Devotional Reflection, Thursday, July 26, 2026
Proper 11, the week of the eighth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Welcoming as Christ Welcomes Us

Key phrases for reflection from today's reading:
7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

You will find the full text of today's epistle reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 797)
AM Psalm 50; PM Psalm [59, 60] or 66, 67
Joshua 9:3-21; Rom. 15:1-13; Matt. 26:69-75

Today we celebrate the Feast of John Cassian. (See below.)

David's Reflections

Walking through a nursery or a garden brimming with colorful flowers of various types can prove overstimulating. I usually want to take all of them home, and I resist deciding among the choices. Today's epistle feels like that to me—so many images and ideas that ask for attention. Which flower do I pause to savor and reflection on?

Verse 7 reads, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." Now, there's a mouth full and a heart full in a few words. In fact, the more one chews on this the larger it gets. Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. Hhmm!!! and ahem!!!

I find Henri Nouwen's words penetrating and poignant.
*Hospitality. . . means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free. . . .Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.**

For Paul's readers, the lack of space existed between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Their styles of life and their cultures differed so dramatically that even celebrating Holy Communion at the same table proved a challenge. Read Galatians 2 to get the sense of that aspect of the issue.

With what groups or individuals do such strains exist for you and for me? In 2003 I found myself in uncomfortable moments with laity in parishes in The Diocese of Virginia who had taken a dissenting stance on the ordination of an openly homosexual bishop. I have felt grief that Christians with so much in common in terms of faith and mission cannot continue receiving eucharist together over an issue like sexual orientation, which is not a central tenant of the faith.

Then, the the pandemic—we had the spectacle of mask wearers and non-wearers squaring off against each other in faith communities.

Imagine Jesus present in that individual or that group that stretches your capacity for hospitality. How would you treat those persons or that individual then? How we treat those persons is how we treat Christ IN those persons.

"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you." How would my life change if I were more resolved to extend to others the same space-creating welcome that Christ extends to me?

* Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Doubleday, 1975), p. 51.

Collect of the Day, Proper 11, the eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask

and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 231)

Today we celebrate the Feast of John Cassian, abbott at Marseilles (died ca 435 CE).
http://satucket.com/lectionary/john_cassian.htm
https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/1002/02/28/100623-venerable-john-cassian-the-roman

Collect of the Feast of John Cassian
Holy God, whose beloved Son Jesus Christ blessed the pure in heart: Grant that we, together with your servant John Cassian and in union with his prayers, may ever seek the purity with which to behold you as you are; one God in Trinity of persons now and for ever. *Amen*

For Our Enemies
O God, the Father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice to truth; deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 816)

A Prayer for Light
O Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning, and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down: Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 110)

A Collect for Mission
O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 257)

Daily Office Epistle, Romans 15:1-13

15:1We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. 3For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' 4For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name'; 10and again he says, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people'; 11and again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him'; 12and again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.'

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

<u>Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer</u>
Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*