

# Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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Fourth Sunday of Lent 2022

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*1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Joshua 5:9a, 10-12*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*

*Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32*

### The New You

Reflecting on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians (5:17-21), I am reminded of the importance of reconciliation. In this context, I'm not referring to the Sacrament of Penance per se. Reconciliation in the larger sense means to restore friendly relations and co-exist in harmony. In Paul's letter, his frustration is clear. There was quarreling and division among the new Christians. They were struggling to preserve their unity. Many misunderstood the importance of Jesus's death and resurrection and were reluctant to give up their immoral ways. Paul admonished them for placing too much importance on personal status and riches and encouraged them to live among the people with humility and generosity. In his words, "If anyone is in Christ, (s)he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

Paul's words to the Corinthians are relevant today. Relationships are broken or severely strained by opposing beliefs and perspectives. There are growing racial tensions. Homeless individuals and camps are ubiquitous. COVID has kept us away from friends, family, colleagues, and strangers. There is increased suffering and need all around us, but we've been "living in our heads," which has kept us from truly engaging with others' experiences and needs. Within our own families, among our neighbors, in our local communities, throughout the country, and beyond our borders, there is a palpable need for reconciliation and the ability to co-exist in harmony.

As the world reopens, and we pray it will, Paul's message challenges us to cast off old ways and reconnect with the world around us. He urges us to reinvent ourselves and become ambassadors of Christ. There are limitless opportunities for fresh beginnings and new discoveries. This is a big part of what makes being alive remarkable. The powerful and hopeful words of St. Angela Merici move us to act: "Do something. Get moving. Be confident. Risk new things. Stick with it. Get on your knees. Then be ready for big surprises" (Angela's words, as translated by Terry Eppridge, OSU).

—Kathy Kafka  
Novato, CA