

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH
MAY 8, 2022 - Easter 4
Father Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we continue our pilgrimage in Resurrection 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 walk together in light, hope 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: Girded with gladness, we come rejoicing! You are the God of our salvation and we offer you our praise. When we cry for help, you hear us and rescue us from the deepest darkness. You turn our mourning into gladness, loosen our sackcloth and adorn us with your favour. Therefore, we raise our voices in grateful thanksgiving and give glory and honour to your wondrous name. Alleluia!

Fr. Michael: 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 on this good earth, together we 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: Heavenly Father, we praise you for your goodness and your generosity. We trust you for faithfully preserving us through both good times and bad. We serve you with all that we are and all that we have and we glorify you in our plans, activities and worship. We speak of you to others in response to your great love for us. In every thought, word and deed, we try to live for you by the power of your Spirit. You are the God of encouragement; help us to live in harmony with each other so that together we may with one voice glory you and your Son, our Lord and Risen Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Fr. Michael: O God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do your will, and work in us that which is well-pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Living Lord. Amen

Reader: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles(Acts 9: 36-43) Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them.

Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and

helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Holy God, Creator of life. You call us out of our dark places and offer us the grace of new life, when we see nothing but hopelessness you surprise us with the breath of your Spirit. Call us out of our complacency and our routines, set us free from our self-imposed bonds and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion and peace. We ask this in Jesus' blessed name.

Amen

Reader: Our psalm for the day of hope is Psalm 23 You, Lord, are my shepherd. I will never be in want. You let me rest in fields of green grass and you lead me to streams of peaceful water and you refresh my life.

People: **You are true to your name, and you lead me along the right paths, I may walk through valleys as dark as death but I will not be afraid. You are with me and your shepherd's rod makes me feel safe.**

Reader: You treat me to a feast while my enemies watch and you honour me as your guest, filling my cup until it overflows.

People: **Your kindness and goodness will always be with me every day of my life and I will live forever in your house, Lord.**

(from Contemporary English Version of the Bible)

Reader: A reading from the Book of Revelation (Revelation 7: 9-17)

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Eternal God, as you created humankind in your image, women and men, male and female, renew us in that image; God the Holy Spirit, by your strength and love, comfort us as those whom a mother comforts; Lord Jesus, who calls us from the safety of our refuges to the risky business of witnessing; God the Holy Trinity, grant that we may together enter into a new life, your promised rest of achievement and fulfillment – world without end.

Amen (World Council of Churches)

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

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Risen Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. John (St. John 10: 22-30)

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

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Fr. Michael: The Gospel of Christ.

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

Homily - WELBY AND WELLNESS

Has this ever happened to you – you have something that needs to be completed by a certain specific date, but for some unknown reason, you have trouble getting round to it. You try and try and always come up empty until.....

Well, this happened to me this week in putting together my few words about the shadow character in this morning's reading from the Book of Acts. While at the cottage, I could not get my head around what I wanted to say but that was OK since I knew I had Friday and Saturday to get this thing done, but then Friday got busy and Saturday was to be the garage sale and getting my fourth shot and and and...it sure looked like I'd be doing this on a wing and a prayer literally until....

We were driving home through Mattawa and down the valley and Sharon plugged her phone in and pushed a button and suddenly, there was this interview done by Kate Bowler with Justin Welby, the present Archbishop of Canterbury. What a fascinating story he has to tell and how down-to-earth he is in matters of religion and culture. And, he's just plain hilarious at times!

At one point, he was describing a time he spent with one of his dearest friends, a priest in Somalia at the time of the Ebola crisis. They had been talking about how one knows what the right thing is to do and or say to someone who is dying. Archbishop Welby paused a moment and then spoke of being in a refugee camp and of his visit with two people there – with a three year old boy who was being tended by his six year old sister and then with an old lady who was blind and on the edge of death. In both cases, he did not speak Somali nor they English, so all he did was sit with them and hold their hands. Later, he asked his friend the Bishop how HE coped with such massive death and despair and his friend said, "I do the best with what the Lord has given me to use and then I leave the rest up to God." As I listened to the rest of the interview, what I wanted to say started to form and, for better or for worse, this is what I want to say:

At the time when Saul was being healed and changed by God through Ananias and Judas in Damascus to Paul, Peter was visiting small communities of believers which were springing up all over the empire. As he journeyed, he was told that a member of the fellowship at Joppa had died and Peter travelled to that city to share the grief and sorrow of the sisters and brothers. On his way, he was told that the woman was a very faithful person named Dorcas (also known as Tabitha) who had been a pillar of the community, generous beyond description to those of the church who were in need, particularly the widows and orphans. She was a shining example of what James, the brother of Jesus, meant when he wrote to the church, "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive

yourselves; do what it says.” James had also said in his letter, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..” and to this Dorcas became committed following her conversion by Philip from paganism to The Way,

Tabitha was a highly respected widow who gave of her self and her goods with abandon to the widows and orphans of the city, Jew and Gentile alike. Also, she was a woman who was unique – following the death of her husband, she refused to become , you know, “the poor widdler lady” who had to be looked after by family – she discovered that she had great skills as a seamstress and started repairing the finery of the important people and soon was asked to design dresses. Unable to keep up with the demand, she began hiring other widows and paid them well for their work. Her generosity knew no bounds and many a widow or poor woman of the village would wake up of a morning to find a new dress neatly folded on her doorstep – no note, no nothing to tell who the benefactor was, but everyone knew!!! Many of the men of the town did not like her because she was a woman with spunk – an entrepreneur in a world where women were more or less confined to their homes, doing “women’s work”; a business woman in a world thought to be the exclusive domain of the males of the species. She was counted as being dangerous because the men feared that she would be held up by the women as an example of what they could do if they broke free from the shackles of their society...as I said, a woman of spunk!!!

She died unexpectedly and her employees and family washed her body, anointing it with costly oils and perfumes and wrapped her in a linen shroud and laid her on her pallet in the room above her shop where she laid her head after a hard day’s work. It was to here that Peter came and seeing the body, he quietly asked everyone to leave. Kneeling at the side of her earthly remains, Peter remembered a moment when Jesus healed a young girl and how he had simply said, “Talitha cumi “: hich meant “little one, rise”. Laying his hands on the shroud, Peter said, “Tabitha, cumi” and prayed that using Jesus’ words would effect the same result. After a moment, he noticed that her chest rose and fell, rose and fell. Quickly unwrapping the cloth, Peter took Dorcas’ hand and helped her to sit up. Calling the others, he presented their friend now very much alive and the room erupted with singing and dancing and many, many tears of joy.

Why should we remember Dorcas or Tabitha ? After all, she isn’t listed as a saint and yet her name is associated to this day with organizations which have as their mandates the care of widows and orphans and the empowerment of women as independent daughters of God. We need to remember her because of her commitment to living out what the bishop in Somalia said about recognizing and using whatever gifts and talents we have been given to raise people and communities up; to do this work without fanfare or the seeking of awards or even praise for what we do; to undertake acts of justice and equity for anyone who is in need regardless of the dangers involved or the judgment made by others. Her story also speaks of what happens when a community works together and bonds into a close-knit family intent upon a common mission of service and servanthood. Her narrative also reminds us that “with God all things are possible” and that the age of miracles has not passed – indeed small miracles happen each and every day when we live out our gospel mission to love one another as God in Christ loves us.

For all this we honour the widow of Joppa this morning and ask ourselves, “What can I do to advance the healing of lives around me?”

Fr. Michael: As the Church has witnessed to the truth of our faith for the past two thousand years, so now we join our ancestors in the faith as we declare, I believe in God the Father Almighty,

People: **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 God, you care for us and we need nothing more.

People: **Hear the cry of those who are hungry – hungry for justice and dignity, hungry for freedom and love.**

Reader: You lead us into a haven of peace and rest.

People: **Hear the cry of those who are alone; those who grieve a relationship broken by death or human failing; those who live in the isolation of a hospital room or a prison cell.**

Reader: We pray for those who live in a frail body or a confused mind. From our own community and faith family, we hold before you Marjorie, Sarah, Roy, Howard, Irene, Scott, Jeanette, Zachariah, and Cheryl and ask your healing touch upon them and us as we minister to them in your name.

People: **Lead us as we offer your hope and peace to friends and strangers alike.**

Reader: You breathe new life into us and lead us in new ways. Today, in our diocesan cycle of prayer, we hold before you Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; as well as our Community Ministries: Centre 454; St Luke's Table; The Well, Centre 105, Cornerstone Housing for Women, the Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre and the Refugee Ministry. We also pray for the Church of the Ascension, Ottawa and the Reverend Rhonda Waters and Julian of Norwich, the Reverend Monique Stone and Deacon Elizabeth December and we ask that these parishes and persons may be touched by your renewing, life-giving power so they may serve the common good.

People: **God whose breath is life itself, we pray for a just and caring use of all your creation, a fair sharing of its abundance and an ethical searching of the mysteries of life.**

Reader: You are with us and you comfort us even when the darkness of the world looms large over us.

People: **We pray for all the truth-seekers, for those who cannot speak and those who cannot be heard, that the light of your Word may shine in the darkness which overshadows them.**

Reader: In the face of those who trouble us, you provide for us and pour out your blessings.

People: **Hear the cries of those trampled by racial or religious intolerance, those disoriented by homelessness and poverty, those defeated by unemployment and underemployment.**

Reader: God of compassion and justice, you are with us always and have promised to sustain us all the days of your lives.

People: **Enlarge our visions of life, and make us bold in our hope, Father Son and Holy Spirit – let our cry come to you.**

Reader: All this we ask in the blessed name of the Risen One. **Amen.**

Fr. Michael: In the blessed season of Lent, we were invited to consider how we live as followers of Jesus – to look at our decisions and our actions and to hold them before the Lord. Let us now pray for wisdom, guidance and forgiveness as we move into the light of Easter and resurrected lives.

People: Holy God, Creator of all that is, Donor of Grace and Giver of Life; hear our prayer. There are chasms in our lives, deep valleys that separate us from one another and from you. We confess that we have allowed these rifts to grow; we confess that we are fearful of confessing where we have failed you, ourselves and others; for being afraid of being rejected if we stand before others and offer

our hearts. You call us to a reconciled life, to healed relationships, to a wholeness with others and especially with you. Mend us, we pray, and make us new creations through the power and love of Christ.

Fr. Michael: Sisters and brothers, this Good News is for all the world; Christ was born, lived, died and was raised again so that we would be freed from sin and death. Know that indeed you are forgiven in the power of God: Father, Son and Spirit. Go and be the face and heart and voice, the hands and feet of Christ in your world.

Amen.

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

People: And also with you.

WE SHARE THE SHALOM OF GOD WITH ONE ANOTHER

Fr. Michael: God of loving care, you spread before us the table of life and give us the cup of salvation to drink. Keep us always in the fold of your Son Jesus, our Saviour and our Shepherd. 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: Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator of heaven and earth. We give you thanks and praise for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus, for he is our true paschal lamb who has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he destroyed death and by his rising to life again he has won for us eternal life. Therefore, joining our voices with the whole company of heaven, we sing our joyful hymn of praise to proclaim the glory of your name.

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: We give thanks to you, Lord our God, for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and the Redeemer of the whole world. In him, you have delivered us from evil and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night that he was handed over to suffering and death, a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take, eat: this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper, he took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, "Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in the remembrance of me." Therefore Father, according to his command,

People: we remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming again in glory Fr.

Michael: and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, Lord of all; presenting to you from your creation this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant.

Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice that we, made acceptable in him, may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Michael: In the fullness of time, reconcile all things in Christ and make them new; and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the first born of all creation, the head of the Church and the author of our salvation.
By whom and with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen

Fr. Michael: And now, as Christ has gifted to his Church, we pray, Our Father,
People: **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: God of steadfast love, watch over your Church redeemed by the blood of your Son Jesus. May we who share in these holy mysteries come safely to your eternal kingdom, where there is one flock and one shepherd; we ask this in the name of Jesus our Saviour, Redeemer, Friend, Brother and Good Shepherd. Amen

Fr. Michael: O Lord, our shepherding God, come close to us now in our time of need. Shepherding God, we need you in this time of anxiety and economic uncertainty. We need you in the midst of this pandemic and we need you to heal and bind our wounds, be they physical, emotional or spiritual. We ask you to pour your healing ointment over our hands and our heads. Guide us with your Voice; help us to listen to you and to follow no matter where you lead us. Help us to trust in you.
Shepherding God, protect us from those who wish us not good but harm. We thank you for your Son who lay down his life for those who follow him and for those who stand outside the sheepfold and who as yet do not know the shepherd. We pray that by our actions, our words, our behaviour and our reaching out into the community, they may come to know you. Shepherding God, renew us, guide us with your love and renew us with your peace. Amen (from re:Worship 2019 adapted by RMF)

People: **A rainbow is not just a symphony of colours sent to calm the storm in our souls; it is a talk with God, a mysterious, miraculous conversation with God, heart to heart, the very heart of God saying to our hearts, “ Remember that I am your God; be my walking rainbows so that the whole world will know to whom you belong. I am the God who keeps promises and I have not forgotten our covenant.” This is the hope of the Church: that God keeps promises. The mission of the Church is to walk among the suffering and give, for we are covenant keepers, walking rainbows, bringing the hope of the good news to the poor. Alleluia!**

(Walking Rainbows by Ann Weems from Kneeling in Jerusalem 1992 – reformatted by RMF into a prayer form)

Fr. Michael: May the God of rainbows enwrap you in love; may the God of crosses hold you in arms of hope and may the God of wild winds fill you with all courage and joy; and the peace of God which passes all understanding be with you and yours this day and all the days of your lives; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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

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