

Kuhn Memorial Presbyterian Church
Barboursville, West Virginia
Trinity Sunday
June 7, 2020

Call to Worship

Carmina Gadelica, Vol. III

Bless to me, O God,
each thing mine eye sees;
Bless to me, O God,
each sound mine ear hears.
Bless to me, O God,
each fragrance that goes to my nostrils,
the Three that seek my living soul.
Bless to me, O God,
each taste that goes to my lips,
each note that goes to my song,
each ray that guides my way,
each thing I pursue,
each lure that tempts my will.
The zeal that seeks my living soul;
the Three that seek my heart;
the zeal that seeks my living soul;
the Three that seek my heart.

***Hymn** Morning Has Broken

Glory to God, Gaelic melody; Text: Eleanor Farjeon

John McAlister

- 1 Morning has broken like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word!

- 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,

like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning!
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation! Praise every morning!
God's recreation of the new day!

Scripture Reading Genesis 1: 1-2:4
 Matthew 28:16-20

Message

Today is Trinity Sunday, when we celebrate God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; or God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sustainer. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most difficult concepts to explain. So, I will simply say that God the Creator, whom some call Father, some call Mother, God the Son, Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit, have existed together from before the beginning of the created world. We can hear this in the Genesis text and in the gospel lesson. The term "Trinity" does not appear in Scripture. It is a concept that took shape in the early Church to explain the relationship of God and human beings in those three distinct ways.

Today also focuses our attention on the creation story, the work of God, accomplished in the span of six days, as explained by the author of Genesis. The seasons of the year are some of our best evidence of the creative power of God. My husband is an amateur photographer. To be a good photographer, you have to have a good eye, recognizing the play of color and shape and position, dimension and all those factors that together form an image that draws attention. He likes taking pictures in nature, and loves shooting waterfalls.

When I am with him on one of his adventures, if I am not cold or wet, my mind often recalls these words describing the Creation, how vast and expansive and magnificent it all is. All the elements of nature having their genesis in the mind of God. All of it. And I can't even raise a blade of grass without the mind of God to give it its form and function and life. We try to capture it thru a camera's lens.

Did you notice as we read this text, that when God completes his work each day, leans back and considers the result, God pronounces it “good.” The day God created man and woman, God pronounced them “Very good.”

In the last week or so, I have been troubled by what feels like to me, that we, the human race, have ignored the gifts that God so carefully designed, human beings, and have become adversaries of one another. Widespread restlessness, born of racial injustice, anger and pain, have come rushing like the mighty wind of Pentecost, across this nation.

And I wonder what God feels when his children are at war with one another in this way? Tearing asunder what God so lovingly wrought. The creation God pronounced “good.”

What has been identified as a race-based murder, has prompted a week of protests, some peaceful and inspiring, and some that erupted in grievous violence. We have heard words seldom used in our time: curfew, tear gas, rubber bullets, riot gear. What has become of our nation? Where do we turn for help, for reconciliation, for peace?

A public figure being interviewed this week says she tells people to be hopeful. This world God created is good, very good. That has not changed. God still creates. God still redeems. God still comforts and sustains. We will emerge from these conflicted times and hopefully be better citizens.

But, she was asked, where do we find hope? She says hope is found where it always is, between faith and charity (love.) We recognize this from the love chapter in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians.

“Faith, hope, love abide, these three. But the greatest of these is love.”

So, with faith as our sure foundation, and acts of love our goal, where do we start to turn this around?

I found these words by Rev. Stephen Bryant of the Upper Room Ministries helpful:

He writes, “The call of Christ leads us to share in his life, his suffering, and his ministry, to do each day what he would do in our place. And he asks the question we are all asking, “Where do we begin?”

What would Christ do in our place today?

He suggests three practices:

1. We reach into our hearts. We face the evil that hides out in our own hearts and repent of it.
2. We reach up to God, turning away from sin and turning toward God. God will give us courage and insight and the language we need to communicate effectively across race and culture.
3. We reach out to our community. Some of you may have already done that by participating in a peaceful protest. Jesus started where he was, in his own community. Churches, community leaders, law enforcement, it will take all of us working in concert. Charity, the old-English word for love, does still begin at home.

As Ed and I watched the news this week, all 25 hours a day of it, we kept saying to each other, “We’ve been there.” Usually with students. Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Atlanta, Columbia, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Raleigh, where our daughters live, and other U. S. cities all the way to Los Angeles. We prayed for the protesters, that they would be safe and not act in ugly and destructive ways. And we did the same for the law enforcement officers. We witnessed violence and we saw evidence that animosity is thinly disguised and can easily erupt with little provocation.

This is no way to care for the world God created and called “good.”

When our grandson visited a few weeks ago, he loved standing at our patio doors and watching for wildlife from the woods behind our home to show up. Baby bunnies, birdies, as he called them, a lizard.

We don’t have a bird feeder, so we made an impromptu one for Thomas-bread crumbs scattered on the top rails of our deck. For hours, he would watch with anticipation, and when a forest friend showed up , he would jump and bounce and

point and call out trying to have a conversation with them. Waving at them, hoping to coax them to come closer. Pure delight.

We have a lot to learn from children. Thomas seemed to know instinctively where hope was. Right there between faith and love. And as a result, he delighted at the appearance of creatures unlike him, who navigated the world unlike him. Who didn't speak his language. But it was all good. It was very good.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

God of our past and our future,

Trinitarian God,

we come before you with grateful hearts,

trusting that you will walk with us through all the seasons of our lives,

including this strange time of illness and isolation,

and his dreadful time of unrest, sadness, grief, and anger.

You are still the God of history and God of the world you made and pronounced good.

Hear us as we pray for your world and the people who dwell in it:

We pray for all those who face danger and despair,

those who suffer the effects of the pandemic,

those who are hungry and hurting while the world is distracted,

those people who have been abused and places damaged by the current unrest and violence,

all who have no say, no agency, in the direction of their lives,

those who will be called on to repair breaches of all kinds,

We pray for those whom we hold dear to us...

We pray for all those working to relieve suffering everywhere.

We pray for ourselves, our eyes freshly opened, that you will forgive our sins of hatred, oppression, and injustice,

and inspire within us renewed intention to seek the ways of the Prince of Peace, who taught us to pray, saying, Our Father...Amen.

Blessing

May God bless you this week,
from morning's waking til night's folding.

Bless your comings and your goings,
the spinning of your labor and lives.

May the ones you meet, even those with whom you compete,
be the better for it.

God bless this week.

God bless this journey

God bless your work and your leisure. Amen.

William John Fitzgerald, *A Contemporary Celtic Prayer Book*, Assisting Christians
to Act, Chicago, IL, 1998.