

LIVING FAITH CHAPEL

Communion of Saints: Living Together Part I

Introduction

- Recap of previous class – What It Is Not
 - American Individualism and the American Church
 - Compare with a pre-modern German community of saints
 - Christian community not an ideal, but a divine reality
- Today:
 - A spiritual, not a human reality
 - Ministering to one another

A Spiritual, Not a Human Reality

- The basis of all spiritual reality is the clear, manifest Word of God in Jesus Christ (1 John 1:5-7)
- The basis of all human reality is the dark turbid urges and desires of the human mind (Mark 7:21)
- Spiritual community v. Human community
- *Within the spiritual community there is never, nor in any way, any 'immediate' relationship of one to another, whereas human community expresses a profound, elemental, human desire for community, for immediate contact with other human souls, just as in the flesh there is the urge for physical merger with other flesh.*
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Struggle of humans for self-justification (Luke 9:46)

Ministering to One Another

- Holding One's Tongue
 - Each individual is prohibited from speaking covertly about someone else, even under the cloak of help and good will (Ps 50:20-21; Jas 4:11-12; Eph 4:29)

- Meekness

This is the highest and most profitable lesson, truly to know and to despise ourselves. To have no opinion of ourselves, and to think always well and highly of others, is great wisdom and perfection.

- Thomas a Kempis

- Treating others as higher than yourself (Rom 12:3; Rom 12:16)
- Putting neighbor's will and honor before your own
- Consider self the greatest of all sinners (1 Tim 1:15)

- Listening

- Love for God begins with listening to His Word
- God loves us by lending us his ear
- Listening can often be a better service than speaking, contributing something

- Helpfulness

- No one is too good for the lowliest service
- Be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God (*e.g.* – Luke 10:31)
- Our schedule is not our own to manage, but allow it to be arranged by God