

Bible Study
Trinity Sunday, Year A
June 11, 2017

[RCL] Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

The stories of creation in the Bible are a few of the enigmatic and disputed narratives in history. Countless scholars and avid readers of the Scriptures have attempted to shed light on the meaning behind the Jewish version of the origin of human beings and the world as we know it. Amidst all the interesting commentaries and criticisms, the practical lesson of stewardship, of humans as creatures of imbued divinity, the images of God, capable of both the destruction and renewal of creation are perennial and emphatic statements of our nature as God's children.

In the text, God's command was for Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply" and to "subdue" and have "dominion" over every living thing on earth. I believe these words hint to a missionary aspect of our understanding of the Creation. From the very beginning, we have been given the task to bear fruit, that is, to produce good work, and to put things into order—especially with regard to the prevalent abuse of our natural resources and the disregard of the environment's welfare. The Anglican Five Marks of Mission, which include the imperative to "strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth" is an allusion to that ancient divine command from our Triune God.

- Christians have been accused of being "too eager for heaven that they forget earth," and thus disregarding the importance of the environment. How would you respond?
- Do you think the Creation narratives provide solid reasons to be faithful stewards of God's creation? Why or why not?

Psalm 8

This psalm evokes a feeling of wonder and awe, the one we often have after gazing at the glittering canopy of stars against the dark sky. Humble adoration is immortalized in the words, "When I consider the heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses, what is man that you should be mindful of him?" The captivating intricacies of the universe have long captured the imagination of poets and scientists alike. The psalmist was no exception.

- Many Celtic prayers are examples of beautiful odes composed for the adoration of God as the Creator. Have you experienced particular moments when the beauty of nature stirred you to worship?

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

The Apostle Paul's benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you," is a striking statement worthy to be pondered in

light of the Trinity. In this passage, Paul underscores the importance of building community: to strive to keep the peace, to dwell in unity with one another—even in difficult circumstances.

As I read this passage, I reflected on the word *communion* as a distinctive factor in understanding the Trinity. The benediction speaks of the entire manifestation of God's love from the Father being exemplified in grace by the Son and bounded through the Holy Spirit. This trinitarian perception is conveyed through our faith expressions. The Trinity, then, is the Divine Communion. And we participate in the affirmation of this communion poignantly in our celebration of the Eucharist as a *koinonia*, or community of faith. In the Eucharist, we are bounded by God, with God, and in God, where love is perfected.

- The doctrine of the trinity is difficult to explain. However, the traditions passed down to us by our predecessors in the faith help us understand it better. What are those traditions? Do you think they must be preserved and taught to the present generation?
- Is the Trinity truly manifested in the Eucharist? Yes or no? Why or why not?
- How should we encourage the Christian sense of community in our present societal context of individualism?

Matthew 28:16-20

The trinitarian formula—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is a peculiar mark of the Great Commission. Jesus, in this Gospel passage, gives his final instructions, citing the authority given to him by God the Father in the context of his resurrection. His authority is made absolute, triumphant, and infinite. Through him, the knowledge of the Triune God has endured.

Still, why bother with the trinitarian formula? Will the Great Commission still be great without it? Perhaps the glory of God cannot be realized without acknowledging the distinguishing work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit culminated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through Him, the Triune God is revealed.

- Reflect on the Trinity and how it is a fundamental doctrine of our understanding of God.
- How is the Trinity implied in the Paschal mystery of Jesus?

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