

The Sunday Missive – June 19, 2022
The Second Sunday after Pentecost

Hymn 372 Praise to the living God

Praise to the living God! All praised be his Name
Who was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same.
The one eternal God ere aught that now appears:
The first, the last, beyond all thought his timeless years!

Formless, all lovely forms declare his loveliness;
Holy, no holiness of earth can his express.
Lo, he is Lord of all. Creation speaks his praise,
And everywhere above, below, his will obeys.

His Spirit floweth free, high surging where it will:
In prophet's word he spake of old: he speaketh still.
Established is his law, and changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart, on sea, on land.

Eternal life hath he implanted in the soul;
His love shall be our strength and stay while ages roll.
Praise to the living God! All praised be his Name
Who was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjvNFygfxq4>

Collect of the Day

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your lovingkindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

1 Kings 19:1-15

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your

prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

Psalm 42

As a deer longs for flowing streams* ***So longs my soul for you, O God.***

My soul thirsts for the living God* ***When shall I come and behold the face of the Lord?***

My tears have been my food day and night* ***While people say to me continually, "Where is your God?"***

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul* ***How I led the throng with shouts and songs of thanksgiving.***

Why are you cast down, O my soul* ***Why are you disquieted within me?***

Put all your hope in God* ***I shall again praise my rock and my God.***

By day the Lord commands his steadfast love* ***At night his song is with me.***

My prayer is to the God of my life* ***I shall again praise my help and my God.***

Galatians 3:23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by

faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Hymn 653 Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard, beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord, let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee the silence of eternity
Interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm; let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8sX0JenfPM>

Luke 8:26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and

he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him who begged Jesus not to order them back into the abyss. Now there on the hillside next to the Sea of Galilee a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these instead. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and was drowned. When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Pentecost 4C --- Padres and Proverbs

It being Daddys’ Day, for all fathers, let us pray:

O Lord our God, creator of heaven and earth, through your Son Jesus Christ you have revealed yourself as heavenly Father to all your children. Bless, we pray, all earthly fathers. Strengthen them to nurture, protect, and guide the children entrusted to their care.

Instill within them the virtues of love, patience and accountability. May they be slow to anger and quick to forgive. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, may all fathers be made strong and steadfast examples of faithfulness, responsibility, and lovingkindness. **Amen.**

Because it's not easy being a father. Not to be flippant, but it is not nearly so easy to be a father as it is to become a father; the whole enterprise is very challenging. One day they're playing 'Hail to the Chief,' and the next day you're 'Mack the Knife.' Try teaching your child a skill. Sometimes it seems as though every slight critical adjustment is perceived as a brutal personal attack. The difficulty is our relentless stream of expectations and comparisons. The proverb goes, "Children are proud of their fathers, but old men are proud of their grandchildren"

So the task we each face is to distinguish the challenges and expectations of our own lives and accept the responsibility for interpreting the world anew for our own times. Fathers, children and old men alike – just as with mothers and others – must let go of what has been wrong, without denial if we would comprehend serenity and know peace. As Saint Paul insists in our reading this morning, we must not be slaves to the laws and interpretations of the past. We must indeed take them into serene and sober consideration as we make plans for our own lives – by faith.

Perhaps you've heard this one: A young boy was driving a hayrack down a country road and hit a rut, and the wagon fell over in front of another farmer's house. The farmer came out, saw the young boy crying and said, "Son, don't worry about this, we can fix it. But right now dinner's ready. Why don't you come in and eat with us and then I can help you with your load and get you back on your way." The boy said, "Oh no, I can't! My father is going to be very angry with me." The farmer said, "Now don't worry, just come inside, set a spell and have something to eat. You'll feel better." The boy said, "I'm just so afraid my father is going to be angry

with me." But they went on inside and had some chicken and dumplings. Afterwards, as they walked back out to the tractor, the farmer said, "Now, son, don't you feel better after that great meal?" The boy said, "Yes I do, but I just know my father is going to be furious with me." The farmer said, "Nonsense. Where is your father anyway?" The boy said, "He's under that pile of hay."

Now you might say this boy managed to separate his issues from his father's a little too readily, but he was young. As a teenager, I spent some time farming, and was in fact once on the bottom of a fallen wagonload of hay. It was not pleasant. This was in Indiana, on a hog farm belonging to some relations of ours.

As long as we're on the subject of hog farming, what on Earth can we make of the scene we just heard from Luke where Jesus' healing results in the death of a whole herd of pigs? It is important to remember that the story was written in a time and culture when swine were considered impure, inedible and untouchable. So, just like the loss of all those priests of Baal whom Elijah slaughters, the pigs' destruction is of metaphorical significance. They represent the unhealthy and expendable segment of Creation, of society, of ourselves which can and even must be eliminated for us to thrive in God's World.

I can tell you, hogs are not necessarily more or less awful than any other creature. Hog farming has its ghastly aspects, but so do cattle, poultry and fish. For us, the killing of a herd of pigs by drowning seems outrageous, even actionable. The swineherds should have sued. It is an unfortunate metaphor, like the killing of an innocent fig tree, so we have to set aside our sensibilities long enough to get the point of the story, which has to do with the demon-possessed man, the demoniac.

Oscar Wilde once asked, "How else but through a broken heart may the Lord Christ enter in?" Perhaps this is why Jesus is continually drawn to the shattered, the broken, the marginal. When he arrives among the Gerasenes, he immediately meets the

possessed man. Jesus' entire interaction with this community is based on his encounter with this fellow.

The fellow is the repository of innumerable demons. Everyone in the community can point to him and say, "Look, he is the bad one here." A bad egg, and potential scapegoat. In the ancient tradition, each year an actual goat would be used to carry the sins, the demons of the people out into the wilderness. In this story, the demoniac serves the same purpose. Today we have our own versions: mentally ill, prisoners, so-called illegal immigrants, anybody who doesn't agree with our political views, non-conformists, at whom we point when we don't want to deal with our own failings as a society.

In families too, we have black sheep. There is a Senegalese proverb: "*Nu ma doon waax baay, juru ma leen.*" It means "I am not the father of all who claim to be my children." Now I never personally heard such sentiments expressed out loud in my childhood home, but I did, on more than one occasion sense my parents' fervent desire to believe that, 'Many a ragged colt makes a fine horse.' Black sheep can serve good purpose in family systems. A rabbi was once asked to give the eulogy for a fellow who alienated his family, made no friends and thus left behind no admirers. The Rabbi racked his brain for something good to say about the man, with no success. The gathered congregation were waiting with baited breath and unspoken wagers to hear what the Rabbi could possibly say in the man's favor. When the time for the eulogy arrived, the Rabbi cleared his throat and spoke: "His brother was worse."

What Jesus accomplishes by removing the scapegoat, by taking away the black sheep, by in a sense baptizing away the demons of the community in the sea, is to unplug this system of deflected violence. Jesus action removes the possibility of unloading the fear, anger and self-righteousness onto the designated sin-bearer. The result, as St. Paul insists, is a life led away from violence and toward personal accountability. As the proverb goes, "*Cada es hija*

de sus obras.” Each of us is the child of our own actions. In this life, there is no more good use for violent stories, for scapegoats or black sheep; the fears born of comparisons and expectations will be dispelled, and we – not just parents and children, but also neighbors, local and global -- can become companions, partners in helping one another, and free children capable of compassion, forgiveness and choice

A father was watching his young son trying to dislodge a heavy stone. The boy couldn't budge it. “Are you sure you are using all your strength?” the father asked. “Yes, I'm trying,” the boy replied, and still the rock would not move. “Are you sure you are using all your strength?” the father persisted. “Of course I am,” said the boy, exasperated. “No you're not,” said his father, “You haven't asked me to help you.”

Children, give your parents permission to abandon old systems of violence and scapegoating so they can help you. Parents, give your children the freedom to ask for help without being required to buy into your systems. Alone we will fail – together prevail! It is humbling, scary, hard work. It is the work of faith and faith alone, and it will never disappoint you. As the proverb goes, “*Padre Viejo y manga rota – no se deshonorra.*” An old father and a ragged sleeve are never dishonorable.

Hymn 493 O for a thousand tongues to sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
And spread through all the earth abroad the honors of thy Name.

Jesus! the Name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.

Glory to God and praise and love be now and ever given
By saints below and saints above, the church in earth and heaven.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wxp5LAqaEG0>

Diana of the Hunt

All can see, in the shining places,
Vestiges of her classic graces;
Where her footsteps, fleet and stark,
Have beautifully embossed the dark.

We know indeed, that the stately and golden
Antlers, hunters and heroes olden,
Wood-nymph, satyr, and sylvan faun.—
Goddess and stag, are gone!—all gone!
But still,—as strange as it may appear,—

Sometimes when the nights are bright and clear,
The long-breathed hounds are heard to bay
Over the hills and far away!
And lovers who walk at Love's high Noon,
See something flash in the light of the moon,

As a shining stag swept through the sky,
And the chase of the goddess were up, on high.
But be this as it may, in sooth,
It is only in the pursuit of Truth,
That the Soul shall overtake and possess

The most exalted Happiness.

Forceythe Willson