consecrated to be the Body of Christ, and the chalice of wine is consecrated as His Blood. When we receive communion, we file up to the priest, standing and opening our mouths wide while he gives us a fragment of the wine-soaked bread from a golden spoon. He also prays over us, calling us by our first name or the saint-name which we chose when we were baptized or chrismated received into the church by anointing with blessed oil. As we file past the priest, we come to an altar boy holding the basket of blessed bread. People will take portions for themselves and for visitors and non-Orthodox friends around them. If someone hands you a piece of blessed bread, do not panic; it is not the eucharistic Body. It is a sign of fellowship. Visitors are sometimes offended that they are not allowed to receive communion. Orthodox believe that receiving communion is broader than me-and-Jesus; it acknowledges faith in historic Orthodox doctrine, obedience to a particular Orthodox bishop, and a commitment to a particular Orthodox worshipping community. An analogy could be to reserving marital relations until after the wedding. We also handle the Eucharist with more gravity than many denominations do, further explaining why we guard it from common access. We believe it is truly the Body and Blood of Christ. We ourselves do not receive communion unless we are making regular confession of our sins to a priest and are at peace with other communicants. We fast from all food and drink--yes, even a morning cup of coffee--from midnight the night before communion. This leads to the general topic of fasting. When newcomers learn of the Orthodox practice, their usual reaction is, "You must be kidding. Altogether this adds up to nearly half the year. Here, as elsewhere, expect great variation. With the counsel of their priest, people decide to what extent they can keep these fasts, both physically and spiritually--attempting too much rigor too soon breeds frustration and defeat. John Chrysostom says in his beloved Paschal sermon, everyone is welcomed to the feast whether they fasted or not: Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. In consultation with your priest as your spiritual doctor, you can arrive at a fasting schedule that will stretch but not break you. Next year you may be ready for more. In fact, as time goes by, and as they experience the camaraderie of fasting together with a loving community, most people discover they start relishing the challenge. There is no complete confession-prayer in the Liturgy. Orthodox are expected to be making regular, private confession to their priest. The role of the pastor is much more that of a spiritual father than it is in other denominations. He is not called by his first name alone, but referred to as "Father Firstname. If we are saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and you from force of habit add, "and the Son," you will be alone. The "filioque" was added to the Creed some six hundred years after it was written, and we adhere to the original. About seventy-five percent of the service is congregational singing. Traditionally, Orthodox use no instruments, although some churches will have organs. Usually a small choir leads the people in a capella harmony, with the level of congregational response varying from parish to parish. The style of music varies as well, from very Oriental-sounding solo chant in an Arabic church to more Western-sounding four-part harmony in a Russian church, with lots of variation in between. This constant singing is a little overwhelming at first; it feels like getting on the first step of an escalator and being carried along in a rush until you step off ninety minutes later. It has been fairly said that the liturgy is one continuous song. Relatively little changes from Sunday to Sunday; the same prayers and hymns appear in the same places, and before long you know it by heart. Then you fall into the presence of God in a way you never can when flipping from prayer book to bulletin to hymnal. Is there a concise way to say something? Can extra adjectives be deleted? Can the briskest, most pointed prose be boiled down one more time to a more refined level? In Orthodox worship, more is always more, in every area including prayer. When the priest or deacon intones, "Let us complete our prayer to the Lord," expect to still be standing there fifteen minutes later. The original liturgy lasted something over five hours; those people must have been on fire for God. The Liturgy of St.

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Everyone is welcome to all services. A second collection is taken for the up-keep of the church at all Masses on first Sundays. Regular Mass Schedule.

Related Media If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. In this passage Paul calls for the church of Philippi to be unified. Even though in many ways they were a model church, they were not a perfect church. They had many threats to their unity. In chapter 1, it is clear that they were being persecuted from outside for their faith. Paul said that God had granted them to not only believe in Christ but to suffer for him as well v. In chapter 3, we see that there were false teachers teaching circumcision v. In chapter 4, two women were fighting in the church possibly causing it to divide into factions v. Though a model church, the Philippians had many threats to their unity. William Barclay perceptively observed this: There is a sense in which that is the danger of every healthy church. It is when people are really in earnest, when their beliefs really matter to them, that they are apt to get up against each other. The greater their enthusiasm, the greater the danger that they may collide. It is against that danger Paul wished to safeguard his friends. Paul calls for this church to make his joy completed by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose 2: Essentially he called them to be unified, to be one. The church was caring for Greek widows and Hebrew widows, but while distributing the food, the Greek widows were being left out. Amongst the Roman Christians, there were divisions over preference Romans Some preferred to worship on Sunday, and others practiced the Sabbath day. Some ate only vegetables, and others ate everything. These differences created division. The Corinthian church was divided over the personalities and teaching gifts of their greatest teachers 1: Similarly, each church today has the potential of disunity over such things as ethnic culture, church culture, doctrinal differences, personality differences, and personal preferences. Disunity is something the church must be aware of and wisely labor against. Moreover, it must be noted that unity does not mean conformity. The world wants us to be all the same. We should all have the same body type, the same skin, the same education, the same type of clothes, etc. However, in the church and the world for that matter God made everybody different with different roles, and these differences make the body of Christ beautiful. The eye needs the hand, and the hand needs the feet. We give honor to the hidden parts like the heart and liver 1 Cor Unity does not mean that everybody is the same but that we honor our differences and work together despite our differences. Are there any conflicts in your life with family, peers, co-workers, or church members? How can we learn to walk in unity, especially in the body of Christ? In this text we will consider several ways to maintain unity in the body of Christ. How can the church and its members walk in the unity God called us to according to Philippians 2: To Be Unified, Christians Must Focus on the Right Resources If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion Philippians 2: We have different backgrounds, different styles of worship, and we enjoy different things. We also express ourselves differently. How in the world can we be unified? He describes four resources which are both commonalities of each Christian and empowerments for unity. This really is not a question but a confirmation. Most of our close relationships are based on commonalities—what we share in common. With relatives, it may be the blood we share in common. With friends, it may be a common ethnicity or hobby. These commonalities help us be unified. However, what we share in common as Christians is even greater than any commonality we could share with the world. But God has not just given us these as commonalities but also as empowerments. The grace to be unified has been given by God, and we must appropriate and access it. Since God has given us all these resources—all these supernatural empowerments—we should be a unified church. What are the resources God has given the church for unity? God has given us encouragement in Christ. One of the commonalities we have as believers is encouragement from our relationship with Christ. The word

represents exactly what we see in the Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke The Samaritan comes alongside the person hurting, anoints his wounds, puts him in a hotel, and pays for his stay. He does whatever is needed to help. Christ does the same with us. This is one of the reasons we can be unified. We can be unified because we have in common the same friend, the same comforter, the same encourager. For each of us, Christ comes alongside to walk us through the pains and the struggles of life. Where ever you go, Christ goes with you. We have the same person to come to in order to find grace and mercy in time of need. Listen to what the writer of Hebrews said about Christ. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. He understands being alone. In the hour of his greatest need, his family and friends left him. He knows being hungry. He knows being tired. He knows being tempted by the devil, and yet, he is without sin. Surely, we each have great encouragement in Christ. This commonality is a motivation for us to be unified. But again, this is not just a commonality; it is also an empowerment for unity. Christ could still love his disciples who failed him. He could love those who mocked and accused him. He could forgive them. And he can encourage us to do the same when we suffer. We can be unified because we have someone who has been through it all before us, and he comes alongside us to help us. Yes, we can be unified because we have the help of Christ. You can love your roommate, your parent, and your church because of the help and encouragement of Christ. He comes alongside you to do so. What else has God given us for unity? For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This is a tremendous consolation that the world does not know. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. Fear and anxiety are often the driving forces behind conflict. We fear being rejected. We fear not being loved. We fear people talking about us. We fear losing things important to us, and this encourages us to think bad thoughts about others and sometimes to even fight with them. Many of us stay awake at night rehearsing conflict and cultivating anxieties. Love drives away those fears. With the Ephesians, Paul actually prays for them to have power to grasp this love. Look at what he prays: And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Fear of rejection and fear of being hurt not only cause us to fight but keep us from seeking to restore relationships. God has given us fellowship with the Spirit.

Chapter 9 : How to Maintain Unity in the Church | theinnatdunvilla.com

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints [in Ephesus], the faithful in Christ Jesus. 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! 3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ. 4 For he.

Now it is important that we take up the equally valid matter of the place of the church, i. You will recognize instantly that this whole matter of the place of the church in the world today is a very confused issue. On one hand we are being told that the job of the church is to forget doctrinal preaching and desire for individual salvation and involve itself in the problems of human suffering and injustice. The church, they say, belongs in the vanguard of the struggle for social justice and the reason Christianity is shunned by the world is because Christians will not dirty their hands or risk their reputations. We are being told that Christians can only show their faith as Christians if they are willing to carry a placard in Alabama, risk jail in some picket line, join the fight for land reform, or the abolition of laws against homosexuality and adultery. We are told that the church should be speaking to all the issues of life today and should be concerned about problems of metropolitan government, mass transportation, suburban segregation, equal representation in legislatures, and other problems that confront our modern world. On the other side there is an equally vocal group which says the job of the church is to thunder against evil from the pulpit, to denounce Communism, and anti-Americanism, and, thus preserve, if possible, the blessings of bourgeois materialism for Christians to enjoy to the full. They say we must attack with scorching language anyone who dares to raise questions about the Bible, or threaten the special privileges of Christians in modern society. The theme of this group seems to be, "Come weal or come woe, the status is quo. In the midst of this kind of confusion the letter to the Ephesians calls us back to reality. In this letter we have a declaration of the intention of God in forming the church, and a clarifying of its purpose and its ministry -- not only in the 1st century but in the 20th as well. As always, when we come to the Scriptures we are returning to the fundamental issue of any matter, to basic, essential, underlying truth from which we can work our way out again to the application of these things in every area of life. It is so necessary that we get our direction from the revelation of God in Scripture. I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This whole passage is a greatly condensed summary of the reason why the church exists and a statement of what its function should be. But before we consider this more closely, we must see how the apostle describes himself in presenting this whole matter: He calls himself "a prisoner for the Lord," or a prisoner of the Lord. Remember that this letter to the Ephesians was written from the city of Rome where Paul was awaiting trial before the emperor on charges of inciting riots, with the implication even of treason against the emperor himself. These charges had been preferred against him by the Jews in Jerusalem at the time of the seizure of Paul in that dramatic encounter he had with the Jewish leaders in the city of Jerusalem. After languishing for two years as a prisoner in Caesarea, he had been sent at last on a very perilous sea voyage which ended in shipwreck, but, at last, he arrived at Rome. There he lived in a home, chained to a Roman guard day and night. He was the personal prisoner of Nero, but he never refers to himself as the prisoner of Caesar. He saw beyond the chains, and the guard, and the imperial processes of justice, to the controlling hand of Jesus Christ behind all things. He did not fret about being in prison, being chained, being limited. Read his letter to the Philippians, written in this prison relationship, and you will find it is filled with joy and triumph and the assurance that all is well, for the apostle looked behind the visible things to the invisible things. Because that is where ultimate answers lie, that is where truth is found, there is the explanation behind all visible things. So he does not say, I am the prisoner of Caesar. To say "the prisoner of Caesar" would be a superficial explanation, and Paul is never superficial. Behind Caesar is Christ. The Lord Jesus himself reflected this same attitude when he stood before Pilate. Pilate said to him, "Do you not know that I have the power to crucify you? This has a direct bearing upon the issue Paul is discussing in this passage, the purpose of the church. The whole explanation for the confusion about the church that exists so widely today is that Christians have been

looking at the things that are seen instead of the things that are unseen. Here is our human race, with suffering and need obvious everywhere. Hate and bigotry abounds in our world. Injustice prevails and misery exists everywhere you turn. And over here is a group of people, the church, who talk about love, compassion, sympathy and help. The obvious answer to human need is to let this group of people that are so concerned in this area get to work and do something about it. Let them meet the need, directly and positively. It sounds so logical, so consistent, so practical. But that is because we are so superficial. We only see the things that are visible. In our shallow concern for externals we treat symptoms and not causes, and, therefore, we apply superficial remedies that work only for the moment -- if they work at all -- and then the situation is as bad again. Well, what is the answer of the apostle to this? What does he say the church should do in the face of the desperate demands of human need? His answer is, "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called. He means, "Obey your orders! Follow the divine strategy, not the obvious shallow counsel of men. The church is not expected to devise its own strategy or to set its own goal. The church is not an independent organization existing by means of its own strength, as human organizations do. One can never understand this body that exists in human society unless you view it as more than an organization. Think of the figures the apostle uses for the church in this very letter: The church, he says, is an army under the command of a king, and an army that will not obey its leader is useless as a fighting force. The church is a body under the control of the head, and what a tragedy it is when the human body refuses to respond to the direction of the head. The church, he says, is a temple for the exclusive habitation and use of a Person who dwells within, who has the right to do with that habitation as he wills. So this is the word of the apostle to us: Obey the directions of the Head. We are not left in doubt as to what that calling is. It is here in the first three chapters of this letter and scattered in many other places in the New Testament. The first three chapters of this letter are devoted to the task of describing what Christians have in Christ, as compared with their former condition in darkness and defeat in the kingdom of Satan, and to what end and purpose this is all designed. This is always the structure of a Pauline letter. He begins with telling people the truth the truth is nothing but what we call doctrine ; but is that which forms underlying foundations. How foolish it is to start with anything but truth. There are those today who tell us that we should start with anything but truth. There are those today who tell us that we should start with some kind of dream, an idea, whether it be true or not; and, building on that illusion, we are to work out practical solutions to our problems. The apostle never does this, he starts with the truth, the truth as it is, things as they really are. He calls us back to reality. That is the glory of Christianity: It is a setting forth of things as they actually exist. In these first three chapters you have a marvelous statement of reality. Read these chapters through. It simply exhausts human language to set forth the great realities that the Christian and the church, as a body of Christians, possess in Jesus Christ. In these three chapters there are several very clear statements of the purpose of the church, not merely its purpose in eternity, some day, but its purpose in time, right now. If we want to know what that purpose is let us observe these statements. Let me quickly run through these first three chapters and point out some of these statements. The church was planned long before the world was made], that we should be holy and blameless before him. We are to be a moral example to the world, reflecting the character of Jesus Christ. Just recently I read of two American men who were riding on a train in Britain. As you know, the English trains have compartments where six or seven people can be seated. In the compartment with these two men was a very distinguished looking gentlemen. The two Americans were quietly discussing this gentleman among themselves. In a very low tone one of them said, "I would wager money that he is the Archbishop of Canterbury. What the blank difference does it make to you? We are designed to do so, to be "holy and blameless before him. We who first hoped in Christ, we Christians, have been destined and appointed here is our calling to live for the praise of his glory. The first job of the church is not the welfare of men, important as that may be, and as it definitely enters into the picture. But that is not the first thing. The first thing is that we may live to the praise and the glory of God. As the New English Bible puts it, we "should cause his glory to be praised," Ephesians 1: It is the story of what God is and does. The problem with this world is that it does not know God. It has no knowledge of him. In all its seeking and wanderings, its endeavors to discover truth, it does not know God. But the glory of God is to reveal the himself, to show what he is like, and the story of what God is and does is the glory of God. You have that in

Second Corinthians where the apostle is commenting on this very fact. He says, For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. In this same chapter, the fourth verse confirms this, In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. He lives in his people.