

Trinity Sunday, Year "A": Genesis 1:1- 2: 4a; Psalm 8; 2 Cor. 13: 11-13; Matthew 28:16-20.

Title: Some Doubted

It is the glorified Jesus, the post-resurrection Jesus that we encounter this morning for we are at the end of the story. Earlier it was the glorified Jesus that had appeared to the two Mary's: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. This was the encounter that took place near the entrance to the empty tomb. You may recall that it was in that encounter with these women that Jesus instructs them to go now and tell the brethren to go to Galilee for it is there that they will see him.

The brethren. That would, of course, be these very same disciples who are now gathered with our Lord this morning on top of a mountain. The text says that upon seeing Jesus, they worshipped him. Well, of course they did. Nothing surprising about that. But in the very same sentence -- separated by only a semi-colon -- the text also says something very curious. It says that "some doubted." Some of those we now call Apostles, Jesus' inner core, those who have been closest to Jesus, those on whom Jesus is depending upon to continue the good work that he had started -- some of them doubted!

Apparently there were others besides poor infamous "Doubting Thomas" who, when faced with an apparently defeated Jesus hanging on a cross, had doubts. But Jesus did not dismiss the doubters -- whoever they were. Nor did he send them away as somehow unworthy because of their doubt. Jesus never said, "Come to me all you have your doctrine straight." Jesus does not say, "Come unto me all of you who have no remaining questions." What he does say is, "Come to me all you are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I will refresh you."

Not only does Jesus not reject the doubters, not only does he not send them away in disgrace, he ordained them! He commissioned them. He embraced them. And he empowered them. And he sent them out telling them, "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 with these words Jesus gives birth not to a doctrine, but to a reality of divine truth. Divine presence. And the reality that Love is in our midst and in our lives to stay.

"I am with you always, Jesus said, [even] to the close of the age." These are Jesus' last words. And that is where the Gospel according to Matthew ends.

The first words of the story of God's work in the world are, "In the beginning." And so in the beginning we find God creating all that is. And we find God stopping with some frequency to declare that it is 'good.' And to bless that which he has created. This is how we are introduced to God the Father.

And the story goes on and eventually transitions to God With Us. Emmanuel. Jesus. Son of God. The second person of the Trinity. He who came to redeem us.

And the story concludes with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Counselor. God ever present. Always with us. Even until the end of the age.

It is the story of the Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. Or as St. Augustine described the Trinity: Lover, Beloved, and Love -- the love that exists between them all. That same love that animates each and every human being – some more than others for the Spirit works in conjunction with free will. But it is always there. We can deny it. But we cannot erase it for it is the substance of creation. We can refuse to recognize it, but we cannot make it go away.

There is a story that Jay Leno, the former host of the Tonight Show, tells about his mother. She came to this country as an immigrant. And like many immigrants she longed to be a citizen of this country. Unlike one born in America, in order to become a citizen she had to take a test. You could miss up to four questions on the test and still pass. However, miss five and you would fail and you would not receive your citizenship. And she desperately wanted to become a citizen.

She had already missed four questions when the judge asked her, "What is the Constitution?"

She quickly responded, "A boat."

No, no, said the judge. That is wrong.

Her countenance fell. She was sure she was right. She had seen the Constitution, the USS Constitution, anchored in Boston Harbor. Yet the judge had said that she was wrong. It looked though for sure she would not be granted citizenship. Worse, she was terrified that she would be deported.

"No, said the judge, "the constitution is the document governing...."

"It's also a boat!" protested Leno's father. The Constitution. Same thing. Come on judge!"

The judge and Leno bantered some. Finally, exasperated the judge rolled his eyes and said, "Okay. Fine. She's a citizen. Now you's get out of here."

Leno's father hugged his mother. "You passed!" he said.

Jay Leno said that his mother was never completely convinced that she had passed that test and till her death worried that she might be deported for not having answered all the questions in exactly the right way.

The Good News is we don't have to answer all the questions the right way.

Some doubted. Yet, Jesus loved, embraced, and even commissioned them anyway. Doubts and all. Questions and all. Shortcomings and all. No disciple was dismissed. No one was deported from the Kingdom, that is to say 'the Kingdom of God', because they didn't have all the right answers. In fact, if you read the gospels you soon realize that the disciples had a hard time even coming up with the right questions, much less the right answers.

We tend to have so many questions don't we? Does God guarantee eternal life?

Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do we get sick? Why is there pain and sorrow in a world created good? Where is the justice in all of this?

Oh, and this one: Isn't the church full of hypocrites? And doesn't that render it unworthy of my participation in it? I can tell you that as a relatively young adult who was tentatively testing the waters of coming back into the church of my youth, I put that very question to a very wise priest. His answer was yes, the church is full of hypocrites, but if you think you'd like to join us, he said, we can all scrunch up a little tighter and probably make room for one more. True story.

We do have so many questions. And that is a good thing. God gave us good minds and wants us to use them. But I also think that God would have us sometimes just lay our questions aside long enough to make ourselves available to let God just love on us a little.

For God's sake, and for our sake, let us not wait until we have all of our questions answered to our satisfaction. Let us not wait until we've figured God out. Because if we do that, we'll never get there. Because the reality is that only God knows God. Only God fully comprehends God.

I like what Anselm, an eleventh century Archbishop of Canterbury, had to say on this subject. He said, "I believe in order that I may know." I believe in order that I may know. Dear ones, Anselm is reminding us that our *experience* of God precedes our *knowledge about* God.

Let me tell you: I doubt that anyone ever came to faith as a consequence of encountering the Creed of Athanasius which is but an attempt at explaining the theology of the Holy Trinity. If you don't believe me, after the service today, turn to page 864 of the Prayer Book and see if the reading of the Creed of Athanasius constitutes a spiritual

experience for you. I'll bet not. But millions have come to faith because they were open to experiencing the very realities of which that creed speaks.

And so here we arrive at this point on the Christian calendar: Trinity Sunday. A Sunday which invites some comment on this doctrine which seems so hard to understand.

The Holy Trinity is one of those concepts that we encounter as we move into the church. A concept that probably raises more questions than it answers. Questions that can be maidenly difficult to get our heads around.

Dear ones, the Apostle Paul writes to the saints in Corinth and reminds them God is not a God of confusion but rather the God of peace (1 Cor 14:33).

Indeed let us continue to ponder together the things of God. No less than Jesus commands it in this very same Gospel for Jesus says that we are to love God not only with all of our heart and soul, but with our minds as well (22:37).

These very words appear over the archway to the DuPont Library of Theology – a room housing hundreds of thousands of volumes on Christian theology and doctrine. As you enter that room, over the archway are these words: Jesus died to take away our sins, not our minds.

Indeed, but also as we move through this journey together, let us remember along with St. Anselm that we might believe in order that we might know.

And so come. Come to this house. Come to this table. Come into the presence of the Great Mystery. Bring your doubts. Bring your fears. Bring your anxieties. Bring your need for forgiveness. Bring all that you are. But come. And as you come we might recall Jesus' words and the all-inclusive invitation that it is, "Come unto me ALL who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (11:26-30)."

Amen