

## "In Christ" (The Arena of Interpersonal Participation)

Our living oneness with God in Christ is not experienced or expressed in isolation. To be "in Christ" is to be immersed into a family - into a living, participatory community in which we share in common with others what is far from common - the indwelling life of Christ (I Cor 12:12-14). Our experience and expression of Christ is never just for our own sakes, but for others.

Think about it - in Christ, God made room for us in His family. We were outsiders and Christ came to reconcile us (II Cor 5:19) and bring us in. In Christ, God has accepted us (Ro 15:7). We are received in a "face-to-faceness" (Jo 14:3) with no fear of rejection. In Christ, God has been good to us - generously gracing us with all we need for life and godliness (II Pet 1:3-4; Eph 1:3). In Christ, God makes intercession for us - dealing with us not according to our faults, but according to our needs (Ps 103:10; Matt 20:1-15).

In Christ, we see the truth of what it means to be God and the truth, then, of what it means to be the people of God-hospitable, accepting, good, intercessory. When we abide in Christ and abandon to Him in our communities of faith...

...We practice hospitality, we make room for strangers (Matt 25:35; Heb 13:2; I Pet 4:9). We look out for the overlooked and the left out. Through the gift of open hearts and open homes, open arms and open ears we welcome all the "others" God sends into our lives - into our worship, into our space, into our love.

...We accept one another (Ro 14:1-3; 15:7; I Thess 3:4-5). We do not judge others through the lens of our own personal preferences and convictions but rather celebrate diversity and honor one another as custom made expressions of God's life. There is even room in us for others to fall and to fail as we graciously and gently restore as we have been restored in Christ (Ga 6:1-2).

...We are good and generous to one another (Ro 15:14; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14). Since God's goodness and generosity cannot be put in the service of self-interest, we practice the presence of people as surely as we practice the presence of God - listening, encouraging, edifying one another so they may be well cared for.

...We are intercessors, instruments of redemption (I Thess 2:8; I Jo 3:16). Each for the other, we lay down our lives - our rights, our privileges, our comfort zones - in order to bring the best out of one another. We respond to flaws and faults, not to criticize, but to intercede.

This is our expression of "on earth as it is in heaven." This is bringing the unseen into the seen, making the invisible visible. This is Who Christ is... this is who we are... this is what it looks like to be in Christ with one another!

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### *Praise Reports & Prayer Requests*

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 **GREETINGS** 

No one has ever accused me of being "liturgical", of following formularies or prescribed forms of worship. I respect those who do, I just don't seem to be at home in that room of our Father's large and gracious house. However, I do hope your Easter season was a good and healthy reminder of the resurrection imperatives that are ours everyday... since everyday is resurrection Sunday for the people of God in Christ.





There is, for example, the imperative to live in a new world (II Cor 5:17) - a radical break between old and new, false and true. In our crucified, risen Savior we find the power that changes our earthborn condition - from "dead" to "deathless", from "sinner" to "saint", from "darkness" to "light" - to name only a small sampling.

Our faith is not faith that escapes the world, but one that overcomes it (I Jo 5:4-5). The "age to come" breaks through this "present evil age" and makes, for the believing Christian, every day Easter Sunday. It is imperative that we learn to live everyday in the new world of crucified, risen Life!

 **CALENDAR** 

<b>APRIL</b>	
3,10,17	CCF
12	Alachua Study
22-24	Monticello, UT (859-393-4104)
26	Ocala Study
<b>MAY</b>	
6-8	Waymart, PA (607-239-5006)
<b>JULY</b>	
8-10	Bar Harbor, ME

 **PRAISE and PRAYER** 

-  For our brothers and sisters in Christ
-  For the Crucified, Risen Power of Christ each day
-  For our Christian communities to be "one" in Christ
-  For ourselves to intercede, not merely criticize

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