

Families Living the Gospel

Though Many, One: PART 2

Last week, I shared that I am feeling the unrest of our nation deep in my soul and that the only place where I find peace is in the arms of Christ. Even though there is so much fighting and polarization happening all around me, I can still see glimmers of hope. These moments of hope keep me going, they sweep away the clouds of despair and act as a lighthouse in the darkness.

I found one of these moments of hope in an article I read online from OSV Newsweekly. The article, published on June 13, 2018 and written by Gretchen R. Crowe, titled “Though Many, One: Where to go from here?” describes a conference she attended at Georgetown University, called ‘Though Many, One: Overcoming Polarization through Catholic Social Thought’. Crowe describes the conference as “an intense, exhausting and exhilarating exercise in finding common ground among those not always adept at seeking it. The more than 80 Catholic leaders who attended the invitation-only event spanned the progressive and conservative wings of the Church, bringing just enough perspectives and opinions to make things interesting. But from the outset, the event’s co-conveners, made it clear that the event would not center on matters of intra-Church debate. Rather, participants were given the lofty goal of exploring how the principles of Catholic social thought can help bridge ideological, political, racial and ecclesial divides in the Church, thus enabling more effective evangelization and an advancement of the common good in the Church and in society.”

Just that this conference happened at all is a good sign and a major step. Crowe agrees and says, “As the stakes in the Church grow ever higher, few events have ever seemed more needed. American Catholics are highly polarized along political lines, and the Church finds itself not immune from the challenge of racism. **Amid this turmoil, Catholics have a choice: to work at odds with one another or to work together.** In the name of evangelization and a common witness to the world, the recent convening encouraged the latter. Participants were reminded that, despite varied backgrounds and perspectives, Catholics have far more in common than not. Indeed, some of the most effective moments of the event took place during the daily celebration of the Eucharist or the Penance Service. It is difficult to maintain a hardness of heart when exchanging the sign of peace. Such exchanges illustrated the other goals of the convening — those of developing relationships, modeling dialogue, advancing Pope Francis’ “Joy of the Gospel” and building common ground and unity.”

How is Jesus calling you to work with your fellow Catholics to build common ground, develop relationships, model civil dialogue, and be an example of unity? Is there anything you can change in your

attitude towards those who look different or believe something different than you? How can you be a witness to the fact that we everyone, all of us, are made in the image and likeness of God?

Next week I will share the conclusion of Gretchen Crowe's article where she reports on how the more true we are to real Catholic social and moral teaching the closer we can get to that common ground. The more Catholic we are, the more good we can do.

Stay tuned, stay hopeful.

-Katie Neu, Director of Lifelong Faith Formation

July 15, 2018