

SPIRITual commUNITY

Last week

Ethos and community

- We are to be **PEACEMAKERS** as part of a divinely designed and diverse spiritual family.
- We are not to divide the Body of Christ with **DOGMATIC** ethos on paradoxical issues.

This week

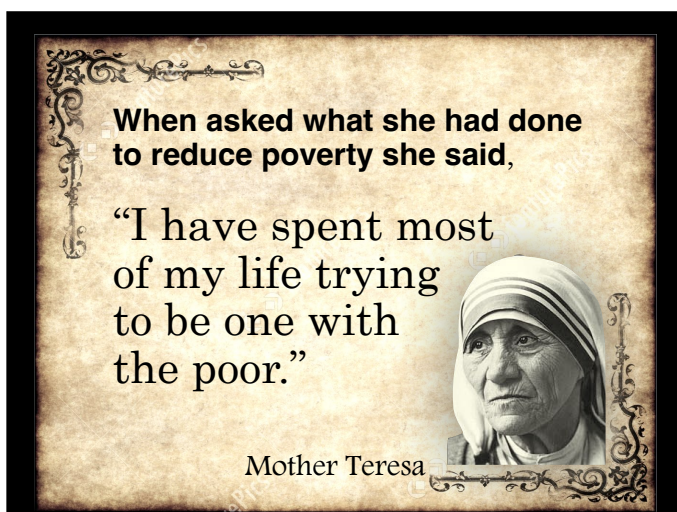
Empathy and community

- This should be a **CORE** element in personal character and church culture.



Our pain comes not so much from our being broken people in a broken world as it does from the sense of isolation that brokenness creates.

Isolation is the essence of hell.
Empathy removes isolation.




Empathy is an important attribute of God.

Isaiah 53:4

“Surely he has **borne our griefs and carried our sorrows**”

Hebrews 4:15

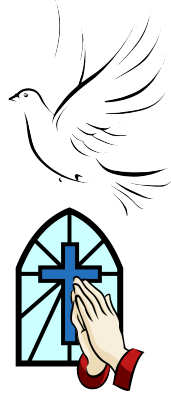
“For we do not have a high priest who cannot **sympathize with our weaknesses**, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.””



The Spirit's ministry is Empathetic.

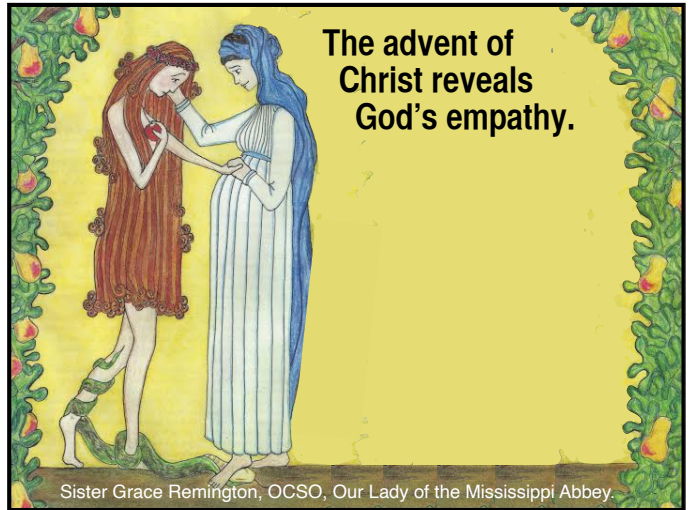
John 14:16

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever"



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The advent of Christ reveals God's empathy.



Sister Grace Remington, OCSO, Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey.

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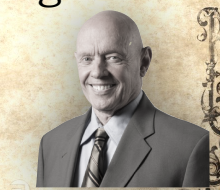
Psalm 23

"1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death, I **fear no evil,**
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they **comfort** me.
5 You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies; You have anointed
my head with oil; my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow
me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

9

"When you listen with empathy to another person, you give that person psychological air."

Stephen Covey



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Luke 6:31

"Treat others the same way you want them to treat you."

Empathy is the front door to the house of Biblical ethics.

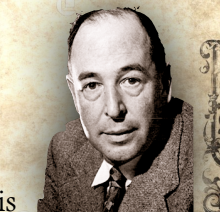
To enter by any other way is to never quite be at home there.

It is a sign of the Image of God in all humans.

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"You don't need religion to have morals. If you can't determine right from wrong then you lack empathy, not religion."

C.S. Lewis



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Golden Rule

That nature only is good
when it shall not do unto
another whatever is not good
for it's own self.



What is hateful to
you, do not do to
your fellow man.
That is the entire
Law; all the rest is
commentary.



Hurt not others with
that which pains
yourself.



This is the sum of duty:
do naught to others that
which if done to thee
would cause pain.

Do unto others as you
would have them do
unto you.

No one of you is a believer
until he desires for his
brother what he desires for
himself.

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both
IN his death and
IN his life.

Isaiah 53:4
“Surely he has
borne our griefs
and carried our
sorrows,”

Galatians 6:2
“Bear one
another’s burdens,
and so fulfill the
law of Christ.”

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John 8:32

“know the truth, and **the truth will set you free.**”

Ephesians 4

“15 but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the **growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**”

Speaking truth in an empathetic loving way
is a spiritually liberating, unifying, and
peacemaking path to building individuals
as well as churches to spiritual maturity.

15

John 8:32

“and you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”

1 Peter 3

“15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with **gentleness and reverence**; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile **your good behavior** in Christ may be put to shame.”

**Healing truths are heard unless
the messenger's behavior
drowns them out.**

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Philippians 2

“5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

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Philippians 2

“5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,”

1. Empathy is from the inside out.

A function of both **head & heart**

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

2. Empathy puts “self” aside.

Except as it **identifies** with others

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7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

3. Empathy takes the initiative to lay “self” aside.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

4. Empathy identifies with others on the deepest level.

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Charles Dickens

From apathy to empathy through listening

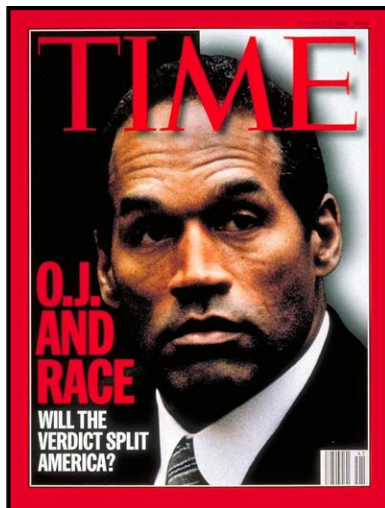


Roger Ebert
(Film critic)



“Movies that encourage empathy are more effective than those that objectify problems.”

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May what looked like an unexpected verdict hold an unexpected gift to a country that lacks empathy?

Was this a “come to Jesus” moment for many white people?

Could it be that the Way of the Cross was again bringing a message for those who had ears to hear?

Does social justice start with empathy?

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Cultivating empathy

1. Get comfortable with your own feelings.

2. Show up

- watch your body language (posture)
- give feedback of what your heart hears
- validate emotions

3. Listen to understand

- don't rush to evaluate or solve a problem
- ask searching questions
- affirm emotions

4. Respond with personal vulnerability.

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The listener's prayer

Lord, you have given me ears to hear.

Help me know how to bless You with them.

You have given me Your Spirit.

Help me listen to Your Spirit more than mine.

You have given me contact with people You love. Help me communicate your love with my ears and my tongue.

When I don't feel empathy,
help me listen until I do.

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Hard Questions



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