

## WEEK OF CHRISTIAN UNITY: HEALING OF OUR BROKENNESS

*Mark 3:7-12*

In this week of Christian Unity today's gospel reading gives us a perspective of Jesus with people coming to him, not just from Judea and Galilee, but from much further afield, from Idumea, Transjordan, Tyre and Sidon. This offers us an opportunity to reflect on what unites us.

This great and diverse crowd had one thing in common; *they were all afflicted in some way*.

The gospel reading says, *'all who were afflicted in any way were crowding forward to touch him'*.

It is our brokenness that unites us in this week of Christian Unity. We have to own the tradition we come from. Our Lord is asking us not to do away with our tradition. But he wants to teach us and heal those barriers that prevent us from enriching one another. In this week we make the extra effort to encounter, pray and work together with different Christian denominations knowing that he can heal our brokenness. What unites us is our need for him. We do not even come to him with the same brokenness and what we seek is not a healing into uniformity but a healing that will enable us to learn from each other. After healing, differences will become strong traits to bring inter-denominational nourishment. We are talking here about unity that affirms the richness of our adversity. You cannot erase or swallow up the traits of those who have come from Idumea and Transjordan.

The prayer of Our Lord that *'we may be one'* is not a call to uniformity but a call to recognising the strength of each other. There is no need to be exactly the same. We need to learn from the human body which is a single organism but its external members differ even if some are more similar to each other than others. Moreover, we all profess *"one holy catholic and apostolic Church"* but do we believe it and acknowledge that it has already been accomplished? If it has been accomplished each tradition is called to make its own worthy contribution to the Christian narrative. After all, it takes more than one spice or one herb to season a dish. Paul's writing in I Corinthians 12 (:12-27) points out something that is very valuable. There should be no arrogance because each part of the body has its unique role to play in the body, each church has its unique part to play in the Body of Christ, be it in theology, liturgy, the preservation or the reform of tradition or preaching, etc...

The question at hand is how we can then push our own traditions and our own members towards more openness, interest and dialogue. What tools have we at our disposal? Which gifts could we employ? The one brokenness we need to reflect on during this week of Christian Unity is denominational pride. This, more often than not, takes the upper-hand. This is what needs healing. Far too often our own preconceived ideas, our own creeds and confessions triumph the Scriptures. These are the brokenness we need to bring to Jesus in this week. Once these crumble, there will be a visible unity of sharing our diversity knowing that indeed there's *"...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..."* (Eph. 4:5-6a).