

*"All for one and one for all!"* We know the phrase, and we might even know that it was the 3 Musketeers who said it.

*"United we stand, divided we fall."* Anybody?

Historians in the crowd might remember that Patrick Henry used this phrase in his last public speech, given in March 1799 when he said dramatically, *"Let us trust God, and our better judgment to set us right... United we stand, divided we fall."*

Or we could go back further: to Matthew 12:25 *"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand"*

And again this morning we hear the same sentiment: *"Lord, help them be one, as you and I are one."*

It seems to be really difficult for the people of God to be united about—well—many things. Some of us want our church services to be full of mystery, quiet and contemplation. Others of us are more comfortable with shouts of "Alleluia!", extemporaneous prayer and a worship band.

Some believe that many people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and that they need to denounce what they think is wrong in their lives before they can be accepted into the body of the faithful. They are constantly on guard for the devil.

Others feel that God's forgiveness and love are endless, and God's forgiveness generous. They might believe that creation is hugely diverse, and that the only way we can really learn about God is through the things that make us different.

But one thing I hope all followers of Christ are certain of: God loves all the people. People in Camden. People in the United States, people all over the world.

We are all one- that is as true today as it was 2000 years ago when Jesus first said it. Jesus is one with God and we are one with Jesus and all of us are one in God.

We are part of one human community.

We are part of the lonely, the marginalized, the oppressed.

We are part of the stranger, the sick, and the homeless.

We are part of the artists, and healers, the scientists, the religious.

And we are part of each other, here at St. Thomas'. When someone is hurting we pray for them. When they graduate, we cheer them.

That's what's community does.

We are no stronger than our weakest member, and no less heroic than the bravest one in our midst.

We are part of a holy Community. It's only natural that we want to be with each other again.

After all, stores are opening up things up again, aren't they? We're "jump starting" the economy.

Did you know that the word economy comes from the Greek word "oikonomia". And did you realize that oikonomia is Greek for "the whole household of God."

To "jumpstart" may be a good thing, be it means realizing that the whole household of God doesn't contain just the fit and healthy, but also the sick and the lonely, the very old and very young.

To care for the whole household of God means understanding that we may be connected, but some of our number may need more care than others.

You see, the economy – the whole household of God— isn't just about our monetary system. It's about thinking about every single person in the household of God.

Here's a parable for you:

A race was being run by 9 special Olympic athletes. At the sound of the starting gun, they all started off-- making their best effort to race each other to the finish line. One young boy stumbled, tumbled to the ground and began to cry. Two of the racers, without hesitation, turned around and began running in the other direction—toward the fallen boy.

The other contestants worked hard to make it to the finish line, while the two who had turned around reached for the boy and helped him to his feet. The all linked arms and together they walked to the finish line. By the time they reached the end, everyone in the stands was standing and cheering for the ones who came in last.

Our world is ONE in ways we cannot yet even imagine.

I am witnessing something during this pandemical experience. I am seeing those who are beginning understand how tied together as a human community the household of God really is—and I'm also seeing those who don't see why it's important to turn around and gather up those who are not able to be a part of the race with the ones who are the strongest.

And I ask myself—"Why should we be so intent on gathering together, until we all can. What is the harm in waiting until we can all cross that threshold together?"

We are one, just as the Father and Jesus and all of us are one.

And all for one, and one for all, right? Amen.