

Dear Friends in Christ,

*As a body is one though it has many parts,
and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12



 BishopStephenDParkes

 BishopSDParkes

In this issue of the *Southern Cross*, I hope that you will enjoy learning more about our spiritual family – the Diocese of Savannah. As the body of Christ we are made up of many parts and are very diverse, but all of our parts are united together as “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.”

As the Roman Catholic Church, we celebrate our universality but are beautifully knit together around the table of the Lord through our celebration of the Eucharist, which:

...is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1324)

The Eucharist draws us into beauty and mystery. One of my favorite quotes about the Eucharist is from St. John Vianney: *There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.* As we receive the Eucharist, we become a tabernacle and resting place for the Real Presence of Christ. Our thoughts, words and actions – our witness as Catholic Christians – should reflect the light and love of Christ.

Our Church, our world, needs authentic witnesses to bring Christ’s light into darkness, most especially from those who hold public office. I am deeply concerned about government officials who identify as Catholic but whose views (especially when it comes to the preeminent issue of protecting the child in the womb), are not in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Our shared faith should also be expressed in our public witness. I ask you to please pray for Catholics who serve in the public square...that they do not compromise the beliefs of our faith but rather show courage in their promotion of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all persons from conception to natural death. For those who separate their personal belief from their public witness, may they experience the grace of conversion and make a difference in building a culture of life.

Please be assured of my prayers for you, your loved ones and your intentions. I pray that we may be authentic witnesses of our Catholic faith. Thank you for your prayers for me. May we meet each day in our prayers and as the Body of Christ, may we *Rejoice in the Lord always!*

In Christ,

Most Reverend Stephen D. Parkes
Bishop of Savannah