

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

*12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Notice how our life as a Christian is marked by our relationship with others. It is not me, myself, and my Bible, but me, the church, and the Bible. We've been called to be members of Christ's body, all sorts of people playing all sorts of roles to encourage and edify each other and give glory and praise to God in so doing. We are a flock of sinners gathered around the Good Shepherd who has laid down His life for us, and so in one another we see someone for whom our Lord has shed His blood. How can we not love a brother or sister by blood? And so, as we live as Christians, we live not by ourselves, but for Christ and with one another. The Word of Christ calls us, converts us, confirms us, and then guides our common life with our fellow Christians, in the home and in the parish. It is in that context that we read St. Paul's words today, and it is in that context that we live and grow and labor together in our daily lives and in the Lord's vineyard. And all of that is defined by the cross. As Christ has done for us, so we are expected—and indeed, by the Spirit empowered—to do for one another, struggling against our baser instincts and selfish desires in order to reflect the love that Christ showed for us throughout His ministry and especially on Good Friday. We proclaim His forgiveness to one another in hymn and conversation. We model His forgiveness to one another in our attitude and acts. And yes, we do this imperfectly, but we keep striving to do it nonetheless, motivated by the perfect and mind-blowing manner in which our Lord has done it for us. And so *“let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.”* And in that way, *“whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* Amen.