

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost 16 the Imitation of Christ in the Church

The passage today from Philippians 2:1-13 contains an ancient hymn to Christ at 2:5-11. It points to him as our example. But first it asks us if there is anything of his example in us. The imitation of Christ is central to Christianity. We have no other model. He does not seem to have patterned himself on anyone. But he does live out the role of a servant as we find it expressed in the Suffering Servant Songs in the prophetic book of Isaiah. Sometimes the Servant is Israel and sometimes a Messianic figure like no other, devoid of majestic power and suffering anguish. The Suffering Servant puts feelings on the concepts of Messiah in Israel. Jesus himself would suffer and his own anguished compassion would pass across the face of God and remain there in our perceptions of God.

“So if our shared life in the Christ brings you any comfort; if love still has the power to make you cheerful; if we really do have a partnership in the spirit ; if your hearts are at all moved with affection and sympathy – then make my joy complete ! Bring your thinking into line with one another. Here’s how to do it. Hold on to the same love; bring your innermost lives into harmony; fix your minds on the same object. Never act out of selfish ambition or vanity; regard everybody else as your superior. Look after of each other’s best interests, not your own” (Philippians 2:1-4).

This passage talks first of shared life in Christ, comfort, love and the enabling of a cheerful spirit. It seeks hearts full of affection and sympathy for the needs of others.

“Holding on to the same love and bringing our hearts into inner harmony” requires both the imitation of the love of Christ and our own inner work.

We also need to immerse ourselves in the example and teaching of Christ in the Gospels to find inner peace. We need the best of psychological insights and the most helpful fruits of our experience in this process. **“Each of us is as unique as a snowflake or a fingerprint” (Tom Hoobyer).**

Jesus enslaved himself to the cause of human salvation. No effort was too great, no sacrifice too great. Every person ever born comes within his tender gaze and care. He connects God’s love with the needs of all of us.

We only have to ask and trust and shower God with heartfelt praise. It works with others too! The negative emotions we feel are not always caused by others but by the meaning we attach to their words and actions.

Talk tenderly to yourself.

Disassociate from negatives

Associate with positive interpretations.

See Christ as the *eikon* (holy picture) of love

Enjoy the days.

You are not the richest person on earth but you are not the poorest.

Rejoice!

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, October 1.

- *Bible study, 10:00am*
- *Group discussion, 7:30pm, Parish office*

Thursday, October 2.

- *Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel*

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80; Philippians 3:14-21; Matthew 21:33-43