

Have but One Eucharist

by Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius emphasizes the importance of unity in the Church, encouraging believers to have one faith, one preaching, and one Eucharist.

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 4:3, Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:20, Colossians 3:22, 1 Timothy 5:3, 1 Timothy 5:8

Topics: "Church Unity", "Christian Living"

Description

Ignatius of Antioch emphasizes the importance of unity in faith and practice within the Church, highlighting the oneness of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the singular nature of baptism, preaching, and the Church itself. He instructs different groups within the Church, such as wives, children, servants, and masters, on their respective roles and responsibilities in living out their faith. Ignatius encourages purity, obedience, love, and harmony among believers, drawing examples from various biblical figures known for their faithfulness and dedication to God.

Transcript

I have confidence of you in the Lord, that ye will be of no other mind. Wherefore I write boldly to your love, which is worthy of God, and exhort you to have but one faith, and one [kind of] preaching, and one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ; and His blood which was shed for us is one; one loaf also is broken to all [the communicants], and one cup is distributed among them all: there is but one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants. Since, also, there is but one unbegotten Being, God, even the Father; and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of truth; and also one preaching, and one faith, and one baptism; and one Church which the holy apostles established from one end of the earth to the other by the blood of Christ, and by their own sweat and toil; it behoves you also, therefore, as "a peculiar people, and a holy nation," to perform all things with harmony in Christ.

Wives, be ye subject to your husbands in the fear of God; and ye virgins, to Christ in purity, not counting marriage an abomination, but desiring that which is better, not for the reproach of wedlock, but for the sake of meditating on the law. Children, obey your parents, and have an affection for them, as workers together with God for your birth [into the world]. Servants, be subject to your masters in God, that ye may be the freed-men of Christ. Husbands, love your wives, as fellow-servants of God, as your own body, as the partners of your life, and your co-adjutors in the procreation of children. Virgins, have Christ alone

before your eyes, and His Father in your prayers, being enlightened by the Spirit. May I have pleasure in your purity, as that of Elijah, or as of Joshua the son of Nun, as of Melchizedek, or as of Elisha, as of Jeremiah, or as of John the Baptist, as of the beloved disciple, as of Timothy, as of Titus, as of Evodius, as of Clement, who departed this life in [perfect] chastity, Not, however, that I blame the other blessed [saints] because they entered into the married state, of which I have just spoken. For I pray that, being found worthy of God, I may be found at their feet in the kingdom, as at the feet of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; as of Joseph, and Isaiah, and the rest of the prophets; as of Peter, and Paul, and the rest of the apostles, that were married men. For they entered into these marriages not for the sake of appetite, but out of regard for the propagation of mankind. Fathers, "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and teach them the holy Scriptures, and also trades, that they may not indulge in idleness. Now [the Scripture] says, "A righteous father educates [his children] well; his heart shall rejoice in a wise son."

Masters, be gentle towards your servants, as holy Job has taught you; for there is one nature, and one family of mankind. For "in Christ there is neither bond nor free." Let governors be obedient to Caesar; soldiers to those that command them; deacons to the presbyters, as to high-priests; the presbyters, and deacons, and the rest of the clergy, together with all the people, and the soldiers, and the governors, and Caesar [himself], to the bishop; the bishop to Christ, even as Christ to the Father. And thus unity is preserved throughout. Let not the widows be wanderers about, nor fond of dainties, nor gadders from house to house; but let them be like Judith, noted for her seriousness; and like Anna, eminent for her sobriety. I do not ordain these things as an apostle: for "who am I, or what is my father's house," that I should pretend to be equal in honour to them? But as your "fellow-soldier," I hold the position of one who [simply] admonishes you.

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