

Trinity Sunday—Year A  
Genesis 1:1-2:4a  
Psalm 108  
II Corinthians 13:11-13  
Matthew 28:16-20

**Since May 22<sup>nd</sup>**, so that's the last three weeks, listen to what's happened in our world. **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**, a suicide bomber launched an **attack at the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England**. Ariana Grande is especially popular among young girls. The attacker had been radicalized with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) quick to claim inspiration.

**On Friday of that week, May 28<sup>th</sup>**, a bus of Coptic Christians in Egypt was attacked on the way to worship at St. Samuel monastery in Minya 160 miles south of Cairo along the Nile. Again, the Islamic State was thought to be involved. Minya Province has the largest percentage of Christians in Egypt. Egypt's Grand Mufti, Shawqi Allam, denounced the attack saying, *"Those traitors breached all the religious principles and humanitarian values"*—he's the highest religious authority in Islam in Egypt.

**On that same day, across the world in Portland, Oregon**, two young women were riding a commuter train. One was wearing a hijab, the traditional head covering worn by some Muslim women in public. **A man started to harass them**, yelling awful things at them because he perceived them to be Muslim. Three bystanders stepped in to stop the harassment; **the three were attacked by the man**; two of them died.

Three days later, **on May 31<sup>st</sup>**, a suicide truck bomb exploded in the diplomatic quarter in **Kabul, Afghanistan** near the German embassy and the Presidential Palace. This area was supposed to be one of the safer areas. The streets were packed with commuters and women shopping and children going to school. 90 died. No group has yet claimed responsibility. Afghani intelligence believes it to be the work of a Taliban affiliated group; the Taliban deny responsibility. Nonetheless, the Afghan President ordered the revenge execution of 11 Taliban militants on death row.

Three days after the Kabul attack, **on June 3<sup>rd</sup>**, a van plowed into pedestrians on **London Bridge, then three men exited the van randomly attacking people in Borough Market** shouting *"This is for Allah"*—again, these men had been radicalized. Last Wednesday, 100 Muslim leaders gathered on London Bridge to condemn this violence. The London Mayor released police reports signaling that anti-muslim crimes increased fivefold since the attack from a daily average of 4 to as many as 20.

**Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>**, three days after the London attack, **a man attacked a policeman outside of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris** shouting, *"This is for Syria,"* placing the Cathedral, full of tourists, on lockdown.

The following day, **on June 7<sup>th</sup>**, **two simultaneous attacks stunned Iran—an attack on Parliament and an attack on mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini**—twelve died. The Islamic State claimed responsibility. If the Islamic State's claim is true, this is the first time they have struck inside Iran. Sunni militants regard Iran, which is predominantly Shiite Muslim as a nation of heretics.

Meanwhile, back in our own country, **on May 31<sup>st</sup>, the second noose in a week was found on Smithsonian grounds in Washington D.C.**, this time at the National Museum of African-American History and Culture.

And in the last 10 days, Bill Maher (that's talk show host/comedian Bill Maher, NOT our Bill Marr) thought it appropriate to casually pull out the n-word during an interview with Senator Sasse of Nebraska. CNN fired comedian Kathy Griffin who co-hosts their New Year's Eve show after she released a picture of herself with a head of the President in hand, and they fired show host Reza Aslan after he called the President "*a piece of a not-good-thing and an embarrassment to humankind*" on twitter—Aslan lost his cool in response to tweets the President made the morning after the attack in London. ALL these events are completely beyond the pale and a testament to the coarsening of our culture.

And that's not even touching the hearings that have gripped the country this week, and the endless recriminations being thrown at one another in Washington and on our tv screens.

Are you exhausted? I'm exhausted. My psyche is strained; my mind is numb; my body is tired; and my heart just keeps on breaking. It's enough to weary a soul. **Religious hate. Racial hate. Political hate.** This sermon starting gestating in my soul **on May 28<sup>th</sup>, the day the Egyptian Coptic Christians and the Portland attack happened.** Something inside of me cried out, "***This has got to STOP! Religious hate has got to STOP!***" And then the nooses happened at the African American Museum, and inside, I cried out, "***Racial hate has got to STOP.***" And then, I hear about these public media personalities saying awful things about another human being made in the image of God, and inside, yet again, I cry out, "***Political hate—it's got to STOP!***" Bombing after attack after bombing after attack—this hate, ***IT'S GOT TO STOP!***

***And it's got to start stopping with us.*** I can't stop an attack in London or Paris or Kabul or Tehran, I can't stop hateful speech in Washington or on our airwaves, but ***I can stop the hate in my speech, in my circles, in my family, in my community. I can stop the hate in my heart, and I must. You must. We must.***

So, where, how, do we dig deeper and ground ourselves in a *different* place so that we can STOP all this hating?

Well, today is **Trinity Sunday**. Usually a weird feast specially designed to make preachers crazy as they struggle to do that new Trinitarian math—if one is three and three is one, is each member a third of the one? But a day *to contemplate the Trinity* has never felt more important to me than it does right now.

What are the essential, foundational, bedrock truths of the Trinity? This **God** who *creates* and *redeems* and *blows where it will*; this **God** who is *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*; this **God** is *Lover, Beloved, and Love* itself; this **God** who is *Lifegiver, new life birthed, and midwife*—this **God** is always moving, as the Church Fathers knew, as ***perichoresis, the circle dance.***

As Richard Rohr would remind us, the Trinity is the flow of love, *and it's the flow itself*, and sin is anything that stops the flow of love.

The Church Fathers and the mystics all intuit the same thing, the Trinity reveals to us this **great divine diversity, each member distinct**, that links hands and dances, knowing at its deepest core that it's **all the same substance**.

The Trinity reminds us of *the nature* of these divine relationships—no one member of the Trinity lords it over another, but all are co-equal and co-eternal, all bow and yield to one another, releasing all that they have toward the other while at the same time receiving all that the other is sending their way—*perfect receiving* and *perfect giving*. As **Teresa of Avila** described, it's like the buckets in the water wheel—they fill fully and empty completely and the energy of that being filled and pouring out creates the energy that makes the wheel go, and it is effortless.

Richard Rohr notes that this circle dance of love has a *centrifugal* and *centripetal* force—a force of love moving outward that then draws everything back toward the center. *Centripetal* literally means, “*to seek the center*.” For Rohr, the Trinity tells us that *everything belongs*.

This isn't just a head-trip. We believe that our lives, as individuals and as community, mirror the life of the Trinity. Could we stand next to one another in all the glory of our **diversity**, in the **distinctness** in which God has made us, while at the same time link hands and knowing beyond all knowing that **we are all the same divine substance**?

Could we yield and submit to the other, fully pouring love toward them and fully receiving love in return?

Could we understand that everything is caught up in this divine circle dance of love?

Could we make a conscious decision not to lord it over others, but to move through this world as equals?

What would change in the ways you relate to others, what would change in the way you relate as a *religious* person, as a *racial* person, as a *political* person, if the Trinity was your paradigm for all your relationships?

***The hate has to STOP***, but nature abhors a vacuum. If the hate stops, what energy will move into its place? What if we drained the stream of adrenalin and rage that is fueling the water wheel of hate, and instead, let the waters of love and forgiveness and grace fill our buckets generating the energy that can transform the hate that is engulfing us and our world?

Today, in **Matthew 28:19-20**, Jesus tells his disciples this: “**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's the very last thing he says to them, *and us*, in Matthew's gospel.

***“Go, and make learners of all nations, teach them, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Dip them, immerse them, in this circle dance of love. To baptize is to literally whelm them, to get them wet, overwhelm them with the energy of this love. You've got to teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you—love your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, care for the least of these—feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick***

*and those in prison. And forgive, forgive your brother who sins against you seventy times seven times, if that's what's needed."*

This **great commission** from Jesus, it's not about believers lording it over the rest of the world; *it's about weaving all the world into the great, eternal, neverending circle dance of love.* And we are both *the weavers* and *the woven*, **and it's hard.** Right now, hate seems to be the path of least resistance, and we can only say "NO" to it *if we are drawing our energy from a different source.*

So empty your bucket of hate and that adrenalin-laced anger *and* dip your bucket into the cool, fresh springs of God's love; *let these waters* fill you completely and then empty that love out fully into the world. And when you grow weary, and you will, cling to Jesus' last promise to his friends and followers—say it with me—**"Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."** Amen.

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June 11, 2017