



The Inclusive Community

First Sunday After Pentecost

Trinity Sunday

May 30, 2010

Proverbs 8:22-31 John 16: 12-15

Homily of Terry and Fred Quinn

Martin Luther King liked to quote a central thought of the Buddha that “All life is interrelated.” I think that is how I think of the Trinity—as interrelated divinity meshing with all of life. I’ve always had trouble envisioning the Trinity, especially when considering that at the time of Jesus and until the enlightenment of science, people believed in a world that ended at the sky above and the earth below without any concept of the vastness of the universe. So the idea of a Father God as written in the stories of the Old Testament prevailed. Yet, the concept of the divine spirit was always with us from the beginning of time when the spirit hovered over the primal waters. The spirit did not suddenly come at Pentecost. It was always there—the spirit constantly connecting with us, the mothering, birthing, fathering, blossoming, creatively loving spirit. We can listen to it, meditate on it, search for it---or not---but the spirit is always there, ---God is always there,---- everywhere--- evolving---- into all of creation.

Jesus told us that the kingdom of God is within. Cosmologists refer to this as the “kindom” which is relational---connected to others and all of creation. John speaks of the Spirit of truth and in today’s reading from Proverbs we hear “Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I came to birth ---ever at play in his presence, at play everywhere in the world, delighting to be with people everywhere.” We also hear from St. Paul in Acts that “God is the one in whom we live and move and have our being.” Rather than speaking of God’s transcendence or beyondness, he speaks of God’s “everywhereness” or immanence—indwelling. Marcus Borg tells us that God becomes desacralized when removed from the universe and thinking that the word “God” refers to a being separate from the universe “out there” may be a major cause of modern atheism, agnosticism and skepticism. The God “out there” might be believed in but not

known, not felt, not experienced and in a sense then not real to us. The God that is experienced is real. The divine mothering, fathering, brothering, sistering blossoming

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spirit within us and all of creation has within it the possibilities to diminish or live with the darkness and bring to light the “star quality” of all of creation . We’ve learned in our cosmology sessions and through our readings that we all have specks of the primal stars within us---all connected to one another, the spirit of truth John speaks of -- not just from itself, but from what it has learned, experienced, shared—all of the aspects of love.

(I am an avid Jeopardy fan, and in the last Friday’s contest one of the questions was about a song which of course I had never heard of (post 1975)—and the question was “If God had a name, what would it be?” and the answer was “One of us.” ---“us” including all earthly inhabitants, every speck of creation. Again, we go back to the Catechism definition of God---God is everywhere. Therefore, when we experience compassion, love, empathy we know that God is with us. We internalize God.

Today Fred has 2 true stories about 2 dogs and how the aspects of love, of empathy, compassion, the indwelling of the spirit were exemplified in these 2 animals. One of them is a beagle, which will delight our daughter Marisa and our grand-beagles Mickey and Georgy.)---and Kathy--- these stories can be retold or “woofed” to Ginger.

Life is interconnected on many levels and the spirit is revealed in all of creation.

Champ is a beagle pup who, in 2007, suffered incredible burns by an abuser who dumped acid on him and left him on a Paterson street to die. When he was rescued he was burned on 85% of his body. Mike Martin and his wife, Janice, volunteers at the Elmwood Park Save the Animal Rescue Team, adopted him. He whimpered with pain from his scars and later underwent multiple skin graft surgeries. For seven months they bathed him daily and applied medical ointment. Mike and Janice dressed him in special pajamas to keep his scorched body from becoming cold.

Champ is now 3 years old. Mike says that rather than being angry or fearful of people, he is gentle and friendly. Because of that, Champ also has a career. He visits injured Iraq war wounded veterans, and the ill and aged in hospitals and nursing homes. He also visits schools where he’s at the center of lessons about unconditional love and his road to overcoming cruelty. He makes an enduring impression on children who easily relate to him and can remember him as an example. He was also a guest on a national talk show after which he received 11,000 letters and e-mails from people who were inspired by the story.

My Second Story involves Sophie, an 83 year old woman whom I met together with her daughter when I was telling stories to a group in a North Jersey nursing home. Her daughter confirmed that Sophie’s mother often told this story at family gatherings. This

was the story: She grew up on a small farm in New York State. When she was an infant her mother dressed her, put her in her carriage and instructed her two brothers to wheel

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her up to the top of the hill and stay with her. The boys went off to play with friends, leaving Sophie alone. Apparently the brakes were not applied and the carriage, perhaps with the influence of a breeze, started rolling down the hill where there was a river. They had a “big white fluffy dog” who apparently must have gone into the river and rescued Sophie, obviously dragged her across the lawn and up the stairs of the front porch and then scratched on the screen door while continuing to bark. Sophie’s mother reportedly opened the door to see what the commotion was all about.

She saw Sophie, sopping wet and crying. The dog was also very wet and sat there wagging her tail. Sophie’s mom picked up the child and saw the carriage was turned on its side and was lying in the river. It was easy to see what had happened. Sophie ended her story with “If it wasn’t for that wonderful dog I wouldn’t be here today.” Her daughter nodded, smiling.

The word compassion comes from the Latin—*compassio*, *compassus*---to sympathize, to empathize. Compassion is another name for God. In these stories we witness the compassion of 2 dogs---we often feel the presence of the spirit, of god in the world of nature, as we watch it bloom, beautify the world, die and then bloom again. We see the facets of God everywhere.