

Sermon June 3, 4, 2023

As I was preparing for this sermon, several topics were brought up by more than one writer. The Holy trinity is one of the topics. After all, it is Holy Trinity Sunday. Genesis 1 says “ Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness. This is the first recognition of our God as more than what we can understand fully.

And in the Gospel we hear “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Trying to understand the Holy Trinity is difficult at the best of times. It really is so abstract. How do we define God without using our preconceived notions and words? God is so much more than that. I don’t want to limit my view or your view by putting human terminology to use. But it’s there. In black and white. God is envisioned in many ways throughout scripture. The writers and storytellers in the bible help us to understand that God is more than what we can comprehend.

God is named as a quality: from Psalm 3:3 You, O Lord... are my glory,--as truth- for the Spirit is the truth from 1 John 5:6. God is named as animals, in John 1:29. Here is the Lamb, God is named as a hen in Matthew 23:37--gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. God is named as a woman...comforting mother: from Isaiah 66:13 as a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you. In Deuteronomy 32:18b--you forgot the God who gave you birth.

I believe that perhaps Jesus labels God so that we may have some understanding of the trinity. He is helping us to understand that God is more. But he is using our limited human understanding of what that might look like.

Another theme is creation. We hear of God creating the world and all that is in it. Including humans, male and female. In this story God calls all humankind to be stewards of all of creation.

In the Psalm it praises the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars. The psalmist claims that God has made human beings just a little less than divine and to rule or take care of everything God created. How majestic is God's name!

Of course in the Gospel we hear of baptism. Which we celebrate this weekend with a baptism of our own. What joy! Welcome Noah, son of God! Another disciple. We hear of gifts. Gifts of all kinds. Gifts of water, air, animals, trees, plants. Gifts of languages, gifts of the Holy Spirit. Kindness, hospitality, creativeness, service, teaching and so much more.

There is so much in each of these readings that I love.

I want to talk about being called and about being sent forth. Let's start with this, you have been created in the image of God. This is not an abstract statement. You are perfectly made. We are given gifts at our Holy Baptism and even birth that are important to recognise. It is something that we shared with students in confirmation class. The gifts directly affect our calls.

A word that churches often use when talking about call is vocation. When I looked up vocation online the definition that I saw was...

Vocation, in its broadest sense, encompasses every role that a person has in his or her life. Your vocation is created by the roles you play and the actions you take, which can range from a job to family life, or from being active in a community to taking time for yourself. Something that arises from within.

Hear the word—call. In Genesis, God calls upon humankind to take care of all of creation. We are to be good stewards of everything we see and of all the Earth. Everyone we meet. In Matthew, we are called to go forth, go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Teach them to obey everything that was commanded of us by Christ.

Even the Psalmist today claims that God made us to rule over all things. All flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts, birds of the air, fish in the sea.

I believe those calls are the same. God calls us to take care of everything around us. He means humanity too. When God calls us to be stewards of the world, God wants us to go and do something, not just hear the words. When Jesus calls his disciples to go forward and make disciples of all nations, he is not asking them to simply hear the words and then sit back and relax, he wants them to go. Go outside, go take care of things.

These are not passive phrases used by either God or Jesus. They are action words. They are meant to be done ...out there.

One of my favorite calls right now is to be a mama to Andrea. My daughter just gave birth to her 3rd child. I have been to visit and I am loving on the baby and the other kids. I know her husband is taking good care of her. But I need to be her mama right now. She is tired, she is sore. She deserves some extra loving and attention.

Of course, I am a grandma. Or as I am called...Oma. One of my favorite calls of all. I also love being a wife, a sister, a friend, a confidant.

I talk about these calls because I want you to know they are so very important. In the grand scheme of things, they may not feel very important or life changing. But we never know how our actions are going to affect someone or something.

I was at a retreat this week and I heard a woman explain that she felt she wasn't doing enough. She wasn't doing enough to share God's love and how can she do more? I heard the sadness in her. I don't want you to take lightly all that you do. I want you to know that God has a special plan for you. What you do is important.

When I was a teen, I had a vision for my life. I knew I wanted to be a wife and mom. But I also thought I wanted to be a counselor. I love to help people. I look back on those dreams and I know that I have accomplished

them all. I don't have a degree in counseling, however, I sure do counsel friends and family, students, peers.

One of my least favorite words is "just". Not in the sense of justice, but in the sense that I am just, just a mom, just a sister, just a receptionist, just a person who..... All you do is valid. All you do is important. All you do is because of God given gifts.

One of my favorite experiences in the church has been to attend Lay School of Ministry. I felt called. I felt I needed to know and learn more. About God and about the Church, church with a capital C, about my faith. I wanted to know why it felt so important to me. I know a few of you have attended or are going. I highly recommend the school. My problem was that I walked out of that program wanting to do more and be more. I walked out saying, I am just a lay person. I felt inadequate somehow. I felt like I should be doing more.

This gift of faith and of life long learning and desire to learn is huge. Like the woman on our retreat, she has a desire to disciple people. She has a desire to lead people to God. What greater gift can there be? Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations. This Great Commission is calling you to do that. But how do we go about making disciples?

I believe we make disciples by being who we were made to be. By caring for our neighbors, by caring for the environment, by doing our part to make sure that the person next to us is comfortable, welcomed. St. Francis of

Assisi is credited with saying, "Preach the Gospel at all times, when necessary, use words."

So I say to you, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, one person at a time, as you are uniquely gifted to do.