

## **“Faithful Together”**

Mark 12:28b-31; I Corinthians 12:4-14 – Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn  
Vista La Mesa Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), La Mesa, California – April 28, 2024  
Consecration Sunday

*Holy God, bless the speaking and the hearing of these words, that we might offer our whole selves in love to you and serve our neighbors in Christ’s name. Amen.*

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One of the greatest gifts of scripture is how it can be simple and complex at the same time. In fact, I would say the same is true for our faith. At one level, it is simple and clear: Love God. But when we dig in just a little deeper, layers upon layers of meaning are exposed. The whole is made up of many parts. Love God, with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength. Love God, and love your neighbor. Be the church; be the Body of Christ, which is one but has many members. The Lord our God is one. And it’s Christ Jesus who showed us how the many members of the Body can work together to share God’s love. The Lord our God is one, and it’s the one Spirit who activates the many gifts that we bring together to faithfully be the Church that Jesus has called into service.

It's enough to make your head spin. (Or is that your soul reeling?). But if we take a breath, it doesn’t have to be overwhelming, because somewhere within ourselves, we know this is just how the world is. Nothing is just one thing; everything is made up of smaller parts, and is itself part of a larger whole. So it is with us. So it is with the Church. So it is, dare we even say, with God? And all those parts are

moving, if as Paul writes, “each part is working properly,” in the movement that is reality. It could seem intimidating, like some giant machine that seems in danger of overheating or running off the rails. But perhaps, instead, we could think of it as the dance of life. Because life is what that movement is. Life is what is happening when the parts are interacting – whether they are the parts of your being, your heart, soul, mind and strength, or the parts of the Body of Christ. Life is what is happening when the parts are working properly, so that the Body can build itself up in love. It’s when the parts stop moving that we need to worry.

The Intentions Offering that comes with our stewardship campaign this year invited you into an exercise of reflection. You are invited to consider how you are engaging the different aspects of your being in your faith life. Are all parts functioning? Is anything being neglected and left to atrophy? And beyond your own being, you are invited to consider how your contributions can help the Body build itself up in love. Because your part is essential; your presence makes a difference.

This is a lot of words to get at something rather mysterious. As we move into the moment God has set in front of us, we’re going to need more than words. We need to give our spirits room to commune with the creative Spirit of God. So let’s take some time to let these truths settle into our bodies. I invite you to join me in some arm movements as we open ourselves to what the Spirit is teaching us about how all these parts fit together as the whole. I know some of you won’t be entirely comfortable waving your arms around, but I want you to try. Don’t do anything that

hurts, but see what you can do, and what your body can teach you about living out your faith with your whole being.

- Jesus teaches us to love God. We raise our arms up, though we know God is in every direction.
- Jesus teaches us to love our neighbors. We open our arms to our sides.
- Jesus teaches us to love God with all our hearts. We cross our hands over our chests.
- And with all our souls. We circle our hands in front of us, stirring our breath.
- And with all our minds. We raise our hands to our heads.
- And with all our strength. We grab hold of the task and lift it up.
- Paul invites us to share the gifts the Spirit has given us. We extend our hand in offering.
- Paul invites us to drink of the Spirit, to receive her blessings. We bring our hand in to accept those gifts.
- Paul invites us to do all this together. We reach our hands out to one another, perhaps joining hands, perhaps touching finger tips, perhaps just extending toward one another in a connection of love and gratitude.

I wonder if any of that reminded you of the motions of “take, bless, break, give” that we remembered Jesus doing with the bread a couple weeks ago, that we remember Jesus doing with the bread every week. Our faith is not a still thing; it is in

motion. Up and out. In and through. The Spirit of the Risen Christ is alive and moving, and we are invited to be part of that movement, together. As whole beings, as the whole body, as one small part of the movement of God in the world.

This is a day of consecration. This is a season of commitment. God is inviting you to bring your whole self, to help make this body whole. Nobody is asking you to know exactly how to do all the things that need to be done. Nobody is asking you to give something you do not have. Rather, what we need is you, particularly you and all that you particularly are. That is what God wants to work with. That is what God wants to add into the mixture that will become something new. That is what God wants to consecrate.

We share our intentions together this day as an act of worship, because we know that without the Spirit activating them, they will remain lifeless wishes. We bring them here and ask the Spirit to stir them all together into a beautiful whole. We commit our resources, our talents, our time, our energy. We commit to showing up, to being present with and for one another. We commit to being faithful together, to loving God and loving our neighbors, with all that we are. Hallelujah and Amen.