



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast June 7, 2020: Trinity Sunday

Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost, is one of the few celebrations of the Christian Year that commemorates a reality and doctrine rather than a person or event. On Trinity Sunday, Christians remember and honor the eternal God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1-2:4a: The well-known creation story which extols the goodness of heaven and earth, and praises the Creator who has made all things “very good.”

Psalms 8: A song of praise to the sovereignty of God and dignity of humankind.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13: Paul comes to the end of this letter responding to queries from a church in which the members do not live in harmony.

Matthew 28:16-20: After his resurrection, Jesus has asked Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to tell the remaining eleven disciples to go to Galilee, where they will see him. Now Jesus appears to them on the mountain where he was transfigured, and proclaims “The Great Commission.”

Not a sermon...(well, maybe more than usual)

From the scripture descriptions we see above, it sounds like we should immediately jump to 2 Corinthians! It’s not as if we haven’t been in turbulent times before where we were not living in harmony with our neighbors, but it seems we are stuck in those times. In the US during the last week we have seen a lion’s share of hate, death, violence, vitriol, and . . . we have seen increasing sickness, unemployment, hunger, and continuing school and business closings. It is more than fair for us to ask, “what do we do?” We all want answers, and we have been brought up to believe that our faith has answers. Let us direct our attention to the reading from Matthew for a moment. While I am not denigrating the problems in the church at Corinth, the end of Matthew’s Gospel is loaded with significance for both our church and country today.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

It is easy for us to identify with the eleven disciples. At the sight of the risen Jesus, they worshipped him and followed him, just as they had done before he was crucified. But now, for maybe more of the disciples than is apparent, we see their worship is clouded with doubt. Jesus’s resurrection did not remove all their uncertainties and questions. Yet, what is important for us to see is that they were not excluded because of their doubts and questions. Rather, it is exactly to those uncertain people that Jesus gave the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations....” There are two actions in the Great Commission: (1) “baptizing” and (2) “teaching.”



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“Baptizing ... in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit” symbolizes a new life under God and membership in a supportive community. Those who are baptized are now in a committed relationship, between God and them, and between their Christian community and them. This relationship is one that they can now depend on. God’s grace is freely given.

Baptism does not stop there. “Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...” is the action part. The most effective way to teach is by example. “I say and I do” is teaching. Sure, it is important to talk about faith, but it is also important to live it by obeying those words. We probably have seen the bumper sticker which reads, “Less talk, more walk.”

Christians must always remain mindful that they do not claim too much for themselves. I do not have to give specifics here because we are well aware of self-promotion. Christians baptize, teach, serve, make God’s presence known in the world, but it always through a derived authority. In today’s Gospel Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” And at that moment he directed the disciples, even those in doubt, to continue God’s work, remembering that they have derived their authority from God by God’s grace and not through their own doing.

In what may seem to us to be dark days, and we feel like “sheep in the midst of wolves.” We can live as we should, set the examples we need to, and call out those things which are clearly not God’s work. After all, we have each other, while remembering God is with us always.

May it be so. Amen!

-Blessings, Vance



Prayers for the Raquette Lake Community working under unusual circumstances to prepare for the summer season, especially Jim.
