

A LIVING SACRIFICE

THE LESSON: ROMANS 12

The epistle to the Romans is generally viewed as the Apostle Paul's masterpiece. In it he presents a clear explanation of our salvation: *God is righteous. All humanity – both Jews and Gentiles – are sinners, destined to die. We can be made right with God by faith in Christ Jesus because of his death on the cross for us – an act that was motivated by his love for us. Our belief in Christ frees us from sin and death. Christians have become children of God, destined for glory...*

But then we come to an important word: “therefore”. This means that everything Paul has just written has further implications. Because of all that he's just finished writing about, Paul wants his readers to know how this has an impact on the way we live our lives each day.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn't make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time quietly considering what it means to be a living sacrifice: mind, body, and spirit. Close with this adapted version of the collect for the fourth Sunday after Easter: ***O Almighty God: You alone can order my unruly will and affections: Enable me to love what you command, and to desire what you promise, so that in this world of constant change, my heart will be fixed upon what brings true joy; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.***

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O Almighty God, who alone cast order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, BCP PAGE 194)

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ROMANS 12: **NOT CONFORMED, BUT TRANSFORMED**

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect...

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.