

Trinity Sunday Year A 2020
The Church of the Redeemer, Greenville, SC
The Rev. Catherine L. Tatem
June 7, 2020

Genesis 1:1-2:4 Canticle 13 2 Cor 13:11-13 Matthew 28:16-20

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

With these words, Paul closes his second letter to the people of Corinth. We remember that Paul is writing to a church marked by continuing divisions. The Corinthian community is torn apart by factions, and the people's reported behavior (from Chapter 12), includes "quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder." Paul could be writing about many of our communities today, locally and nationally. In fact, we are witnessing much more than the behaviors in Corinth: our communities, torn by deep-seated and long-standing divisions, offer, in addition, hatred, violence, murder, and intolerance. Murder is wrong. Racism is wrong. At the same time, offering God's blessing to one another is not optional to our faith. We have professed that we will seek and serve Christ in one another, and that we will strive for justice and peace among all people while respecting the dignity of every human being.

Day after day, I turn off the news, turn the radio to podcasts, open a book ... and turn back to local and world news. I need to know what is going on. We need to be informed. We might need to be uncomfortable –

and not obsessed, but knowledgeable about the condition of our world. The messages are clear: the Covid-19 virus has no favorites and its spread continues. Racial injustice, including murder in our streets, is abhorrent and needs to stop. We are living in a time of change, and at times, overwhelming change.

Turn, friends, to spiritual resources. On many nights I answer this invitation (via computer, of course, in these days of quarantine safety):

Join us to pray for the life of the world.

At first I thought, yeah – I'll pray, but I can't help the life of the whole world. And then,

The prayers come back to me; they are grounding and familiar. Prayer calls to all of us, calls and waits with that invitation:

Pray for the life of the world.

God calls us to be grounded in God, in God's son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Now, I miss the voice of that community prayer when I do not tune in. I miss it. For what, in what, do you have that longing? We miss gathering in person, in the name of Christ. To be sure, computer worship is not the same. We are, however, together through the gift our technology. It is comfortable: we are at home in casual attire, coffee in hands, and yet – something is missing. Of course. We are missing. Human interaction is missing. It is important that we do not abandon our faith, worship and prayer in this time. We need to turn again and again to God, in prayer by ourselves and in prayer in community even while we yearn for physical presence. God transcends a computer screen. God will triumph over coronavirus, over systemic racism, over our loneliness and despair.

Today, the invitation to prayer changed:

Join us to pray for the life of this broken, but beloved world.

Thank you. I will. How about you?

Dare to imagine that there is more to life than what we see on the news and that prayer changes us. When we join in relationship with God – that’s what prayer is – we are transformed. That transformation leads us to an awakened longing for God, to more prayer, to action, to justice, mercy, and right relationship with all of God’s creation. We have not in the history of creation reached that right relationship, but we have a merciful, loving, God. Today’s invitation is to pray for this broken AND beloved world.

From the reading from Genesis: God saw creation, and it was good. God rested on the 7th day, not to rest (God doesn’t need to rest) but to enjoy the goodness of creation. God created us in God’s image and gave us dominion, caretaking, over all of creation. Ignatius wrote that we are created to know, love and serve God. Be certain that it is God who draws forth these actions from us.

We live in a broken world. We live as God’s beloved children and some say, the pinnacle of creation. Get to know God every day. Pray without ceasing: with a book, in your heart, through a computer, together in whatever way that might happen. Do not let the failings of Corinth and of this world define your life and our life in God’s good creation.

Transformed, we will change the world.

Bless one another, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.