



Lent reflection for March 20, 2024

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1 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: to the one group a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is qualified for these things? For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many, but as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God, we are speaking in Christ before God.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all, and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are qualified of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our qualification is from God, who has made us qualified to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Today's Reflection is by Kevin Devine

To read a scripture passage that deals with letters of recommendation is kind of a trip. I've spent much of the last decade searching for sustaining work and I am WELL acquainted with letters of recommendation. There's also so many other ways and methods with which you are meant to recommend yourself to the world, chiefly through social media and online presence. It's always

bothered me because the proof that's required to assert your worth in this world is generally at odds with how I strive to live. I have no inclination to boast, no urge to document everything I do and exclaim "Look at me, aren't I just amazing?"

I often wonder if it is enough to strive for a quiet existence, one that cultivates betterment of the self, improving the lives of those you love and the community in which you live.

The last section of this passage fills me with a sense of hope, although I can't say for sure why. What I take from this section is this idea that we, ourselves, our Spirit...that spirit that is part of something greater than us, is, simply enough. It is enough for us simply to be. Our qualification is inherent in our existence and that is profoundly moving.

I suppose it is a message to us to keep faith that we can live a spiritually fulfilling and loving life without pride and boastfulness. A reminder that the loudest voices in the room are not the most important and that beautiful gifts can come in unassuming packages.



Kevin is a musician and arts administrator hoping to make significant changes in his field of baroque and classical music. When he isn't working or playing the harpsichord or the hurdy-gurdy, he is interacting with every animal that crosses his path or cooking with (or for) his partner in Park Slope. Though a born and bred Californian, he is likely part bear and prefers winter weather.