



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 25, 2021

The Communion of the Loved

by Mr. Daniel H. Wilcox

1 John 3:16-24

3:16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us--and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

3:17 How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

3:18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

3:19 And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him

3:20 whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

3:21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God;

3:22 and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

3:23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

3:24 All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

A man dated a beautiful woman who lived a very privileged life. He had enough money to provide for her and their life together as they became engaged in an adoring communion. A few weeks later, the man was partially paralyzed in an accident. She took care of him for several months, proving to be a loving, faithful companion. She sold her things to provide for them. She sacrificed her privilege because of her love for him.

Here in 1 John, we are reminded that Jesus Christ died and arose because of God's love for us. God through Jesus Christ chose to rescue humanity by the cruelty of Calvary and the hope of the

Resurrection. This love changed our estrangement to communion by the shedding of blood and secured our relationship with the Almighty through a faith in Jesus Christ and His name. We believe in both the crucifixion and resurrection as our conviction and conversion. Therefore, we are led to love one another as Christ loved us affirming John 15:13 that the greater love is to give oneself for the benefit of others.

Let us obey the commandment of Jesus Christ by imitating the sacrificing love of our Lord. Our love for each other forms the basis for communion and the bond of community. May our emulating love engender holy communion in humanity.

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—Reflecting on the scripture, share a time/instance when you loved others or felt loved by others? How did this experience make you feel or direct you?

PRAY:

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people; Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Ghost, lives and reigns, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Adaption from The Book of Common Prayer

ACT: During the Easter season, make an act of sacrificial love for others. Journal your experience and reflect on your journey through Eastertide and toward Pentecost. In this Eastertide Season, do what you can to protect the health of others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prayerfully considering getting the vaccine when it is available—See: <http://www.amechealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

Song: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
AMEC Hymnal, #455

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find the promised rest.
Take away our love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.
4. Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.