

John 14:1-14

Two weeks on funeral readings...this is Easter...but that's the point isn't it...death and resurrection.

This gospel is generally read at funerals. And although comforting, it is not just about death and going to a place prepared especially for you...but this passage is also about life and the here and now...What Jesus' disciples will be doing once He is gone and departed.

So many times, we follow Christ or the tenants of a religion for some later, better, eternal reward...we follow a religion for what happens after this life... and in doing so we forget to live the life we have been given today...with all its ups and downs and with it all the many blessings and opportunities we have. Otherwise, what's the point.

Why write off the life you are living, the life you have been given NOW...for some future unknown reality...now those who are in power might well like us desensitized to the sufferings of this world... so that those less fortunate accept their lot and status quietly in life...while the rich and powerful get to live how they wish... of course at everyone else's expense...don't worry peons... Jesus promised it will be better later on so stop whining and complaining...you'll get your reward later on...you just won't get anything now from us!

Rather what Jesus teaches us is that if we follow His ways that we and everyone else will have abundant life today AND always. That's the concept of everlasting life!

Otherwise... why should we care about social justice or making life better for those who have been marginalized now in this life...that mindset resembles the cast system...stay where you are and you'll get yours later...it's just the way things are...this is the philosophy of the rich and powerful to keep the status quo with them on top...while the many who are subjected won't stir the pot...sounds like a major con to me.

See Jesus knew the human heart. He knew our propensity for a survival of the fittest mentality...after all our spirits are housed in a human body complete with certain survival mechanisms in our brains...He also was aware of our attachments to what's directly in front of us...what we perceive with these limited 5 senses...our attachments to earthly possessions...and our own tribes...He know how we were created!

And because of our human nature we can often place everything else ahead of people...especially those people who we perceive as different, from us...those we don't feel connected to.

Think about when people feel at one with creation...usually in nature or at community or at family gatherings...that connection to others and a the bigger reality is what Jesus was revealing to His disciples...the larger family...God's one holy family!

...and wherever people were or are disconnected from one another Jesus sought to bring those who have been marginalized... back into the fold...God's feast...our shared meal together as one! That's what this altar behind me represents.

The setting today is Jesus' farewell address... He is at his last meal... with his disciples. Jesus has washed the feet of His disciples and has explained to them what it means to serve one another instead of wishing or feeling entitled to being served by others below their station...He is teaching them not to fall into a hierarchy mentality where one person or people group is better than another. That's a system of power and control that has been established by the kingdom of man...our base urges...our limbic system of thought...our reptilian survival mind...me and my own.

He has also just foretold his own betrayal by one of their own. One who did not see the connection and who sought to force his agenda. Judas was forcing Jesus' hand and by the way all of them felt this way...

See Judas just acted upon it! After all, they came to Jerusalem with Jesus to replace one system of power with their own...

They had the "all powerful" Messiah on their side and they would soon be in power. Judas just forces Jesus' hand...or so he thought!

They have yet to get that Jesus' kingdom is not the kingdom we have set up for ourselves... but rather a kingdom that God set up for all of creation...yet they could not see it...like many of us still can't.

He has told his disciples that he would be leaving them shortly and that they will not be able to follow their teacher and friend any longer...and He predicts Peter's denial when confronted.

No wonder they are all troubled at this point. This wasn't what they signed up for...Messiah meant to follow an anointed King in the line of David...this wasn't the meal in Jerusalem that they were hoping for...they fully thought that this would be the moment of their triumphs...when all their dreams came true...finally coming into their own with their master... and of course sharing in His glory!

Now their teacher and Messiah (their Earthly King) is leaving them, one of their own has turned against them, and their own leader is going to fail the loyalty test. It is as if the rug has just been pulled out from under them...The world as they knew it was at an end with the following Chaos and Fear and Unknowing to come!

And how does Jesus respond to their anxiety? By once again painting for them a broader picture...Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me". Jesus is calling them to continue to trust! Have faith...Trust in God...and trust in me... and believe everything I taught you and showed you...and everything will turn out just fine!

Jesus assures them that this is NOT the end, but rather something unexpected...a new beginning. He will sow the seeds of God's

revolution born today...in Him and in them. And that His destination will also be their destination.

There are many dwellings in my Father's house, and he goes to prepare a place for them, so that they will be with him. Again, this is about connection and relationship...

And Thomas once again asks a question that most of us would...OK so where ya goin' then?

He wants to understand the process then...show me...put it in my google maps over here! He wants directions from his teacher.

And Jesus responds by saying that He Himself is the map...the way...Jesus is the direction...the pointer the compass... follow Him and you will always find the way. Jesus is your google map to eternity!

But don't mistake it as the ONLY way...that's when we get into trouble and force people to get with the program or suffer the consequences!

If you haven't figured out yet...You can't force anyone to do anything...or believe in something just because you believe it so... especially if they do not know the teachings of Jesus or have been raised with a compass or map...people's lives would be so much easier if we realized this.

Mother Meera an Indian Mystic says it like this "The Divine is the sea. All religions are rivers leading to the sea. Some rivers wind a great deal. Why not go to the sea directly?"

In my Father's house there are many rooms!

Now contextually...This statement by Jesus is more a promise and word of comfort to his disciples... that Jesus himself and His teachings is all that they will ever need going forward.

So don't fret and panic, don't go searching for a different answer or a different map. And no need to force their perceptions now on everyone

else or else they are just as bad as the religious elite forcing their way of life upon them.

Then Jesus kinda sums it up for them on a grander scale...If you know me, you already know God. If you know me (and of course they do), then you already know my Father as well. Just to be clear if you know me (and you do)... you have already experienced God.

And now it's Phillips turn to chime in...Ok then Show us the Father...Abba...the creator and then will be good.

Now Jesus is getting tired of their once again not getting the bigger picture here...Have we been together all this time and you still don't know who I am or what I'm up to? For real!?

Jesus' whole mission here has been summed up as Tikkun Olam...the reconciliation of Creation back to God's intentions...In Jesus' life He has revealed the Father by His word and by His actions...He has revealed who God is...and what God is like... and with it Jesus has revealed God's Kingdom here on earth...a reality to be experienced and lived from this day forward...both NOW and forever.

And now Jesus has finished this task of sowing these seeds and will be returning to God...and in leaving, He will now entrust this same work to His students who are sent to do the same... and in doing so will cause the fruits of God's Spirit to be born into the world for generations to come...and hence it is so today.

So if we want to know and experience God right now, we need look no further than to Jesus. All the words that Jesus has spoken...all the works that He has done...they are from God to show us who God is and what God's kingdom is all about.

This passage has everything to do with life here and now...and Jesus has entrusted the mission of seed sowing and bearing God's fruit now to us... His students.

And because Jesus entrusts His mission to his disciples, he states emphatically... "Very truly I tell you, the one who trusts me will do everything I did and more. Remember in the rabbinical model a disciple now becomes as their Rabbi and does the things their Rabbi did.

Greater works than even Jesus?! Really? Well actually yes! Healing the blind and raising the dead? Now we have laser surgery & defibrillators! And so much more to accomplish healing and reconciliation in our world today. Now how have we used this power...for Tikuun Olam – to reconcile all creation as one integrated whole?!

And He will do whatever we ask in His name?

We do that every week right here don't we...but sometimes we doubt that God answers prayers? Really? Doesn't seem like it sometimes... not in our impatient and magic bullet society.

We see prayer as being wish fulfillment for our particular desires so that we miss the relational part of praying...our connection to the Divine.

See Jesus promises to be with us always doesn't He...through the Spirit, to work in and through us... to accomplish NOT our purposes and desires but rather God's purposes. And remember those purposes are not necessarily individualistic or only about me and my own desires... but rather for the good of all creation.

Jesus has made known to us the very heart of our creator, and He has entrusted this mission of revealing this reality to us. Where have you seen God in our midst? How are we enacting Jesus' work and presence... in our lives... and in our church? And how are we contributing to the Kingdom of God by being Jesus' own disciples?

Jesus showed us the way...now it's up to each one of us to share that way with others...May God continue to bless you all... in all works done and creating in the One, who is our way, our truth, and our life.

Our river leading straight to the Divine! For our Lord has Risen!

your faithful servant,

carmen