

Trinity Sunday - June 7, 2020 - Saint David's, Halifax NS

Readings: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; II Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20

Call to Worship:

Praise be to the God who made us and all there is.

Praise be to the God who loves us and all there is.

Praise be to the God who keeps us and all there is.

**Praise and glory be to the holy and undivided Trinity
now and forever. Amen.**

Prayer:

**O blessed Trinity,
you are the Maker of all things seen and unseen,
you are the Saviour of all both near and far,
you are the Spirit of life and peace:
we worship you with all the company of heaven
and all the faithful of the earth.
Holy, holy, holy! Glory to you, O Lord most high. Amen.**

Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28, 31a (NRSV)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. . . .

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; . . .

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,

in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” . . .

³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Reflection:

The first chapter of the first book in the Bible presents creation as the good work of a life-giving God,

it describes human beings as equally created in God's image,

it states the provisions that God made for everything to be nurtured and sustained, it declares the responsibility given to human beings to look after every living thing.

And what do we humans do?

We deny by word or action that God is the source of all life.

We twist our human relationships into power struggles, domination and subservience, conflict and division.

We interpret the words "subdue" and "dominion" as meaning "control" and "exploitation."

We end up alienated from God, from one another, and from nature.

We have missed the beauty, the wonder, the awe, the praise in this story of beginnings. We have lost the tender watchfulness, the delight, the sabbath restfulness that God shows in creation. We are far from God's rhythm and pattern of activity, far from God's character, far from the image in which we were made.

And yet with infinite grace God wills to share life with us, to re-create us, to make us anew in the divine image. Which leads us to ask, What is the divine image? What does God look like?

One theologian has written that "God exists as the mystery of persons in communion."

[from "*The Practical Trinity*" by Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *The Christian Century*, July 15-22, 1992, p. 678]

God exists as the mystery of persons in communion.

Creator, Incarnate Word, Spirit--each unique yet each a part of the other.

No subordination, inequality or hierarchy.

A relationship, a communion, a household, of love.

Communion means shared life:

shared love, shared suffering, shared hope, shared responsibility, shared joy.

The One God in Three, the divine mystery of persons in communion, reflects the *relational* essence of life. This is what God looks like.

So we are made in the image of God to exist in relationship with one another and with all creation. We will be most like God when we learn how God shares life. We will fulfill God's purpose for us when we experience the shared life of love, suffering, hope, responsibility and joy--living as partners, unique but equal, with no one being more important than another, with no one being excluded.

We are seeing all too clearly in these days the devastation, division and heartbreak caused by attitudes and behaviour of subordination, inequality, exclusion. The rage and deep hurt over racist violence and systemic racism cannot be ignored. We dare not ignore it. On Pentecost we read of Jesus breathing the Spirit into his disciples and we were invited to "take a deep breath" to be filled ourselves with the Spirit, to be transformed, shaken, moved, comforted, challenged and directed.

How does that invitation lead us to respond to the words of a dying man, "I can't breathe"-- a man murdered because of the colour of his skin?

How does being made in the image of a God whose nature is "shared life" shape our attitudes and our actions?

We are learning through the pandemic just how interconnected we are. We share a common humanity, regardless of race, gender, language, economic status. We are truly in this together, for good or ill. It is God's *good* purpose to share life with all. Jesus says, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." This is not just for some but for everyone. And we who are his followers are called to this purpose.

Living Faith, one of our church's official standards, reminds us:

God is always calling the church to seek that justice in the world which reflects the divine righteousness revealed in the Bible. . . .

Justice opposes prejudice in every form.

It rejects discrimination

on such grounds as race, sex, age, status, or handicap.

Justice stands with our neighbours

in their struggle for dignity and respect

and demands the exercise of power for the common good. [*LF 8.4.1, 8.4.6*]

We know we fall short in this calling--in our community, in the church, in the world. We are from God's character, far from the image in which we were made. But we are not to be mired in our failures and our fears. As I said last week, "The love of Christ, stronger than death itself, can move in us and among us and through us so that all the world can know this love." With infinite grace God wills to share life with us, to re-create us, to make us anew in the divine image.

Made in the image of God, and re-made through Christ, by the power of the Spirit, we glimpse the wonder, awe, beauty, and peace of life as God intends. We are able in small ways and big ways to reflect God's nature of love, compassion, justice and goodness. We learn to receive life as gift, to treasure it and share it, "to taste and see the goodness of God' revealed in creation, Christ, and communion with one another in the Spirit." [*Catherine Monry LaCugna*]
Amen. Thanks be to God!

Prayer:

It is truly right and our greatest joy
to give you thanks and praise, eternal and triune God,
whom we worship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In Jesus Christ you spoke the word
that brought the world into being.

By the Holy Spirit, you brought order out of chaos
and breathed life into your creatures.

In parental love, you stood by us in spite of our disobedience,
correcting us with gracious reproof,
and welcoming us again into your loving embrace.

God of all nations and peoples, bring peace and healing to the world.

End hatred and prejudice, cruelty and violence.

Work in us and through us to build a better world according to your purpose.

God of healing and strength, we remember and pray for all who need your healing touch, all who need your strength in these trying days.

We give you thanks, O God, that Christ has promised to be with us in the world as in our worship. With your blessing, we go to serve and to share in the Name of Jesus Christ, so that your gracious reign may be known through all the world. Amen.

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
Amen.*