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Ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μὴ ψυχῇ
συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
Phil. 1:27

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why our young Catholics are keeping steady company is the conviction that "everyone else is doing it." Catholics must be warned against the attitude that they can base their conduct on the ways of the world. They must be taught from childhood that if they wish to live up to the principles of their faith they must be willing to be different from non-Catholics and must be willing to be ridiculed as old-fashioned. And, they must know this is the way to bring to the attention of the world the true standards of morality. In the words of Archbishop Noll: "If teen-age Catholics have any duty it is to lead others who have never had any special moral training and not to follow others. Every one instructed in the knowledge of God is obligated to be a leader, and may not follow one who is not so instructed."¹⁹

Priests must direct the laity along this way, by word and especially by example. Priests are men who have chosen a way of life very different from that of people of the world because it exemplifies in a high degree the ideals of the Christian life laid down by Our Lord Himself; hence, they must be models of virtue for their people. Catholic men and women—and even children—must learn that it is not easy to be a good Catholic, and that they must be prepared to face scorn and hatred and ridicule if they would be accounted faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

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¹⁹ *Ow Sunday Visitor*, June 27, 1954.

BROTHERHOOD IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

From the twentieth to the twenty-seventh of last month an organization called The National Conference of Christians and Jews sponsored a very well publicized "Brotherhood Week." According to the material in the "Magazine Kit" for this "Brotherhood Week," sent some months ago to the editorial offices of *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, the National Conference seeks "to demonstrate that all creeds can work together to achieve the goals of brotherhood." The National Conference further describes itself as "an educational, civic organization of religiously motivated men and women." According to the National Conference's "Fact Sheet," this body "seeks the Brotherhood of Man based on the Fatherhood of God."¹

A society which works for this high goal might appear at first glance to be a religious gathering, but the material in the "Magazine Kit" assures us that this is not so. "While the National Conference," we are told, "does much of its work through religious groups, it is not itself a religious organization." We are informed that "rather, it is a group of religiously motivated men and women whose purpose it is to eradicate prejudices and bigotry through educational programs of good will."

From the literary material which the National Conference of Christians and Jews has so generously provided, it would appear that this group's aim of "the Brotherhood of Man based on the Fatherhood of God," for all practical purposes, means a condition in which prejudice and bigotry have been largely eliminated. Yet this printed matter leaves no doubt about the fact that the "brotherhood" with which "Brotherhood Week" is concerned is something which goes beyond the limits of any particular religious organization. One leaflet insists on the contention "that all men—of all religions, of all colors, of all languages—are in fact brothers."

The high position occupied by some of the people who propound these teachings, as well as the extraordinarily powerful publicity given to "Brotherhood Week" and its various exercises, make it

¹ There are several mimeographed sheets and one printed leaflet in this "Magazine Kit." This and the following citations are taken from various parts of the material in this collection.

imperative that Catholics know something about the divinely revealed doctrine on the subject of a genuine and supernatural brotherhood here on earth.

That information is readily available in the sources of Catholic theology. Indeed, the doctrine of the brotherhood with Our Lord and with each other which men are privileged to enjoy, as the real though adopted sons of God, is one of the basic teachings of the New Testament.

In the Greek text of the New Testament the word ἀδελφότης, or "brotherhood" occurs twice. Both times it is used in the First Epistle of St. Peter. The first time it occurs is in the laconic command issued to the faithful to "Love the brotherhood."² The second time is in the reminder that "the same affliction [persecution by Satan himself] befalls your brotherhood that is in the world."³ Thus in both instances the term clearly refers to a social unit within which men are brothers, and this social unit is obviously the Church itself. Actually, then, the word "brotherhood," like the expressions "Church," "kingdom of God," "city of God," "household of the faith," "Body of Christ," and "temple of God," is a genuine name of the Church, one of the designations used in Scripture to designate the supernatural community which is the *congregatio fidelium in Christo*,⁴ the social unit within which alone men are to find salvific contact with God in Our Lord. And, along with such terms as "disciple," and "called," and "Christian," the word "brother" is one of the words which the New Testament employs as names for the members of the *ecclesia*.⁵ As a matter of fact, the term "brother" is the most frequently employed of all these New Testament titles. It is, incidentally, the first name applied to members of the Lord's company in the text of the *Acts of the Apostles*.

It is very interesting to note that, in the Vulgate, the term "*fraternitas*," the Latin equivalent of ἀδελφότης, occurs no less than eight times. Twice, of course, it stands as a translation of ἀδελφότης.

² I Pet. 2: 17.

³ I Pet. 5: 9.

⁴ Cf. Fenton, "Scholastic Definitions of the Catholic Church," in *AER*, CXI, 1 (July, 1944), 59 ff.

⁵ For the particular significance of the term "*ecclesia*," cf. Fenton, "The Meaning of the Name 'Church,'" in *AER*, CXXXI, 4 (Oct., 1954), 268-76.

Five times, however, "*fraternitas*" is a part of the translation of the term φιλαδελφία,⁶ and once it is a part of the translation of the cognate φιλάδελφος.⁷ It is highly indicative of the mentality of primitive Christianity that φιλαδελφία and φιλάδελφος were taken to mean, not merely "brotherly love" and "one possessing fraternal affection," but precisely as "*charitas fraternitatis*" or "*amor fraternitatis*" and "*amator fraternitatis*." The basically corporate significance of the "brotherhood" was axiomatic to the members of the Church from the very outset.

Those who were privileged to be the disciples of Jesus Christ during the first few centuries in the life of the Church militant of the New Testament were very well aware of the fact that it was precisely by reason of their association in the *ecclesia* that they were privileged to be brothers to Our Lord and, through Him, to each other. Our Lord Himself had brought out that fact with matchless clarity during the course of His public life on earth. All three of the Synoptic Gospels tell of one occasion when Our Lord taught this truth. Here is the pertinent passage in the *Gospel according to St. Matthew*.

As he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him.

And one said to him: behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee.

But he answering him that told him, said: Who is my mother and who are my brethren?

And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren.

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.⁸

These people whom Our Lord designated as His brothers and sisters were members of the community of His disciples. Primarily, of course, they were μαθηταί or "disciples," men and women whom He had called or invited into His company so that they might hear from Him that message which St. Peter once described so aptly as "the words of eternal life."⁹ But it is essential to remember that

⁶ The expression "*amor fraternitatis*" is found in I Pet. 1:22 and II Pet., 1:7, where, incidentally, it occurs twice. "*Charitas fraternitatis*" is the translation in Rom. 2:10; I Thes. 4:9; and Heb. 13:1.

⁷ Cf. I Pet. 3:8.

⁸ Matt. 12:46-50.

⁹ John 6:69.

these disciples were organized into an individual congregation or social unit, and that to be a disciple of Christ, or, in other words, to be numbered among those whom He indicated as His brothers and sisters, actually meant belonging to that social unit.

During the course of His public life, Our Lord organized these people whom He had gathered around Himself and formed them into a definite religious society. They were organized so perfectly that, immediately after His Ascension into heaven, this group appeared as an established religious society, manifestly distinct from and bitterly opposed by the old Jewish religious commonwealth within the fabric of which Our Lord had instituted it.¹⁰ This society of the disciples was in reality the faithful remnant of Israel. The old Jewish religious community was, until Our Lord's death on Calvary, the genuine and supernatural kingdom of God on earth. Our Lord's sacrificial death marked the ultimate rejection of the Messiah by the group which had hitherto been God's kingdom, the *congregatio fidelium in Christo*, precisely by reason of its profession of acceptance of the divinely revealed message that centered around the promised Messiah. It was also the sacrifice of the new and eternal covenant, the act in which the liturgical activity of the society of the disciples became valid as that of God's kingdom in this covenant. As the kingdom of God on earth, the society of the disciples was to stand as the company within which men are to do the will of the divine Father in heaven. Thus, in a special way, it was constituted as the company of the "brotherhood."

As the society of the disciples, the supernatural kingdom of God of the New Testament was and is the community of those who accepted Our Lord's invitation, or, in other words, the assembly of those who had received Him. We must not allow ourselves to forget how intimately Our Lord lived in and with, and was joined to, this particular group. St. Peter brought out that fact with extraordinary clarity when he was listing the qualifications of those men whom he would consider acceptable as candidates for the apostolic post vacated by Judas Iscariot. According to the Prince of the Apostles, such candidates had to be of the number

¹⁰ Cf. Fenton, "The Proof of the Church's Divine Origin," in *AER*, CXIII, 3 (Sept., 1946), 203-19.

. . . of these men who have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us,

Beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us. . . .¹¹

The Greek text of the *Acts* brings out that intimacy of Our Lord's association with the company of His disciples even more powerfully than the Latin and the English translations. In the Greek, the three verbs in the first of the verses quoted are all variations of the word *ερχομαι*. The text refers to men "who were going with us all the time that the Lord Jesus was going in and going out among us." It gives the idea of a traveling community within which Our Lord moved and worked. It tells definitely of a company within which and from which He taught His divine message. This group constituted the society of those who actually received Him.

Now the first chapter of the *Gospel according to St. John* brings out the connection between the "reception" of Christ and the basis of brotherhood in Him and under the Fatherhood of God.

He came unto his own: and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name.

Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.¹²

Here we find the fundamental explanation of the supernatural brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God. According to the *Gospel according to St. John*, the community of Our Lord's disciples, the company which received Him and within which He worked and taught is the social unit within which men are empowered to become the sons of God, to be born of God, in a proper and supernatural sense, although obviously not in the same way in which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity proceeds from God the Father. Thus this society of those who believe in Our Lord's name is the organization within which men can be and should be children of God, and brothers to Jesus Christ and to each other in Christ. It is the congregation which deserves the title of the *ἀδελφότης* or the brotherhood.

¹¹ *Acts* 1: 21 f.

¹² *John* 1: 12 f.

It is not by accident that the notion of belief in Our Lord's name is joined, in the text of St. John's Gospel, to that of supernatural and adoptive sonship of God. According to God's own decree, the supernatural life in function of which men are designated properly as adopted sons of God and brothers of Our Saviour is something which is meant to be lived in that community which is called God's kingdom or His *ecclesia*. The standard and traditional definition of this social unit is *congregatio fidelium in Christo*. The people who make up this supernatural kingdom are those who profess their belief in and their acceptance of the divinely revealed message of salvation which centers around the divine redeemer, Jesus Christ. Their company is the true household of the faith,¹³ the social unit within which alone men are to be saved from "this perverse generation."¹⁴ It is the Church, the community outside of which, in the words of the *Unam sanctam*, there is "neither salvation nor the forgiveness of sins."¹⁵

Here we encounter the central and essential factor in the divinely revealed teaching about that supernatural and adoptive sonship of the living God in terms of which men may be designated as brothers to Our Lord and to each other, and in function of which the *ecclesia* itself may be properly designated as the brotherhood. Men really become sons of God, though of course, in an analogous way, in and through the possession of the life of sanctifying grace. The company or social unit outside of which there is "neither salvation nor the forgiveness of sins" is nothing other than the community a man must be "within" if he is to obtain the ultimate and perfective status of the life of sanctifying grace in the beatific vision (salvation) or the *gratia prima*, the life of grace given to a person who has hitherto been deprived of it, the life of grace given by God with the forgiveness of original or mortal sin.

The life of sanctifying grace can only be understood and described as involving the status of adopted sons of God when we consider that life in terms of its ultimate and perfective act, that of the beatific vision. The beatific vision is a clear, direct, and immediate intellectual perception of the living God in the Trinity of

¹³ Cf. *Gal.* 6: 10.

¹⁴ Cf. *Acts* 2: 40.

¹⁵ Cf. The Bull *Unam sanctam*, issued Nov. 18, 1302, by Boniface VIII. *Denz.*, 468.

His Persons. As such it is something utterly beyond the purely natural capacity of any intellectual creature, actual or possible. It is something on the divine rather than on the merely created level. When creatures possess the life to which the beatific vision belongs, the life of sanctifying grace, they have this life as a gift from God rather than as something which they have earned by their natural efforts. The life of grace is inherently and essentially supernatural, something which belongs to the intrinsically supernatural order, by reason of the nature of the beatific vision itself. And it is in terms of this essential supernaturalness that the beatific vision is the basic element in the explanation of Christian brotherhood.

Now it is axiomatic that a thing acts on the level of its own being or essence. "*Operatio sequitur esse*" is one of the basic observations of an accurate philosophy. It is natural for any created intelligence to know about God by realizing that He is the First Cause and the Final End of the particular grade of reality that constitutes the proper object of that intelligence. Thus for the human intelligence, the mind of an *animal rationale*, the proper object is to be found in the essences of things which can be perceived through the agency of the senses. The mode of knowing God which is proper or natural to the human being is that by which He is recognized as the First Cause and as the Ultimate Purpose of these things.

Acting in accordance with the dictates and the limitations of human nature, then, man knows God by realizing (1) the fact that there is a being which is a cause but which is not subject to causality, which is a principle of motion but which is not itself moved, (2) the fact that qualities which are characteristic of things subject to causality or motion cannot in any way be present in a reality which is not thus subject to causality and change, and (3) the fact that concepts which of their very essence or nature are not limited to caused and contingent things may be applied properly and correctly, even if necessarily in an analogical way, to the First Cause and Last End. Man's natural knowledge of God may be perfected and sharpened indefinitely, but the process must always be carried on within this definite sphere.

As the intellect of an *animal rationale*, the human mind is intuitively on the lowest level in the scale of intelligences. It would have been possible to know, even within the bounds of a purely

natural order, that there could have been an indefinite number of created intellectual levels superior to the merely human, realized in created pure spirits. Within the realm of Christian doctrine we are aware of the fact that the angels are such created pure spirits, and we know that there are many different levels of perfection among the angelic intellects. As a matter of fact the principles of St. Thomas' philosophy make it clear that there are as many different species of angels as there are individual created pure spirits.¹⁶

Obviously we cannot know the specific perfection of any individual angelic nature. This, however, we do understand: every created spirit has as the proper object of its intelligence being on the level of its own existence, in other words, its own essence. In every case this essence is something which had to be actualized by God. Thus it is something distinct from the act of its own existence. And, in every case, according to the intellectual activity natural to it, the created spirit would know God only as the First Cause and the Ultimate Purpose of the reality which it recognizes in its observation of the proper object of its own natural intelligence. This is not only true of every existent created pure spirit: it would have to be verified of any created intelligence which God could bring into existence. In other words, it would be absolutely impossible to have a created intelligent being which could naturally perceive God in an act of immediate and direct intellectual knowledge.

On the other hand, God Himself is the one Being to whom such an act is natural. God is His own understanding. Actually the *ipsum intelligere subsistens* constitutes what is known as the metaphysical essence of God.¹⁷ The proper object of God's understanding, the reality which He knows immediately and directly, is His own essence, subsisting in the Three Divine Persons. There is no other intelligence, actual or possible, on the level of the divine Understanding. There is and there can be no other intelligence to which the immediate and direct intellectual perception of the divine

¹⁶ Cf. *Summa theologiae*, Ia, q. 50, a. 4.

¹⁷ Cf. Billuart, *Summa Sancti Thomae hodiernis academiarum moribus accommodata sive Cursus theologiae iuxta mentem D. Thomae* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1904), I, 45.

essence, subsisting in the Three Divine Persons, is something natural. And obviously there is no other being whose intellectual life consists in such a perception of God's essence.

The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is truly the Son of God because He proceeds from the Father by way of generation, coming forth from the Father with whom He is consubstantial as from the Principle subsisting in numerically one and the same divine nature. And any intelligent creature to whom God grants the life of sanctifying grace, which is the life of the beatific vision, can be called the child of God in a real though analogous sense, since God is giving to that creature the principle of a life which finds its ultimate and perfective expression in an act of intellectual perception of the divine essence, as it subsists in the Three Divine Persons. God acts as the immediate Principle of a kind of life which is similar to His own in that it finds its perfect manifestation in an intellectual act which has the same immediate object as the divine intelligence itself.

It is obvious, of course, that the life of grace is not something that resembles the life of the Triune God. The act of God's understanding is actually identified with the divine nature and with all of God's attributes. It is also identified with each of the Divine Persons. On the other hand, the quality by which the created intellectual being is raised up to the condition in which it is con-naturally capable of activity on the divine level is only an accident, an entitative *habitus*. It is something which, during the time the creature is *in via*, as distinct from *in patria*, can be lost. The life is a grade of activity granted to a creature whose natural level of operation is indescribably lower than the life of grace.

Yet, precisely by reason of the fact that this created activity attains the same intelligible object as the divine life itself, the beatific vision and the life of grace into which it is integrated are such as to constitute the man who possesses them as a real child of God. The term "son of God" applies to the man in the state of grace in a proper if analogous fashion.

On the other hand, the possession of created intellectual life on the natural level of the creature does not constitute a person as a child of God except in a purely metaphorical way. In other words, the expression "child of God" is applied to a man in the state of sanctifying grace in such a way that the definition of "child," as

"one proceeding from an immediate and conjoined principle in similarity of life," is verified of that man. Strictly speaking there is no "similarity of life" when the natural activity of any created intelligence is compared with the act of the divine understanding, since the proper object of that natural understanding on the part of the creature is something quite distinct from the proper object of God's own understanding. Hence when we speak of men as "children of God" merely in terms of their created human nature, or of their dependence on God the Creator, we are using the term as a figure of speech. Such metaphorical use of the expression may be allowable, but it remains something absolutely distinct from the proper though analogous employment of this expression.

It is at best misleading to speak of men "of all religions" as brothers under the common Fatherhood of God, as though diversity in religion, or the acceptance or non-acceptance of Our Lord, could be considered as indifferent to the concept of human brotherhood. Actually the supernatural brotherhood which men possess by reason of the life of the beatific vision is essentially a brotherhood in Our Lord. The life of grace, in function of which men are constituted as adopted children of God and as brothers to each other under the Fatherhood of God, is something which men can possess only because Our Lord, the Incarnate Word of God, has obtained it for them through His sacrificial death on Calvary. It is something which men can live only insofar as they are in salvific contact with Our Lord in His Mystical Body.

In other words, the life by which men may live as adopted sons of God is something which they can possess only if the natural and consubstantial Son of God the Father actively communicates that life to them. They can derive that created sharing of the divine life only from the Incarnate Word, who is at once their Brother, their Head, and their Saviour.

The genuine supernatural brotherhood in God's *ecclesia* affects the nature of the association itself. The supernatural kingdom of God is truly the "household of the faith," the social unit within which men and women are empowered to live as brothers and sisters to Our Lord and, in Him, to each other. The relations set up in function of this brotherhood are real, and they have genuine effects in the order of charity. It is God's command that we should "work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the

household of the faith."¹⁸ In the *ordo charitatis*, which is the objective order of reality, our brothers within the household of the faith are closer to us than any other human beings. If we are to give Our Lord the enthusiastic loyalty that is due to Him, they should be the first beneficiaries of our charity.

This is a lesson highly important to the Catholics of our own time. Prior to the issuance of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* there were a certain number of Catholic publicists who worked to spread abroad the illusion that there was such a thing as an invisible church, a kind of community of good men and women in some way distinct from the visible society which God has constituted as His supernatural kingdom on earth for the new and eternal testament. Furthermore, some of them went so far as to teach that there was a loyalty due to this imaginary "invisible church" which surpassed the loyalty due to the visible organization over which the Bishop of Rome presides as the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth. Pope Pius XII stigmatized that blunder once and for all in his brilliant encyclical letter.¹⁹ Unfortunately, however, bad teachings set up slovenly habits of thought which do not always disappear once the basic teachings have been exposed and reprovved. Hence it is imperative that, in considering the conditions of the Christian *ἀδελφότης*, we take cognizance of the fact that this fraternity carries genuine obligations in the practical order with it.

The brotherhood in the *ecclesia*, the supernatural fellowship which men are privileged to possess in function of God's communication of the life of grace, makes tremendous demands. Our Lord and Brother insists that we subordinate to Him every person and every thing which is near and dear to us. And the association in the Church itself is meant to be our dominant social relation. We speak of "brother priests," and of "brother religious," but all of these unions are based on the fundamental brotherhood within the *ἀδελφότης* which is the household of the faith and the Church of the living God.

Our brotherhood in the Christian life of grace is likewise ultimately definable in terms of a common Mother. Our Lady is the

¹⁸ Gal. 6: 10.

¹⁹ Cf. the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, issued June 29, 1943, in *AAS*, XXXV (1943), especially 199 f., and 224.

Mother of Christ, the *θεοτόκος*.²⁰ By that very fact she is the Mother of the Mystical Body, outside of which there is neither salvation nor the forgiveness of sins. The person who lives the life of grace enjoys a favor which has come to him from Christ the divine Redeemer, and which has likewise been given to him through Mary, the Dispenser of all graces. The life of grace is a sharing of the life of Christ, the life of the Person who is the Son of Mary.

The Church itself, the kingdom of Christ within which Mary reigns as Queen, is the *ἀδελφότης*, the brotherhood. And, as the "household of the faith," this community has its own family banquet, the divine banquet which is the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament. The life of the brotherhood is signified and caused in the Eucharist. Indeed, men live the life of the brotherhood only insofar as they partake, sacramentally or at least spiritually, of the Eucharist.²¹ The theology of the Blessed Sacrament is, in the last analysis, the theology of the Christian brotherhood.

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The "brotherhood" with which the National Council of Christians and Jews is concerned is, ultimately, something to be brought about if and when all men act toward each other as if they were joined by family ties. It is definitely our business so to pray and to act that, insofar as lies within our power, we may bring men to see that there is a genuine and ineffably perfect brotherhood in Our Lord available to them. It is our business to bring out the fact that God wills that all men should enter into that brotherhood. The only eternal salvation available to men, the only ultimate and everlasting happiness which they may attain, is something which they are meant to have and can have only within this household of the true faith.

It is laudable to see people working toward a condition in which all men would act toward each other as if they were brothers. They must be assured, however, that this condition will never be attained outside of that true brotherhood in the supernatural order which Our Lord has brought about by His sacrificial death. Definitely they will never attain the good of brotherhood through the family of Adam.

²⁰ Cf. the Anathematizations of St. Cyril, in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus, *Denz.*, 113.

²¹ Cf. *John* 6: 54.

In a certain highly figurative sense men may be called brothers by reason of their common descent from our first parents. Yet the good of genuine brotherhood under the Fatherhood of God is not to be attained in and through the family of Adam. The family of Adam as unregenerate is a fallen family. We are born into that family, and, in order to achieve salvific union with God and brotherhood in Our Lord, we have to be taken out of that unregenerate group and inserted into the household of the faith which is the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. The unregenerate family of Adam, as a fallen social unit, is precisely the "world" over which Satan holds sway as "the prince of this world." Our salvation, our genuine brotherhood with and in Jesus Christ, depends on our being transferred out of this social unit and brought "within" the *ecclesia*, "*extra quam nullus omnino salvatur.*"

It would be unfortunate were men ever brought to imagine that whatever "brotherhood" there may be by reason of membership in the unregenerate family of Adam would be the brotherhood under God which men need and in which they are to find their perfection.

On the other hand, Catholics must be reminded that mere membership in the Church, which is the *ἀδελφότης*, does not constitute and guarantee that the life of the brotherhood, the life of sanctifying grace, is actually being lived. It is unfortunately possible to be, in this world, *in statu viae*, a member of the supernatural brotherhood in Christ and at the same time to live in a manner utterly unworthy of that brotherhood. In this life we possess the treasure of the true brotherhood in such a way that we can lose it by our own malice and infidelity.

It is our business to work and pray so that we may live the life of the true brotherhood in Christ in this world in a manner that will bring us to enjoy it forever in the Church triumphant.

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