

A NOTE TO PARENTS

"[May] Christ ... dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love ... [may you] know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:17, 19

Today's selection from Ephesians was probably composed for liturgical use—that is, as a formal prayer, blessing, and hymn of praise. It is a resounding affirmation of the amazing claim of the Gospel: that the Risen Lord continues to live, not only at the right hand of God but also in each one of us.

Throughout history, great leaders and teachers have drawn followers and inspired movements. Many of them have continued to be influential after their deaths; it can be said of them that "their spirit lives on" in their followers and in the continuation of their teachings or their work. Superficially, this might seem to be what Christians mean by claiming that Christ dwells in our hearts through faith. But in fact, our scriptures tell a very different story.

Jesus did God's work, but he had no program and no platform. He asked his followers to imitate him in doing God's work—a mission which, he said, was simple to understand, though hard to do. He promised that he, personally, was able to set people free from guilt, fear, selfish competitiveness, and even death. When he passed through death, his followers claimed not that his *message* was still alive but that *he, personally*, was alive—in a new, permanent way. They drew new members to their company not in order to advance a program or platform or struggle or ideology, but to bring more human beings into relationship with that living One who is still, even now, able to set us free from guilt, fear, selfish competitiveness, and the power of death.

This relationship is meant to thrive in community—the community that we call the Church, the Body of Christ. Our spiritual food, the bread and wine that embody that new life for us, is also called the Body of Christ, and it can be blessed and shared only in the company of others—others who, like us, yearn to be filled with all the fullness of God.

© 2006 by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard. All rights reserved.

THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

203 - 624-2520 • www.the-sunday-paper.com

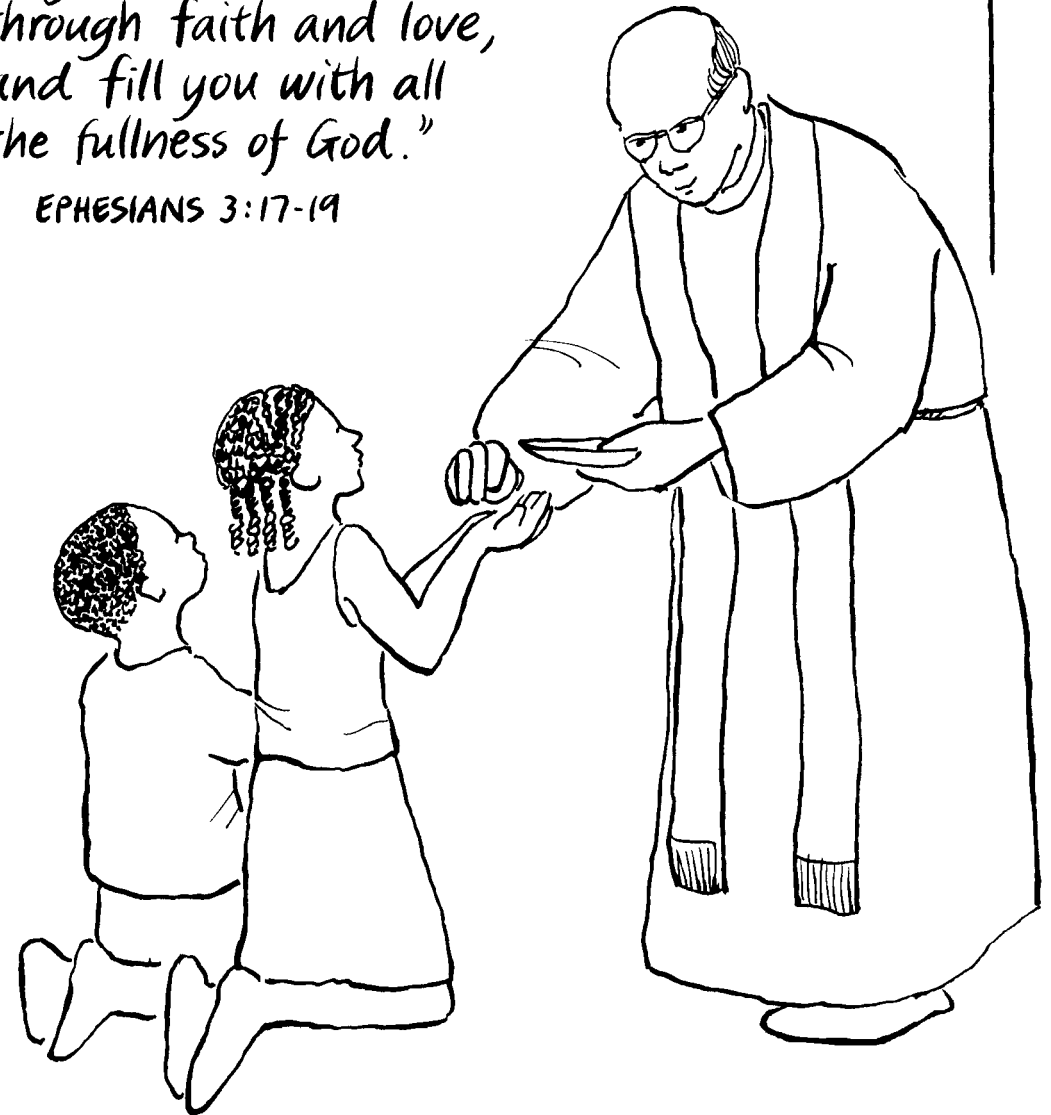


THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B
PROPER 12
TRACKS 1 and 2

*"May Christ live in your hearts
through faith and love,
and fill you with all
the fullness of God."*

EPHESIANS 3:17-19



THE BIBLE SAYS THAT JESUS LIVES IN US.

Jesus came to live with us. He was born and grew up.



He healed the sick and fed the hungry.



When he died and rose again, he gave us his Spirit to live in us.



He feeds us with his own life, in bread and wine.



Jesus did wonderful things and showed God's power. But his work did not end when he died and rose again and went to be with God.

Jesus gave his Spirit to live in us. He is alive in our hearts and in his people, the Church.

Draw some people who have Jesus's life in them. What are they doing?