

Holy Trinity Sunday
June 19, 2011
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Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2:4a, Psalm 8, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28:16-20

Do It Yourself

What do you think of when you think of father's day? Do you think of dad on a hammock, with a cold drink in hand and an old rusty lawnmower in the background? Or do you imagine him enjoying his favorite sport season? Maybe all you think about is the new set of neckties, socks and underwear to get for him this year. I guess our thoughts round fathers' day depend on who your image of a dad is. We can take some examples from media. You can go from the likeable and charming dad like Cliff Huxtable to the silly but probably more real life like Homer Simpson. Duh! Then there's your office dad, and your mechanic dad, and a whole lot of other different images about our fathers.

One that always comes to my mind is the do-it-yourselfer dad. Again, going back to your TV shows, you could think of Bob Vila. You know, household project in mind, power tools on hand and big mess in the house. I think of do-it-yourselfers because my dad was always doing something around the house. He learned the lessons around hard work from his dad who was a mason. The kind of work my dad learned from his dad was very hard and difficult: mixing cement, putting up cinder block walls, cutting rebar and that kind of thing. My father has always been a very strong man. Not the body-building kind of strong, but more like a Paul Bunyan kind of strong: big, burly, brawny. Growing up, I admired that in him and I tried to imitate him. I never really got the biceps he has, but I learned the desire to do things on my own. By the way, I hope the ladies here will forgive me if this sounds like a testosterone laden sermon. I'm not trying to make this into a physical strength or macho prowess reflection. Instead, this is a reflection on what God has done and the manners in which we are called to follow suit.

I got to thinking about do-it-yourself and building things when I was reading the story of creation from Genesis which we had as our first reading today. In a way, God is the ultimate builder and creation is the ultimate do-it-yourself project. From nothingness, from a dark, formless void that existed in the beginning, God created the world. Not necessarily with tools, but with God's creative Word. Let there be light. Let there be the sky. Let there be dry land and oceans. Let there be plants, and trees. Let there be all sorts of animals: birds, and fish, and those of the earth. And then God said, "let us also make humankind, to our image, to our likeness." That's the way in which many of us have come to know God for the first time in our lives. Our parents or maybe a Sunday school teacher told us about God, the creator of things, the source of all that exist. This is not a story meant to be understood as scientific accuracy or as historical fact. It's a story meant to describe the goodness of the order of creation, the interdependence of the elements of creation, the community and fellowship that God has with humanity.

And that's the point to where I want to get today. You see, God made everything into existence and then put it all into our hands. God the Creator is also God, the one that charges us as stewards of creation. On this Sunday of the Trinity we know and we are able to reflect on God the Creator, God the Father because we are co-creators with God. "This is now all up to you" (my own interpretation of God's words). "Fill the earth, subdue it, have dominion over it." That's the charge, the responsibility, the commission that God entrusts to us. If God is Bob Vila, we are the apprentice, the helper; the sidekick that puts continues the work we have received from our master. We cannot know God as creator apart from our task to be the ones in charge of creation.

So God is the ultimate do-it-yourselfer. So much so that when humanity was getting lost, when we were losing our way, when we could not do it on our own, God came and lived among us. You know how they say that if you want something done right you ought to do it yourself? In a way, that's what the manifestation of God that we know in Jesus, the Redeemer, is. Jesus came to teach, to show God's love for us, to provide hope, to lead the way back to God, to light our way, to announce forgiveness, to give life. So God, in the shape and image of Jesus, comes, lives, dies and right before ascending back to heaven, once again, put us in charge. He sends us forward, asks us to carry on the ministry.

That's what we find in Matthew 28. It's what we've been talking about for the last few weeks. Jesus' farewell discourse is, among other things, a commissioning. Just like God the Creator, charges us with the care of the creation, so God the Redeemer charges us with continuing what he has begun. We know God in the different manifestations of the Trinity so that we can continue what God has begun. Christ has come, and yes he has done so in our favor, for our benefit, out of love for each one of us, but also with the purpose only so that we can follow his example, and apply what we have learned, and do for others what he has done for us. We know God the redeemer so that we can lead others in the way that takes us to redemption.

And finally, when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, it did so with the purpose of equipping those who were in charge of the task of ministry. To give us the tools, to give us the talents, to accompany us, to lead us, to guard us on the way, to sanctify and bless the community of believers. We can understand God as the Sanctifier when we realize that the Holy Spirit enables us to minister to those around us.

In the end, what we find in the Holy Trinity is a model of community. These are the manifestations of God, the revelations of God, the ways in which we can interpret and understand God so that we can do the same that God does. We co-create, we tell the good news of salvation, we live in the sanctity of community with others. That's what God does for us. Now is our turn to follow on God's way. Amen.