

Holy Oil and Dew

Psalm 133 is one of the Psalms of “ascent”, and specifically deals with the unity of the people of Israel, especially in light of their unity under the throne of David and in their pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem.

The psalmist draws analogies from the “holiness ointment” – the oil used to anoint Aaron as high priest (cf. Exodus 30:22-33) – which runs down from Aaron’s head to his beard and to his collar, as well as from the “dew” which falls on Mt. Hermon in the north. In both cases, unity and brotherly love is a blessing that *comes down* on the people. It makes them holy (cf. the oil) and it is life-giving and refreshing (cf. the dew).

Communion Meditation:

Psalm 133 gave us two different word pictures of the good of brotherly love. It’s like the good oil on the head of Aaron which runs down on his beard and robe. And it’s like the dew of Mt. Hermon. There’s a word that’s used three times in the Hebrew text which means to “go *down*”. In verse 2 of Psalm 133 it is used twice: this unity is like the oil which runs *down* on the beard, and then runs *down* on the collar of Aaron’s robes. But it’s used in verse 3 also, though the ESV translation doesn’t catch it. This unity is like the dew of Hermon which runs *down* on the mountains of Zion.

In other words, very simply, true unity, and true brotherly love can only come *down*. We’ve seen this past week that our nation, our much lauded “melting pot”, has been stirred up yet again. We’ve seen the very *opposite* of brotherly love and unity. But the problem is not people who aren’t trying hard enough. The problem in our nation is not that some people want to get along and some people are hateful: the problem in our nation is that unity can’t be built from the ground up.

Unity must come *down*. This place, the Church, is the place where brothers can dwell together in unity. Not because we’re more skilled at unity, but because our Lord, who prayed just before His death for us to be one, is making it happen. Jesus Christ is enthroned at the right hand of the Father, and is *pouring* the Holy Spirit *down* onto His people. Unity is the will and the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Unity starts here. We need to take it seriously. When we eat together, we feel one with one another. We all eat bread from one loaf. We drink wine that came from one place, even though it’s divided here. In this supper, the Spirit is truly at work with us, knitting our hearts together, and imparting grace, that we might be one.

This feast is for those who would be united together. This feast is for those who have been united to Christ by baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This feast is opened to all those baptized and united to Christ’s Body the Church. This is the joyful, and *unifying*, feast of the People of God.

Word of Commission:

In Jesus Christ's "High Priestly Prayer" of John 17, which has been referenced a few times today, Jesus prays, "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." In our Lord's Day worship, the Lord renews His covenant with us; He sanctifies us through His truth proclaimed; and He unites us in the sacrament of the Eucharist. And He does so, so that we can be sent into the world, as He prayed in John 17. He does so, so that we may be as holy oil, and refreshing dew, running down to the world, and healing the nations.