

THE DEEPEST YEARNING SESSION THREE
“TO THOSE SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST , CALLED TO BE SAINTS”

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, we thank you that you have called us into fellowship with one another in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Help us to remember that we need one another in order to be fully alive in you. Guide us as we seek your will for ourselves and for our parish, and help us to remember that you have given each of us our share in the Holy Spirit so that together we can be your Body, the Church. We thank you Lord for this gift in Jesus' name. Amen

STUDY TIME

1. Read I Corinthians 1: 2, 7 – 10 (A , B) and 1 Corinthians 3: 10-13, 18, 21-23 (C,D)

A) What does it mean to be “holy” as individuals and as a community?

B) Paul calls upon the Corinthians to be united. What is it that pulls the community together?

C) How do we know what the standard of God is that we are commanded to follow?

D) Where does our community lie within a fellowship that is so diverse in its makeup and its life?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (A) 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8 (B) 1 Corinthians 8:9 1 Corinthians 10:24 (C) 1 Corinthians 11:12-33 (D)

A) What is the role God wants the Church to fulfill in the world?

B) What does Paul say about the idea of “change” in the Church and how should we approach this issue in our fellowship?

c) In chapter 10:24, Paul writes of a sign of a truly faithful community. What is that and why is it so difficult to be both achieve and maintain?

D) What does Paul say about Eucharist. How do I see this Sacrament in the life of our parish, in my own life?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 12: 1-30)(A,B,C) and 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 (D,E)

A) What is the source of power and guidance for the Church according to Paul?

B) What is the relationship between the signs of the Holy Spirit in a fellowship?

C) Reread Romans 12:4-6 and 1 Corinthians 12: 12-30. How do these two passages relate to each other and why would they matter to us today?

D) Are we open to receiving and accepting the signs of the Holy Spirit in our congregation. If so, what can we be doing to better use these gifts and if not, what should we be doing to highlight the gifts?

E) For Paul, what is the “greatest” sign of the presence of the Spirit in our fellowship?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-12 (A, B) and 2 Corinthians 5:11-22 (C, D)

A) What are our treasures in clay jars? What is (are) yours?

B) Paul speaks of the ministry given by God to his Church. What is that?

- B) This section is about RECONCILIATION. What is this (in its broadest sense) and why should the Church be engaged in it?**
- C) How can we be reconciled to God? To one another?**
- D) What does an ambassador do and how might this give us shape for our ministries?**

5. Read 2 Corinthians 9: 10-15 (A, B) and 2 Corinthians 13: 5. 11 (C,D)

- A) What is Paul telling us about the source of our ministries?**
- B) What attitude should shape our ministries and our relationships with one another and with the wider community and the world?**
- C) As we enact our ministries in our parish, what must we be constantly doing? How can we achieve this?**
- D) How can we achieve “perfection” in our ministries?**

6. Try to pull all the material from this week into a summary “statement” about ministry and community.

7. For next week, please read Paul’s letters to the Church in EPHESUS and GALATIA

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

1 CORINTHIANS 1: 1-2, 7-10

- 1. Jesus Christ is the very foundation of life in community. If the fellowship is lacking THAT sense of the presence of Jesus in its’ midst, that sense that He is the head and cornerstone, then the fellowship is weakened.**
- 2. We know what God’s standards for the Church are through the study of Scripture and reflection upon the Word as both individual Christians and as members of the Body.**
- 3. Our unity lies within our common allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord. How that allegiance is expressed varies from community to community, from individual to individual. But the tie that binds all together is a common faith in Jesus Christ who is our Risen Lord. If THAT is lacking, it is difficult for the community to truly be Christian – it may be a grouping of well-intentioned and loving persons but lacks the foundation and thus may be prone to collapse at any time.**

2. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1 1 CORINTHIANS 5:5-6 1CORINTHIANS 8:9 1 CORINTHIANS 10:24 and 1 CORINTHIANS 11: 17-33

- 1. We are called to be stewards for God. What does stewardship mean to you and how do you see it being interpreted by the community?**
- 2. Change is necessary in order for a fellowship to grow. But, change for the sake of change is to be discouraged as much as staying put because of a fear of the new or the different. The community needs to be constantly seeking the will of God for herself and effecting those changes which will encourage the growth of the community towards the**

goal of fuller union with God in Jesus. BUT, the object of change is not to add more persons for the sake of adding more or looking good, it is to widen the base for ministry.

3. Paul speaks of sacrificing our individual needs and desires for the betterment of the fellowship as a whole. This can be very difficult for us to do because our culture continues to focus on the individual and our self-fulfillment (remember the term “the ME generation”?) But, says Paul, true Christianity finds itself in sacrificial service to others.

4. For Paul the Eucharist is the centre of the life of the community. Established by Jesus himself, it is the gathering point of the fellowship and in the sharing of the body and blood of Jesus, the community is united one to another. BUT, too often this Sacrament and how it is both understood and enacted becomes a major stumbling-block and blockage between communities and denominations which of course runs counter to both the intent of Jesus and the will of the Father

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 1-3 and 1 CORINTHIANS 13: 1-13

1. The true source of power for the Christian Church is the Holy Spirit given by God for the strengthening and empowering of the community.

2. The signs of the Spirit are to be in mutual interdependence. No one sign of the Spirit is greater than any other but each has its value and place. One specific gift may rise in a particular situation, but then be of lesser importance in another time and place.

3. Both of the readings speak of the Church as being the Body of Christ, with each part of the Body reliant on all the other parts for wholeness and power.

4. How receptive are we to the Spirit? What might be obstacles to the full recognition and utilization of the gifts in our parish?

5. The greatest gift of the Spirit at work in the Church is the ability and willingness to love others.

2 CORINTHIANS 4: 5-12 and 2 CORINTHIANS 5: 11-21

1. For Paul, the ministry of the Church is to share the revelation and light which God has given us in Christ Jesus. This is done in three ways: through the celebration of Jesus' presence (liturgy), study (Holy Scriptures and reflection) and action (service to others).

3. Our ministry is to be reconcilers because Jesus, by dying on the Cross, reconciled the world to the Father. If we see ourselves as “little Christs” to one another, then we must be engaged in the work of reconciliation both within our fellowship and in the wider community.

4. This ministry of reconciliation is focused centered on faith in Jesus and in conversation with God (prayer)

5. An ambassador represents others. We, in our ministry, should represent Jesus to one another and to the world. This means that we must sacrifice our own self-interests for the good of others and for faithfulness to the gospel proclamation.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-15 and 2 CORINTHIANS 13: 5, 11

- 1. For the Christian, true power is the sacrifice of self and the taking on of the role of a servant to others. It is “left-handed power” in the sense that it denies the worldview of control over others. In giving ourselves to others, the power of the Spirit is released – Christian power comes not from domination of others but from free submission to the will of God and Jesus was we are led by the Spirit.**
- 2. All that we do should be undertaken within the spirit of thanksgiving and praise for being given the gift and the opportunity to serve.**
- 3. We as fellowship must constantly examine what we say and do and question that whether what we wish to undertake coincides with God’s will for us as a community and for the greater world. This involves the gift of PATIENCE because God does not always answer prayer immediately.**
- 4. Everything we undertake needs to be examined with care under the “microscope” of the gospel.**
- 5. Perfection in ministry on our own is impossible! All we can do is pray to the Father in the name of the Son under the guidance of the Spirit that what we do will be blessed and sanctified (made ‘holy’) by the Trinity and that we will discern and rectify any moments when we fall short of the will and plan of God. While we seek perfection, we must see that alone we will never be, but with God all things are indeed possible!**

READINGS FOR SESSION THREE

1 CORINTHIANS 1: 1-2, 7-10

Paul called to be an apostle by the will of God and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus – their Lord and ours...you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Go, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, is faithful.

1 CORINTHIANS 3: 10-13, 18, 21-23

By the grace that God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder and someone is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire and fire will test the quality of each person’s work....Do not deceive yourselves. If anyone of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a “fool” so that he may become wise... So then, no more boasting about men. All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos

or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future – all are yours and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:2 1 CORINTHIANS 5:6-8 1 CORINTHIANS 8:9

1 CORINTHIANS 10:24 1 CORINTHIANS 11: 17-33

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast so that you may be the new yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the festival not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth... Be careful that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling-block to the weak...

In the following directives, I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way after supper he took the cup saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. One ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread or drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined as that we will not be condemned with the world. So then, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1 1-30 and 1 CORINTHIANS 13: 1-13

Now about spiritual gifts brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant. Now you know that when you were pagans, somehow you were influenced or led astray to dumb idols. There I am telling you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed" and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord", except by the Holy Spirit. There are

different kinds of gifts but the same spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all persons. Now to each one of them the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the gift of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit and she gives them to each one, just as she determines. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all the parts are many, they form one body. So it with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit in one body; whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part, but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body”, it would not for that reason cease to be a part of that body. And if an ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body”, it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? . But in fact God has arranged the arts in the body, everyone of them. Just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you!” and the head cannot say to the feet, “I do not need you!”. On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable and those we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the part of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for the others. If one part suffers, every part suffers and if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now, you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles. Second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracle, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with the gift of administration and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?...

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no records of wrongs. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be

stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophecy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put away childish things. Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5-12 and 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21

We do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as servants of Jesus' sake. For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" made his light shine in our hearts to give the light of our knowledge of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show this all surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus might be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life might be revealed in our mortal body. So, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. Since then we know what it is to love the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that we can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than what is in the heart. If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God: if we are not in our right minds, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on, we regard no one from an earthly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, anyone who is in Christ is a new creation; the old has gone, the new is come. All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore, Christ's ambassadors, as though God was making this appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who has no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might be the righteousness of God

2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-15 and 2 CORINTHIANS 13: 5, 11

Now he who provides seed to the sower and bread to for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you may be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service you perform is

not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to Gd. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise you for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ and of your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith; test yourself. Do you not realize that Christ is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test. Finally, brothers and sisters, goodbye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the love of God and peace will be with you.