

One Body, Many Parts

by Fr. Mark Pavlik
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Just before Christmas, I sprained my toe. I'm not sure exactly how, but I did. And if that were not bad enough, the day after Christmas, just as it was beginning to heal, I smacked it into the leg of a chair and let's just say that was not helping to heal the pain. For weeks afterward, my toe was a little bit swollen and sore. In the midst of limping around the rectory, I had a new appreciation for how important my toes were. I had never really given much thought to them – they were simply there. But when each little movement caused new pain, I realized how I had taken these “little piggies” for granted.

Each part of the body is important for what it does, and when that part cannot fully function, you truly realize its importance. That is precisely what St. Paul is telling us in the second reading from his first letter to the Corinthians. We are all members of the body of Christ and as various members, each of us has a role to play in the success of the work of the whole body.

The various members of the body are just as important and necessary as every other. As St. Paul writes, our roles in the whole body vary. Some of us are teachers or prophets while others have the gift of healing or of assistance. In looking at the various parts, it is obvious there are some roles that are very visible, while some are not. Some have responsibilities that are very public, while others are confined to quiet places. But as my parents would say to my siblings and me when we were young, “it takes all kinds.”

So the obvious response to this reading is for each of us to ask ourselves, “what role do I play in the body of Christ?” “What are my charisms and gifts?” “How do I manifest my faith in daily life?” Here are some things you can think about to get your list started: Can you pray for those who are in need and have no one to pray for them? Can you show God's love to someone who needs to see it? Can you get involved in some form of ministry here at St. Olaf? Can you volunteer your time? Can you be an advocate for someone whose voice is not being heard?

There are countless ways to live out your faith and bring to life your part in the body of Christ. So whatever your part, know that you are vital to the Church and her mission. Every little toe has its purpose!