

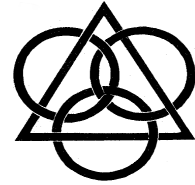


Trinity Topics

Eastertide 2009

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HOW LONG IS EASTER?

This may not be a question that grips the hearts and minds of the parishioners of Trinity Church, but it is important for the liturgical life and worship of our parish. Also, I take a rather older view of it, so that view needs some explanation.

With the 1979 Prayer Book we were introduced (or, as some would have it, “re-introduced”) to the notion that the Easter Season is 50 days long – from Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost. In fact, the season is now referred to by some as “The Great Fifty Days.”

My sense is that we are better served by the older Prayer Book tradition of a 40-day Season of Easter (“Eastertide”), followed by a 10-day Season of Ascension (“Ascensontide”), culminating in the Feast of Pentecost (“The Day of Pentecost”). I don’t think it is so much a question of being right about this; rather, I look at it from the point of view of which is more “efficient” in our corporate life as a Parish Church.

I don’t want to quibble like a Pharisee about the Church Calendar, but I think something is lost when we depart from the older Prayer Book tradition. For all practical purposes, Ascension – and to some extent – Pentecost, get swallowed up in the 50-day period called “The Great Fifty Days.” While each of the three (Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost) is profoundly connected to one another, each is also a discrete movement or “scene” in the Story of the Gospel. Therefore, for the purposes of proclaiming the Gospel in our worship, and for living our life according to the Church’s Rule of Prayer, I prefer the older scheme.

I confess that I’m a little nervous putting this in print, because I’m going against the grain of the Prayer Book reform movement that produced the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. I also run the risk of making things more confusing for us by not “toeing the line”, so to speak. But I’m not trying to be rebellious or antiquarian; I simply want to use the scheme that seems to best serve the proclamation of the Gospel and our corporate prayer.

Fr. Kip

THE DISCIPLE AND THE COMMUNITY

I write this article to integrate two important topics – one that I’ve been writing on for a while, and the other which is the subject of the current preaching. The first topic is the notion of **Discipleship**, and the second is the topic of how the Resurrection Stories (and those of Ascension and Pentecost) work to form **the Community which is the Church**. I contend that in the conversation about Discipleship, one will – at some point in time – have to pay attention to the Church as a community or society.

With regard to the viability and health of the Church in our day, I would offer this rather bold thesis: *At this point in the life of the Church, we do not need more conceptual teaching, more ideas, more principles, or even more rules. The great need of the Church in our day is for a “community” or “society” of people, which seek to live as Disciples of Jesus according to the story (primarily found in Holy Scripture) which has been handed down to it.*

I am unashamedly putting the emphasis on the collective nature of the Body of Christ, rather than elevating the individual to the supreme position of concern and care. I say this because I’ve come to believe that the making of a Disciple – an apprentice of Jesus – both demands and requires a “community” into which the Disciple can come and be made a part of, and a community by which the Disciple may be trained, disciplined (yes, I said “disciplined”) and encouraged to persevere.

In the landscape of our symbolic world there are many images that affirm and almost worship “the individual”. These few come to my mind:

- the rugged individualist;
- the self-made man;
- the lonesome cowboy;
- the existentialist “Rock” of Simon and Garfunkle;
- the one-man social/political revolutionary;
- the eccentric scholar on the quest for the truth;
- the Jason Bourne or James Bond who live by their own wits alone;
- the athlete (like “Rocky III”) who trains alone.

These perspectives all came about as a protest against “community” gone bad or stale, and in that sense I can see the need for them. But the problem is that the pendulum has swung too far; and for the notion of Discipleship this is, at

best, crippling. No one can truly be a Disciple by himself or herself; the Community is required to make and keep Discipleship authentic and real.

Here's a case in point: a recent commentator on religious life wrote of the difficulty we have speaking publically about God and speaking to God. He suggests this is “**a consequence of two hundred years of adjusting to the modern habit of relegating religion to the sphere of the *private* and *individual*....**” Then he gives his anecdote: “**Speaking of and to God is...a *traditional* practice. It is something people learn to do from childhood, because their parents and their grandparents and their teachers do it....**”

The point I'm making here is that something is learned and is done, because a neophyte – one who doesn't know how to do something (perhaps a child or a newcomer to the faith) – learns how to do it and does it as a result of being a part of a lively community that does such things. It is such a community that I'm trying to emphasize here; and, of course, the “something” that I am speaking of is **Christian living**, and the Community I am speaking of is **the Church**.

The downside to this idea is that if such a Community does not exist, or exists only in a tepid form, then the making and nurturing of Disciples is practically impossible. And that is the reason for my thesis at the beginning of the article, *The great need of the Church in our day is for a “community” or “society” of people, which seek to live as Disciples of Jesus according to the story (primarily found in Holy Scripture) which has been handed down to it.*

So it is with a sense of eagerness that in this season of Eastertide that I'm listening to the stories of that first Apostolic Community which was formed out of the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ (and His Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost). Already – on the Second Sunday of Easter – we've heard of a Community formed by the presence of the Risen Christ: One who comes forgiving those in need of forgiveness; One who engenders His Peace in the midst of chaos; and One who brings a Joy that springs from His Resurrection.

The Disciple and the Community are inextricably intertwined in the story of the New Covenant People of God. Our task is to integrate “our story” into that story.

Fr. Kip

**ECW Salad Supper Cancelled for
May**

There will be no ECW Salad Supper in the month of May.

Summary of Special Offerings

In 2009 Trinity Church has gathered three “Special Offerings.” These are offerings that fall on a particular day or season of our Church Year, and they are designated by the Vestry to go to some outreach project or effort.

The names and the amounts gathered this year are as follows:

- Ash Wednesday = \$131.00
- Good Friday = \$187.00
- Easter Day = \$396.00

The Vestry designation process will begin at their April meeting.

In addition, our most recent “designated offering” has been for the “Heifer Project,” sponsored by World Church Services – which is an ecumenical group that does a lot of good ministry to the poor around the world. Through the Church School and others we’ve gathered \$113.00 from the Lenten Bake Sale and \$79.00 from the Lenten Mite Boxes (or “Arks”), for a total of \$192.00.

LITURGY FOR EASTERTIDE

Sunday, April 26

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

7:45 am = Holy Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, April 29

Catherine of Siena:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Friday, May 1

St. Philip & St. James

8:30 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, May 3

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

7:45 am = Litany & Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, May 6

Easter Feria

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, May 10

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

7:45 am = Holy Communion

10:00 am = Holy Communion

Wednesday, May 13

Easter Feria

10:00 am = Holy Communion

Sunday, May 17

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER:

Rogation Sunday

7:45 am = Holy Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, May 20

Rogation Wednesday

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Thursday, May 21

ASCENSION DAY

7:00 pm = Holy Eucharist