

A fad (F-A-D) is defined as a certain item or behavior that is enthusiastically received among a particular group for a short period of time ... most often because of its perceived novelty or newness.

An early fad, from the 1920s, is flagpole sitting. Alvin Kelly, a Hollywood stuntman, sat on a flagpole in 1924 for 13 hours. Five years later, in answer to the copycats who tried to show him up, he sat on a flagpole again for 49 days.

More recent fads from the last several decades would be: in the 1950s - hula hoops, in the 1960s - 8-track tapes, in the 1970s - mood rings, and in the 1980s - PacMan. Other fads, in no particular order are: waterbeds, troll dolls, Rubik's cube, pet rocks, and goldfish swallowing.

Fads often seem to take hold among young people - high school and college aged - most likely because they are eager to make a mark on the world. The desire to embrace a fad to define oneself has given rise to the humorous maxim that states:

*“Always remember that you are absolutely unique, just like everyone else.”*

In Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, we hear a call to unity.

Paul speaks of the *“one body”* of Christ ... and the *“one Spirit”* of God ... our *“one Lord”* Jesus Christ ... and the *“one God and Father of all”*.

Yet this unity is not some sort of fad - it is not an attempt at being one-of-a-kind by somehow being just like everybody else. God created us as unique individuals, each with a unique calling and a unique mission. We gain nothing by trying to be like anyone else.

Our unity does not come from any external motivation, but rather from inside ... from the *“one faith”* which we share - the *“one faith”* which we will all profess in a few moments. We are called to unity by our *“one baptism”* which opens for us the manifold graces of

the Sacraments ... and draws us into the life of the Trinity - a supernatural unity in which God's grace transcends our own natural limitations.

Beginning today, and for the next month, we take a break from hearing Saint Mark's Gospel - and instead read from Chapter 6 of Saint John's Gospel, focusing on the Bread of Life discourse.

This Bread of Life - the Holy Eucharist - is the true source of unity. The unity we experience as members of Christ's body is strengthened by our sharing in the "one bread" and the "one cup" at this altar. Our own bishop has spoken at the Holy Hours around the diocese of how there is no separation ... no division among us in the Eucharist.

The miraculous multiplication of food we heard in the Old Testament reading ... and in the Gospel should be evidence for us of the unlimited grace and power of God to work in our lives. We need that grace ... and we need to allow God to operate in us ... every day.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist - let us pray to more deeply realize the unity that comes from God ... the supernatural unity that preserves the uniqueness of each person. Let us desire to move into a more intimate relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit - so that we might be more "*worthy of the call [we] have received*" in our Baptism.