



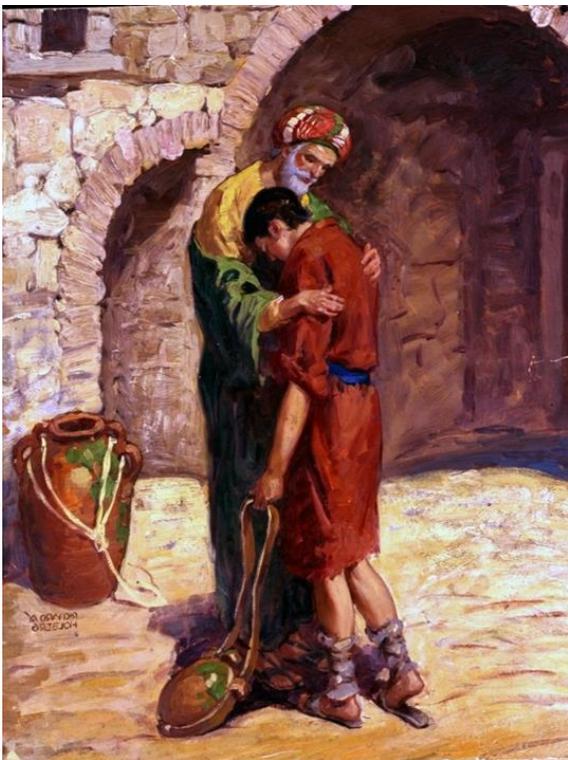
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY —September 4 & Beyond

"Useful for God's Reign"



Paul's Epistle to Philemon is considered by most biblical scholars as one of Paul's indisputable writings. It is quite singular in its theme, and has been studied by Christian writers and apologists since patristic times.

The letter is written by Paul in prison and is addressed to Philemon, a wealthy Christian of Colossae who had a church in his home (he might have been a bishop, according to some commentators) and to two other persons connected to this household.

The main theme of the letter has to do with Onesimus, a name that means *useful*. Paul is sending this letter to Philemon with Onesimus, who--according to several interpreters, taking into account the content of the letter--was a former slave of Philemon's who had escaped, and probably stolen some money from him.

Onesimus had come into contact with Paul in prison and had been converted to Christianity, becoming a faithful servant of Christ and a good helper to Paul in his mission of spreading the Good News of Salvation.

Now Paul sends Onesimus back to his owner, and he pleads to Philemon that he considers him a brother in the faith, and not a slave any longer. Paul even offers to pay Philemon any money that Onesimus might have taken from him.

At that time, slavery was an intrinsic part of the fabric of society, and slaves were considered and treated as subhuman creatures. They were regarded as private property, and the punishment for escaping could be merciless, including death.

By sending Onesimus back to Philemon, Paul is trusting that Philemon's conviction as a follower of Christ has given him a totally different perspective in relation to the intrinsic dignity of every human being, including slaves.

Before escaping, Onesimus may have carried out several domestic tasks for Philemon; however, using an interesting play of words Paul declares to him that "formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and me."

This obviously refers to Onesimus's value as an agent of Christ's Way of Love, as a new convert to the faith.

The letter deals with forgiveness and reconciliation, and appeals to Philemon's Christian love in understanding how Paul may have simply kept Onesimus for himself, but instead of doing so, he decides to let Philemon take a step toward true forgiveness, and receive his former slave as a true brother and collaborator in the building up of God's Reign.

Paul actually hints in the letter that he would like to keep Onesimus with him as his collaborator, but he insists on putting the decision in Philemon's hands.

As the person through whom Philemon received the Christian faith, Paul could have used his authority to simply command that he does what he is asking, but Paul prefers to ask him in the name of Christ, whose love they now share even with Onesimus as brothers in the faith.

Paul's last words in the letter clearly express what a deep satisfaction he derives from the certitude that Christ's love in Philemon will not disappoint him in his expectations. He ends by saying to him, "Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ."

When Christ's unconditional love for all can work reconciliation and forgiveness in our hearts; when guided by His love we come to the realization of how equally dignified and beloved we all are in His eyes, then our hearts are truly refreshed in the living waters of His unending love, and we become preciously useful for His reign.

Fr. Carlos E. Expósito. Rector

Readings for The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Philemon 13:1-20 Psalm 1 Luke 14:25-33

CALENDAR

Note: We are worshipping in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10am. Tuesday Noon Mass and Friday Morning Prayer are held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

SUNDAY Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation every second and fourth Sunday of the month at

11:30am Topic: Communicating with God Rector's Study
A Spanish Mass will be held on the first, second, fourth (and fifth)
Sundays each month at 1pm. Everyone is welcome.

TUESDAY Noon Mass in St. Mary Chapel

THURSDAY Spanish Class 1:00pm to 3:00pm in the Flower Room. Taught by Fr.
Carlos

FRIDAY 10:00am Morning Prayer in St. Mary Chapel

SUNDAY The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

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OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

www.allsaintschurch.org