

I don't know about you, but I like going to places like Dairy Queen or Grand Ole Creamery. I am overwhelmed in making a choice about which ice cream to eat. I know I can't eat it all, but I must choose.

Cookie dough, mint chocolate chip, Moose Tracks, Rocky Road, it's all ice cream – all made from milk and cream, but with such different flavor. What fun would it be to go to Dairy Queen be if there was only vanilla or chocolate?

If this is true for Dairy Queen, how much true is it for the Body of Christ? The Body of Christ is one, yet resplendent with many gifts and talents. Lots of graces are given!

St. Paul gives great examples: ministering in general, teaching, exhorting or encouraging, generosity in giving, displaying mercy. In other words, we have unity – we are all part of the Body of Christ – and yet many “flavors” or gifts in the one Body.

All gifts, of course, are meant to build up the Body of Christ for the glory of God. Thus, if someone has a great gift in teaching, it is not meant for himself or herself, but for the sake of others. God has structured things in such a way that no one has all the gifts. This would lead to pride. Instead, God wills interdependence. Another person's gifts strengthen my weakness, and my gifts strengthen someone else weakness.

For us today, St. Paul's exhortation about the Body of Christ can help us avoid two major pitfalls. First, because we are fallen, we can tend to get envious at others' gifts. He or she has that gift and I do not. Thus, we become sad or even resentful at another's gifts.

We must remember that we are all on the same team! We're in this together. Another's gifts are meant to build up the Body, to strengthen you! The antidote to envy is admiration. Give praise to the Lord when you see someone with a great gift. Ask God to continue to bless him or her. And recognize that you have your own gifts!

The second pitfall to avoid is turf wars. This is my ministry or this is my area. Again, we are all the Body of Christ. We are on the same team. We must work together with our various gifts to build up the Body. We must stand shoulder-to-shoulder, not face-to-face. May the good Lord continue to bless His one Church with many gifts. And in doing so, may we thank Him for His countless blessings!