


May 9, 2021
Sixth Sunday of Easter

Time for the Young and the Young @ 

Today is Mothers day. It's a day we pay homage to our mothers, and those who mothered us. When I was born, I was born clubfoot. My feet pointed in to each other. One of North America's top orthopedic surgeons saw me just after I was born and noticed. He charged into my mother's room and demanded to know if she was going to do the exercises he prescribed, or not. If she said yes, and didn't then it would only be harder on me, so if she had no intention of doing the exercises, she should say so then, and he would book the necessary surgery right away. My mother looked at him and her look said it all. She didn't know there was anything wrong with me, so all this talk of surgery was beyond her comprehension. Just then the ob-gyn showed up and told her about the birth defect. I was lucky, I was the first born of the family, so mom had time to spend an hour every day massaging and exercising and turning my feet outward. Our dog, a dachshund named Heidi, was extremely jealous of all the time my mother was spending on me, but I rested in my mother's love for that hour every day for the first year of my life.

In today's gospel lesson, Jesus invites us to abide in his love. Abide. Another word might be dwell, which means to remain for a time, to ignore everything else and just rest and be, just like I rested in my mother's love as an infant. Jesus said that he wanted us to abide, to rest in his love so that he may joy in us, and that our joy might be complete. I'm sure that my mother found joy in that first year of my life, and I'm sure I did as well. Such is the invitation of our God for each and every one of us.

Jesus, bless our mothers who provided a place for us to rest in their love for us, and thank you for inviting us to rest in your love at every age. Amen.

Meditation: “Boundary Breaker”

You are all up on Kabbalism, right? It’s the name given to a form of Jewish mysticism. Have you ever heard of Shekinah? It’s a word that is not found in the Bible. It’s found only in rabbinic literature. In Kabbalism, Shekinah is the feminine aspect of God. Shekinah is the English transliteration of a Hebrew word that means dwelling, or settling, and it denotes the dwelling or settling of the divine presence of God. Symbolically, Shekinah is usually represented as light. Remember the light that shone in Moses’ face after he met with God? Remember the light that shone from Jesus at the transfiguration?

In the reading today it says that “while Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.” Fell. It sounds so abrupt, so blunt, so violent even. I checked other interpretations and found that some replaced ‘fell’ with ‘took control of,’ which could be coercive, or, better yet, ‘came on.’ Might I suggest the gentler word ‘settled’ on, like the dove that settled on Jesus at his baptism? While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit settled on all who heard the word. The feminine aspect of God settled on those who heard.

And what strikes me is not that it was the divine feminine aspect that settled on them, but that the divine feminine aspect settled on ALL who heard the word. I’m sure that created a problem for the priests. Imagine! They, the Jews, were the ‘chosen people’. God was theirs, and theirs alone. And here God is failing to recognize that boundary and chooses everyone within earshot – even those despicable Gentiles.

Makes me wonder about us, about the church in our time. What boundaries have we established? Who is ‘in’ and who is ‘out’? Are BIPOCs in or out? Asians? What about sex trade workers? Drug addicts? The homeless? Convicted felons? Single parents? LGBTQ2S+? Lower class, middle class or upper class? People whose first language is not English? Muslims? Buddhists? Sikhs? Hindus? Those who haven’t been baptized? Philanderers? Cheats? Sinners of every kind?

How would we feel if we saw God choose someone we considered to be ‘out’? How might we react if we saw God choose someone we considered to be ‘out’?

Our mothers love us unconditionally. They don't calculate the risk of loving us. They don't calculate what the debt we will owe will be. They don't always like the things that we say or do, but they do always love us, because they don't set conditions or limits or boundaries on the love they have for us. And I think that is what God is demonstrating in the scripture passage today. There are no boundaries to God's love. The boundaries between people are of our own making, and if we truly love God, as God loves us, we will work to tear down those boundaries, just as the Berlin wall was torn down in 1989. May we love God and neighbour, as God and our mothers love us, without conditions or boundaries. Let's follow in God's footsteps and break the boundaries.