

Trinity Sunday, 2011

An elder once said to a child:

"I will give you a gold coin if you can tell me where God dwells."

To which the child replied:

"I will give you two if you can tell me where God does not dwell."

Today we honor the wisdom of that child. Today is Trinity Sunday.

Today we honor that great mystery of the holy three-in-one

who is, who are the ground of our being,

in whom we live and move and have our being.

The doctrine of the Trinity is all about creative, life-giving relationship,

and thus we share in the life of the Trinity

every time love is born or people reconciled,

in every act of making, each creative dream,

in the flow of life's great healing river.

Thanks be to God!

Paul hints at this great truth when he signs off his letter to the Corinthians with a prayer that they might know the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is in fact a passionate advocate for such communion,

for our sharing in the life of the Trinity through the Spirit.

Earlier in his correspondence with the Corinthians

he teaches them that God, through the Spirit, gives to each of us

the gifts that are uniquely ours but which are then properly used in glorifying God.

To the Galatians he emphasizes that those who are clothed with Christ in baptism

can be known by what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit, the character they display:

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness,

and self-control.

When I was a little boy, I spent hours reading and rereading a favorite book

that I now see as a kind of parable for this work of the Trinity through the Spirit.

I also had a record version of it, which I wore out on my portable turn-table.

It was written by Ruth Krauss in 1945 and it's called "The Carrot Seed."

It's about a little boy who plants a carrot seed, but no one in his family believes it will come up. His mother, his father and his big brother repeat to him each day, "I'm afraid it won't come up," but the little boy carries on from day to day completely unconcerned. Planting the seed, watering it daily, pulling the weeds, and patiently waiting for the carrot to grow are all part of his simple approach. He leaves anxiety to the parents, competition to his big brother, and wins for himself real satisfaction in being true to his vision. In the end, his faith is rewarded: a huge carrot grows, "just as the little boy had known it would."

Carrots grow from carrot seeds,

patiently, lovingly, joyfully, faithfully tended over time—

and the fruit of the Spirit grows from Spirit seeds in the same way.

This sermon was written by The Rev. Theo Park and delivered at Christ Episcopal Church, Red Wing. Fr. Theo thanks all those whose material he has borrowed and apologizes to those he has overlooked.

These are implanted in each of you, each of us, by God,
who has created us to be uniquely gifted,
creative, resourceful, and whole,
in the image and likeness of our Creator and loving Parent.

Look around. Where do you see Spirit seeds producing fruit?
Where do you see the communion of the Trinity as a reality in our midst?
Who among us would you name as a person of...

Love	Joy	Peace	Patience	Kindness
Generosity	Gentleness	Faithfulness	Self-control	

Perhaps you would even name yourself. It's no sin, you know.

I *hope* you're on that list somewhere.

I hope that for you, *I'm* on that list somewhere.

You're certainly the faces that fill out *my* list.

As we will say at the close of our prayers for this summer season,

God showers these gifts upon us in abundance,

to empower us in our calling;

our work is to come to know and trust these gifts,

that we may discover the joy they bring,

and be inspired to live and to love out of that joy.

In order for our fruit to grow

we need to stay connected to God the grower and to Christ the vine
and we need to play our part: watering, weeding, and waiting patiently,
with anticipation but without undo expectation.

It's not always easy; that's where the self-control part comes in.

In life as in literature,

it does not do to give up too early;

don't give in to criticism or let anyone

deter you from bringing your seed to fruit.

But neither does it do to rush the produce

or expect too much of the first year's growth.

If we practice patience and self-control

we may find ourselves pleasantly surprised when it comes to harvest time.

This doesn't mean we can't take risks.

Planting anything, bringing it to blossom, ever, is a risk.

Every gardener, every farmer here knows this,

and it's no less true of human endeavors.

In fact, all of the fruits of the Spirit involve risk:

Loving, being joyful, being kind or patient or gentle,

being a person of peace or generosity or faithfulness or self-control—

they all involve risk because they involve investment;

they all involve risk because they involve action;

they all involve risk because they involve opening ourselves to disappointment.

Despite our best efforts, there are many other factors that affect the results.

God—who planted these seeds in us—takes this risk with each of us.

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We are called to trust that God tends the vine,
of which we are the offshoots.
We are also called to be co-creators in God's image
and tend the seeds implanted in each of us and in each other.
To water, to weed, to prune out disease,
that we might produce much fruit.
But at the end of the day,
to remember that it is about the effort, not the outcome.
Who knows what surprises may come up?

So as we move into this season of the Sundays after Pentecost,
the long weeks of green growth on the church calendar,
representing the Church at work in the world:
Do your work,
tend the garden given you,
love it and be patient;
know that the One who has begun a good work in you
will bring it to completion.
Trust that all things are indeed possible for those who believe.

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

PS: Krauss' book is still available, both in hardcover and as a paperback reprint. The ISBN for the hardback is: 0060233508. You can hear the song version if you go to:
http://www.kiddierecords.com/archive/week_30.htm

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