

Public Policy Committee
Diocese of Rochester
2012 Education Priority:

Common Good: We Are One in the Body of Christ

Opening Prayer

Sign of the Cross

Reading from Acts of the Apostles, 2:42-47, gives a glimpse of the early Christian community:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. A reverent fear overtook them all, for many wonders and signs were performed by the apostles. Those who believe shared all things in common; they would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each one's need. They went to the temple area together every day, while in their homes they broke bread. With exultant and sincere hearts they took their meals in common, praising God and winning the approval of all the people."



(Brief reflections:)

These words paint a snapshot of what was important for the early Christians: including common prayer, sharing their meals and sharing of their resources so that the needs of each person were met.

We began our prayer with the sign of the cross, reminding us that the God we worship is a community of persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. We are created in the image of God who is a community of persons.

Let us Pray

Loving God, we come together as the early Christians did, eager to live our faith in you in difficult circumstances. Many in our world are looking for work, others are struggling with poverty and inadequate income. Some in our community are doing very well. We pray that your Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding may be with us as we look at these difficult issues. And like your Son, Jesus, may we find a way to serve those who are hurting and in need. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Closing Prayer

The Acts of the Apostles has a second description of the early Christian community which is very similar to the one we hear in the opening prayer. This reading is from chapter 4 verses 32-35.

"Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, and no claimed private ownership of any possession, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need."

(Brief Reflection:)

Pope Benedict XVI offered this commentary on the reading: "As the Church grew, this radical form of material communion could not in fact be preserved. But its essential core remained: within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life" (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 20)

For a concluding prayer invite members of the group to name the people they would like to remember in prayer, such as those who are looking for work, the sick, the poor.....

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[after members have mentioned their intentions, the leader offers this prayer:]

Loving God, we are grateful for this time we have spent together exploring how our faith connects with the realities of our world. We pray that we may be a faithful reflection of your Good News in the world by the way we gather in prayer and by the way we live as a community that cares for each person. Amen