

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Spiritual Practice to cultivate Compassion, one of the eight pillars of joy.

5:30 p.m., Sunday, April 10, 2022

Jonesborough Presbyterian Church

(As you enter, please light a candle and place it by the Christ Candle.)

Gathering music

Welcome

Chant

“Live in Charity”

Text comes from an 8th century Latin hymn
associated with the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday.

Music by Jacques Berthier

Live in charity and steadfast love.

Live in charity; God will dwell with you.

Scripture

Matthew 22:35-39

[A] lawyer asked [Jesus] a question to test him.³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”³⁷ He said to him, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 15:13-14

¹³ Now when Jesus heard [about the death of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

Silent Reflection

Meditation Compassion Meditation from *The Book of Joy* (pages 337-340)

There is probably no word that the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop use more when describing the qualities worth cultivating than *compassion*. In short, the Dalai Lama feels that educating our children to have more compassion is the single most important thing we can do to transform our world. But we do not need to wait for the next generation to grow up before we can start to experience the benefits of compassion. Indeed, cultivating compassion for even ten minutes a day, the Dalai Lama said, can lead to twenty-four hours of joy. Expanding our circle of concern is essential for both our well-being as well as that of our world. This practice is adapted from the Compassion Cultivation Training program. (337-338)

Centering: Sit comfortably, resting your hands on your legs or in your lap. Close your eyes and take several long breaths. Pay attention to your breath staying in the present moment.

1. **Think of someone you love very much, a relative or friend or even a pet.**
Try to either see their face in your mind's eye or feel their presence, and notice how your heart feels when you think of them.
2. **Feel whatever arises.** If you feel warmth, tenderness, or affection, stay with these feelings. If not. Just stay with the thought of your loved one.
3. **Silently say the following lines.**
 - *May you be free from suffering.*
 - *May you be healthy.*
 - *May you be happy.*
 - *May you find peace and joy.*
4. **Breath in, and as you breathe out imagine a warm light coming from the center of your heart,** carrying your love to your loved one, and bringing them peace and joy.
5. **Rejoice in the thought of your loved one's happiness.**
6. **Now remember when this person was having a difficult time.**
7. **Notice what it feels like to experience their pain.** Does your heart ache? Do you have a feeling of unease in your stomach? Or a desire to help? Simply notice the feelings and stay with them.
8. **Silently offer the following phrases:**
 - *May you be free from suffering.*
 - *May you be healthy.*
 - *May you be happy.*
 - *May you find peace and joy.*
9. **Imagine that a warm light emerges from the center of your heart and touches the person you have in mind, easing their suffering.** Finish with the heartfelt wish that they be free of suffering.
10. **Now, think of a time when you experienced great difficulty and suffering – when you were a child, or perhaps even now.**
11. **Place your hand on your heart and notice feelings of warmth, tenderness, and caring toward yourself.**
12. **Reflect on the fact that just like all people, you want to be happy and free of suffering.**
13. **Silently offer the following phrases:**
 - *May I be free from suffering.*
 - *May I be healthy.*
 - *May I be happy.*
 - *May I find peace and joy.*

- 14. Now, imagine someone you neither like nor dislike**, someone you might see frequently at work or at the store but do not have strong positive or negative feelings toward.
- 15. Reflect on the fact that just like all people, this person wants to be happy and free of suffering.**
- 16. Imagine this person being faced with suffering – in conflict with a loved one or experiencing despair or grief.** Allow your heart to feel warmth, tenderness, and caring for this person and an urge to help them.
- 17. Now silently offer the following phrases:**
 - *May you be free from suffering.*
 - *May you be healthy.*
 - *May you be happy.*
 - *May you find peace and joy.*
- 18. Now, reflect on the fact that everyone on the planet has the fundamental desire to be happy and to be free of suffering.**
- 19. Fill your heart with the desire that all be free of suffering, perhaps even someone with whom you have a difficult relationship, and silently repeat these phrases.**
 - *May all beings be free from suffering.*
 - *May all beings be healthy.*
 - *May all beings be happy.*
 - *May all beings find peace and joy.*
- 20. Allow your feelings of compassion and concern to fill your heart, and feel the warmth, tenderness, and caring.** Radiate this feeling of compassion out to the world.

Prayer

By J. Philip Newell in *Celtic Treasure* (page 186)

You have shown us the way of compassion, O Christ.
You have shown us the heart of kindness.
Awaken the depths of compassion in us
that we may be alive to one another's suffering.
Awaken the heart of kindness in us
that we may be truly alive. Amen.

Chant

“Live in Charity”

(Please leave in silence.)

Resources used in preparing tonight's spiritual practice

Chants

Robert Gass with Kathleen Brehony, *Chanting: Discovering Spirit in Sound* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), ix.

St Bartholomew's Church, "Taizé: Ubi caritas." YouTube, September 10, 2020,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9zvDBPkgOk>

Text: Latin, 8th century; English translation Taizé Community, 1991, "Live in Charity."
Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal, 2013, #205.

Compassion Meditation

Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Abrams, *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* (New York: Avery, 2016), 337-340.

Prayer

J. Philip Newell, *Celtic Treasure: Daily Scriptures and Prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 186.