

Sermons for the Journey

Fr. John Morrison
Trinity Sunday – Year B - 2018
Sunday, May 27, 2018

Isaiah 6:1-6

Psalm 29

Romans 8:12-17

John 3:1-17

27 May 2018

Saint John's, Huntington

When my brother died last year, he left for me a rather large envelope filled with family memorabilia: cards, letters, a few legal documents. Included in the collection was correspondence between my father and mother, some of which while Dad was stationed as a naval officer in Pensacola and Mom, my infant brother, and I lived in Atlanta. This was near the end of World War II and contact via telephone was not always an option, but letters could always be posted. Quite a few from this period had been included in the envelope and several struck me as I read them more than 70 years after they had been written. I find it hard to imagine that such letters would have been transmitted by email or text; they were of the kind that could not be relegated to electronic exchange.

One of the letters concerned my brother who was only months old and was very sick. Mom's letter to Dad was punctuated with worry, trust, and love, worry over the severity of my brother's illness, an abiding trust in the one, holy, and living God, in Jesus her Savior, and the strength and depth of her love for my father that helped to sustain her.

Now my mother was no theologian, but trust in God does not need a degree. I'm certain that at one time when she was a little girl she would have checked off all the appropriate boxes when she was confirmed, but while she loved to read and passed that on to me I don't think I can ever recall seeing her with a book that remotely suggested or hinted at the finer points of theology. Maybe something like *The Shoes of the Fisherman* or *The Robe*. Mom lived in the realm of faith, not the realm of academic disputation.

However, she did read her Bible (and that surely has theology in it) and our family would gather round the radio on Sunday afternoons to listen to *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. As I look back on her on this Trinity Sunday and in light

of the correspondence I just referenced, it is obvious to me that the leaves of the New Testament etched themselves on her mind, on the very essence of who she was. Without ever being what one might call today a raving evangelist or a holy roller, she very much lived her life in the power of the risen Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit; she bore witness to the utter reality of the living God. Indeed, when she died in 1990 on her way to the hospital in the car with my brother, she turned to him and said the following: "David, I love you all very much, but I'm going home."

I think it was Mary, Queen of Scots, who said "In my end is my beginning." In her death within the blessed fellowship of the holy Trinity and in the "blessed company of all faithful people," my mother was never more truly herself. Sick, yes; weak, yes; perhaps even a shadow of what she once was. But much more accurately, in the dance of the Trinity she was what someone called a shadow of her *future* self. Mom had lived through the suicide of her father when she was two years old, through several wars and seemingly infinite police actions, through assorted illnesses and trials; actually, she had lived like a good many other people, people whose lives we remember this weekend, perhaps even better than many. Yet underneath whatever came her way she knew that the faith she embraced had been tried and tested in arenas 2000 years ago as well as in arenas more contemporary to her, that her simple yet profound belief in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was a belief worth living for and dying in.

As we celebrate Trinity Sunday, I believe that the mother I knew and loved, who knew and loved me, lived her life as best she could within the pattern of the divine dance that is discovered in the blessed and holy Trinity. She had made her Yes to Jesus; though she did not possess the theological vocabulary to express it this way, she knew that she had been invited into the divine dance of the Trinity and had accepted the invitation. My mother viewed everything with the eye of trust, of faith, of love; her life was firmly anchored in the resurrection of Jesus, in what God was doing at any point in her life through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in the sure and certain hope of the new heaven and the new earth, in what God had prepared for her and for all who loved him.

In an early episode of "*Blue Bloods*" titled *Mothers Day*, at Sunday dinner Linda Reagan thanks God for her mother who gave her her faith. On this Memorial Day weekend, thank you Dad for your willingness to serve our country, thank you Mom for being a catalyst for my faith in the one, holy, and undivided Trinity, for being the one who sustained us while Dad was away by virtue of your love and trust in the God who sustains us all.