

# Weekly Gospel Readings

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Paope

### Jesus and Beelzebul

On this Sunday (10/29/23), the Third Sunday of the blessed month of Paope, the Church reads [Matthew 12:22-28](#). In this reading, Jesus heals a demon-possessed blind and mute man. Instead of glorifying and thanking God for this miracle, the Pharisees attack Christ and claim that He can only cast out demons through “Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.” Yet rather than becoming angry with the Pharisees and having an emotional outburst, Jesus presents a logical argument by explaining, “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?” ([Matthew 12:26](#)). From this discussion with the Pharisees, we learn more about the importance of being united as one body of Christ.

By definition, unity is “a condition of harmony.” Using this logic, Christ explains that it is impossible for a demon to cast out a demon. If Satan were to allow this, then he would be divided against himself, and his kingdom would be without harmony—complete and utter chaos. In the same manner, the Church and Christians cannot be divided amongst each other. Division leads to chaos, and a Church with chaos is not united with the Body of Christ. As St. Cyprian of Carthage explains, “There is one God, and Christ is one, and there is one Church, and one chair founded upon the rock by the word of the Lord.”

Yet, if there is one Church and one God, why do divisions arise? Quite simply, due to a lack of love. As St. Paul teaches us, “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” ([Colossians 3:14](#)). True harmony and true unity can only exist when we strive to achieve the perfect love that Christ demonstrated to us. But, practically speaking, how can we demonstrate this love that leads to unity? St. Paul answers this question by explaining that:

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” ([1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#)).

Let us pray that God strengthens us in our mission to strive for this perfect love. The Church was established through the love of Christ, and we must keep the Church and our own homes united by continuously and earnestly striving to demonstrate this same love. St. Paul teaches us that “for just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” ([1 Corinthians 12:12](#)). It is not only the priests or not only the parents that are responsible for unity in the Church and our homes. Each and every one of us has a *personal* responsibility to maintain this unity.

#### Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version
- Catena Bible, Church Father Commentaries
- Commentaries on the Gospel of St. Matthew by Father Tadros Malaty