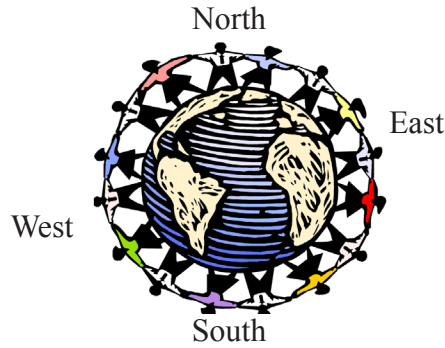


Celebrating Our Differences



Building Community

Song Reflection: Ground of All Being *(Jan Novotka)*

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12

The body is one and has many members, but all members, many though they are, are one body; so it is with Christ. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members share its joy. You are then the Body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it.

The First Letter to the Corinthians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections

There is an ambiguity about love that resists common sense: In seeking the good of the other, one finds one's own good. Intuition would suggest that we take care of ourselves first and if there is anything or any time left over, then we turn to others. But Paul supposes that one's good is not achievable apart from the well-being of others in the body of Christ to which all belong. So there is a circularity to love, starting from God's love of us, which love renews us and remakes us whole, and moving until it gains expression toward others as a way of responding in thankfulness to God's love. In that sense, love cannot be held; it cannot be seized; it is realized fully only in its being shared with someone else. We who have experienced God's love, honor and relish that love most completely only in the sharing of it with others. So, to look after the interest of others is inescapably to benefit all persons in the community and therefore to benefit oneself.

(J.Paul Sampley)

The Reality of Diversity

WHAT WE ARE IS DIVERSE . . . All of us in this society, all of us in our global village live different lives. Diversity is our reality. It takes intense effort and constant vigilance ... in order to preserve the appearance of homogeneity, a homogeneity that neither reflects the real lives of people nor the radical inclusivity of the kingdom . . .

To preserve the fiction of homogeneity, many people must be excluded, others must be silenced, and still others must be threatened or socialized into obedience Recent calls to our institutions to adopt a more global understanding of their tasks are really admissions of the rampant narrowness that always underlie an ideology of sameness

The Christian tradition has been global from the beginning . . . the denial of diversity will cease and all the energy, money, and time devoted for so long to preserving the illusion of sameness can now be turned to really listening and understanding each other at last, to really loving our very different neighbors, to really embodying the radical inclusivity of the kingdom.

(Mary Ann Tolbert, Reconstituting the World)

- * *What are the blessings of differences? What are the costs?*
- * *Can we allow people to be different without expecting them to be like us?*

* *Do you believe that all is holy, all is one?
If so, how does that affect the way you live your life?*

Prayer for the Human Family

*Creator God,
You have made all of us.
Red, yellow, brown, white and black,
tall and short, fat and thin,
rich and poor, young and old,
all your children.
Teach us to cooperate rather than to compete,
to respect rather than to revile,
to forgive rather than to condemn.
Jesus turned from no one.
May we learn, like Him, to be open
to share of the Divine
that you have implanted in each of your daughters and sons.
May we be a bond of love
that will really make a reality
the sisterhood and brotherhood in which we profess to believe.
Amen*

