



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



Our Lady of Sorrows
Mass with Assumption Seminary Community
September 15, 2014

We come together again to celebrate the holy sacrifice of Mass. We live anew the once and eternal offering of Calvary, and in a special way today we celebrate our Blessed Mother's role on the hill of the Cross. She stood there keeping vigil with the crucified Lord, and in her mourning, her suffering Son offered her comfort. He spoke to his Mother and to the disciple whom he loved: "Woman, behold, your son... Behold, your mother." From the Cross, our Lord showed us that the remedy for the sufferings of this world is unity through the power of his sacrifice.

This is the same theme echoed in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. He reminds us of what we are doing here in Mass. We take bread, which becomes Christ's Body given for us, and we take the wine, which becomes the new covenant in his Blood. So that, "as often as [we] eat this bread and drink the cup, [we] proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." However, this unity in the Body of Christ was being damaged by human weakness. Some in the community of Corinth – those who were wealthier and did not have to work all day – were arriving early, and eating their own supper. They were getting drunk and filling themselves up, so that there was nothing left for those who came later. As awful as it was that people were getting drunk and acting like the Lord's Supper was some sort of social party, St. Paul reprimands the Corinthians for the divisions among them at the Lord's Supper. This was even more scandalous to

him. He tells them that their gatherings for Mass “are doing more harm than good” in the way they “show contempt for the Church of God.”

How could that community celebrate communion in the Body and Blood of Christ if they did not foster charity and unity amongst themselves? This question is important for us here in this community. Are there divisions among you, my brothers? Are there factions? Certainly, everyone is different, likes different things, and has different habits and tastes. But this is not the division I’m talking about. The division that turns the Mass into a mockery is when we do not foster fraternal love for each other. If we dare to come forward to enter into communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, then we must strive to love and honor our brother with whom we have the most difficulty. We must humble ourselves.

Now it is easy to blame the divisions on someone else – and surely everyone has their part to play in making divisions – but we cannot control anyone but ourselves. Not too long ago we had the reading about removing the plank from our own eye before telling our brother about their splinter, remember? My brothers, this is not a small consideration, this is at the heart of our worship of God – here at its source and summit. This is why Pope Francis has been so serious about helping us to stop dividing communities with gossip. In a homily in February he told us: “The sin of defamation had been removed from the Ten Commandments and yet to speak evil of a person is still a sin. Why is speaking ill of another a sin? Because there is hatred in my heart, aversion, not love.” The Holy Father has also been trying to get us to remember that fraternal correction must be done in love. In another homily he said: “You cannot reprimand a person without love and charity. [Just like] you cannot perform surgery without anesthesia: you cannot, because the patient will die from the pain.”

So, my brother seminarians, today hear the call of Our Lady of Sorrows. She knows the pain which sin and division causes in our world. That pain pierced her heart even as it was laid upon her Son for our redemption. Ask Our Lady to open your heart and your life to a better way of being. May there be no divisions or factions among you, so that we may participate worthily at this Holy Mass, and in our communion “proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again” (Ps). May we make our petition to our

Mother, Our Lady of Sorrows, in the words of that centuries-old hymn, the Stabat Mater:
“O sweet Mother, font of love, touch my spirit from above. Make my heart with yours
accord.”