

Cosmic Christ

By Rev. Todd Farnsworth

1 Corinthians 12: 12-21, 31



12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14** Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. **15** Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But in fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. **19** If they were all one part, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, but one body. **21** The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”

31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

I know you share my excitement regarding the New England Patriots getting into the Superbowl...again...but I won’t bore you with that inevitability today (we can look at it more closely next week). Another bit of stellar news **this** week was the announcement of nominees for the Oscars!

Now that is my Superbowl lineup! We've got Black Panther vs. The Favourite vs. Green Book vs. Black KKKlansman vs. Roma and Bohemian Rhapsody, Vice and, A Star Is Born....And beyond the big movie names, there are categories such as director, actor, actress. And beyond the names printed large in the titles are the costumers and set designers and sound mixing and hair and makeup folks. Each one plays an important part in bringing the whole movie to life on the screen.

And beyond the awards categories, there are the production assistants and craft services and investors and animal wranglers. And each one of them is vital to making the movie come to life.

And beyond them is...well, I think you are probably getting the gist. As Paul notes in this morning's lesson, **12** *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.* Paul understood that big undertakings were made up of smaller parts. The parts were not less important, and he wants to make that point particularly clear to his church in Corinth because they had started making up some pretty wonky categories about who was MVP or GOAT(sorry, that's for next week) in the local church. They had lifted up speaking in tongues as very important. They had lifted up prophesying as very important. Paul notes that both gifts are valuable because they all serve a common source...Jesus. He is common because within the church it is through him, through our baptism into him, that we become a part of this extraordinary undertaking known as "ministry". We become a part of a COSMIC CHRIST experience!

According to Sister Margaret Pirkl, Order of St. Francis, *“The Cosmic Christ can be defined as that aspect of God which pervades all of creation, the Christ who “fills the universe in all its parts” (Ephesians 1:23).*

For Paul, this was envisioned as an actual body that moved through the universe, connected by our common experience of baptism. He says, *“For we were all baptized by[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.* If we were to shrink those many parts of the body to fit into this room, the head might be up here where the choir is sitting. The neck over here by the stairs and the piano, The torso and arms and hands about here. The waist, legs and feet back here. It may be a little bit difficult to imagine with all of us spread out like this, but with the help of dimming the lights and a bit of Hollywood magic, I think we can better visualize the sacred networks that move between us and hold us as One.

You will notice that there are blue dots filling the room now. I’d like you to hold up your hands until you can see at least one of those dots projected onto you. I’d like you to think of those dots as the Spirit of Jesus glowing within you. The gifts you bring into the world, whether it’s an ability to crunch numbers, or create art, or play the violin, or care for other members of the body...whatever your gift or gifts, identify it and then see it in the dots on your hands.

Now notice that there are dots on the people around you. They also have gifts that make up this magnificent Body.

Notice that we are all connected by the dots that fill this room. We are all part of the Body of Christ. We are all pieces of a larger organic puzzle.

When the lights are turned on it is sometimes difficult to remember that we are connected through the Spirit of Jesus, so let's put some muscle memory on this experience.

Keeping the dots on your hands, I'd like you to try moving a little in your pew. Go from side to side but keep a dot on your hand as you go. Keep in sight the reality that you are connected to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, AND one another.

Got it?

Ok, now let's take a situation like our friends who have been sleeping in the basement this week. Between 6 and 12 men who are homeless have been sleeping in the basement since last Monday.

We have used our Christ head to think about menus for them.

We have used our Christ torso and hands to prepared food for them.

We have used our Christ legs and feet to deliver that food to them.

We have used our Christ heart to hear their stories and feel a connection to them...to see these dots on their lives when they tell us about sleeping in a car on days when the library isn't open. Or finding small jobs to buy food with when their seasonal work is shuttered by the cold.

Notice how each part moves, but each part is connected by those blue dots. We are each connected within the Cosmic Christ that Paul envisioned. And if one of these parts is hurting (toes, pretend that you got stubbed on a stone, or lost your job, or got word that a close friend has been diagnosed with cancer. Let me hear you!), the rest of the body, being connected, responds.

Head, what will you do? Remember to keep the dots in sight.

Body, arms and hands what will you do? Remember to keep the dots in sight.

Legs and foot and toe, what will you do? Remember to keep the dots in sight.

If a part of the body is crying out, we cannot ignore or pretend it is not hurting. We cannot say, "Oh, that's somebody else's problem." Likewise, we cannot decide to hurt one part of the body without affecting the whole body of Christ! Our mission in the blue dots of spirit connectivity is to think, to move, to respond with what Paul describes as "*the most excellent way!*" If you are at all familiar with chapter 13 of 1st Corinthians you will know what that way is. It is the way of LOVE. The way that brings healing. The way that builds up the body and makes it stronger, healthier, more resilient to go about its work in the world.

The season of Superbowls and Supermovies is upon us. Let's remember what gets those players to their place in the pantheon of their sport. Let us work together as a connected body, made up of many parts, united in the

spirit of Jesus Christ. Let's keep these dots in mind and move together toward that most excellent way, whether the lights are off, or on, in Jesus name. Amen.