

## **UNITY IS NOT UNIFORMITY!**

May 24 marks the beginning of the week Christian unity. One of the most helpful comments I have heard about genuine Christian unity is that *unity is not uniformity* in how Christian churches equate the unity of faith practice with faith understanding.

Perhaps one of the distinctive aspects of the Catholic Church is its tradition of what could be described as *delegated authority*. This is to be applied to issues of faith and morals originally established from the teachings of the apostles that is now passed to their successors being the bishops of the Church. This does not happen in the Protestant Christian churches and sadly it results often in disunity.

Yet it is important to remember that there is so much beauty in so many Christian traditions and this is expressed so well in this reflection by Fr Thomas Ryan OP in 1989. Below are some of his insights;

***“When God puts us all back together (with our co-operation) this great Church will be marked by the dignity and the scholarship of the Anglicans, the apostolic order and sacraments of the Roman Catholics. There will be the warm fellowship of the Methodists and the Lutheran respect for sound theology, the Congregational respect for the rights of the lay members and the Reformed love of the bible, the Pentecostal reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit. This is to be all wrapped up in the Orthodox reverence for the mystery of God.” - Fr Martin R Maunsell***