

**Trinity Church in the City of Boston**  
The Rev. Morgan S. Allen  
June 7, 2020  
*Trinity Sunday*

Come Holy Spirit, and enkindle in the hearts of your faithful, the fire of your Love. *Amen.*

On this Trinity Sunday when we consider the *being* of God, we begin “in the beginning,” when “God created the heavens and the earth,” and the Spirit “swept” across the waters ... when God spoke of light, and there was light and sky, man and woman, and creeping things ... when God saw that the creation was good – “indeed, [that] it was very good” – and God blessed the cosmos and all that teeming life within it.<sup>i</sup>

In a blink, we then trace the long arc from Genesis to the conclusion of Matthew’s Gospel and Jesus’ final words to his disciples: “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” ... a gift of love from the God of Love, Jesus commissioning his disciples to love as he loved, to serve as he served, to sacrifice as he sacrificed.<sup>ii</sup>

And so, in these stories of scripture, we encounter the God who is Three and is, yet, one; the God who is Father, Son, Holy Spirit; who is “Source, Stream, Living Water;” who is Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.<sup>iii</sup> Whatever our chosen language and images, we recognize in God a “Trinity of Persons [in] a Unity of Being,” a Divine essence existing as both difference and union – *real* difference and *real* union.<sup>iv</sup>

We renew our Baptismal Covenant on this day as a witness to God’s union; to our union with this Trinity; and to our union with one another. In a more familiar time,<sup>v</sup> the “outward and visible signs” of water and washing would symbolize for us the Grace sweeping over our fellowship and making us “one Body [by the] one Spirit,” all of us sharing in the “one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism,” by which we live into the one hope of God’s calling to us – *one* and *one* and *one* and *one* and *one*.<sup>vi</sup>

No matter our history or our situation, our sin or our significance, God unites us in the inheritance prepared for all people from before time and forever. Yet, though Jesus commissioned his disciples two thousand years ago, we find ourselves still laboring between these two moments: the goodness with which God created us ... and the love with which Jesus sent us into the world.

Back in those halcyon days of March, we struggled to move beyond a “shelter-from-the-storm” approach to the pandemic. Initially, we quarantined in the expectation that the current circumstances would soon pass, and that, before long, we would return to our prior normal. Then, as one month gave way to another, we began to recognize our current experience *as a crucible*, one forging us into a new, but unknown, creation. We realized that the world as we knew it did not “go on hold” in February, it *ended* in February, and as a parish we have since worked together to shape our emerging reality.

Now, as we gather between Friday’s Minneapolis memorial and next week’s Houston service for George Floyd, let us be clear that the stark light his murder shines on the murders of Ahmaud Aubrey in February, and Breonna Taylor in March, and the litany of Black lives taken by racist violence, has not presented a *new* challenge during an already challenging time. *No*. **We remain in the *same* crucible** – the one that began with a virus disproportionately infecting and killing people of color ... the one that is exposing the life-and-death inequities of our racist nation ... has only reiterated the mortal stakes Black Americans face every day.

Speaking to the viral perils of large-group protests in the nation’s hottest COVID-19 hotspot, one New York organizer explains, “We have reached a crux where we must choose between potentially losing our lives at the hands of the police or the pandemic ... we’re choosing between the lives of our unborn sons and [the lives] of our parents.”<sup>vii</sup>

Here me again: *we remain in the same crucible*.

Now, I am a doer. When the going gets tough, I work hard. When the going gets tougher, I work harder. And if the bolt still won’t budge, I get a longer wrench, add a cheater bar, and torque that steel until it yields or breaks. In that spirit, I stand ready – right now! – to roll up my sleeves and confront racism, to do the work, the hardest work, whatever it is.

Yet, in the shadow of this urgency to “do something,” I recognize my felt need in *this* moment expresses the entitlement of my presumed agency; hints of an effort to avoid the crucible altogether; and unveils a desire for the lost luxury of our unthinking, uncritical, taking-our-privilege-for-granted February. Therefore, as all of us have worked to amend those habits which still anticipated the near return of our pre-pandemic routines, so, now, white Americans must resist our familiar indignation rituals that busy us as a strategy to delay or avoid interrogating and transforming our own hearts and homes.

Further, we must recognize that our insidious culture is at work right now to *commodify* anti-racism and to leverage its packaging as “good for business.” Lord, have mercy, Black lives suddenly matter to every industry, from the Ubers to the NFL. And while I want to pray, “Thanks be to God,” in hopes that each of these businesses have told the truth and will honor their confessions, collectively, these CEOs’ social media posts imply that “making a statement” *accomplishes* the work of justice; that their organizations have somehow learned their lessons (right fast); and that these last few stormy days are now nearly over. No, no, and *no*.

As the Church, we must not give into the temptation to participate in those economies of fast-but-fleeting resolution. Black Americans have shouldered life-and-death burdens for four-hundred years, and white Americans cannot behave as though justice will be achieved in only two weeks. Instead, we must model justice as a consequential, lifelong covenant: a *generational* undertaking demanding a transformation of our very being – our eternal souls! – that cannot be accomplished in the signing of a letter or the hosting of a single church service on a Monday during a crisis. These can be steps, but they are *only* steps, to a trust we earn day, by day, by more-loving day.

In this parish, we do not have a saint (as with “Saint Mark’s” or “Saint Anne’s”) to claim as a patron who inspires our ministry. Instead, we gather as *Trinity Church*, inheriting the essence of the Three and One, this Holy Being of *real* difference and *real* union. And lest we retreat from the scope of reconciling work we now see with increasing clarity, realize that we do not approach this righteous labor alone! No, for our *Trinity Church*, on this *Trinity Sunday*, the calling of this moment draws us into the *loving center of our fellowship* – indeed, *this crucible dwells in the very heart of our triune God!*

When we seek one another in difference, we witness the richness of God’s very Being. When, in vulnerability and humility, we seek to enliven our Covenant – to serve Christ in all persons and love our neighbors as ourselves ... to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being – we share in the *vital* Glory of God.<sup>viii</sup> For our God *is a community!* A loving, just, co-equal community. And, created in this God’s image, so *are* we, so *must* we be, for

the One who spoke the world into being;

the One who rose from the grave and vanquished death itself;

the One who daily works in us and through us –

this Holy One strengthens us to believe that the fulfillment of God’s dream remains possible ... that for people of goodwill and faith; that for people of justice, mercy, and love; that for people willing to take their very souls and set them at the foot of the cross – the fulfillment of God’s dream remains possible ... even now.

We pray in the hope of this holy Three and One,  
*Amen.*

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<sup>i</sup> Genesis 1:1-2:4a.

<sup>ii</sup> Matthew 28:20.

<sup>iii</sup> Cunningham, David S. *These Three Are One*. Wiley-Blackwell. 1988. Cunningham uses the image of “Source, Stream, and Living Water.”

<sup>iv</sup> From the Proper Preface for Trinity Sunday: “It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. For with your co-eternal Son and Holy Spirit, you are one God, one Lord, in Trinity of Persons and Unity of Being: and we celebrate the one and equal glory of you ...” (Book of Common Prayer, pp. 361, 380).

<sup>v</sup> And would have baptized were it not for the necessary social-distancing constraints of the pandemic.

<sup>vi</sup> From the Baptismal Dialogue, BCP p. 299.

<sup>vii</sup> McCausland, Phil. [“New York protestors say they are facing two deadly pandemics: racism and coronavirus.”](#) *NBC News*. June 4, 2020.

<sup>viii</sup> From the Baptismal Covenant, BCP pp. 304-305.