

Sermon: Trinity Sunday

The Rev. Mike Wernick

May 22, 2016

Year C

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Psalm 8

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

O God... I thank you... that you have given me... a mere mortal... the strength of will to omit the Athanasian Creed from today's liturgy... there was a moment when I planned to include it... that you have not made me like other theologians... who attempt to make the incomprehensible intelligible... and the unintelligible comprehensible... that you have steered me away from Greek words... which no one understands anyway... and that you will prevent me from preaching heresy... though I will not... as one FaceBook friend suggested... show pictures of kittens instead... but that you will lead me towards Wisdom herself...

Theologian Richard Boyce writes: to find any wisdom that one might deem worthy of a capital W... one must be willing to travel to temple... synagogue... and ashram... to hear the words that the Divine has revealed to particular people within their own faith and practice... he cites a passage written by Shirley Guthrie... who herself wrote: God is not a prisoner of the Christian church... if our faith claims to speak the truth... it must have some correlation to the truth we can learn from the natural sciences... from art... philosophy... and psychology... from many disciplines found in many different places...

And indeed... today's passage from Proverbs affirms that Wisdom can be found wherever we are... on the heights... at the crossroads... beside the gates... but also in the grocery store... in the city park... or the courthouse... in our homes when we gather at table... or sit together to watch a movie on Netflix...

Boyce adds: Wisdom's fingerprints are all over God's creation... because Wisdom was there when God marked out the foundations of the earth... she was there when

everything in this world began... right beside God as a Master Worker... and God's domain knows no boundaries... neither in space... or in time...

St. Bonaventure wrote: *God is the One whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere...* and so Wisdom also resides with God at every point within creation... calling us to life... calling us to shift our perspective from microcosm to macrocosm... lifting up our eyes so we can see...

And just as the trained eye can know the architect from their building... like Frank Lloyd Wright... just as the trained ear can know the composer from hearing a particular symphony... so one trained in Wisdom... can discern whether what is true here and now... is true everywhere and always... Wisdom calls to us from the human heart... because this is where we experience her... this is where she teaches us... this is where we find God through her...

Jesus said: I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now... but when the Spirit of Truth comes... he will guide you into all the Truth...

I've said before that I really like these words... these words buy me some time... they take me off the hook of judgement... because I don't think I've been led into ALL truth... not yet... I'm still learning... not only about being a priest... about what the rubrics say... from both our perspectives... but mostly about myself... about the places I'm broken... about the questionable motives for some of the things I do... some that are so subtle a whisper would seem like a scream... about the difference between how I experience myself and how others experience me... and about how to be vulnerable enough to acknowledge... that I am sometimes afraid of being judged by you...

But in today's Gospel... the word that's translated as Truth... can also be translated as faithfulness... and that's what I try to be... in v. 24 of Proverbs... Wisdom says she was *brought forth*... [but] the Hebrew word for this also means *to whirl*... or *to dance* into

existence... and the reading from Romans tells us that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit... together... these images encourage us... as we grow in consciousness...

This journey of growth... from our small minds to the mind of Christ... was touched on by Jesus in his parable about the four kinds of soil... and how they each received the same seed differently... this journey of growth was reflected in the parable of the ten bridesmaids... some of whom could simply not share the oil of consciousness that they had developed and which lit their way... as parents... we know that there are some lessons our children must learn for themselves...

When I was a child... I spoke like a child and reasoned like a child... When I became an adult... I put an end to childish ways. But even now I know only in part... even now I see only in a mirror dimly... but when I know Wisdom fully... then I will see her face to face... and I will know the delight she feels in me and in the whole human race... faith, hope, and love abide... but the greatest of these is love...

We cannot understand the mechanics of the Trinity... and the point is not about complicated theological statements... but I think we can draw the right conclusion... one that leans in the right direction anyway... we move along The Way by embracing more and more love... that's why the greatest of these is love... because love makes us vulnerable... and vulnerability opens us up to pain... in their co-eternal mutuality... the three Persons of the Trinity have agreed to be vulnerable to each other... but this vulnerability is not a weakness... it is a sign of perfect love... and perfect love casts out fear...

Some countries try to ensure peace by creating a military deterrence... but this is only the kind of peace that the world can give... the peace that Jesus gives is the peace that comes from perfect love...

And the Trinity understands... better than we do... that Jesus' peace... the peace which passes understanding... comes from a love which knows that if I hurt you... because we are in relationship... I also hurt myself... so perfect love... casts out fear... because we know that while we are looking out for others... others are looking out for us... that others have our backs...

The three Persons of the Trinity are not codependent... the Holy Spirit does not pour God's love into our hearts so that Jesus and God will love her... the Three Persons are whole within themselves... and maintain their own identity... while they seamlessly and simultaneously and selflessly give themselves to each other... it's about the most healthy and functional love story ever... it is this to which Wisdom calls us. Holy Trinity... help us hear her call... Amen.

Mike+