

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

There is enmity on the part of fallen men toward God. Fallen men do not desire to approach God. That's what it means to be fallen. It is not that they are afraid. Fallen men are simply content with their sinfulness.

They see that corruption and death surround them. They sin against others, and they experience the receiving end of sinful behavior. That hurts. They see wars and factions and strife. They experience fear.

But that hurt and fear is never enough to cause fallen man to desire reconciliation with God. Rather they always seek the remedy in other fallen men. They believe that man can self-improve, over time, to ultimately heal himself.

Fallen men will worship inanimate objects. They will pray to sun and moon and wind. They believe in luck and chance. They believe in self. They believe that the odds are better with a slot machine or a lottery ticket than with God. They are dead in their sins. So they cannot seek the true God. That is what it means to be fallen.

That fallen-ness, that fatal flaw that infects the heart of every man born of human father, has been manifest in your life also. For with God is peace and unity. But sin is marked by discord and strife. Disagreement poisons our closest relationships. Selfishness is manifest in our marriages and with our family. Jealousy is present in the best of friendships. We disagree even

with those who share our pews. And death is an ever-present, nagging reminder, an unavoidable consequence of our fallenness.

So what the Apostle Paul describes as he writes to Timothy, quiet and peaceable lives lived in godliness and reverence, is unattainable for sinners. And at the end of lives filled with turmoil and unrest, godlessness and irreverence, sinners meet true suffering, and torment which never ends.

But God, in His mercy, in His superabundant grace, desires all men to be saved. He does this not because we have deserved it. Quite the contrary. He does it out of His great love. In love the One God sent the One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. God became a Man to redeem men. He gave Himself a ransom for all. He gave Himself over to death, that you be purchased unto life.

All things have been delivered to Him by the Father. It is He that wills mere men be forgiven, that you be forgiven, and that you be given the knowledge of God the Father, and the revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The death and corruption of the fall into sin are washed from you when you are Baptized in His Name. Your death is removed, and you are given the life He won. There your transgressions are pardoned, and there you put on Christ. In Christ, your Savior, you are good and acceptable in the sight of God.

And the faith you receive worships only the True God, trusts in only the True God, and believes in only the True God. He is testified to by the Preachers He sends, and through their mouths and hands He makes His heavenly Gifts yours.

That you be one, one without schism or division, one Holy Church, one in love with those who share your faith, one with those who share your pew, the same Christ that died and rose for you gives you His Body and Blood, the saving gifts hidden from the wise and prudent of this world, but revealed even to those newborn in the one true faith. He gives you Communion with God. He makes you one.

In Christ your Mediator you are saved, and you come to a knowledge of the truth. You come to know the Mystery hidden from the foundation of the world – that in Christ Jesus God is reconciling fallen men to Himself.

This reconciliation, this recreating of the right relationship between you and God, gives to you, O Christian, the promise of heaven now, a taste of heaven now, peace with God, and unity with His Holy Church.

In Christ, He gives you the ability to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence, assured of the glorious life in heaven which never ends.

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.