

HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING

In Scripture and Prayer and The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Week of June 12, 2022

Collect for Trinity Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. BCP 228

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 New Revised Standard Version, 1989

¹ Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? ² On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; ³ beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: ⁴ “To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.

²² The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. ²³ Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. ²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth— ²⁶ when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world’s first bits of soil. ²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Romans 5:1-5 New Revised Standard Version, 1989

¹ Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

John 16:12-15 New Revised Standard Version 1989

[Jesus continued], ¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Psalm 8 1979 BCP 592

- 1 O LORD our Governor, * how exalted is your Name in all the world!
- 2 Out of the mouths of infants and children *
your majesty is praised above the heavens.
- 3 You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, *
to quell the enemy and the avenger.
- 4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, *
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
- 5 What is man that you should be mindful of him? *
the son of man that you should seek him out?
- 6 You have made him but little lower than the angels; *
you adorn him with glory and honor;
- 7 You give him mastery over the works of your hands; *
you put all things under his feet:
- 8 All sheep and oxen, * even the wild beasts of the field,
- 9 The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, *
and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.
- 10 O LORD our Governor, * how exalted is your Name in all the world!

Psalm 8 Common English Bible, 2011

- 1 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth!
You made your glory higher than heaven!
- 2 From the mouths of nursing babies you have laid a strong foundation
because of your foes, in order to stop vengeful enemies.
- 3 When I look up at your skies, at what your fingers made— the moon
and the stars that you set firmly in place—
- 4 what are human beings that you think about them;
what are human beings that you pay attention to them?

- 5 You've made them only slightly less than divine,
crowning them with glory and grandeur.
- 6 You've let them rule over your handiwork,
putting everything under their feet—
- 7 all sheep and all cattle,
vthe wild animals too,
- 8 the birds in the sky,
the fish of the ocean,
everything that travels the pathways of the sea.
- 9 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth!

Supplemental Resources

Numbering the Psalms

Psalms are usually identified by a sequence number, often preceded by the abbreviation “Ps.” Numbering of the Psalms differs—mostly by one—between the Hebrew (Masoretic) and Greek (Septuagint) manuscripts. Protestant translations (Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinist) use the Hebrew numbering, but other Christian traditions vary:

- Catholic official liturgical texts, such as the Roman Missal, use the Greek numbering
- Modern Catholic translations often use the Hebrew numbering (noting the Greek number)
- Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic translations use the Greek numbering (noting the Hebrew number)

Verse numbers were first printed in 1509. Different traditions exist whether to include the original heading into the counting or not. This leads to inconsistent numbering in 62 psalms, with an offset of 1, sometimes even 2 verses.

Hebrew numbering (Masoretic)	Greek numbering (Septuagint)
1–8	1–8
9–10	9
11–113	10–112
114–115	113
116	114–115
117–146	116–145
147	146–147
148–150	148–150

Wikipedia

Psalm 8: A Pastoral Perspective

By James McTyre, Pastor, Lake Hills Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee

The well-known hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” sings, “God in three persons, blessed Trinity.” Less well known, though, and even less understood is what this hymn truly means. How can God be three persons? Why is the Trinity blessed? Our hearts sing what our minds cannot grasp. We sing of things too wonderful for ourselves.

Psalm 8, another example of singing what our minds cannot fathom, is a beloved psalm of praise to the mystery and wonder of God’s holiness. Anyone who has stared at the starlit sky or listened to children at play can sense the psalm’s truth. Any who have experienced God’s undeserved, unsolicited mercy hear their own voice in the psalm’s gentle amazement. God’s holiness flows from its words. Yet the psalm is so much more than the sum of its parts. An exegesis of dissection strips the music from this word of God. As with all great pieces of art, this psalm is to be appreciated, not understood.

So it is quite fitting that Psalm 8 and the Trinity are bound together this Sunday. Two mysteries that evoke wonder instead of explanations harmonize well. We cannot fully comprehend how the three persons of the Trinity independently coexist. Nor can we fully understand how the lips of infants sing praise. Yet we know they do. We know beyond our ability to know. We believe. These mysteries, the Trinity and Psalm 8, help our unbelief.

By this point in our church and social calendars, Easter is long gone. Whatever brief and ceremonious observance of the resurrection might have been held in our churches has been shoved off the pages of the datebook. Life goes on. Why? What purpose propels the trajectory of the life that goes on and on and on? By Trinity Sunday we have practically forgotten Easter’s glory. Perhaps one reason Easter does not command our attention fifty-seven days later is that on Easter Sunday we try too hard to explain that which is too wonderful for us. With the precision of medical examiners we expect to solve the mystery of God’s presence. Instead of bathing in glory, we expect the automatic cleanliness of outlined prose. Slightly more than a month and a half later, the answers have aged not so well. Trinity Sunday and Psalm 8 are poetic correctives.

Not even the most gifted preacher can fully explain the force behind the life that goes on and on and on. The meticulously crafted Easter sermon, sadly, is often forgotten by Easter dinner. Yesterday’s satisfactory explanations dissolve in today’s troubles. Life defies explanation. Yet there is wisdom, there is understanding. Sometimes these come through articulation, but most often they are felt through inspiration. The heart knows what minds suppose.

“What are human beings, that you are mindful of them?” (v. 4) Notice how in the psalm this question is an answer. Instead of acting as a topic sentence, this question is the response to the psalmist’s sense of wonder, after he or she has considered the awesome, vast expanse of the Creator’s reach. Verse 4 is not a question to be answered; it is the answer. It is the prayer of the Breton fishermen: “O God, thy sea is so great and my boat is so small.” It is the prayer of a teacher going forth to an unruly class. It is the prayer of anyone with both a daunting task and sense of perspective. The prayer, the answer, the response to creation’s immensity is, all at the same time, a whispered “Thank you,” a dumbstruck “Wow,” and a shouted “Help me!” The psalmist’s answer is at least three things in one.

God is so great and we are so small. Yet God in three persons chooses to be known. God chooses a relationship with us that goes on and on and on. Why? Why does a parent choose to love a rebellious child? Why sacrifice riches to help the poor? Why preserve wilderness for the flocks and herds and beasts of the field when we know land could be put to more productive use? Sometimes we can explain our reasons with scientific evidence, but sometimes there is no reasonable answer. Why does God continually choose to love us, knowing who we are, knowing the smallness of our minds? Do we really need an answer? Or is it enough to respond, “Thank you,” “Wow,” and “Help me!”?

Our lives are driven by the quest to find solutions. We think that if we can make a little more money, our problems will disappear. If we can get our children in the right schools, they will be contented fifty years later. If we can only do this, then that will be fixed; but the amount of this and that keeps growing. There are always answers we have not considered and questions we have forgotten to ask. The life built around answers is a life propelled by anxiety. Either we live in disappointment when yesterday’s answers are rendered obsolete, or we live on guard, protecting today’s answers from tomorrow’s destruction. The psalmist calls us to live not by anxiety but by wonder.

What if questions replaced answers as the driving force of life? What if wonder became more important than solutions? What if, instead of trying to solidify our formulaic descriptions of God, we sang with the angels, “Holy, holy, holy!”? Would comfort with questions paradoxically bring us less anxiety than the endless search for resolution? Would our families, churches and nations fight less and praise more? Who knows?

In Psalm 8, questions and praise peacefully coexist. It is possible to have questions and doubts, and still believe. Even more, between the questions and praise, there is purpose to life. God has made human beings little less than angels in order to care for all things under heaven. On the day

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we speak of the mysterious union of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are guided by this psalm in its lyrical union of questions, praise, and purpose. While three things in one may be difficult to explain, they can be understood.

David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, eds., *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year C, vol. 2* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009)

The wisdom of Psalm 8

[T]he structure of [Psalm 8] is worth observing closely. At its center is an affirmation of human power and authority. At its boundaries are affirmations of praise to God. The center (v. 5) and the boundaries (vv. 1,9) must be read together; either taken alone will miss the point. Human power is always bounded and surrounded by divine praise. Doxology gives dominion its context and legitimacy. The two must be held together. Praise of God without human authority is abdication and “leaving it all to God,” which this psalm does not urge. But to use human power without the context of praise of God is to profane human regency over creation and so usurp more than has been granted. Human persons are to rule, but they are not to receive the ultimate loyalty of creation. Such loyalty must be directed only to God.

Walter Brueggemann. *Message of the Psalms* (Augsberg Old Testament Studies) (pp. 37-38). Kindle Edition

The Hymnal 1982 - #362 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

All thy works shall praise thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity.

For more on this hymn go to <https://bit.ly/Learn156>.

Spiritual Day Hike

In the landscape where Spirit & World intersect



Week of June 12, 2022

This Week's Holy Women and Men (Witnesses to inspire us)

Commemorations in the Episcopal Church are listed in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), in Lesser Feasts and Fasts (LFF), and in a Great Cloud of Witnesses (GCoW).

Here are the Holy Women and Men remembered this week:

- Jun 12 [Enmegahbowh](#), Priest and Missionary, 1902 *LFF*
Jun 13.....[Gilbert Keith Chesterton](#), Apologist and Writer, 1936 *GCoW*
Jun 14.....[Basil the Great](#), Bishop of Caesarea, 379 *LFF*
Jun 15.....[Evelyn Underhill](#), 1941 *LFF*
Jun 16.....[George Berkeley](#), 1753, and [Joseph Butler](#), 1752,
Bishops and Theologians *GCoW*
Jun 17.....[Marina the Monk](#), Monastic, 5th century *LFF*
Jun 18.....[Bernard Mizeki](#), Catechist and Martyr in Mashonaland, 1896 *LFF*

June 13: Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Apologist and Writer, 1936

Born on May 29, 1874, Gilbert Keith Chesterton was one of the intellectual giants of his day, and was known for his writing that spanned fields as diverse as literary criticism, fiction and fantasy, satire, and Christian apologetics. Chesterton often blended elements of such genres together, as indicated in his famous novel *The Man Who Was Thursday*, which combines a mystery plot with Christian imagery and symbolism. His work in the field of literary criticism was immensely influential in his day, and his book-length study of Charles Dickens can be credited with bringing that author's work back to the forefront of scholarly study.

As a young man, Chesterton had been fascinated with spiritualism and the occult, but his faith grew stronger over the years, as he devoted himself to the defense of what he called "orthodoxy," which was for him, among other things, an acknowledgement of the mystery and paradox of Christian faith in an age of increasing skepticism. His spiritual journey toward the ancient faith of the Church culminated in his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in 1922.

In works such as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*, Chesterton defended Christian faith with a unique blend of wit and religious fervor, while simultaneously satirizing the prevailing viewpoints of the day that often sought to dismiss faith as irrational and unnecessary. The latter work was particularly important to C.S. Lewis, who called it "the best apologetic work

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I know.” Today, Chesterton is still known and loved for his sharp wit, his intellectual tenacity, and his refusal to resolve the ambiguities of Christian faith in favor of facile and passing conceptions of truth. His work has influenced intellectual figures as diverse as Ernest Hemingway and Dorothy L. Sayers, and he is a figure beloved of Protestants and Catholics alike.

Chesterton died at Beaconsfield in England on June 14, 1936.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018

Happiness is gratitude doubled by wonder.

G.K. Chesterton

June 15: Evelyn Underhill, 1941

The only child of a prominent barrister and his wife, Evelyn Underhill was born in Wolverhampton, England, on December 6, 1875, and grew up in London. She was educated there and in a girls' school in Folkestone, where she was confirmed in the Church of England. She had little other formal religious training, but her spiritual curiosity was naturally lively, and she read widely, developing quite early a deep appreciation for mysticism. At sixteen, she began a life-long devotion to writing.

Evelyn had few childhood companions, but one of them, Hubert Stuart Moore, she eventually married. Other friends, made later, included such famous persons as Laurence Housman, Maurice Hewlett, and Sarah Bernhardt. Closest of all were Ethel Ross Barker, a devout Roman Catholic, and Baron Friedrich von Hügel, with whom she formed a strong spiritual bond. He became her director in matters mystical.

In the 1890's, Evelyn began annual visits to the continent of Europe, and especially to Italy. There she became influenced by the paintings of the Italian masters and by the Roman Catholic Church. She spent nearly fifteen years wrestling painfully with the idea of converting to Roman Catholicism, but decided in the end that it was not for her.

In 1921, Evelyn Underhill became reconciled to her Anglican roots, while remaining what she called a “Catholic Christian.” She continued with her life of reading, writing, meditation, and prayer. She had already published her first great spiritual work, *Mysticism*. This was followed by many other books, culminating in her most widely read and studied book, *Worship* (1937).

Evelyn Underhill's most valuable contribution to spiritual literature must surely be her conviction that the mystical life is not only open to a saintly few, but to anyone who cares to nurture it and weave it into everyday experience, and also (at the time, a startling idea) that modern

psychological theories and discoveries, far from hindering or negating spirituality, can actually enhance and transform it.

Evelyn Underhill's writings proved appealing to many, resulting in a large international circle of friends and disciples, making her much in demand as a lecturer and retreat director. She died, at age 65, in London on June 15, 1941.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018

Divine Union, Love, and Prayer

There is the true, solid and for us most fruitful doctrine of divine union, unconnected with any rapture, trance, ecstasy or abnormal state of mind: a union organic, conscious, and dynamic with the Creative Spirit of Life.

If we now go on to ask how, specially, we shall achieve this union in such degree as is possible to each one of us; the answer must be, that it will be done by Prayer. If the seeking of the Eternal is actuated by love, the finding of it is achieved through prayer. Prayer, in fact—understood as a life or state, not an act or an asking—is the beginning, middle and end of all that we are now considering. As the social self can only be developed by contact with society, so the spiritual self can only be developed by contact with the spiritual world. And such humble yet ardent contact with the spiritual world—opening up to its suggestions our impulses, our reveries, our feelings, our most secret dispositions as well as our mere thoughts—is the essence of prayer, understood in its widest sense. No more than surrender or love can prayer be reduced to “one act.” Those who seek to sublimate it into “pure” contemplation are as limited at one end of the scale, as those who reduce it to articulate petition are at the other. It contains in itself a rich variety of human reactions and experiences. It opens the door upon an unwallled world, in which the self truly lives and therefore makes widely various responses to its infinitely varying stimuli. Into that world the self takes, or should take, its special needs, aptitudes and longings, and matches them against its apprehension of Eternal Truth. In this meeting of the human heart with all that it can apprehend of Reality, not adoration alone but unbounded contrition, not humble dependence alone but joy, peace and power, not rapture alone but mysterious darkness, must be woven into the fabric of love. In this world the soul may sometimes wander as if in pastures, sometimes is poised breathless and intent. Sometimes it is fed by beauty, sometimes by most difficult truth, and experiences the extremes of riches and destitution, darkness and light. “It is not,” says Plotinus, “by crushing the Divine into a unity but by displaying its exuberance, as the Supreme Himself has displayed it, that we show knowledge of the might of God.”

Underhill, Evelyn. *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today*, 1922. Kindle Edition



June 17: Marina the Monk, Monastic, 5th century

Marina was born in present day Lebanon, in the fifth century. She was the only child of her parents, and her mother died when she was still a young girl. Her father refused to remarry, and instead raised her himself until she was a teenager. At that point, he hoped to find her a husband and then retire to live the life of a monk.

Marina, however, rejected this plan, saying: “Why would you save your own soul at the cost of destroying mine?” Instead, she shaved off her hair and exchanged her clothing for men’s clothes. When her father saw her determination, he relented. Selling all of their possessions, they went together to the monastic settlement in the Qadisha Valley, where he introduced her as his son “Marinos”.

After ten years of living the monastic life together, the father died. Marinos continued to live at the monastery without revealing his identity to anyone. In time, however, a local girl who had become pregnant accused Marinos of fathering her child. Rather than respond to this accusation with the obvious denial, Marinos accepted responsibility rather than reveal his secret or subject the girl to further reproach. When the child was born, the infant was given to Marinos to raise at the monastery, and he accepted the boy as though he were truly his own son, and bore patiently all of the scorn and abuse that the other monks heaped upon him for his alleged violation of his monastic vows.

After many years Marinos also died, and it was only when the monks went to prepare the body for burial that they discovered it was actually the body of a woman, who had obviously been innocent of the charges of having fathered a child. The monks and villagers lamented their false accusation and judgment, and after their repentance many miracles were performed at Marina’s tomb.

While some aspects of this story may be legendary, there are numerous accounts in early Christianity of women disguising themselves as men and entering male monasteries, and this is one of the examples that is considered to be the most historically reliable.

Marina/Marinos is particularly venerated today in Lebanon, Cyprus, and Italy, usually under the name of “Marina the Monk”.

Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018

