

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt
Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year A
Outdoor Picnic - Creation Theme
Sandy Bottom Nature Park
Isaiah 65:17-25
Revelation 21:1-6
Matthew 6:25-34
05/21/2023

First Reading

¹⁷For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. ¹⁹I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. ²⁰No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD —and their descendants as well. ²⁴Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent — its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.

Second Reading

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." ⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and

the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew:

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

The Gospel of Our Lord

Prayer

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

Creation and God's Plan

Good morning! In seminary one of the professors that intimidated students the most was our ethics professor, Dr. Dan Bell. He was a big man, standing roughly 6'2 or 6'3. He spent considerable time at the gym lifting weights, and so we sometimes called him the Hulk. But he had one weak spot... cats. The man loved cats. He shared that, in an event that apparently happens enough that it wasn't uncommon, when grading papers at home he would often be grading late into the night. But, as he finished up for the evening one of his cats would often jump into his lap and fall asleep. And so, instead of moving the sleeping kitten this man who terrified an entire seminary's worth of students, would just reach forward, shut off the light, and sit in the dark till the cat moved.

Dr. Bell liked to point out that a domesticated pet was a sign of God's kingdom. And he has a point, right? Raise your hand if you have had a pet at some point in your life. Have you ever stopped to realize how strange it is

that human beings seem to actively seek out animals to turn into our friends? Whenever we spend time with pets, or take time to watch wild animals, we are given a taste of that wonderful future that God has planned; *“²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox...”*

Which brings me to my second point. It's easy to worry about what the future will be, especially when it comes to the church. You'll often hear people say that youth are the future of the church. But, this is wrong, firstly because youth are already a part of the church, but secondly because Jesus Christ is the future of the church. If it were all up to us, man, it would be a disaster. But fortunately, it's not!

Now, we don't know the specifics, but one thing is certain, it is in the hands of Jesus Christ, and God will not let the church fail. Things may certainly look different, and we have seen exactly that in the 2,000 years of the church. Heck, the pandemic certainly showed us that things can look VERY different. And throughout it all God continued to work God's plan in the world, bringing eternal life and new hope for people everywhere.

It's easy to be worried about the future of God's church, but the good thing is that it's God's, and God will not fail. This doesn't mean we can skate by, but it does mean that God will continue to use the many and varied gifts of the good people of St. Paul's to do wonderful and miraculous things.

So today, as we celebrate the beauty of God's creation, stop and take a breath and enjoy it! As Jesus said in our Gospel reading today; *“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.”* Amen.