

Today is Trinity Sunday – a day for us to immerse ourselves in the deep mystery of God, the one who is the Divine Creator, a life force in our world, a companion on all the roads of our lives, a lover beyond compare. So, it is no surprise that this God who is larger than our imagination can too often be bewildering and – to our ears – silent.

Theologian Karl Barth called God the *totaliter aliter*: one who is totally other – and he means other than us. God is beyond our imagination and comprehension. For thousands of years, the Bible's stories have told us how people from long ago and often far away encountered God.

Our God is not just a source of life but also draws all creation towards justice and mercy which brings life for all. We cannot diagram this ending point, this place where God's plan is complete. It will be a time when the lion lays down with the lamb and all shall sit at the Lord's table and be satisfied. We trust this plan because we trust this God.

We've all heard the stories. The Divine Presence can be a voice in the desert, or the person of Jesus teaching on a hill or in the powerful Spirit moving across both water and land. These stories are but HINTS of the Divine Mystery – but they give us a taste of the breadth and depth of truly incomprehensible encounters with YHWH.

We get to Trinity Sunday by moving, once again, through the sacred story of God's incarnation in an infant, the foretelling of prophets, the anointing of the Spirit, then a cross and an empty tomb. Finally the gift of the Holy Spirit is poured out on all. This is our sacred story and we have heard it year after year - and it always brings us to this moment which leaves preachers tongue tied.

Trinity Sunday is an invitation to stop and contemplate all that's been revealed since that first Sunday in Advent, to pause and consider the majesty and mystery of the Divine One....which might best be done in silence.

All of this to prepare us to enter what the Church calls Ordinary time – sometimes known as that 'great and endless green season.'.... when we are to celebrate the presence of the Divine in the commonplace. We are

invited to sharpen our vision so we can recognize the movement of God in the rhythms of our lives. During this Ordinary Time we are asked to acknowledge the hand of God in moments large and small, precious and life-giving always drawing us forward.

We are about to launch into familiar stories that the Bible recounts: stories about Jesus who is God among us.

A simple meal where usually unwanted outsiders are given a place at the table.

A wedding which is running short of wine.

An evening of fishing which goes from total failure to overabundant success as the nets rip.

A sower who scatters seeds in his fields,

a father's love for his daughter and a mother's ferocious advocacy for her daughter.

A deaf man who could hear what he never heard before

and a picnic for 5000 on the side of a hill.

In the midst of the ordinary rhythms of life, our ancestors recognized the hand of the God who was calling people to life, to joy and to abundance.

A God who was helping people hear and then see one another as beloved children of God.

A God who built community around generous care for one another: sharing resources and inviting the forgotten in.

It doesn't take a scholar to see that the people who are at the center of God's stories are imperfect: in body and spirit, in morals and courage, in honesty and love. Yet all these are God's, and they are us as well.

Today we launch Ordinary time.

I could use some Ordinary time: time without reports of racially motivated crimes and incomprehensible destruction of young life. I could use a time without famine or flooding. But I have lived long enough to know these are

all a part of Ordinary time. God's people have always been confronted with disease and disaster, death and sorrow, deprivation and discord. And I also know that we are too often the authors of the pain inflicted.

Mixed in with the raising of children and getting married, among grocery shopping and getting through a week of work, present in celebrations and gift giving, of joy and laughter, there is our God. You and I – saints and sinners that we are - live in the midst of Ordinary time among millions of others who are saints and sinners too.

But we are armed with the stories told by people of faith, visions of a time of great blessing, peace, concord, and promise. In the midst of all we face, we are beloved by the Divine One who will not let us go. In times of our ignorance and defiance, rejection of God's love for others, and in times of suffering and death, The Divine One will not let us go. God will open our eyes, clear our hearing, break open our hearts and draw us forward into life.... we the ordinary people who are living out ordinary lives. Today we launch a season of considering what it means to live as God's people as actors in this divine drama, all taking place in ordinary time.

Here's an old Irish blessing for your journey

May the road rise to meet you

and the wind be always at your back

May the sun shine warm upon your face

And the rains fall soft on your fields

And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.