

We bow our hearts in prayer: Dear heavenly Father, as You have shown us love in Christ, may He so richly dwell in us that we are fully comforted and able to comfort others with Your forgiveness. Amen.

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We have three major themes all coming together today.

We have the theme for this 19th Sunday after Trinity: Confession and Absolution.

We have the theme for our Catechism Sermon Series: The Duties of the Family.

And today we celebrate as Christian Education Sunday.

Oh, and we had a baptism (at the first service).

These 3 themes and the Baptism fit together relatively nicely,
especially as we meditate on our text for today.

... We read as follows in Jesus' name:

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ^(ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. ^(John 17:17)

St. Paul begins this section by recalling their Baptism, that's what's going on when he calls them **God's chosen ones, holy and beloved.**

They can know that they are chosen by God because they are baptized into His name.

They are holy because He has washed them clean from all their sins, as He washed Ezra today.

They are beloved because the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save them and connected them to Jesus' death and resurrection by their Baptism.

The cleansing from sin in Baptism is also accompanied by Christ's righteousness.

As we put off the old sinful man in us, a new man of righteousness comes forth.

We are dressed, as it were, in Christ's righteousness. So St. Paul admonishes:

Put on then... compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

As Baptized children of God, you already possess these virtues. They are yours in Christ....

But we still fight against our sinful nature and so must also be educated in godly virtues.

This is one of the blessings of having a Classical Christian education,

because not only are the various subjects to be taught for the growth of the intellect,

but the teachers also work to teach and train the children in moral and character development.

Of course, there is a reason for this, St. Paul knows what is in man.

He knows that as long as we live in our corrupted flesh, we will continue to sin against each other.

We will sin against our own family.

Husbands & fathers will selfishly misuse our God-given authority for personal gain & gratification, demanding to be served, rather than using that authority to serve.

We will accidentally or even intentionally at times provoke our children to discouragement.

Wives will struggle to live in godly submission under their sinful husbands.

It is only natural in our sinful condition to justify our disrespect for, or to complain to others about the injustices or selfish decisions husbands sometimes make.

Children will continue to struggle against both the good & bad decisions & judgments of parents.

You will, at times, rebel outwardly with outbursts of anger.

Other times, your rebellion will be more quiet as you simply ignore instructions given you.

And if we do these things against our families, should we be surprised that we also sin against the members of the Church, or against our students, our teachers, and our school mates, our employers, employees, our acquaintances, and next door neighbors, and those neighbors we interact with on social media, but never see face to face?

And so St. Paul also writes that in our Baptized state as forgiven sinners,

one of the ways we demonstrate our **compassionate hearts, humility and patience** is by **bearing with one another**, recognizing this common sinful condition we all share.

To **bear with one another**, he explains: **if** (we could really insert the word "when") **one has a complaint against another, forgiv[e] each other.**

This is not to sweep our conflicts under the rug and pretend they never happened.

This is to address & resolve the strife in a manner befitting our nature as Baptized children of God, **holy and beloved, for as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

This is certainly not what our sinful nature wants to hear.

We naturally keep track of those wrongs sinned against us, holding grudges, waiting for revenge.

But St. Paul points us to our heavenly Father and His loving action toward His rebellious children.

He could have passed judgment on us all, not a single one escaping our just punishments, not only here on earth but also in hell, suffering for all eternity,

and that, not only for our sins against Him, but also the sins against His people, our neighbors.

And yet, He patiently and compassionately, bears with us in our sin.

And what is more, Jesus has borne our sins in a way that only the perfect Son of God could.

He endured it when He became a man Himself.

He endured the selfish abuses of authority and unjust verdicts.

He endured disrespect and complaints of those rebelling against God, those outbursts of anger or the simple ignoring of His law and love.

He took your sins upon Himself in order to suffer the punishment you deserve.

It was His blood that was spilt on the cross as a sin offering for your offenses...

It was His suffering and death that removes your guilt before the Father...

That **blood** now **cleanses** [you] **from all sin.**^{1John1:7}

God has not swept it under the rug. He has addressed it and resolved it... with forgiveness.

That is not only true of my own sin, but also of the sin that others perpetrate against me.

Their sins, too, have been borne and paid for, and so forgiven by God.

We have this perfect example of love, that though He is wronged, yet He bears with us in our sin. His love is given to us, first for our own sake, so that we may have the peace of Christ.

So that when we have sinned against God and our family, or our Church or school family, we may humbly confess our sins, ask for needed forgiveness, and be sure that we have received it, so that our conscience may be clean and we be freed from the burden of guilt, as holy and beloved. Secondly, it is given to us so that we may **put it on** like we put on clean clothes every day.

So that when we are sinned against, in **love, compassion,** and with **humility,** we forgive the offender and pass along the peace of Christ.

These things are not natural to our sinful state, but are gifts of our Baptism.

They must be learned and drilled, and practiced, and done constantly, And for this reason, among others, St. Paul admonishes:

**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

This is the reason why our students memorize Bible passages, the Catechism, and hymns.

It is so that they can live in Christ, and He in them,
fully confident of their forgiveness, living at peace with God,
fully able to bear with the sins of others and to forgive them freely.

...

This past week, I had the privilege to see the reason for Christian education as I sat at the bedside of a dear Christian woman named Jane.

I was not there to hear her tell me of all the things she had learned in math, science and language.

I wasn't there to hear what she had accomplished in her life as a Christian Day school teacher.

I was there because she was dying.

I was there because she wanted to hear her Savior speak to her words of comfort, words she had heard and memorized for so many years.

She wanted to hear the declaration that her sins were forgiven.

She wanted to receive the Lord's body and blood for strength to die a blessed death in the Lord.

She wanted to be reminded of how her Baptism connects her to Jesus' crucifixion & resurrection, and the promise given to her through Baptism – that she will rise to life from death.

I also had the privilege to see the fruit and blessings of a Christian education, started at an early age, as well as continued throughout life, upon Jane's family.

They also sat with me around Jane's deathbed, her six children.

They also wanted to hear the comfort of forgiveness, not only for Jane, but also for themselves.

They joined in singing hymns memorized in their youth.

And when I was not there, they read to her passages often used to comfort and strengthen faith.

This is the real reason for Christian education: that we may have comfort and salvation in Christ.

The other subjects (math, science, language, music, typing, art, and so on),

these are important for learning to prepare one for life in this world and to see the glory of God, but to learn of Jesus and your salvation through Him alone, is important not only for this life, but essential for life in eternity. Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen. Soli Deo Gloria