

Quiet Day 7 May 2016

Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost: The Infusion of Divine Love II

SCHEDULE

9:30 - 9:40 **Introduction**

9:40 - 10:40 **First Conference**

9:40 - 9:55 First session of reflections on the theme of the day

9:55 - 10:18 First session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. **Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!**

10:20 - 10:40 First session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)
[Enter silently from 10:18 to 10:20. At 10:20 we will intone the bell and begin silent prayer.]

10:40 - 11:40 **Second Conference**

10:40 - 10:55 Second session of reflections on the theme of the day

10:55 - 11:18 Second session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. **Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!**

11:20 - 11:40 Second session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)
[Enter silently from 11:18 to 11:20. At 11:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.]

11:40 - 12:00 **Third Conference**

11:40 - 11:55 Third session of reflections on the theme of the day

11:55 - 12:18 Third session for thoughtful, conversational prayer: Restrooms, refreshments, stroll the grounds, reflect in the church. The entire campus is open to us. **Please maintain quiet. Please keep talking to a minimum and please talk quietly. Thank you!**

12:20 - 12:40 Third session of Silent Prayer in the Sanctuary. (Or thoughtful meditation in the Music Center.)
[Enter silently from 12:18 to 12:20. At 12:20 we will intone the bell and begin praying.]

12:40 - 1:00 **Eucharist. All are welcome.**

Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost: The Infusion of Divine Love

In the Christian story Jesus' crucifixion completed his coming into the world. His resurrection began his ascent to the Father. But where did he go to ascend to the Father? ... into the heart of all creation ... into the innermost being of humanity ... with his victory over death. From there he radiates boundless Love. Today's Quiet Day will explore how we prepare ourselves to receive this infusion of Divine Love moment by moment.

Resurrection

This month's quiet day was our fourth in the series on the Church Year. We focused on the resurrection. Today we'll focus on the Ascension and Pentecost, but first a review of last month's thoughts on the resurrection.

The Revised Common Lectionary prefers readings from John for Easter Day and the season of Easter. Before we look at all the lectionary readings below, please note the following:

20:31 ... many other signs Jesus also did, which are not written in this book ..., but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in order that believing you may have life in his name.

17:3 And this is life eternal in order that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you sent, Jesus Christ.

10:10 I have come in order that life they may have and abundantly they may have it.

10:30 I and the Father are one. [This draws in and clarifies all 22 of the "I am" statements, or, the I am statements clarify "I and the Father are one." Thomas Keating says this is the basic text for Christian practice.]

14:20 In that day you yourselves will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.

The primary point I would like to make is this: John 20:31 states the purpose of John's Gospel. As such, it shines a light back over the entire Gospel. In doing so, it brings into focus other texts that help us understand just what this life is, what it is about (*both* quality and quantity), how we receive it, and what it *feels* like.

In Lectionary Year C we have the following:

Easter Day

John 20:1-18

vs. 11 But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping

vs. 15 Woman, why are you weeping? Whom/What are you seeking? (cf. 1:38)

vs.17 But go to my brothers and tell them, I ascend to my father and their father and my God and their God.

Second Sunday of Easter

John 20:19-31

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." ²⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ "If you forgive the sins of any, *their* sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained."

...

30 Now therefore, many other signs Jesus also did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in order that believing you may have life in his name.

Third Sunday of Easter John 21:1-19

Notice the emphasis upon love.

This emphasis on love – “love one another as I have loved you” – connects all of Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels

Let’s look at the beatitudes

Humble

Mourn

Meek

hunger and thirst for Relationship with God

Merciful

Pure in heart

Peacemakers

Persecuted

It is as though this final beatitude, blessed are the persecuted, stands outside the poetic structure of the other seven. It stands both as another “place” to which one is catapulted by the Spirit, on the one hand, and on the other hand, from this place the spiritual journey is “seen” most clearly. From this place one understands what it is all about: Participation in the redemption of the world/cosmos. Where/what is this place? Nowhere and everywhere in eternal Life in God. [Cf. the end of the sermon on the mount: “Love your enemies. ... Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”]

When encountering John 20:23 (parallels Mt. 16:19; 18:18), we can first over-imagine what it could mean. Then, if ever we get it, we can grossly under-imagine.

So, quite simply, we have the power to help people feel free or bound. The most obvious way is whether we forgive, but it’s really much more than that. When someone enters your orbit, how do they feel? Do you help them feel like they are revered and loved beyond measure? That they are sacred creatures? They may not realize what you know, that they are divine, but do they “feel” or “intuit” because of you (if, or to whatever degree, they will allow their self) that they are of utmost value and deeply loved? And does this continue throughout their encounter with you? Even if they don’t realize at all what’s going on, is something soul expanding and joyful happening simply because they were with you? Are they brought to peace, to some degree and even if just for a little while, simply because they were in your presence?

The above might sound only earthly ... and this is where we can under-imagine once we get the above. For what is the divide between earth and heaven? For the awakened, isn’t that distinction disappearing? Don’t we dwell in eternity right here right now in every here and every now? Does our loving kindness ... our love and kindness ... invite people to experience the Light, Life, and Love of God right here right now? Does our loving kindness, our compassion and forgiveness for the trauma of being human, transmit a freedom that redeems the moment, that is redemption?

Consider Jesus and the woman at the well. Cf. Eph. 5:1-20, especially: "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself on our behalf as an offering and sacrifice to God, a fragrant aroma" (5:1-2). ... "redeeming the time ..." (5:16).

Love people even in their sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all of God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

--Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

The Ascension

Luke 24:44-53

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you~ that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Acts 1:1-11

1:1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he

was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Ephesians 1:15-23

15 ¶ I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.¹⁷ I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him,¹⁸ so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.²⁰ God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.²² And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Pentecost

Acts 2:1-11

2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,¹¹ Cretans and Arabs~ in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

Romans 8:14-17

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!"¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we

are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

John 14:8-17 [18-24] (25-27)

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸ "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?"²³ Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵ "I have said these things to you while I am still with you.²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.