

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH

MAY 15, 2022 - Easter 5

Father Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we continue to journey along the path of Easter Light, we acknowledge that our sacred space and the places we call home are located on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin peoples.

People: **May we share the light in a spirit of hope, joy and reconciliation.**

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Eternal God, our Alpha and Omega, our beginning and our end, we have gathered to worship you. In your time, you created all things and wove into their fabric a yearning for fulfillment in you. It is this yearning within us which has pulled us here this morning. Take these moments, O Lord, of time and space and complete them in us, through your Holy Spirit. May our labour bring forth a new creation in you. Jesus, this is your hour, help us to make the most of each precious moment, for in your name we have gathered and in your name we pray. **Amen** (from My Redeemer Lives website, re: Worship 2022)

Fr. Michael: We are a redeemed people called by the Spirit to be one in Christ. As community called and gathered, we pray, Almighty God,

People: **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: And now, with all the saints in heaven and those gathered around the Word here on this good earth, we praise you and say, Glory to God in the highest,

People: **and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Fr. Michael: Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. Give us grace to love one another and to walk in the ways of your Son's commandments, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen**

Fr. Michael: Christ, as a Light illuminate and guide us; Christ as a shield overshadow and protect us. Christ under us, Christ over us; Christ beside us on our left and on our right. Be in the heart of each person with whom we speak today and be with us and around us as we bear your Light wherever you lead us. **Amen**

Reader: A reading from the Book of Acts (Acts 11: 1-18)

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me.

As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.

These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Govern everything by your wisdom, O Lord, so that our souls may be always serving you in the way you wish and not as we choose. Let us die to our selves so that we may serve you; let us live for you who is life itself. **Amen** (St. Theresa of Avila)

Reader: Our psalm for this new day is Psalm 148

Praise God from the heavens, praise the Lord in the heights, praise the Lord angel hosts and sun and moon and stars of light! Praise God, watery heavens, lifted by the Word and fastened there forever – let them praise the Lord!

People: **Praise God from the oceans, you monsters of the waves; praise the Lord fire and hail, snow and mist and tempestuous winds, praise the Lord! Sing, mountains and hills; trees fulfill his words. Wild creatures and tame creatures, creeping things and birds, praise God!**

Reader: Princes and all people, rich and poor the same, men and women, young and old – let them all praise the name of the Lord. God only is exalted and the splendour of the Lord is over all things and places. Yahweh only is exalted and we have been raised up for faith and praise; let all his children call out, **ALLELUIA!** (Amy Scott Robinson from Podcasts Area 52 adapted by RMF)

A READING FROM THE Book of Revelation (Revelation 21: 1-6)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life."

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: God our Creator, we are exceedingly frail and not disposed to every virtuous and gallant undertaking. Strengthen our weakness that we may valiantly serve you; help us against our own negligence and cowardice and defend us from the treachery of our hearts when they are unfaithful to you; for Jesus sake we pray. **Amen.** (Thomas a Kempis)

Holy Gospel Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. John (St. John 13: 31-35)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Fr. Michael: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Homily - Cornelius

They must have asked themselves, "What was Jesus thinking, setting Simon aside and calling him Peter and how "on this rock I will build my church"? What must he have been thinking of to choose someone who nearly drowned trying to walk on water, who nodded in agreement when Nathanael asked if anything good could ever come from Nazareth, who three times denied that he knew their friend and their Lord, who ran away after the sentence of death was passed and who hid with them in the upper room until it was all over, who refused to believe Mary of Magdala with her resurrection news, who was hesitant about caring for the non-Jews in their community? And now, this.....

They called him back to Jerusalem with the simple message, "Simon, come home – you got some splainin' to do". And now he stood before them and didn't seem to be the least bit remorseful for what had happened in Caesarea...

Peter told them of how he had fallen asleep on the rooftop even though it was only the noon hour and how he had a dream in which he saw a large blanket filled with all sorts of animals coming down from the heavens and how he heard a Voice in his dream tell him to get up and eat and how he had replied that he couldn't because almost everything in the blanket was not kosher according to the Law and how everything was horrible and how the Voice yelled at him, "How dare you say that anything I have made is impure...now, get up and eat"; and of how he was awakened by one of the fellowship who told him that there were Roman soldiers below who wanted to speak with him and of how they told him that their commanding officer, a centurion named Cornelius wished him to come for a wee chat. He spoke of visiting this Cornelius in his home and of how this Roman wanted to hear more about Jesus of Nazareth whose name was being whispered on the street-corners; of how Peter had told him everything about the Master's life, death, teachings and resurrection, of how Cornelius wanted to become a part of the fellowship and of how Peter had baptized not only him but all his household – his wife and children, his servants and slaves and some of the cohort who answered to him. He finished by saying, "I now know that God shows no favoritism but accepts people from every nation who love him and do what is right." He then added, "I did what I did because I knew in my heart of hearts that it was the will of the Father that Cornelius and his household should be a part of the Jesus dream. Do what you will to me, but I will not repent for what God and I have done in Joppa." With that, Peter shrugged and waited – there was a long silence and then one of them said, "What you have done is a good thing" and that was that...except__-- the movement founded by God through Jesus was no longer an exclusive fellowship of the children of Abraham and Sarah but was now alive to all – the wind of the Spirit had blown out the windows and the doors now were open and welcoming to all who wished to cross the threshold.

So, who was this Cornelius and why do we remember him? What we do know is that he commanded a company of one hundred Roman soldiers encamped at Caesarea, the capital of the province of Iudaea. As such, he would have had to make all the required oaths of allegiance to the Roman Senate and the Emperor and to demonstrate his acknowledgement of the pantheon of Roman gods. It seems likely that he was married to a local Jewish woman because it would have been highly unusual for a soldier of his minor rank to have been able to transport his spouse and family with him when he was on assignment in the empire. Plus, he was known as a “God-fearer”, a title given to gentiles who supported the works of the local synagogue but who would not have been able to become full members of the community because he was not seen as a “son of Abraham and Sarah”. He, like Peter, had had a dream in which he was told to invite Peter to his home and to ask about him about this Jesus of Nazareth around whom a sect of former members of the synagogue had accepted as the long-awaited Messiah of the Lord. As he and Peter shared their dreams, the Holy Spirit went to work and Cornelius and some of his household began to speak in tongues like at Pentecost. Following this, Peter led him and his household to the Mediterranean Sea where they were baptized in the name of Jesus.

Cornelius matters for a number of reasons: first, he was seen as the first Gentile convert to the faith and in so doing, opened the gates for the expansion of the Community of the Way into all the empire. His conversion also impacted Peter because before this, Simon had been one of the most adamant of the apostles that the Jesus people all had to be Jewish by birth and clearly Cornelius was not. Now, all that was required for membership as a Follower of the Way was to declare, JESUS IS LORD and to be baptized in His name. His conversion and acceptance would trigger the first council of the leadership of the church in Jerusalem which would determine whether this would become official policy or not. Second, this was a life-changing and life-threatening moment for the centurion – he would have had to renounce his oaths to the Roman gods and to the Emperor who was seen as a god by the Roman people and stood in danger of being arrested and executed for treason. Third, it was not only Cornelius who was baptized but his entire household – relatives and slaves and servants and children and Jews and Gentiles– all would now be a part of the fellowship which was affirmed at the council in Jerusalem in 50CE when James declared, “I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who have turned to God” and which Paul seven years later described in his letter to the church in Galatia, “As many as you were baptized into Christ, you have clothed yourself with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

Tradition says that Cornelius became a leader of the fledgling Christian community in Caesarea and was appointed the first bishop of that city.

And so today, we honour another of the shadow players in the drama which was the formation of what we have inherited as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church – Cornelius of Caesarea who said to Peter, “All of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say” – Cornelius heard and was conquered and thus was the net so wonderfully described by Jesus, “the Kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind and when it was full, they drew it ashore widened...” Is it any wonder that churches are shaped like a fishing boat?.....

Fr. Michael: Our faith is based on truth – truth that what is revealed to us is of God. Let us now join the Church through the ages declare our truth as we say,

People: **I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Reader: Gracious Lord, the Scriptures today remind us that words do matter and that the way we choose our words holds within it the capacity to either harm or heal, to wound or to welcome. In this time when words are tossed around so carelessly and casually, may our words be used for the building up of the Body of Christ and share love and compassion in a broken and battered world. Holy and merciful God,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Reader: Healing God, we pray for those who have been hurt by words of hate, misogyny, racism or ageism; for those who are refugees and immigrants who daily face judgment and bias; for women and girls who endure acts of sexism, especially in Afghanistan and other places where basic human rights are being denied based on gender identification; for those from our indigenous peoples who are subject to discrimination and intolerance – may your healing power be with them and with those who are responsible for the darkness which surrounds them. Holy and merciful Lord,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Reader: We pray for those with emotional, mental or physical disabilities who are told that they are “less than” we are; for the elderly who are told that they are now useless; for young adults who are told that they are entitled, selfish and irresponsible; for persons of faith who are told that they are dreamers. God the Living Word, help us to speak the truth in love and to care for one another with the words we choose to speak. Holy and merciful God,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Reader: We pray this day for all those institutions whose heart beats to the rhythms of justice and equality for all. In our Diocesan cycle of prayer this week, we remember Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; as well as The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, Sacred Circle and Archbishop Mark MacDonald, The Area Parish of Mississippi Lake, the Venerable Brian Kauk and the Reverend Jonathan Askwith. We also pray for custodial staff serving the parishes and ministries of our diocese, and for vocations to the diaconate, priesthood and religious life.

In our parish family, we begin silently remembering those who have asked us to hold them in our hearts and we pray in community for Cheryl, Zachariah, Marjorie, Sarah, Roy, Howard, Irene, Scott, and Jeanette. God of healing and wholeness, we lift up to you our words of prayer for those who are near and dear to us; we pray for all who in dark places because of COVID or debilitating illness. Holy and Merciful God,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Reader: Triune God, we love you because you hear our voices and our prayers. We lift all these prayers up to your ears, knowing that you will answer in your own way each and every petition which lies in our hearts and the heart of this family at Holy Trinity. **Amen**

(adapted from Stephen Fearing’s prayer @ Liturgy Link 2021)

Fr. Michael: Together, let us stand before the God of healing, love and reconciliation and together speak our truth as we pray,

People: **God of the clean and the unclean, we too easily think that we can see others from your perspective. We exclude, we hold grudges and nurse contempt for others while hiding ourselves for fear that we too might be found wanting. We think that we are justified because we have been made holy by your love and we assume that holiness means looking and acting just like us.**

People: **We forget, or never really know that all that you touch is holy and that you have created all that is. So, when we exclude, we exclude you; when we hold grudges, we show that we do not love you; when we show contempt, we are scornful of those you made holy. Help us to grow into your truth, loving the clean and the unclean. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Sisters and brothers in the Lord, hear this: God so loved the world that he sent his only Son Jesus, not to condemn the world but in order that we might be saved and made whole – healed and forgiven – through Him. This God has done for this we sing, **Alleluia!**

Fr. Michael: May the peace of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

WE SHARE THE SHALOM OF GOD WITH ONE ANOTHER

Fr. Michael: Gracious and loving God, you show us your way and give us your divine life. May everything we do and say be directed by the knowledge of your truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus. **Amen**

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you**

Fr. Michael: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Fr. Michael: Holy God, Lover of all creation, we give you thanks and praise for in the ocean of your steadfast love you bear us and place the song of your Spirit in our hearts. When we turn from your love and defile the earth, you do not abandon us. Your spirit speaks through Huldah and Micah, through prophets, sages and saints of all ages to confront our sin and reveal your vision of your new creation. Joining in the song of the universe, we proclaim your glory as we say,

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord; God of power and might.**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory; Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Fr. Michael: Gracious God, in the fullness of time you sent your Son Jesus to share our fragile humanity. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, you open the path from brokenness to health, from fear to trust, from pride and conceit to reverence for you. Rejected by a world which could not bear the gospel of life, Jesus knew that death was near. His head anointed for burial by an unknown woman, Jesus gathered together those who loved him, He took bread, gave thanks to you and gave it to his friends saying, "Take and eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave you thanks and said, "Drink this all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many so that sins might be forgiven. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." And now we gather at this table in response to his commandment, to have the bread and the cup of Christ's undying love, and to proclaim our faith,

People: **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Fr. Michael: Breathe your Holy Spirit, the wisdom of the universe, upon these gifts that we bring to you: this bread, this wine, our selves, our souls and bodies, that we may be signs of your love to all the world and ministers of your transforming purpose. Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, Creator of All and we bless your holy name forever and forever. **Amen**

Fr. Michael: And now, as Christ has gifted to his Church, we pray,

People: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Lord, we died with you on the cross.

People: **Now we are raised to new life.**

Fr. Michael: We were buried in your tomb.

People: **Now we share in your resurrection.**

Fr. Michael: Live in us that we may live in you.

WE SHARE THE GIFTS OF GOD WITH ONE ANOTHER

Fr. Michael: God of love, in this Eucharist we have heard your truth and shared in your life. May we always walk in your way in the name of Jesus. **Amen**

Holy one, our eternal resting place, you prepare a home for us in glory. Make room in our hearts for faith in you so that we may know you by your Word and serve you through our works; we pray this in the name of Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life. Amen. (Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church of the USA)

People: **Lord God, you are one, holy and eternal – one with Christ and with the Spirit. Make us one with you, one with Christ, one in the Spirit, one body in the Church, that all the world may believe in you and receive your love; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen**

(Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church of the USA)

Fr. Michael: Loving Jesus is loving our neighbour; loving Jesus is being loved by God; loving our neighbour is being loved by God...who would have guessed that the kid next door was divine?

(from Katherine Hawker Liturgy Outside 2022)

Fr. Michael: May God the Father bless us, may Christ take care of us, the Holy Spirit enlighten us all the days of our lives. The Lord be our defender and the keeper of our bodies and souls both now and for evermore, to the ages of ages. **Amen** (Prayer of St. Ethelwold)

Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.

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