

## Spiritual Family (4)

### *How to spiritually grow together as members of one body*

We need to learn how the Church lives together the divine calendar, the seasons of salvation, one year after the other, receiving renewed spiritual experiences that add to the life of each person.

#### **Readings**

*'For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ...If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be' (1Corinthians 12: 12, 15 – 19).*

*'For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another' (Romans 12: 4 – 6*

*'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread' (1Corinthians 10: 16, 17).*

In the above references, we read the biblical basis related to the body of Christ and its members. We experience the same thing in our physical life;

each one of us has different members: hands, feet, eyes, etc., where each member has a function and a role. Is it possible that the members of the body decide to stop functioning and leave the head to do everything? If this was the case, the head will be saying things but nothing will be happening. Imagine the head telling the feet that today we need to do so and so, while the feet are just listening but refraining from doing anything. Will anything be achieved? The end result will be that the whole body will be in a stand still mode.

Similarly, on the spiritual level, we can be saying things that need to be done while the members of the body are not functioning or carrying out their roles. The result will be that there will be no actual movement; the body will be in the stand still mode.

What about the state and health of the hands and the feet? What about the nervous system? Is the nervous system transmitting correctly to the organs? What about the connections and the joints between one member and the other? The foot may be healthy; the muscles of the foot may be strong; yet, the connecting nerve may be damaged. If the connecting organ is not linking the feet to the head, the feet cannot move. The person may understand what it needs to do; but the feet remain incapable of carrying it out.

Let us apply this to ourselves on the spiritual level. We are a small unit that has members that are joined together. If each member knew his/her role and carries it out, there will be actual and effective movement.

Yet, let us put the movement aside for now because we first need to grow more in the spirit before reaching the step of moving together in the ministry and work of the Kingdom. When a child is little, he is not given

tasks to do; but, he should be growing. If this child stops to grow, he may eventually die.

Similarly, at the moment, we need to make our membership in the one body function at the level of growing in the spirit until we come to the point where we can make it function for the purpose of moving in ministry.

*What does this mean practically? How can we work together as members of one body for the purpose of our spiritual growth? And how is this linked to the resurrection and the 50 holy days after the resurrection –which we are living together these days?*

If one wants to truly benefit from this season, he would ask the Holy Spirit: *'I desire to receive the blessing and grace of this season; teach me how to benefit from the holy fifties.'* This person would then read the biblical verses related to the resurrection, contemplate on them, and would receive some understanding. In most cases what the person receives will be limited and not very effective. That is why we do not grow much from one year to the other nor receive noticeable spiritual strength; we only witness a limited effect.

*What else can be done so that the person would benefit from this season?*

Each one should bring what he/she received to our meeting, where we share about the resurrection. Each one would share what he had received. What each one says is only a fragment or a piece of a puzzle which, on its own, cannot be nourishing food that leads to growth except to a very limited extent. However, each one who shares adds something. Then, among the members of the body, there will be some who are specialised in or called to connecting and joining things together. On the level of the

physical body, we all know that there are organs that join the members together. Similarly, when each one starts to share what he received about the resurrection, there will be members who will connect this sharing together. We will be functioning together as a body so that we can grow.

Having finished the stage of being formed into a spiritual family, we are now at the stage of making this spiritual family function and operate as members of a body. We cannot stop at the stage of becoming a spiritual family. It will be a mere title if we do not function as such. The true spiritual family according to God's mind is totally different from just that and has many other dimensions.

We will start applying that by sharing and collating our sharing and we will come out with few principles. These principles will be true things that are given to us by the Holy Spirit according to our exact needs and they will make us grow. When all what we received is put together, it becomes a spiritual food/meal that can make us grow.

Before this food was put together, it was only one element of nutrition but it was not nourishing food for growth. This is similar to giving someone a powder of carbohydrates and telling him: 'eat it and it will make you full'. It will actually have no taste nor is it satisfying and it can make him feel sick. But if each one brings the element of nutrition he has and we add them together, put them in the oven, they will come out as a nourishing, filling, and tasty meal.

Isn't this what happens on the material level to nourish our physical body which is dust and to dust it shall return? How much more on the spiritual level do we need to nourish the inner spiritual man who is called for the fellowship of glory and establishing the Kingdom of God?!

We are hindered in our spiritual walk because we are not working or functioning together as members of a body. We often operate and live by our mind and thoughts not by our hearts. We search for some verses about resurrection and then pray with these verses asking God to help us live the resurrected life. Then, we find that this is not working enough; it gives us a very limited result.

*Why is that?*

It is because one does not know his particular need each year or in a given year; only the Holy Spirit who dwells in the person knows. It is written that the Holy Spirit *'intercedes on behalf of the saints according to the will of God'* (Romans 8: 27). He is the One who knows your need at this particular time, this year. This is similar to a mother bringing up her child; she knows the particular food that he needs at each stage. She cannot feed him meat as soon as he is born; otherwise, he would die straight away. She starts by feeding him milk; then, she weans him, giving him certain solid foods made in a certain way that suits his age from one stage to the other as he grows up.

That is exactly what we need on the spiritual level.

If we read and listen to sermons about the resurrection, this will make the understanding in our mind increase. Yet, where is the food of the resurrection that will nourish our spirit? We need to prepare it together. We will not prepare it out of the blue; we will have to prepare it from what we have read and heard. Yet, these will only be the ingredients which we will then need to add together and cook to make a meal.

Practically, each one receives something about the resurrection. Then, we share them together. Then, the members, who are called to be joints, will join them and connect them together. This will make up our special food for this year. We then take it/eat it and start to live by it; and so, it makes us grow.

Not only does this food make us grow spiritually, but it also binds us together more and more.

Thus, we understand that even our spiritual growth is based on our fellowship together.

Then, the following year, we receive a different food which we may wonder where it came from. It is actually the food that we have prepared together. The Holy Spirit will not give us the same food which He had given us the previous year. He will give us something new that suits each individual person and also suits the other brothers and sisters.

Each year we are given something new, a new meal, and we start to experience that we are truly growing spiritually from one year to the other; we are actually changing. This will be experienced on the individual level and on the corporate level.

**Q:** What is the level and extent of sharing which we should bring to the group or the spiritual family?

**A:** What I am explaining here will not happen as such all at once.

If one has learned to have a fellowship with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will make him grow in this family. God requests of this family a certain task. Just to illustrate, let us say that this task requires some members to be doctors, some lawyers, some engineers, some computer experts, and some

trade experts because they are called to do a project that requires all these skills. So, as the Holy Spirit is teaching and leading this family, He will teach them these skills. However, if I were in a different family called to go to battle, for example, I will be learning other skills like carrying and using spiritual weapons. I will be learning in a spiritual military school that has no doctors or engineers or any of the skills needed for the other project.

In the body of Christ, there is this diversity and variety so that the body may be able to carry out a complete inclusive work and tasks in the world. The Church of Christ should be the light of the world.

When we start to apply this, we will start by doing so on a limited level. Yet, we will grow in it year after the other until we become experts in preparing our spiritual food together. We will start to discern what the Holy Spirit is teaching us and when we come together we will sense exactly how to connect together. However, this will need time and training like all true spiritual matters which require training.

Our spiritual life and growth are often hindered because we are cut off from being a spiritual family and being members of one body.

I need to see my inner spiritual growth as one connected chain not as sporadic separate events or experiences.

If I am growing spiritually and then I come to a season like the resurrection, I may wonder how to continue my growth within this season. In fact, the Holy Spirit desires for the human soul to grow in connection with the divine seasons of salvation which were set by the Church through a divine mystery. They were not just set as an economy suitable for the life of the church, but indeed by experience it was found that the Holy Spirit does this

link between the seasons and the spiritual growth of the person. So, I will find that when the season of resurrection comes, it brings me something related to what I am already preoccupied with spiritually. This is what makes our sharing together effective; otherwise, it will be mere ideas and contemplation about resurrection.

In other words, each one should be growing spiritually throughout the year. Each one can be growing in an area different from the other; one can be growing in the area of emotions and another in the area of the mind. Therefore, when the power of resurrection comes to the mind it will be different from when it comes to the emotions. It will come to the mind with light, discerning the human wisdom and its tactics, exposing the calculations of the fallen human wisdom, separating confused matters, and so on. On the other hand, the power of resurrection will come to the emotions with freedom, love, broadness, getting rid of the inner constriction, getting rid of the desire to possess things or people, and so on. Can you see the difference? Yet, both are the result of the work of the power of the resurrection of Christ. There can be other things in the person's life that require something different from the power of resurrection; some things for example may require repentance.

If we are growing spiritually throughout the year, the resurrection will come to me with an inner change and growth different from my brother; yet, putting all together makes our meal complete. However, if there is no inner change or growth, we will receive ideas about resurrection in our mind; we will be sharing words and they will all be very similar providing us with one element of food: potatoes for example; some may be mashed, some boiled, some fried, some baked; yet after all they are all only potatoes!

However, if one brings chicken, the other salad, the other potatoes, and so on, it will be a totally different meal. They will complete each other; each is essential; and there will be a great variety. These together make the feast of resurrection.

This happens when each one is growing in the area that the Holy Spirit is working on in that person's life; and then the resurrection comes to each person in the area he is growing in.

It can be a power that touches one's heart, his circumstances, his ties and bonds, or the darkness of his mind. This will be one's experience of resurrection that year.

This highlights the true variety and the power of resurrection which actually comes in various ways.