

Holy Trinity Sunday
Matthew 28.16-20
Sunday, June 7, 2020

This past Wednesday about 500 people gathered in Scalzi Park for a March for Justice in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. In the world of organized rallies, it was, perhaps, one of the worst. No permits. The police did not know who the organizer was. The route of the march wasn't even known. Initially, the rumor was that the group would travel to the Police Station. They ended up in Columbus Park. Regardless the lack of organization, it was clear that the march struck a chord, and it was deeply desired. 500 people massing in the area around JM Wright Technical School where a petite woman with a tiny bull horn barked out directions and underscored that this was a peaceful rally! And then the mass of humanity began to move, to chant, to march down Washington Boulevard and finally arrive at Columbus Park.

Again, the coordination was abysmal. The connection was awesome. Here was an outlet for peoples' frayed and raw emotions. Here was an opportunity to *do* something in the face of the heinous act the week before and other similar atrocities that are all too familiar and frequent. Here was a way to show that things needed to change and they were changing.

It may seem like a bizarre connection, but what we observe today--Trinity Sunday--is, perhaps, the early church's analog to the desire and necessity that the march on Wednesday was born of. Indeed, to observe a Sunday given over to the Trinity--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, or Lover, Beloved, Love--may strike many at this point in history as a bit tone deaf at best and clueless at worst. "Do you not know what is going on in our community, our country, and the world?" some would be apt to ask. Yet, far from the esoteric exercise of figuring out how many angels can rest on the head of a pin, the concept and theology of the Trinity has its roots in a crisis moment for many in the early church.

Their world was turned upside down, and they were trying to develop a framework that would help them make sense of what they were experiencing. Many were raised with the understanding of Yahweh, the God of Israel, Creator of all things. However, they were also transformed by the experience that they had with the one they thought was Messiah, Jesus. Furthermore, they marveled at his teaching, his healing, and they mourned his death, and then they had an experience of him beyond that. And, finally, they were inspired by a spirit of Yahweh and Jesus that gave them strength and courage to engage the world in a way they could not have expected. Thus, what they stumbled into was akin to what many at Scalzi

Park stumbled into on Wednesday: an experience of community and life that gave meaning and purpose to them.

Of course, the experiences of the early church and protesters in Stamford in 2020 are markedly different. Or are they? What is it that we seek but connection. And when we have connection, ethics and morality flow. We can no longer live only for ourselves when we discover the connection to, as well as the value of, the other. And this, too, is an outgrowth of the very concept of the Trinity. Put simply: God is in relationship with God's Self. A venn diagram of relationship within the Godhead. Creator with Christ. Christ with Spirit. Spirit with Creator. All for one. And one for all. And if we are made in the image of this divine reality, then there exists a relational grounding that is fundamental to our being and foundational to our engagement of the world. As John Donne noted, "No man is an island." We are connected. And we seek connection. And we degrade ourselves and our society when we deny these connections, our relationship to others, and the myriad creatures that God gives to us to be in relationship with.

An example of this manifest itself at the rally on Wednesday. As a part of the program, names of black and brown individuals who had been killed by police abuse were called out, with a stirring chant from the crowd. Then, in a stroke of inspiration and serendipity, the petite woman leading this mass of humanity called out. "I want you all to kneel," she said. And the crowd complied. She then began to recite the Lord's Prayer. And it was a revelation. Almost everyone--and not just a few gray hairs--but everyone began to say the Our Father. Believers, non-believers, young, and old, gay and straight and bi and trans, black and white, and every other marker we create to separate were joined in a ritual that transcended our difference and allowed us to see our oneness.

Which raises a further reality hidden in God that we often forget and fail to apply at our peril. The Trinity is a playfully wonderful expression of how adding to the pie does not detract from the pie. Instead, the addition of Christ and Spirit to the Godhead only enhances the reality of the divine. The term that journalist Robert Wright uses for this phenomenon is non-zero sumness. Non-zero sumness. It is the opposite of what we are all familiar with: Zero sumness. That is, there is a limited amount, and we are all competing for the limited pie. Thus, if I win, you lose, and vice versa. There is not enough to go around. Scarcity is the driver of this world view.

However, in the very being of God, we affirm just the opposite. Abundance is the driver of this world view. Non-zero sumness is the reality. There is enough, and there is enough for everyone. Adding people to partake of the pie does not diminish the pie. On the contrary, the pie grows. It is the lesson of the feeding of the 5000, the truth of Jesus' healings, and

the experience of the early church. We do not claim God and then circle the wagons to keep out any whom we feel might threaten our practice or challenge our concept or reorder our priorities. We claim God and then we move out into the world buoyed by the promise that Christ goes with us, blessed with the promise that we are beloved of God as are all whom we meet, and bold in the recognition that God is not a God of diminishing returns, God is a God who bursts the prison of our small-mindedness and fear and invites us into the life and world that God has given us.

Near the end of the movie about Mr. Rogers, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, the cynical journalist, Lloyd Vogel, sits at a Pittsburgh restaurant with Fred Rogers. Rogers asks Vogel to do something. He asks Lloyd to spend one minute thinking about the people who "loved him into being." It's a poignant scene. The exercise reminds us of the exponential expansion of our realities when we think and reflect in these ways. Our connections. Our relationships. Our moments of recognizing who we are as well as whose we are. Our glimpses of that reality in all the others whom we meet. And God at the center of it all. Or, rather, God permeating it all. Thus, God not shrunk because of our limits. But God inviting us to partake of the expanse that is life and love, hope and mercy, justice and grace lost, found, and forever growing in God, in our world, and for you.