

The Holy Trinity, Year C

May 30, 2010

Proverbs 8: 11-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

{1} Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding rise her voice? *{2}* On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; *{3}* beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: *{4}* "To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.... *{22}* The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. *{23}* Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. *{24}* When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. *{25}* Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth-- *{26}* when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. *{27}* When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, *{28}* when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, *{29}* when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, *{30}* then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, *{31}* rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Psalm 8

{1} O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. *{2}* Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. *{3}* When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; *{4}* what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? *{5}* Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. *{6}* You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, *{7}* all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, *{8}* the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. *{9}* O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Romans 5:1-5

{1} Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, *{2}* through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. *{3}* And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, *{4}* and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, *{5}* and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

John 16:12-15

{12} I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. *{13}* When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. *{14}* He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. *{15}* All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

When I “log on” to my computer at home I am greeted with a page of the most recent news as well as various human interest stories. Among those stories there will sometimes be the latest study about how to figure out what love is. The answers vary from biology, sociology, body chemistry, hormones, pheromones, psychology, birth order, to preservation of the species. Some of these articles are informative and some aren’t, but even the best of them fails to be “the” answer. There’s always something more.

If I asked you why you loved a particular person, my guess is that you would easily and quickly come up with an impressive list. The responses might be something like, “I just feel special around him/her.”, or “She/he

makes me happy.”, or “I don’t have to face life alone.”, or “She/he is the kindest person I’ve ever met.”, or “I just feel most alive around him/her.”, etc. If I continued to push a bit, you would eventually run out of things to say and ultimately come to, “Gee, I don’t know. I just do. It seems to be the right thing.”

It’s never a bad thing to want to figure things out and to know as much as possible about the universe and ourselves. That’s part of who we are. When it comes to love of any kind, though, there is a point at which words are no longer helpful, none of the explanations fully suffice and we come to silence and mystery.

For reasons that are not exactly clear, human beings appear to be “hard wired” for relationships and even for love. That has to be why, with the possible exception of the most hardened sociopath, “solitary confinement” is such an effective punishment, particularly if it extends for any length of time. To paraphrase a verse from the second chapter of *Genesis*, “It is not good for the human being to be alone.”

When I was about twenty years old I was able to work full time in a group home as well as go to college full time. In the mornings we assisted the residents in getting ready for work, which was close enough to walk. On one particular day, it was very icy, so I decided to drive the station wagon. I was still a relatively new driver, but thought it shouldn’t be much of a problem. On the way back, I was driving down a street where many cars were double-parked (standard for NYC), leaving only a narrow clear passage. Well, I thought I could make it, but the car slipped on the ice and rested against a double-parked car. Within minutes I had a bit of an audience, including one older gentlemen stating how angry the owner of the car would be, etc. I called him the “prophet of doom.” Eventually, thanks to an idea from the postal carrier, we lifted the car by jack and pushed it away from the other car. Unfortunately, some trim on that car was damaged in the process.

Anyway, I needed to get to school and so agreed to come back later in the evening to settle things. I was convinced I would be fired, sued, etc. I did return. By the way, the owners of the vehicle were an elderly couple.

A brief digression. I remember seeing a documentary on television (back in the 1980s) about the changes happening in Japanese society. Among them was that the stress on work and productivity was altering traditional societal reverence for elderly people, many of whom were becoming increasingly isolated. It turned out that the biggest consumer group for child-sized dolls turned out to be elderly Japanese couples who would treat this doll as a sort of surrogate grandchild. The documentary filmed many examples of this behavior.

Well, when I entered the apartment of this elderly couple, among the first things I noticed was a child - size doll, sitting in a chair with an afghan over its lap. It took me only a few minutes to figure out that this couple was thrilled to have a visitor, probably one old enough to be a grandchild. Even the “prophet of doom” showed up! They were not really as interested in financial restitution (thank God!) as they were in a little company.

There’s something about us that simply craves relationship and a sense of connection with others, even when it defies exact definition.

Today is Trinity Sunday. At its core, this is a feast of the love of God. A love that has been and is being “poured out” to all creation- love for the world and for you and me. A love that will not be stopped by our refusal to love back. A love that will not be defeated by sin and evil. A love that would sooner die than ever stop loving.

Very holy and very smart people have tried and continue to try to figure the Trinity out, to offer plausible explanations, to find the right words or images. All of that is part of who we are. Some of it is very good. All of it is very necessary and very important.

But, at some point, we come to silence and come face to face with mystery. At some point words just can’t express what we want to say.

At some point it is simply best to be embraced by and to embrace the wondrous mystery of God’s love.

Today is a day for awe and gratitude.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of God’s glory.

AMEN.