

## **Lent Devotional March 28, 2020**

### **Scripture**

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

*1 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, 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, 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.*

### **Devotional**

#### **The Rev. Dr. William M. Paul '59, Pastoral Ministry (1996)**

After 60 years of ministry, I am convinced: nothing matters more than genuine divine and human love. This is the claim of 1 Corinthians 13.

I wonder what the world would be like today if, from our first-century beginnings, Christians had more faithfully reflected the grace of God's unconditional love offered to all—and included friends, non-Christians, and even the foes of Christian faith. Sadly, such has not been the case.

One tragic example of the church's failure happened in the year 1099. That year the European Christian Crusaders, in one day's battle to recapture Jerusalem, slaughtered an estimated 25,000 Moslems and Jews (*Archaeology Magazine*, Nov./Dec. 2018).

When fully grasped and faithfully embraced, the scriptural claim that God "so loved the world" and Jesus' command to love our neighbors, including our enemies, are alone what will transform life on our precious planet earth. It will be the gift of all gifts for all people of every race, class, faith, and nation.

I wonder what our world would have been like if, from the beginning, Christians had taken more seriously the command to love all our neighbors, near and far, both friends and enemies. What if every follower of Jesus had become—and today became—a walking, talking, and loving instrument of God's grace in the lives of all who crossed our paths?

If our world is ever to experience lasting peace and harmony, we Christians must more fully and faithfully embrace the truth that our God "so loved the world" and calls us to do the same. If you have received God's love, you will want to share it and devote yourself, body, mind, and spirit, to reflect that love in all you say and do.

### **Prayer**

O God, whose love for us is transforming and forever, help us to embrace and share it with all those who cross our paths as neighbors. Help us also to contribute to peace, justice, and a love that has the power

to transform the world and bring harmony and redemption to all, both near and far. In the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. Amen.