



August 27, 2023

21st Sunday of Ordinary Time

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Matthew 16:15



Dear Friends,

“Who do you say that I am?” For those of us who claim to be Christians, other “Christs,” this question also speaks of who we are. We need to understand that “Christ” is not Jesus’ last name. Christ is a title that means “anointed one”, it is the Greek form of the Hebrew word “Messiah.” So, we proclaim that the historical Jesus is the anointed of God. As Peter proclaimed today and in the Acts of the Apostles Jesus was crucified but now is raised up as “Christ and Lord.”

From the perspective of the resurrection, we look at the human being named Jesus. God was dwelling in his humanity. We see the unique and intimate relationship he has with God. Jesus reveals God as his “Abba,” his Father. Jesus tells us in prophetic actions and parables that God is radical love, forgiveness, and healing. If we love, God lives in us, and we live in God.

The bond of love between the Father and his Son we name the Spirit. This love is so powerful we say the Son shares divine essence with the Father. And it is the Spirit which binds them together. We call the love within God “Trinity.” The God revealed in Jesus who is “Christ and Lord,” is a communion of life and love. God is a community of persons, each member continually emptying their self lovingly into the others.

The love that is God overflows into Creation. We call this overflowing love, Grace. God’s self-emptying Grace creates all that exists from the tiniest atom to the furthest stars at the edge of the universe. Creation is the first self-expression or Incarnation of God. All that God’s love creates, God calls good.

In the heart of Creation, God creates humans in God’s own likeness. Humanity is creation become aware of its own existence. Creation is the first revelation of God; our first book of Scripture. Creation speaks to us of the God who made it. And Creation is not yet complete. It is still in the process of becoming something more and new.

The overflowing Grace of God desired to walk with Creation. So, God empties out Godself in the person of the historical person named Yeshua, Jesus. Jesus is what God had in mind when God created all things. Jesus is the pattern for humankind. God shining through our humanity. He is the key to understand God. Jesus walked with us in his Jewish Tradition with humility and non-violence. His was a ministry of reconciliation. He desired to unite all things as one, in communion with the God of Love. Jesus the Christ reaches out to all people of every race, religion, language, and culture.

Jesus emptied himself out on the cross that he might unleash the power of the Spirit upon us. In his resurrection he breathes into us the Spirit. We become his risen body in the world. The Spirit through faith, baptism, and the Eucharist empowers us to be a community (Church), other Christs, called to reshape the world in the image of the Triune God. We are the next Incarnation of God in the world. We carry on the work of reconciling all things to God, and lead all to the peace, the Shalom, that is God’s gift to creation. This is who Jesus the Christ is; and it is who we say we are.

Peace,

Fr Ron

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