



The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Year A – Trinity Sunday, June 11, 2017

The Reverend Canon R. K. “Moki” Hino,

Last weekend I was home on the Big Island and after visiting with my grandmother on the Hamakua Coast and visiting a friend in the town of Waimea, I decided to go back to Hilo on the Saddle Road, now the Daniel K. Inouye Highway, the road that goes right in between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa.

The elevation on the Saddle Road is over 6000 feet and sometimes when I drive that road at night, I'm lucky enough to be above the cloud line. Last weekend was one of those times and as my car cleared the fog just after Waiki'i Ranch, I was confronted by a moonless sky whose starlight shined just enough for me to see the shadow of Mauna Loa on a night that would have otherwise been pitch black. And in that subtle starlight, that gentle starlight, I felt nudged by the presence of God made manifest in the Holy Spirit, that gentle reminder that God is ever-present, present in the starlight, and present in our souls.

And then as I drove along, I noticed something interesting in the upper left-hand corner of this marvelous, Holy Spirit view. I looked up and saw the constellation of my childhood, my childhood in Micronesia and its almost southern hemisphere skies. I looked up and I saw the constellation of the Southern Cross, the constellation the Hawaiians call Hanaiakamalama, also the name of the summer palace of Her Majesty Queen Emma, and the constellation that guided wayfarers back to their homes in Tahiti after their long canoe voyages to Hawai'i. I saw the Southern Cross and I was reminded of the presence of Christ, the one who teaches about kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and love, and as I drove along the Saddle Road on that Big Island night, I felt this amazing assurance that I was worthy, I was valued, I was saved, and I was loved. And in that beautiful moment, I myself felt beautiful; and I longed to share that with the rest of the world and, of course, with all of you.

And then as I took it all in, I saw this misty cloud-like stream casting itself against the backdrop of the night sky, the Universe. And I realized that I was looking at our galaxy, the Milky Way, the galaxy that my great-grandparents called Ama no Kawa, the River of Heaven. And as I drove along I was reminded not only of the Genesis story, but also that iconic line in one of our Eucharistic prayers, the line that says:

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise. At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

So for me, driving along the Saddle Road was a Trinitarian experience and all at once, I experienced Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in more modern terms, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

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And depending on where I'm at in my life, I get to experience God not in just one way, but in three ways: sometimes three ways individually, and sometimes three ways all at the same time. It's one of those mysteries of our faith that is beyond understanding in the mind, but definitely palatable in the heart and in perceptible the soul.

The Rev. Carole A. Crumley of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation writes this about the Creation Story:

Genesis [sic] depicts the immense power of the Spirit of God that hovers and broods over all darkness and then offers the piercing image of the light of God that shines in the darkness and cannot be overcome by it. Genesis looks into the heart of darkness and sees something beautiful and hopeful: a creative force, a hovering spirit, and a penetrating light that cannot be overcome.

That pretty much sums up my experience of driving on the Saddle Road last weekend. And it makes me think not only about the presence of God, but also how the presence of God works itself in and weaves its way into the story of my life, your life, our lives.

Rev. Crumley continues:

Darkness, light, and new life are all aspects of our human experience. We are creatures of sunset and sunrise, of the ebb and flow of the tides of life, of darkness and light. Within our life stories and the stories of our human history, there are dark sides that do not go away. Human suffering does not go away. Also within our human stories are experiences of a new life and fresh possibility brought by the over-shadowing spirit, of a creative force bringing order out of chaos, of the light of Christ that shines across the ages and beyond the grave.

That reassurance of our salvation, and the love of God for us in spite of our shortcomings and our faults, is the gift of the Trinity – a God whom we experience in whatever way we need to experience God; not limited by one facet but expanded into glorious possibilities for us to see and feel in whatever way we need to see, feel, and experience God in our lives, in our souls, in our stories, and in our hearts.

Meister Eckhart, a German mystic from the 14th Century, wrote this:

God the Father laughed, and the Son was born. Then the two of them laughed, and the Spirit was born. When all three laughed, the human being was born.

Thank God they laughed. Thank God they laughed and I was born, born to experience the presence of God in the starlight, born into a life where I am blessed by family and friends, and born into a ministry where I have the grace to be in community to love and serve God with all of you.

And under the stars of the night sky, may God cast God's light on you. And may you feel the beauty that is the presence of God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And may you take that beauty into your soul and shine it out of the two eyes of you and into a world who desperately needs to feel beautiful, who needs to feel worthy, who needs to feel valued, who needs to feel loved, and who also needs to know the salvation of the Triune God, the Triune God made manifest in the skies of our beautiful starlit Hawaiian nights.