

agony. The gospel for the second Sunday after Easter is that which is at the heart of the prayers for Unity: 'Ego sum pastor bonus: et cognosco meas, et cognoscunt me meae. . . . Et alias oves habeo quae non sunt ex hoc ovili: et illas oportet me adducere, et vocem meam audient, et fiet unum ovile, et unus pastor.' When the hour of his Passion was very near, our Lord prayed, 'That they may be one'.

That was the prayer—that the ancient schism should be healed and mutual charity restored—that was offered by Suor Gabriella, not only with her lips and in her heart but with her very life; with the many years of ardent vitality that, humanly speaking, seemed secured to her. She died as the great darkness of war was falling upon the nations, when peace and unity appeared almost beyond hope, when her own country of Italy and the England for which she so fervently interceded were to be divided awhile in enmity.

What her oblation may, in God's mercy, help to achieve is known only to God's wisdom; but from thousands outside the flock of St Peter, yet seeking the same pastures, rises continually the prayer of the Good Shepherd, 'That they may be one'.



THE UNITY OCTAVE

BY

A DISCALCED CARMELITE



IN the eve of the feast of St Peter's Chair at Rome, when the octave of prayers for Christian unity begins, I am reminded of our Lord's prayer, recorded only by St John, perhaps because he was leaning on his Master's breast at the last Supper, where he could hear every word. That strange, mystic prayer asked for a stupendous privilege for his loved ones. And these loved ones were not only the apostles, for our Lord said that he prayed not only for these, but 'for them also who through their word, shall believe in me'. And the prayer was this:

'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.'

Today, the words 'mystic', 'divine union', 'spiritual marriage' and others of the same kind are spoken with a certain hesitancy, as though there might be some doubt concerning their authenticity.

Yet our Lord actually prayed that his Father and he should be so closely united with each of his followers, that they and he and his Father should be *one*, living by one life, the God-life, animated by one spirit, the Holy Spirit, so that a mystical union, a marriage, and a conjugal love should exist between the human soul and the triune God.

It is a great mystery how such a union can be effected, but if we truly believe in Jesus Christ, we take it from his lips, that his desire and prayer are not fantastic imaginings but that they place before us something attainable, something very clearly defined, and so clearly to be seen by all that the 'world' is to be drawn to the feet of Christ by the effects of divine union apparent in his friends.

Among the early Christians this transforming union of the soul with God appeared as a normal state. There was no fear of delusion because the change wrought was so great, and it was a spiritual change effected from within by some obviously powerful agent. 'He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit' with him, and no one would dare to pretend that he had attained to that holy union unless he or she were a revelation of the Christian virtues. The presence of God in souls was recognised by 'the fruits of the Spirit' and above everything else by an all-embracing charity. St Paul plainly says, 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal', that is, something empty of God. And he enumerated all the other good works which would be worthless without the seasoning of charity.

It was said of the early Christians: 'See how these Christians love one another!' Can we not imagine them? Their happy faces alight with the joy of the new message. The blessed Trinity was in each of them so that in ministering to one another they were ministering to him whom they loved so well as to be willing to die for him. The sacraments given by Jesus Christ were the channels of this new life.

'That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' Each Christian was to be so aflame with God that he or she would be a missionary by *being* rather than by *doing*. In the home, at the court, passing along the streets, the gentle, humble, modest demeanour, the ready smile, the quick sympathy, the complete freedom from 'side', the joyous, holy aspect of the Christian was to speak to the world of the truth of the Incarnation: 'that the world may believe that thou hast sent me'. Each Christian, indeed, was to be a fresh, incarnate manifestation of the word of God, carrying on the work of Jesus and Mary, filling up 'what was wanting to the sufferings of Christ', pouring out divine love and

influence wherever he or she might be found. This was to be their most convincing apostolate, the true witness to 'Emmanuel, God with us'.

Today, as we pass along the streets, as we survey the crowd, how seldom do we see a face that compels us to say, 'God is in that soul'. The light and joy of divine union which our Lord prayed might be a living witness to his divine indwelling in souls are the possession of very few, and lives are sad and drab and drag on in mortal dullness because the romance of the Gospel message is not realised in them. All the while Jesus, Mary's gift to us, with his Father and the Holy Spirit are desiring to take possession of each soul and to transform it. 'We will come unto him and we will make our abode with him.' If every Catholic would bear witness to the truth in the way thus, so inadequately, described, seeking to radiate the *reality* of the Faith, many of those for whom we pray during the octave and at other times would indeed be converted and would then gladly join their prayers to ours for the conversion of 'our separated brethren' the world over.



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AN APPEAL

Please help me to start a Catholic recreation-cum-reading room in the centre of our Mission. The aim is to help Catholics acquire a deeper knowledge of our religion, and also to introduce non-Catholics to the beauty of Catholicism. About £175 is needed to adapt and furnish an existing room. The monthly recurring expenditure will be about £7. Cash donations will be preferred for procuring Urdu books and literature, but gifts of English books and magazines will also be welcome.—Rev. A. P. NORONHA, O.P.,

BISHOP'S HOUSE,

MULTAN CANTT (PAKISTAN).