

9am Christian Learning Series Sunday, May 9, 2021

First Corinthians 13

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Love is a treasured resource, value, and action in the Christian Church. This Sunday morning, we share in a Bible study of *1 Corinthians 13* to reflect on the insights of this well-loved scripture.

We will engage this scripture first with an ancient method of Bible study: *Lectio Divina*. *Lectio Divina* (divine reading) is a contemplative practice of studying scripture that invites us to slow down and engage the words as an encounter with the holy. This practice invites us to stay open to the phrase or phrases of scripture which draw our particular attention during our reading so that we can reflect on the message those words may have for us in our own life. It invites us to have an encounter with scripture as a living word. As we approach scripture in this manner, we see the text as a gift to be received by us, not a puzzle to solve, or a problem to crack. We slow down, taking time to stay open to the text; we make room for a prayerful consideration of the text.

As far as we can tell, this practice of reading comes from the “Desert Fathers” - monastic communities set up in the first few centuries of the church. Later, St. Benedict, monk of the 6th century, establishing *Lectio Divina* as a way of studying scripture within his own religious communities.

Thomas Cramner, Archbishop of Canterbury (1533-1556) and author of the Anglican Communion’s first *Book of Common Prayer* also favored *Lectio Divina*. He ended his “Homily on Scripture” with a strong invitation to read scripture in this way. He wrote, “Let us ruminare, and, as it were, chew the cud, that we may have the sweet juice, spiritual effect, marrow, honey, kernel, taste, comfort and consolation of them.” (<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/253799/1-What-is-Lectio-Divina.pdf>)

Here is our “cud”- the *First Corinthian 13* text: (New Revised Standard Version)

The Gift of Love

¹³ If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly,^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Join us next Sunday, May 16, for *Esther: Women Who Save* led by Rabbi Dena Bodian. Rabbi Bodian, Jewish Chaplain at Wellesley College, will reflect on the story of Esther and what her character and situation teach us about being people of God.