

## *Trinity Sunday*

May 30, 2021

Today's feast really is simple. Although some people may want to engage in some intellectual dogmatic discourse, we are invited into a down-to-earth reflection on God as well as ourselves as disciples. In Jesus, God is not only 'for us' but 'with us' and 'within us.' This feast of relationship and connection challenges every attempt to individualism and thus avoid care and responsibility. God is not solitary or unrelated but active and continually connecting with us.

*Ronald Rolheiser says:*

*'The most pernicious heresies that block us from properly knowing God are not those of formal dogma, but those of a culture of individualism that invites us to believe that we are self-sufficient, that we can have community and family on our own terms, and that we can have God without dealing with each other. But God is community – and only in open our lives in gracious hospitality will we ever understand that.'*

In Deuteronomy we see how God was with and fully invested in the people's lives throughout history. Paul celebrates the God who is 'for us' and not only for us, but with and within everyone else and all creation. In the gospel, Jesus sends the disciples (and us) out to bring the face of God to the world; and tell that we all and creation bear God's image. This image reflects a relational way of being and living with God and each other. The church has responded in positive ways to this but also in ways that were harmful to people—those who were colonised, people of other faiths, women and variations of sexual orientation. Jesus' sending or commission of the disciples entails engaging in the urgent task of protecting human dignity and promoting human flourishing. Jesus does not ask the poor, hungry, homeless, the stranger and imprisoned to come and find us. It is often these people from whom the most prophetic voices emerge. God is attentively listening to the oppressed and should we. This feast, as it erodes the monarchical and patriarchal power of

monotheism, contains a vision of a community of women and men in church and society where relationship is fundamental. It is the foundation of God's interaction with the world. It is called to shared responsibility for one another. God is not unmoved by what we do to one another. God's very self is about relationship whose love is poured into our world and our lives and calls us to participate in the task of inviting all creation into that dance of loving unity. This love is a fierce and transforming love that calls us to wake up each day and enmesh freedom and disrupt whatever system or institution that obscures God's love and mercy. The readings remind us that this love of God draws near to the messy, painful, broken-hearted parts of our world, and concretely brings about liberation, justice, and kindness, in the lives of people throughout history. So, we cannot remain silent in the face of violence, oppression, and dehumanisation. We cannot continue to obscure the presence of Jesus – God made flesh - through our complicity in systemic injustice, including the sins of white supremacy and colonialism.

We are witnessing to our connection with the God we celebrate today, every time we seek to heal, offer forgiveness, give ourselves for the sake of another, use our 'gift of ears' more than the 'gift of tongues'; embrace those who are unwanted or neglected; speak the truth fearlessly against injustice or violence and war, hypocrisy, greed and violence; or promote peace and right relationship with all creatures.

The varying presences of God in people tells us that this feast not just about God but about us. It is the feast of people caught up in the embrace of God - whose name is 'Love' - and reflect that to one another and seek to extend that embrace to ever wider circles of people. This is what people do when they seek to bring hope to people that they do not know, or will never see, and who certainly will never personally thank them. This mission to gather people as one was to people without much preparation, and to people, as the gospel

suggests, had their doubts, their questions, uncertainties and fears; people who from time to time wavered in, or even withdrew from, their commitment. Overriding this is the promise: 'I am with you always' which comes with the command, 'Go, make disciples, preach, teach, baptize.'

It is our mission to build up in our corner of God's world the inclusive patterns suggested by today's feast or the 'Beloved Community' espoused by Martin Luther King Jr. It might seem an exaggeration but it becomes concrete in our work of peace and justice, it becomes concrete when a nation can vote for equality for all its people, it touches on attempts to recognise and acknowledge the first people of this land as sisters and brothers and also their deep connection to their land, their 'home' and strive stand with anyone where the image of God is being smudged.

Though the church is called to be a sacrament of love, it has not reflected Jesus present among us. It has smudged the image of God in people and creation. It has preferred to condemn rather than confess Jesus. Christians have failed to authentically embody belief in God's transforming love. We cannot claim that we believe in the Trinitarian God without courageously enmesh God's reign of love and justice here and now. So often the church has denounced people and ignored its own failures. It has remained silent in the face of injustice leaving people disenfranchised, hurt and wounded. It has failed women by its male-dominated structures in so many contexts. It has failed to hear the cries by people of colour <that Black Lives Matter> in the face of white supremacy and racism and even condemned the victims of violence rather than the perpetrators. The body of Christ remains fractured when (white) people in power are structurally prevented from seeing the racism from which they benefit. It has failed LGBTIQ people by propagating falsehoods about them as being depraved, lost and dangerous which has justified persecution of people who are our siblings. It has failed the poor by ignoring their

claims on our lives despite the priority that God's word gives them. It has failed children by concealing and evading wrongdoing in such ways that they cannot obtain the justice they deserve. It has failed the 'outsider' by siding with warmongers, the military and military spending rather than following the God of peace it claims to follow. It has failed people of other faiths by unfair judgment and abusive religious where they are made to feel unworthy and shamed and ostracised by our rhetoric and actions. It has failed people with disabilities and mental illness where they or their parents are blamed for these disabilities rather than making strenuous efforts where they can have access to the love of Jesus – even if it means cutting a hole in the roof of a building (cf. Luke 5). It has often failed to act decisively with love when it was more concerned with its own image than what is true and right. We must act decisively with love in our world, in the particularities of our own contexts. In the face of these injustices as they weigh heavy upon the most marginalised in our world. We, the Body of Christ, must be agents of liberation, justice, restoration, dignity, hospitality, kindness, and peace. How often do we risk standing alongside the demonised, dehumanised, and discouraged? How might we, individually and as communities of faith, embody love and en flesh hope in our world today? Where are we called to draw closer to suffering with God's liberating love?

We are sent to extend God's work of creating a more humane society. The peace of the Trinity will no longer seem an abstraction when we recognise that God is a community of life and love into which each one of us is drawn. There is no room for spectators in this community. This is what calls us to action and calls us to carry the love and goodness of God everywhere we go. Let us join in with passion for God's dream of love and justice for humanity and creation that burned in Jesus' heart. We are empowered by the Spirit to continue in the mission of Jesus – to live and love in concrete ways that reveal God's loving presence. This is Jesus' call to us: to go into the world as women and men of love.