This weekend brings to a close the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WCPU).  This week of prayer has a history of over 100 years in which Christians around the world have taken part in an octave of prayer for visible Christian unity.  By annually observing the WPCU, Christians move toward the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper "that they all may be one."  *(cf. John 17:21)*

The 2020 theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is, “They Showed Us Unusual Kindness” (cf. Acts 28:2).  Fr. James Loughran, SA, Director of the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute (A ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement) noted that “as we gather annually throughout the world to pray for the unity of Christians, we are reminded of the importance of need for “unusual kindness” in the dialogue that leads to growth in unity. We do this in a world where separation and division hinder the quest for Christian Unity. In 2020, we are being called to show unusual kindness towards one another.”  As Paul recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, it was through their unusual kindness that a divided people were drawn closer together (cf. Acts 27:18 – 28:10).

The traditional period for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18-25. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Servant of God, Fr. Paul Wattson, SA, Founder of the Society of the Atonement, to cover the original days of the feasts of the Chair of St. Peter (January 18) and the Conversion of St. Paul (January 25), and therefore have a symbolic significance.

Our readings on this Third Sunday in Ordinary Time speak to us of discipleship.  Jesus responds to God’s love and we are asked to follow in this path of whole-hearted love.  There are many things that can get in the way of our response, but Christ wants to bring wholeness into our lives, and I believe, through us, into the lives of others.  This week we might explore the ways that Christ is inviting us to move beyond our comfort zones and to take risks in reaching out and ministering to someone.  Jesus gives us all we need to “minister” in our homes, workplaces, schools, and social settings.

God’s blessings on your week, your ministry, and your work,

*Fr. Matt*