

Sermon for 7 June 2020 @ Bethesda

Trinity Sunday/Peace with Justice Sunday

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8 (UM 743); 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20

“Solidarity”

I’m pretty excited over the titles of the last two sermons. To call “Pentecost Sunday” “*All welcome!*” captured the essence of everybody hearing the same thing, even though it was being spoken in many languages. It was so fundamental to think that we really are made to hear each other. All of us. Dogs and cats too, maybe. Gives us something to work on.

Today, to say Trinity Sunday means all our religious insights and energy come from the same root, helps us understand and relate to God like a Person (Jesus). It helps us honor our self - trust and courage (the Holy Spirit); and it helps us to see in the stars and microbes and in the whole show, in the start and completion of everything, a unity, a single intent and kindness and accessibility, to see more than a thing ... to see God, helps lots of us. I think to put it all into the word “Solidarity” has lots of clear sense and reassurance. It hangs together. It’s all one.

Think of how the Poles rose up under Communist Russian control led by Lech Walensa, and called their resistance movement “Solidarity.” Remember how feisty and gutsy they were? One of them even got to be Pope... Over time, we found some problem in his stubborn conservatism... but Solidarity had a spiritual quality to it that we’ll not forget. Solidarity. Human in a clearly practical sense. Calling the doctrine of the Trinity “Solidarity” ties everything about creation together with the one goal of learning to accept love, and to be loving. How do you know love? It’s a feeling, sure; but the Biblical understanding of love is how you treat one another Peace and Justice Sunday”Blessed are the peacemakers” ...More than a feeling, it’s fair play and equal opportunity, through thick and thin ... through such things as marriage, and governing together, and being church...

To demonstrate, over a lifetime, by practice and proof, that this is the essence of reality, is pretty darned fulfilling, I’ve found. To find it solid over the long haul ... I’m working on it.

Applying “Solidarity” as an outlook to present circumstances, as we’re always doing with our sermons and Bible lessons these days, gives incredible opportunity to do good things, try fresh angles, see ourselves and the old folks and the history books, in new light ... It can be healing, as we’re preaching and proclaiming in all our protesting and re-organizing these days. Every now and then I have a day when I just feel free, and relieved, and even pleased. To go through all these inner doubts and long-ago memories, and find myself just as judgmental and unstable as I was @ 3, or 27, or 75 ... the dog-and-pony show, same old, same old And then wake up and just feel pleased, and hopeful, and ... well, maybe you know something about the life of faith, like that ... or maybe someone you know has those days.....

I heard a fellow I respect say recently, “I just may not die as well-off as I started.” I thought that was a powerful statement. In other words, we may flat have too much, in the rich countries ...

and finding ways of doing with less may be beneficial to human relations, to the environment, to the future of world peace, our own dying peacefully and well, the works.

Of course, we have to admit that the other great religious traditions have lasting trouble with our making Jesus God. Over a long life, all I've been able to figure out about that is, when it works right, it helps in understanding how to treat one another and ourselves. I've talked to God a lot more as Jesus, and found it useful. How about you?

And of course, just as we are coming face-to-face with lots of shameful abuse of Christian doctrine in our moment, we're having to let down our power-hang-ups with one another, between husband and wife, parents with children, ageism and sexism and colonialism and all those insights that slow down our triumphal march through nature and human history and ... well, that's what I find so thrilling about this transitional time we're clearly living into now. There's so much constructive change to get started on.

I don't mean it's easy. It's clear to me there are more bad drivers in Baltimore City than there were before Donald Trump got elected And I know figuring out good medicine isn't any simpler than when everybody believed in vaccination, or Well, we really are in the soup in so many ways.

And, I believe in missions ... I pray for those working around the world in United Methodist ministries every day. It's part of the territory ... but preaching the good news of Jesus Christ doesn't free me to think folks who believe other than I aren't beloved. Listening to them, and still going my own way, enlarges my life ... and I believe God works in mysterious ways through all kinds of faith and outside what we think of as religion ... I don't worry much about secularism taking over, as long as religion is as fulfilling and attractive as I've found it and as I feel called to try to make it through Christian outreach.

But the idea that we're all in solidarity; that we have a great deal in common ... that we all know what self-examination is, and how painfully creative and redeeming confession can be ...and that respect is a great gift @ home, @ work, and two-by-two, and through the law-books ...God, there's so much to be done!

Solidarity means Jesus is not only back with us, for keeps . He's God. He's staying with us. His Spirit is keeping us going.

That's holy. That's the root of things...

That'll preach.

Go, do so.

Amen.