

## Lenten Devotional March 12, 2018

### Scripture

#### 1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. <sup>15</sup>I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup>The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup>Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. <sup>18</sup>Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? <sup>19</sup>What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup>No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. <sup>21</sup>You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup>Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? <sup>23</sup>“All things are lawful,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. <sup>24</sup>Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. <sup>25</sup>Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, <sup>26</sup>for “the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s.” <sup>27</sup>If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. <sup>28</sup>But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—<sup>29</sup>I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience? <sup>30</sup>If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks? <sup>31</sup>So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup>Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, <sup>33</sup>just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. <sup>11:1</sup>Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

### Devotional

#### The Rev. Dr. Cathy Brall, Director of Field Education

For many years I subscribed to a monthly newsletter, *Nutrition Action*, because of its thorough research on the sourcing, processing, packaging, and marketing that contribute to the hidden risks or long-term benefits of the food we encounter in grocery stores and restaurants. Reading *Nutrition Action* educated me about the multiple dimensions of the food choices I faced, thus leading me to ponder the complex web of relationships belied in the simple bumper-sticker phrase, “You are what you eat.”

In a similar vein through this passage from 1 Corinthians, Paul writes to encourage the Corinthian Christians to consider their own ‘nutritional’ actions. He exhorts them to remember the deeper significance of the bread and wine they bless and share when they gather. It is a sharing in Christ to feed them spiritually and join them together as one body such that they are becoming what they eat. If they (and we, too!) become more Christ-like through this meal, then actions and attitudes ought gradually to grow to reflect those that Jesus exhibited in his earthly life. Thus Paul asks them to take God and others into consideration when they are making their choices. They are to seek the advantage of the other, accept the hospitality that others offer to them, and, perhaps most importantly, eat, drink, and do all things to the glory of God.

What would it mean for us to seek someone else’s advantage in our food choices? Do we take into account the wages and working conditions of those who gather and produce our food or those who prepare and serve us in restaurants? Is our food sustainably grown or sourced? Do we eat hastily and mindlessly to feed our urges or “partake with thankfulness” for every good gift God provides? Are we

mindful about giving and working toward eradicating famine and hunger, locally and systemically? Might we take the time to invite someone to share a meal with us and graciously partake of the hospitality the other will offer us by their very presence? In this season of fasting, may we partake of those nutritional actions that would truly benefit us and the reign of God's justice and provision for all people.

**Prayer**

Gracious God, giver of all good gifts, help us to eat thankfully, while recognizing that all things come from you. Help us to eat wisely and responsibly, that our food choices may satisfy our nutritional needs and not cause harm to those who procure, produce, or provide the items we consume. Finally, God, in your great mercy, keep us mindful of those who have little or nothing to eat this day. Through the Holy Spirit may we reach out and serve them as Christ came to feed and serve us. Amen.