

# Sermon: Holy Cross Day

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September 13, 2015

Year B  
Isaiah 45:21-25  
Psalm 98  
Philippians 2:5-11  
John 12:31-36a

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

I remember my parents being all knowing and all powerful... they knew when TV shows were on... or knew how to find out... they could allow me to stay home from school... or compel me to go... they knew when I was getting into trouble... even though I thought I was flying WAY under the radar... and I don't remember just when it happened... don't remember just when the it'll-make-you-grow-up shift occurred... but I remember my *all knowing and all powerful*... parents... becoming *human*...

*All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.*

I also remember being amazed at another kind of shift... that some people were able to think up new ideas in their heads... design them on paper... have them manufactured in a factory... ship them to a store... and then you could actually hold in your hands and use... the something they thought up... but I also sensed that there was an underlying continuity in this process... almost like the electromagnetic spectrum... different kinds of one uninterrupted flow of energy... that made all of it one whole... from start to finish...

I remember my first AM transistor radio... and feeling captivated by the wonder of it... of being able to listen to music that was being sent from somewhere in NYC... over the

river from where we lived... a signal received by this thing that someone invented... and later on there were AM/FM radios... and then FM stereo... which I looked it up began broadcasting in June 1961... and then of course you wanted stereo headphones... and so much of the technology we use and enjoy and benefit from today... from smartphones to medical imaging... has come out of the space program...

*What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*

Almost every single one of you knows about the Big Bang... an event of unimaginable energy and unimaginable brightness... the moment cosmologists believe the universe began... and the idea goes... that at some time in the future... the expansion of the universe will slow down... that the combined gravitational force of all the galaxies... will become greater than the energy with which they're expanding... and the universe will stop expanding... and just hang there... maybe for a few hundred-thousand years... neither expanding or contracting... but then... that combined gravitational force will pull it all back together... that the billions of galaxies will begin to fall back in on themselves... and all of them... and all the stars and planets and solar systems within them... and even space and time... will converge back into another unimaginably dense and hot singularity... the point from which the Big Bang occurred... I really like this idea... it seems neat... and tidy... and manageable somehow on an unimaginable scale...

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

We don't light a light and put it under a basket to hide it... light was created to enlighten... and when the Romans... in the myopic vision which they mistook for enlightenment... and in their Empire's opposition to the light of Christ... when they realized that Jesus was telling too much truth... when they and some Temple leaders feared that the good life they had was in increasing jeopardy... when they wanted to keep flying under the radar like I did... when the gravitational force of Jesus' words

could no longer be escaped... or resisted... they decided to silence him... and they wanted to silence him in the most horrific way they knew how... so that anyone else who might want to pick up his staff... anyone else who might want to pick up his mantle... would be silenced too...

And we don't know how God did it... we can't grasp the mechanics... we probably couldn't understand it even if we tried... but since Christ was the One who was in the beginning with God... when through Christ... the idea of creation itself moved directly from the mind of God and right into being... what the Romans and any others whose worldly opposition to this light didn't quite count on... was that they were met with an irresistible force... like ants trying to stop a bulldozer...

Cosmologists now question the gravity that they thought was an irresistible force... they know that the galaxies that are farthest from us... are moving at close to the speed of light... and the farther they are... the faster they go... and they doubt that the expansion of the universe will ever slow down...

Most of them now believe that it will never stop... that the collective gravitational force will never be greater than the energy of expansion... and that the universe will just get bigger than it's already impossible-to-imagine size... and that all of the galaxies will just continue moving forever... into an uncharted and incomprehensible future...

Those who tried to silence Jesus on the cross... had no idea that the Word of God existed before they did... and expanded into creation... had no idea that their divisive and accusatory actions embodied the ruler of this world's opposition to God's unity and forgiveness... had no idea that the weakness of their gravity was no match for the expansion of God's love... they had no idea that they were running against the wind...

And so however it is... that the mystery of incarnation happens... however it is... that our souls are animated by Spirit in these bodies we inhabit... however it is... that all

things came into being through Christ... we are all as inextricably connected to the boundless place from which we came... as all of creation is inextricably connected to the singularity from which it came... and if our formation means anything... if Christ came so we could have abundant life... then like the expanding universe around us... we are always and only called into more and more... and never into less and less...

Most of us thought our parents knew everything... yet we have come to see them as wonderfully human... some people think they're more than human and know everything... we're all somewhere on the spectrum... but we didn't create it... And so as we commemorate Holy Cross Day... we remember that the glory of the cross is that wisdom could have been finite... but is infinite... the glory of the cross is that a symbol of terrorism and oppression was changed into God's symbol for love... the glory of the cross is that the limits of life were replaced with limitlessness... the glory of the cross is that the power of gravity... and death have been removed... and have given way to expansiveness and eternal life...

Sometimes it's difficult to know what to choose... some of us in this world continue to confuse myopia with enlightenment... but we are all on a continu\_um... and we continue to be invited... to give up our small ways... in favor of God's boundlessness... we continue to be invited into that mysterious creativity that allows us to manifest the unmanifest... not things that come out of a factory... but the love that comes out of the human heart... to oppose the things that take life away... and favor the life-giving cross...

Mike+