



THE HOLY TRINITY

22 May 2005

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Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Psalm 8

2 Crinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20

We begin this day in the strong name of the Trinity:

God to enfold you—Christ to uphold you—Spirit to keep you. Amen.

For almost two thousand years invocations of the Trinity, like this one have been the morning prayer of Celtic Christians in Ireland and the Western Isles of Scotland. Echoing the words of the much longer prayer of St. Patrick, This invocation is a daily reminder that we belong to God, And that our Three-in-one God goes with us...Within, before, behind, beside us—in earth's mysteries of wind, water, sun and moon. In each person we meet, shielding us all the day long to protect and keep us.

In the first reading this morning, we heard our most ancient hymn of belonging—from Genesis. And the familiar words of our story once again reminded us that we are bound to our creator from the beginning. And in our beginning we heard that all was a formless void—The Hebrew words are *tohu vabohu*—topsy-turvey. *Tohu*, without form—no shape; and *bohu*, empty—unpopulated. What it really means is that everything was a mess! Nothing formed—all darkness, no light, no seas, no earth. Everything was mixed up, a swirling chaos. And in that empty darkness we feel the wind, that spirit, breathing order out of the confusion. And our grandmother/grandfather-God SPOKE—And with a word, tamed the chaos and ordered a world out of *tohu vabohu*.

And God breathed a word which separated the light from the darkness—day from night. And on the second day, God spirited forth a sky to separate the water below from the water above. And on the third day, God spoke forth the earth and its vegetation—bursting forth in beautiful good abundance. And the breath of God SAID: the Lights—sun and moon, and time and seasons. And God worded forth the Creatures in the waters and in the sky. And God's breath spoke the animals of the earth into existence—and us—in God's own image. (sigh) And then, God rested. And so do we here today—Come to this place, to rest, to offer up the chaos, the *tohu vabohu* of our lives in a moment of remembering who we are.

And in today's gospel the writer of Matthew brings us to a mountaintop, to a place where the earth is still separated from the sky, but here only thinly....Brings us to stand in this space between earth and heaven, between the human and the holy, between Holy Week and the risen Lord.

Eleven. And I wonder...why have they come back to Galilee? Discouraged and broken. And then I remember our Easter gospel—It was the women who were at the tomb that morning—The earthquake, the stone, the angel who said "GO quickly and tell." And then they saw him and they worshiped—

Jesus, their risen Lord, who breathed the words that created order out of their *tohu vabohu*, "GO and tell my brothers to go to Galilee."

And the women carried those creating words from the living, breathing Jesus—And the women's words

bring the 11 to this mountaintop. It is the women who are leading them up the mountain, showing the way to the risen Lord, Bearers of God's creating breath...the women with the eleven as they have been, all along, as Matthew has told us—from Galilee, from the beginning.

And to this thin place which barely separates earth from heaven Jesus comes to them—and they worship him. But they doubt. Worship AND doubt; this is what they bring to Jesus. In those last few days ALL their lives were turned topsy-turvey. Shouts of hosanna had turned to crucifixion, palm branches became clubs and swords, dreams of the kingdom turned to terror— as the disciples panicked, lost sight of their future, denied who they were.

Their lives swirling in chaos—all *tohu vabohu*. But Jesus' word, carried by the women, sends them trudging up the mountain, bearing their heavy loads of sorrow, disappointment, fear, guilt—their leader gone, their movement in disarray, hiding out, no direction, no future, their lives in chaos—And when they meet Jesus he doesn't say, "Where were you? Why did you run? How could you have been such cowards?" Instead, Jesus sees what they have brought—their worship and their doubt. And Jesus looks on them with compassion. For he is the one who had said, Put your sword back.

And Matthew offers us no proof—no fish for Jesus to eat, no closed doors to walk through....no wounds to touch. Jesus simply speaks—A living, breathing Word. And Jesus does not "fix" their doubt, but in their doubt, Jesus-God-the-son simply says—GO.

To this remnant –with their heavy load of doubt and confusion, this much-beloved- son-God once again breathes a WORD that speaks order out of the chaos. And Jesus SAYS—GO...make disciples. And this is a familiar word. The resurrection may be a mystery, but they know disciples. they have traveled with him in his way of discipleship, GOing out—among the people, GOing out—listening, healing, feeding, casting out demons, lifting up, giving hope, collecting the only the most disreputable, ragtag people, all nations and peoples, baptizing them.

And this is how we become part of the story. For we are those baptized nations and peoples. We are the descendants of these eleven and those good-news-bearing women. We are the proof that they did indeed—GO with their heavy load of doubt –and lives all *tohu vabohu*. And on this mountaintop WE ALSO find Christ—Alive. And Jesus, the living, breathing Word, continues to speak, now to US.....And we, too, have lugged our load to the top of the mountain—the *tohu vabohu* of our lives.

We carry this morning's news reports of how many people were killed in Iraq today. We bring the picture from *The Lutheran* magazine of the 24-foot-high wall being built in Bethlehem, right down the middle of the road into the old city. We bring our despair over debates in our church concerning ordination of gay clergy. Our load is heavy with the latest layoffs, pension defaults and filibuster battles. We bring our voicemail and email-boxes overflowing with unanswered messages.

Sometimes we are overwhelmed and paralyzed by all the pain and chaos of the world. And God the Spirit breathes order out of OUR chaos and sorrow; Jesus says to US, the descendants of disciples—GO—make more disciples, baptizing them in my name—Creator, Spirit, Living Word.

Jesus says—GO—BE MY DISCIPLES. Carry YOUR fear and doubt into the chaos of the world—listen, heal, feed, cast out demons, speak hope. Offer your food to the family in our community room on Mondays.

GO—BE MY DISCIPLES. Answer the doorbell and listen to the man asking for help from our Local Assistance funds. He says, "I lost my job and I've been sleeping under a bridge for the last few weeks. And one morning I found an itchy red, bump on my leg. I didn't think much about it, but it got larger and redder. I didn't have a doctor and by the time I went to Denver Health. The recluse spider bite was badly infected, and the doctors said amputation or fusion. So now I'm in this wheelchairHard to sleep under the bridge now. I need a bus ticket to Illinois. My aunt and uncle have offered to take me in while I recuperate.

And Jesus says—GO—BE MY DISCIPLES. Listen to a friend who has just learned she has breast cancer. Or a friend whose partner has left him. Cast out demons of despair and hopelessness with bags of food for MetroCareRing.

GO—BE MY DISCIPLES. Write hope on your emails to legislators asking for restoration of health services for the poorest in our state. Feed hungry people with your offerings to World Hunger.

And Jesus-God-our parent breathes our future out of our chaos as we offer up our worship and our doubt. And Jesus says to you, “As you stand here on this mountaintop and feel my Spirit-creator-wind on your face, you will know I am with you always...Emmanuel. I am with you always—Emmanuel—as I enfold you in my arms and pour my water over you and over your children and your children’s children, and invite you into my dance of Trinity that breathed a world out of *tohu vabohu*.

I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS—EMMANUEL. As I feed and nourish you with my body broken and my blood poured out, all the days, day by day by day, day in and day out—to the completion of the age.