

It Takes a Community

Scripture Reading — 1 John 4:11-18

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:12 —

On the cross God showed us his love in a powerful way. But the fact is that we didn't see that demonstration of love with our own eyes. We have to rely on the eyewitness testimony of those who were there that day. It is through the centuries- old community of faith that we know about the power of the cross.

And in that community we come to believe in God's love, because it takes the love of fellow believers to give us a real- life experience of God's love. "No one has ever seen God," says John, except when God is present in the flesh. He did that in Christ, of course. And God also becomes present when he "lives in us," Christ's body, the church. God does this through his Spirit in us.

Indeed, "if we love one another, God lives in us." This means we can experience God fully only in community. Of course, we can also have solitary moments of God-consciousness. But it is in community where we grow to know the fullness of God's love. "If we love one another ... his love is made complete in us."

In the context of a loving church community we can change and become like Christ, because that is where the full power of the cross is experienced.

Are you part of a church community?

Prayer

O Lord, we must confess that our churches are not always the communities of love they should be. Help us to love one another as you have loved us. Amen.

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