

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Holy Trinity Sunday - Year A

Week 13 of Quarantine

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Psalm 8

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20

06/07/2020

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew:

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

The Gospel of our Lord.

Prayer

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Racism, Brutality, and How the Trinity Can Save Us All

Good morning. Now, repeat after me. I. Am. A. Racist. Now that we've got that out of the way, we can move forward. Because, as many help programs have found, admitting the problem is the first step. Let me be clear, if you are alive right now, you have either been a victim, or taken part in the system of racism that still exists within our society, myself included.

Like so many of us, I grew into this system of racism. I wasn't born with it. Over time, as I grew, the patterns began to take hold. While in high school I started to see the damage that had been done, and did what I thought to put a stop to that evil growth. For several years I thought I was OK, and then this happened. At some point in college I was with friends and was recounting a story. I started to say "And then there was this black guy who..." at that moment I realized the color of the man's skin had nothing to do with my story. I wasn't providing important details to set up the narrative. What's more, if the man had been white, I wouldn't have felt it necessary to share in the story. Clearly, this subconscious bias was still

present. I have been working since that moment to eradicate that sin in my life, but, as our country has shown, some systems are hard to cast off.

I share this because it's imperative that we see the danger of believing we're innocent in the problem. In our society being racist has been relegated to the extremes. We think of members of the KKK, or Confederate flag waving extremists. But that's the subtle trick that's been pulled on us. We think that as long as we're not like THAT, then we must be fine. But this just isn't true.

I've been trying to think of an example to help illustrate this reality, and I think I've finally found one. Any student of the public school system has heard of the infamous *Pax Romana* that marked the time of prosperity in the Roman Empire. But, as some found, this peace didn't extend to everyone. Sure, the peace of Rome was there for the wealthy Roman citizens, but for a majority of people, this wasn't the case. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was a victim of this "peace." During the 200 or so years of the *pax romana* we saw leaders like emperor Nero and Domitian, leaders who oversaw the persecution and slaughter of Christian martyrs and saints. It was during this "peaceful" time that the entire temple of Jerusalem was LEVELED. A structure roughly the size of 4 football fields was reduced to nothing. This was the "peace" that reigned.

And now, here in our country, we too claim to be a place of safety, all the while our siblings of color have seen the same reality that put Jesus Christ on the cross, that peace only extends to a select group.

So, what are we to do? Who can save us from our sin? Why, the Triune God of course! Today is Holy Trinity Sunday, my favorite celebration in the church year. It's this wonderful and impossibly complex thing that helps me to see the need for a church that reflects a diverse community. In the past I've tried to explain some of the trinitarian heresies, I've given explanations, and I've taught about the history of the Athanasian Creed. But today I share why the Trinity is important to me.

The Triune God IS community. Look at this icon:



Within the image we see God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in communion around a table. This isn't just community in the generic sense, look closely and in the bowl on the table you'll see a lamb's head, the lamb of God. What I find to be the most profound detail of the picture is that the table is four sided. 3 seats are already occupied, but yet

there is room for more! And who might that be? It's you and I! Within the Triune God we see a community that while already perfect, doesn't feel it necessary to exclude or reject. All are invited to this table.

As the Psalm was read today I was struck by the power of God's word. *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses, what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor you crown them."* With glory and honor God crowns them, everyone...

What's also wonderful is that the Triune God doesn't seek to strip away what makes us unique. God exists and the Three-In-One, and likewise a rich variety of people are invited to the table. When we talk about racism, we will often hear people say things like "I don't see color." Not only is this not true, it's also damaging. God has created us as unique individuals, and it's our differences that make the community so special. God doesn't want a group of robots that look the same, act the same, and who don't see the richness of God's creation. No, instead God calls us IN to the Triune relationship and invites us to dance together, people of all the varieties under the sun.

So what do we do? Well, as I said already, admitting the problem is the first step. But we can't stop there. God has been busy across the world pushing us to name the problem and to DO something about it. For many of us, this is about LISTENING. For so long we've turned deaf ears to the problem, but no longer. Now we stop and listen for that wonderful activity of the Triune God that saved, and will continue to save us all. Amen.