

**From the Pastor Emeritus, Lover of God and Dutiful Servant of  
the Church of Sacred Memory,**

**to the Dear Saints of God in  
the Church That One Day Might Be**

Grace and Peace Be Yours in Full Measure!

I write to you, beloved saints of the Church That One Day Might Be, as one who has labored long in the vineyard of the Lord, tending to the fields that were once ripe for harvest in the days gone by. I write from the vantage point of a time that has passed, from the Church of Sacred Memory, where we have stored the treasures of our faith, and where we have kept vigil over the sacred stories and rituals that once bound us together as a people of God.

But now, my beloved, I sense a stirring in the Spirit, a whisper that calls us to a new horizon, a place where the Church That One Day Might Be shall come into being. And so, I write to you with a heart both full and heavy, full of the love that binds us across the ages, and heavy with the weight of the memories that must now be laid to rest so that new life might spring forth.

### **The Call to Grieve and Release**

Dear saints, the world has grown in complexity and difficulty, and it is easy to look back on what was and miss it dearly. The Church of Sacred Memory, where I have dwelt, is filled with the echoes of songs once sung, prayers once uttered, and the fellowship once shared. It is tempting to cling to these memories, to hold them close as a balm for the uncertainties of the present and the fears of the future. But the Spirit of God, who moves where it wills, is not bound by the past, and neither should we be.

We are called, dear ones, to the sacred task of grieving and letting go. For just as a seed must fall to the ground and die in order to bring forth new life, so too must we allow the past to rest in peace if the Church That One Day Might Be is to take root and flourish. This is no easy task, for it requires of us a surrender that feels like loss, and yet it is in this surrender that we find the promise of resurrection.

### **The Steps of Our Forebears**

Consider, dear saints, the example of our forebears in the faith. Abraham was called to leave his homeland and journey to a place he did not know, trusting only in the promise of God. Moses led the people of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, through the wilderness, and toward a land they had not yet seen. The disciples of our Lord Jesus left behind their nets and their livelihoods to follow him into an uncertain future, and even after his death and resurrection, they were called to let go of the Jesus they had known in the flesh, that they might receive the Spirit who would lead them into all truth.

These, our ancestors in the faith, did not cling to what was, but rather opened their hearts to what might be. They grieved the loss of what they left behind, to be sure, but they did not allow that grief to hold them captive. Instead, they embraced the unknown with faith, trusting that the God who had been with them in the past would be with them in the future, guiding their steps and sustaining them along the way.

### **The Temptation of Nostalgia**

Yet, I know, beloved, how strong the pull of nostalgia can be. The world has grown more complex, more difficult to process, and in such times it is natural to long for the simplicity of what once was. We remember the days when the pews were full, when the hymns were familiar, when the rhythms of church life were predictable and comforting. We remember the saints who have gone before us, the traditions that gave us identity, the ways of being church that seemed so sure and steady.

But nostalgia, dear ones, is a subtle deceiver. It tempts us to see the past through rose-colored glasses, to remember only the good and forget the challenges, the struggles, the imperfections. It tempts us to believe that if we could only return to the way things were, all would be well. But the past, no matter how cherished, cannot be reclaimed, nor should it be our goal to do so.

The Church That One Day Might Be will not be a return to the Church That Was, but rather a new creation, born of the Spirit and shaped by the needs and realities of a changing world. To embrace this new creation, we must resist the temptation to idolize the past and instead offer it up to God as a sacred memory, trusting that what God has done before, God can and will do again in new and unexpected ways.

### **The Work of the Spirit in the Present**

And so, my beloved, I urge you to open your hearts to the work of the Spirit in the present moment. The Spirit is always moving, always creating, always leading us into new expressions of faith and community. The Church That One Day Might Be will not look like the Church of Sacred Memory, but it will be no less a place

where God is present, where grace abounds, where the Gospel is proclaimed, and where the people of God are nurtured and sent forth to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the challenges of this present age. The world is fractured and divided, and the church is no longer the center of culture as it once was. But do not be dismayed, dear saints. Remember that the church was born in a time of great turmoil, in an empire that sought to crush it, among a people who were marginalized and oppressed. And yet, out of that small and fragile community, God brought forth a movement that would change the world.

The same Spirit who breathed life into the early church is at work today, breathing new life into the Church That One Day Might Be. But this new life will not come by our own striving or by holding onto the past. It will come as we surrender to the Spirit's leading, as we grieve what has been lost, and as we open ourselves to the new possibilities that God is bringing forth.

So take heart, dear saints. The God who has been faithful in the past will be faithful in the future. The church, though it may change and evolve, will continue to be the body of Christ in the world, bearing witness to the love of God and the hope of the resurrection. Trust in the God who makes all things new, and know that even in the midst of change, you are held in the everlasting arms of love.

Grieve, yes, for the past that has passed, for the losses that have been felt, for the ways of being church that are no more. But do not grieve as those who have no hope. For we are a people of resurrection, and we know that out of death comes new life. The Church That One Day Might Be is not a distant dream, but a reality that is already being born, even now, in the hearts and minds of those who are open to the Spirit's work.

### **Journeying On**

As you move forward, dear saints, may you do so with courage and faith. May you honor the past by letting it go, trusting that what God has done before, God can do again in new and surprising ways. May you be open to the Spirit's leading, even when it takes you into unfamiliar territory. And may you always hold fast to the hope that is ours in Christ, the hope that nothing in this world, not even death, can separate us from the love of God.

And now, may the peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in the days to come. May you be filled with the knowledge of God's love, the strength of God's Spirit, and the hope

of God's promises. And may the Church That One Day Might Be, when it comes into being, be a place where the past is honored, the present is embraced, and the future is welcomed with open arms.

Grace be with you all.

Amen.