

Trinity Sunday

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 John 16:12-15

Does not wisdom call and does not understanding raise her voice? The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago.

What a wonderfully probing question on a day when we come to celebrate relationship because, the Trinity is essentially a relationship dance of energy and indwelling. Today I am going to ask you some questions about deep and on-going learning that can be part of the faith journey. This journey is not for everyone. I believe that it is through ritual, metaphor, poetry, open-ended investigation and language that we might be inspired and challenged to experience something new that enables growth in faith.

My bible lists today's gospel under the sub-heading work with the Spirit. So I have questions for you. Are you active or passive in your faith? Do you believe that your thoughts and understandings of the faith are fixed and whatever comes along that is divergent you measure alongside what you have always known. What do the seasonal changes mean for you? Last week we celebrated the coming of the Spirit. What is the Spirit doing in your life? Do you take it seriously? Do you want to bring change to your faith life? Many find change threatening so it's easy to stick within the well-worn tracks because that's the way we have always done it. However, God may be calling us to something new. Are you listening?

I have asked you before, how you learn? Are you an experiential learner? Do you focus on words or images, sound or movement? What will jolt you to considering something new especially in relation to your faith?

Today we will witness and participate in the rite of baptism. Perhaps it will wash over you, or perhaps you might hear within the ancient words a deeper- whisper. For weeks we went through the words of the sprinkling rite at the beginning of our service. I wonder if it was deeply meaningful for you or if it was a cause of a nervous twitter because being splashed in church is an unusual thing to do and we may glad when the weeks pass.

In the Thursday prayer group we've been investigating deep-questions. James Martin's book rests in the proposition that we need on-going learning about prayer because what we learnt in our youth doesn't equip us adequately to deal with the problems of the 21st Century.

So while some are comfortable with investigation, others might find today's sentence more challenging. Does not wisdom call and does not understanding raise her voice? My question for you is how will you know if Wisdom created by the Lord is calling?

How would you know if the thoughts and images that are coming to you at prayer are of God or if they are our own voice? The Thursday group has been deep into this exploration! The basic issue comes down to the tools that we use for exploration. Do we want to be active to work with the Spirit to shape and change us? If we don't then perhaps

listening to the gospel and thinking about it may be all that we want. Alternatively, we may look for a format or methodology that will stimulate us to wonder.

I spent a gruelling day at clergy conference. It was focused on The Good Shepherd and the way that that this image might inspire and sustain us as care givers. I was in that image, body and mind for a full-day and I am still processing. A couple of weeks back I invited Amelie and Isla into the story of the Good Shepherd in preparation for their baptism and to explain to them that today they will enter a new relationship with the one who cares deeply for them. They are also entering into relationship with the Father and the Spirit. I was delighted last week to hear Bishop Kate refer to the Godly Play story of Pentecost. In that story we note that the smoke rises and disperses. This is the reminder that Jesus was a man in one place at one time. He had to change to Spirit that could be in all places at all times. Sometimes we need a symbolic action (such as extinguishing a candle) to assist us on our way to learning. Today I have put the Godly Play story of The Good Shepherd in front of the altar. You might like to look at it as you come forward and reach out your hands and wonder what those hands say to you.

Have you heard this definition of foolishness? Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome. So I return to the question implicit in our sentence. Does not wisdom call and does not understanding raise her voice? Where is wisdom speaking to you? Are you looking for the right places for something new? Spiritual writer Maragret Silf

suggests these are sign-posts that indicate the energy that comes God; a Trinity.

Silf states; “What comes from God will last and will bring about real change within us.

What comes from God has a peculiar characteristic of weaving itself seamlessly into our own personal experiences and memories. In other words, God meets us where we are.

What comes from God will draw us closer to him and closer to one and one another. God leads us to more love”.¹ Can you see such events unfolding in your life? If you can’t and you would like to, here is what a new book on Christianity has to say on the subject. Author Diana Butler explains that she has adopted a new way of viewing Christianity. Her book titled *Free Jesus* concludes that it is necessary to focus Jesus in the present. She claims that staying Christian is about staying in, and with Jesus. Even though there is a verse in Hebrews 13: 8 that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. The church does not stay the same yesterday, today and forever. And so, in a very real way, and (I would say healthy way) Jesus changes for us. Jesus changes for the world. Jesus changes for institutions of faith; for the church. If we are not doing that kind of **work** and letting the image emerge for you and a new image of Jesus being born in us then we are probably in a static place in our own faith².

So today we are encouraged to reflect on wisdom in relation to the Trinity. Wisdom that was created by the Lord at the

¹ Martin, J. *Learning to pray a guide for everyone* p 235

²² Butler D quoted in *Seeing Jesus Again* Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation Week 22 WWW

beginning of his acts. How will you reach into this experience of relationship?

References

Martin, J. *Learning to pray a guide for everyone* Harper Collins London 1989

Butler, D. *Freeing Jesus Rediscovering Jesus as a Friend, Teacher, Saviour, Lord, Way Presence* New Your: HarperOne 2021, xxv