
WORD MADE FLESH

Trinity Sunday

That We Might Become God*

Exodus 34:4-6,8-9; Daniel 3; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18

Today we say - in the ancient church they sang - that marvelous symbol of faith, the Nicene Creed. At its heart is the recognition of God, the "maker of heaven and earth," of Jesus Christ, "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God" and the Holy Spirit, "the giver of life." The debate that rocked the fledgling church in 325 and led to this remarkable hymn of faith was over the nature of Christ, the Trinity and human experience. It was simultaneously a confession about the nature of the cosmos and a confession about the nature of salvation.

Athanasius, the remarkable theologian from the African city of Alexandria, delivered the clarion call at Nicea with his proclamation that "God the Logos (Christ) had become man in order that men and women might become God." The whole meaning of the Gospel was that God, the lover of creation, was wooing the human nature into life-giving communion.

Today is Trinity Sunday and the texts speak of the way the divine is present in all creation calling us to a life of sanctifying acts. Moses on Mount Sinai, apprehending the presence of God, "bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped." His plea, on behalf of the whole people, is that their journey be with God. As with the pilgrim people at the foot of Sinai, so with the pilgrim church at Corinth in today's second reading. The Apostle, in his letter, greets the brothers and sisters invoking the love and peace of God. He speaks of that deep unity that comes through the Holy Spirit and encourages them to be open to the divine grace which has filled the lives of all those that dwell in the eternal.

The Gospel for today is a lengthy discourse with Nicodemus. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a leader of the Jewish community. Nicodemus who visited Jesus secretly and spoke in the council on his behalf when he was arrested. Nicodemus who took part in Jesus' burial, bringing a large quantity of spices.

Tradition suggests to us that Nicodemus became a disciple. He is so like Moses seeking to worship the Creator, like the community at Corinth seeking the unity with all in the Holy Spirit, and like Jesus seeking to incarnate the divine at the centre of his life. Jesus says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." Nicodemus is seeking the eternal in the midst of the vagaries of life. Jesus says that "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Condemnation has already come to those that "do not believe in him," to those who do not believe that the incarnation is at the very heart of creation, the heart of human experience.

Remember Nicea and the Creed, the hymn it has given us. It is Trinity Sunday and we sing of God the maker of heaven and earth, of Jesus Christ "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God," and we sing of the Holy Spirit, "the giver of life." And why such a song? Because in the words of Athanasius, God became human in order that all of us might become God. The whole meaning of the Gospel was God's

wooning of the human nature, wooing it into that life-giving communion which sanctifies all that is.

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