

Communal, inter-connected, relational and loving

Trinity of love, deposing the powers of hate and isolation; gathering creation in bonds of mutual care: through the waters of baptism may our relatedness be reborn in justice, mercy and peace; through Jesus Christ, who is with us always. Amen.

A Collect for Trinity Sunday, Prayers for an Inclusive Church

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: TRINITY SUNDAY
2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Canticle: A Song of Praise; Matthew 28:16-20
JUNE 11, 2017

ST. MARK'S-IN-THE-VALLEY
EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL

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THE GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

During the time of my sabbatical, I was in the midst of and moved through vast populations of people, including the two largest metropolitan areas in the Western hemisphere, Mexico City and New York City, as well as London and Paris, and other large and small cities, towns and villages in Mexico and Europe and throughout the US, Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C., and lots of places between all those places and here.

My consciousness then was

partially about terrain, the whole created realm, but mostly about people of all sorts, in all manners of conditions, living and working, creating, struggling, suffering, rejoicing, often just barely getting along, often distracted, thoughts and feelings, hopes, and disappointments running through their minds, all in some relationship with some others and, in my experience, all more similar than different, all more connected than separated, though the

bywords of our age seem to be polarization and fear of the adversary.

At times my experience of these masses of people honed in on what felt like the microscopic – for a time, or even for a fleeting moment. From the mass of people there would emerge one person in one place alive in the midst of their situation, their choices, the particularity of what they were encountering and thinking, feeling and doing in their home, their office, their car, along the road, with their friends, coworkers or family.

While these experiences of the people of earth and identification with them are very much on my mind and in my reflections these days, they are particularly strong as I reflect today on the Trinity, which is simply the awareness of God as irreducibly communal, inter-connected, relational and loving.

Also, I hear in this gospel reading from Matthew, Jesus calling us into consciousness of the breadth of humanity and of the breadth of his own presence, enlightening, enlivening, strengthening, equipping us, the presence of God in our own lives and in the lives of all the people of earth – always a mass of humanity and always particular down to our fingernails.

While these words of Jesus, sometimes called “the Great Commission,” have fueled triumphalist, often coercive or, at the least, manipulative sectarianism, the call is truly *beyond* getting other people to submit to certain dogmatic, institutional formulations.

Recall that the commandments of Jesus are commands to love, to give of one’s self in love.

To be disciples of Jesus is to be conscious of the generosity and abundance of compassion and hospitality in the person of Jesus and in our own lives, and to radiate that love, mutual care and respect in the world with its unending contexts and among those we encounter along the way, whether our closest friends or the typically overlooked stranger who, though unfamiliar, is most likely not an adversary.

We start where we live. We practice within our faith community – this not-very-carefully curated group of people who show up in whatever way we do in these walls, in the experience of the sacraments, in the sharing of our lives, in our own growth in rising more and more into being alive to all that God longs to be with us.

Then, having practiced, our “all nations” begins with others

who just show up here on our campus and continues with those who are around us in these towns and this county, when we show up elsewhere in our actual communities, among the people who could be anywhere but are here, the people we may know well and the people we've never noticed, the people who are faring well, who are going from strength to strength, and those who are enduring circumstances that shock or repulse us.

Each of us as individuals, because that's where it begins, and then groups of us, or all of us a faith community, can risk connecting and caring in actual, helpful, beautiful, utilitarian, loving ways, ways that help others awaken to the possibilities that are available to *everyone* in the wholeness of reality we know as God and speak about as sacred or divine but who is life itself. Christ Spirit, undying love is with us always to the end of the age: we receive and demonstrate this essential truth that is at the core of our lives. This fullness of divine presence in your life, in mine, in our lives together, in what we share of community here, is not meant to be theoretical or just a vague comfort for us.

Jesus in Galilee, risen beyond death arises in us as consciousness, as awareness and moves us beyond complacency and into action in a world, for people, all people whom

God so loves, who are God's own, who are one sacred humanity, who are our neighbors, who are the next person, the next people along our path.



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