

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Metcalfe
Pentecost Three
June 18, 2023
Reverend Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we journey towards our calling as stewards and apostles of the good news of Jesus, we acknowledge that the places we call home and this, our sacred space of Holy Trinity, lie on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe peoples.

People: **Let us continue to journey heart to heart towards true reconciliation and peace among all our peoples.**

Fr. Michael: Jesus said, "Anyone who receives you, receives me, and anyone who receives me, receives the Father who sent me." Sisters and brothers, we gather today in the presence of the God who receives us with open arms, who loves us unconditionally and who bids us to do the same to another another. Come, let us worship together. (from re:Worship)

Fr. Michael: As Jesus sent the disciples out into communities, so we are sent to proclaim that the Kingdom of God has drawn near. We are eager to share your love, without expecting any reward and we realize that we will not always be welcomed by others. When that happens, let us move on because there are many places that need to hear of your grace. May your Spirit speak through us. Lord Jesus, equip us now for service and witness. 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: In response to your loving us beyond our understanding, 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: Almighty God, without you we are unable to please you. Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

All: Amen

Reader: A reading from the book of Exodus (Exodus 19: 1-8)

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel

camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

The Word Of The Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: We acknowledge you, O God, as Creator and Liberator. You are the One who brought the captives out of Egypt and delivered them from the oppression of slavery. You gave laws which shaped how people were to relate to you, to each other and to their environment. You implored people to worship you only, knowing that whatever god was put in your place would become the object of idolatry and would become the priority of people's lives. In this time of worship, help us to focus on you as the priority in our lives. Remind us of your steadfast love revealed so clearly in your new commandment of love which Jesus showed in his life. Speak to us anew as we offer this prayer and our worship in Jesus' name and for his sake. **Amen** (Moira Laidlaw from Liturgies Online)

Reader: Our psalm for this new day is taken from Psalm 116 I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *

All: **because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.**

Reader: The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; *

All: **I came to grief and sorrow.**

Reader: I will fulfil my vows to the Lord *

All: **in the presence of all his people.**

Reader: Precious in the sight of the Lord *

All: **is the death of his servants.**

Reader: O Lord, I am your servant; *

All: **I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.**

Reader: I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *

All: **and call upon the name of the Lord.**

Reader: I will fulfil my vows to the Lord *

All: **in the presence of all his people.**

Reader: In the courts of the Lord's house, *

All: **in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!** (Psalm 116: 1-2, 12-17)

Reader: A reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained

access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. (ROMANS 5:1-8)

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: This is love: not that you spoke words of comfort, walked with the unclean and the unloved, shared wisdom, bread and wine, brought healing into lives and challenged the status quo. This is love: you spoke the Word of God, walked a painful road to the cross, shared living water, bread of life, brought salvation to the world and died for the sake of us all. This is love: seed sown in the ground which germinates, blossoms and spreads its sweet perfume. Thank you for love. **Amen**

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. Matthew (St. Matthew 9:35-10:23)

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

Fr. Michael: Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest." Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town. See, I am sending you out like sheep into the

midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

This is the very Gospel of Christ.

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

Homily - Sheep Before Wolves

The older I gets, the more I realize that there is a truth to the old French expression, "Ca plus change, ca plus ne change rien" – "the more things change, the more things remain the same". The gospel for this morning could have been written in and for our diocese, our parish or the Church Universal just as accurately as it was for the first fellowship.

Jesus has been engaged in "my Father's business" for a period of time, moving across the landscape of the Galilee and the territory of Judea with the occasional foray into forbidden places like Samaria. Everywhere he goes, he runs into the same folk: people who are poor and dispossessed, those who are hungry and houseless, men and women who have been robbed of their human dignity, children wandering in the byways of the towns seeking shelter and love; everywhere the same, the human condition of so many even in our generation and our country who cry out for justice, for equity; those who want desperately to be seen and appreciated for who they really are in spite of perhaps their outward appearance or behaviour. Jesus spends almost all of his time among the outcasts, the amrhitzen, the vulnerably lost in all sorts and manners of places and he sees beyond what his world, his religious brand, says about these his sisters and brothers and he embraces them in arms and a heart of love. This work is exhausting – often debilitating of mind, body and spirit and it is for this reason that Jesus often breaks away from his community and seeks a "quiet and lonely place" where he can simply BE – be the son of his Father, be vulnerable and where he can enter into dialogue with his Creator. This began after his baptism when he was thrown into the wilderness experience and there is ministered to by angels. Every time he returns from his "away place", his friends notice a new spring in his step, a new energy in his voice, a new power radiating from him.

Jesus knows – Jesus knows what lies ahead. He is under no illusions that this work he is undertaking will last forever with him physically leading the charge. He understands the will of his Father and begins to prepare those who have sacrificed much to be with him for an even greater sacrifice – the loss of self to service for others. When the time is right, he calls them together and begins by saying, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" and then he sends them out into the cruel dark world to witness to and for the Light. Calling them together, he tells them that they are to spend their time with those who live lives of

sometimes not so quiet desperation on the margins. He prepares them for what will prove to be the most severe testing of their commitment to the kingdom principals which he outlined on the side of that mountain in the Galilee – they will be rejected by many, mocked by some, attacked and perhaps even killed for their faithfulness to God’s will that all persons be fully human, fully alive. He warns them to always be on their sharpest guard, for they will encounter some who will profess their faith in what they are doing while seeking the soft underbelly where their credibility can be destroyed. It is not a sunshine and roses scenario he paints because he knows they will need strength and courage for the road ahead. The disciples are basically told that it is time – time to put the Kingdom principles which he has shared with them into concrete practice.

But Jesus does not leave them to their own devices: he sends them out in pairs for ministry. By creating teams, Jesus makes sure that each apostle (the term for those sent!) has someone who will be a support and a backstop, a sounding-board and a critic, a witness and an affirmer on the journey. He does this in part so that the individual apostle doesn’t get into his head that HE is the heart and source of the work but that ministry to be effective must be collaborative and shared; that the gifts of one person will need the gifts of others to make the ministry as powerful and effective as possible. St. Paul was to affirm this when he wrote, “You are the Body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it...there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit....Now to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12)

I am sure that these pairings did not always work out as hand-holding, la-di-la – ing down the road but would have had moments of anger and distrust, times of wondering what this ministry thing was all about and why things sometimes went sour and why Jesus had burdened them with the companion he had chosen for them when they were so obviously ill-matched! Such were the realities of ministry then but let’s remember: ca plus change, ca ne plus change rien!

Today is an opportunity for us to think prayerfully and honestly about our calling in Christ as community and as individuals who say, “Credo – I believe”. It is no understatement to repeat what Jesus said, “The harvest is great but the labourers are few” – it is OUR reality and no matter how desperately we long for the good old days of filled pews and overflowing coffers, we can never go back. This is the reality of the times and we can react in any number of ways to the situation we face: we can try to blame others, especially clergy of the past, for the mess we’re in; we can sit in judgment of members of our fellowship who don’t seem to be “pulling their weight”; we can simply shrug our shoulders and decide that there is nothing more to be said or done and sit here waiting for the lights to go out; we can spend our time navel-gazing; OR we can face the hard facts and resolve to do SOMETHING ABOUT IT; we can spend time in prayer and study of how the evangelize both ourselves and others and the, when the time is right, as Nike says, “JUST DO IT.”...

Ministry was once thought of as the exclusive bailiwick of the ordained and that the laity’s work was to simply provide the resources to fund whatever was happening in a parish and then do the dog’s work as the Rector directed the operation! This began to change in the

fifties and sixties with the development of the idea of the ministry of the whole people of God. This shocked both clergy and laity: the clergy had to accept that much of what they did would be done more effectively by persons living in the hustle and bustle of the real everyday world and set about training and equipping the parishioners to become partners in service; the laity were suddenly faced with the responsibility of helping in real ways to make what the Church SAID be what the Church DID – to not only nod assent to what James said so many generations ago, “Don’t simply listen to the Word: BE the Word”, but to leave the comfortable Sunday pews and get involved in the messy work of ministry and evangelism.

In the seventies and eighties there arose a new Pentecost – the Church began to take seriously the Holy Spirit through a variety of renewal ministries and particularly in our diocese through the gifting of Cursillo, a movement from Spain which had and continues to have as its focus the encouraging of laity to accept and assume their legitimate call to be apostles and evangelists. The majority of lay leadership in our diocese and in our parishes has come through the work of the Cursillo community and I would certainly recommend that as many of you as possible might consider becoming involved as we as a parish move, as JRRR Tolkein, wrote “down a road that goes ever onward.”

We stand at a crossroads here and now as to what our future might look like: we can DIVE – just jump off the cliff crying “Farewell cruel world” and allow our parish to wither on the vine until there is no one left to lock the doors and the parish is remembered as one of those “Oh yes, I remember Trinity – she was pretty good as long as she lasted” places; we can SURVIVE by carrying on as we have been carrying on, supporting ourselves but not having the resources financial and person-like to carry on anything but the barest of ministry possible as those who remain grow greyer and greyer until we reach the DIVE stage; OR we can THRIVE by committing ourselves as individuals and as a team to doing whatever is necessary to move out of the rut in the road in which we find ourselves.

Options One and Two are the easiest ones to enact – they involve very little work on our part and very short-sighted visioning. Option Two will hold us in place for a while but nothing much will change and then Option One will kick in... Option Three – THRIVE – is the difficult and scary one: there is no guarantee that things will change; it will require the commitment of every one of us to give of our all – particularly our talents and skills (even if we’re not really aware of the incredible gifts with which we have been blessed); it will ask of us to trust one another, to trust that God will be with us on the journey; it will necessitate that we put aside all those things that block the work of the Spirit in this place (a full list is found in Paul’s letters to the Ephesians and the Corinthians) and embrace one another in our strengths and our weaknesses; it will involve time of study in the fields of ministry and evangelism and it will involve us as a parish from time to time following the example of Jesus who, as St. Mark tells us, “got up early, left the house and went off to a quiet and lonely place where he prayed”, for without study AND prayer, our house will be build on sand and shale and will blow over in the first strong winds that come.

I ask you to think and pray about all this over the summer months so that, when holiday and cottage season is over, we can make concrete and do-able commitments for the THRIVING of our family here at Holy Trinity.

But just know this: GOD IS WITH US AND AMONG US and we are called to be like Samuel who asked the Lord, "What can I do for you?" and then do what we are called to do. Amen

Fr. Michael: We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord. With this blessed assurance, we say, "I believe in one 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 are the God of hospitality; there is no one like you who invites everyone to come to you. You have invited all people to your home, to your table and into your arms. Lord, would that all would hear and receive this good news. Lord, help us to remember that no one is better than anyone else in your Kingdom, and help us to then treat each other the way you treat us. Lord, in your love,

People: hear our prayer.

Reader: Generous God, because you treat us with tender love we take this time today for friends, our family members and others who need you more than ever in their lives. Pour out your healing on all those who need it, remembering especially at this time - Freeman, Marjorie, Louise, Myra, Roy, Beth, Irene, Howard, Richard, Deb, Jeanette, Sarah, Zachariah, and Cheryl. Be generous with your transforming love for all those who need your presence on their lives today and bring reconciliation and peace into our families and in places where it is desperately needed. Lord, in your love

People: hear our prayer

Reader: Gifting God, you endow us with the gifts of the Spirit to use to further the works of your Kingdom and to be your body. We remember Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; as well as The Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, Sacred Circle, the ministry of reconciliation and National Indigenous Bishop, Sidney Black, St. John the Baptist, Richmond and the Reverend Allan Budzin, and The Parish of Maberly-Lanark and the Reverend Dr. Ron Hunt. We pray for Helen, Beth and all church musicians serving in our Diocese, and we thank you for all who have answered the call to ministry and caring, both laity and clergy who reach out your hand of compassion to others. Empower us to continue to be your hands and your heart to continue your work which needs to be done here in so many lives. Lord, in your love

People: hear our prayer.

Reader: God, there is no one like you in your love, your generosity, your gifting and your hospitality. We thank you that you are in our lives working in us and through us to know that

your Kingdom is open to all who turn to you. In the name of your Son who opened all the doors and broke down all barriers that keep people from you, we praise you and we thank you.

All: **Alleluia!**

(Rev Abi from Rev Abi's Long and Winding Road)

Fr. Michael: Let us stand together before the One who calls us and pray,

People: **Lord Jesus, we call you Lord. Yet it is too easy for us to worship other things, other activities, other relationships, other gods. You tell us that we cannot serve two masters; yet we spend more time focusing our energies elsewhere, diverting our time and energy and our attention away from you. Forgive us Lord when our hearts are led astray and when we worship other gods and serve them rather than you. We turn away from our distractions and ask you to strengthen us to set our faces towards Jerusalem and follow you. We pray this, counting on your grace. Amen**

(Chip Hardwick from Thinking, Praying, Living)

Fr. Michael: The Lord is steadfast in love and hears the prayers of all those who come seeking mercy. God reaches out in the name and the person of Jesus, forgiving our sin and nourishes us with life beyond limits. Sisters and brothers, your sin is forgiven, so be at peace in the name of God, Father, Son and Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: And may the peace of the living and loving Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

WE SHARE THE SHALOM OF GOD

Fr. Michael: God of reconciliation and forgiveness, the saving work of Jesus has made our peace with you. May that work grow towards its perfection in all that we offer you this day.

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: It is indeed right to thank you and praise you, holy and gracious God, creator of all things, ruler of heaven and earth, sustainer of life, for you are the source of all

Fr. Michael: goodness, rich in mercy and abounding in love; you are faithful to your people in every generation, and your word endures for ever. Therefore with angels and archangels, with the fellowship of saints and the company of heaven, we glorify your holy name, evermore praising you and saying,

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.**

Fr. Michael: We praise you, merciful Father, not as we ought, but as we are able, because in your tender love you gave the world your only Son, in order that the world might be saved through him. He made you known by taking the form of a servant, healing the sick, liberating the oppressed, reaching out to the lost. Betrayed, reviled, and nailed to the cross, he confronted the power of sin and disarmed it for ever. In his offering of himself, he became the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Redeemed by Christ, we have been adopted as your children; by your pardon you have made us worthy to praise you. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus, at supper with his friends, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, gave it to them, and said, "Take and eat: this is my body which is 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, and said, "Drink this all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." In obedience to him and with grateful hearts we approach your holy table, remembering our Saviour's sacrifice, and rejoicing in his victory. Confident in his sovereign purpose, we declare our faith.

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

Fr. Michael: Send your Holy Spirit on us that as we receive this bread and this cup we may partake of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. May we be renewed in his risen life, filled with love, and strengthened in our will to serve others; and make of our lives, we pray, a pure and holy sacrifice, acceptable to you, knitting us together as one in your Son Jesus Christ, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and forever.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: As Jesus has gifted to the Spirit 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: God of promise, you prepare a banquet for us in your kingdom.

People: **Happy are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.**

Fr. Michael: The gifts of God for the People of God.

People: **Thanks be to God**

WE SHARE THE GIFTS OF BREAD AND WINE IN COMMUNITY

Fr. Michael: Holy and blessed God, as you give us the body and blood of your Son, guide us with your Holy Spirit, that we may honour you not only with our lips but also in our lives. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: Glory to God,

All: whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fr. Michael: Prayer for Father's Day and The Blessing

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