



SERMONS AT SAINT MARK'S

THE RT. REV. CABELL TENNIS
THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, MAY 26, 2019
ACTS 16:9-15; PSALM 67; REVELATION 21:10, 22-22:5; JOHN 14:23-29

THE HERITAGE WAY

John 14:23-29 [Jesus said to Judas (not Iscariot), "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe."

I speak to you today in the name of God who in Christ has reconciled the world to himself and has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.

The text for this Heritage Sunday is from the 67th Psalm which we have shared together this morning.

"Let your ways be known upon earth, you're saving health among all nations."

With the assignment of preaching on this Heritage Sunday I am going to follow the text. From time to time I will add

incidents and actions from the life of St. Mark's Cathedral and beyond. Let's begin:

"Let your **ways** be known" ways are plural. There are many ways to the Holy. The Heritage way is not just the singular way we have experienced. It's not just St. Marks, nor the Episcopal Church, nor just Christianity, but many ways to respond to and become a part of the journey of God's ways. Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Native

American, Druse, Mystical, Fundamental and more and more... How could we love a God who would exclude from life, beauty, abundance, goodness, grace, forgiveness and mercy anyone of the whole human family. God is inclusive. God's way is inclusive. Let your **ways** be known on earth.

God's inclusive way is a journey. They are a path, a trail, a road, a map to a destination.

I remember reading a book by Alan Jones who was then a professor at the General Seminary in New York. The book was called *A Journey into Christ*. It struck me deeply as I knew that I was involved in the ministry to many persons in their journey here at St. Mark's. Their journey in faith, their journey in life, their journey toward meaning and abundance. As a result, the leadership at St. Mark's began to focus on supporting persons in their journey. That led to a series of lectures beginning with Alan Jones but going on to include people like Belden Lane, John Booty and many others who addressed the journey of the spiritual life. Sermons and classes began to take that shape. We began to notice that persons who came here were often seeking

a fresh start from a more strict and fundamental Christianity or were in a life change or disruption that sent them on the path to a deeper sense of meaning. The way is a journey a spiritual journey.

“Let your ways be **known**”. The way is about knowledge and knowledge is a gift. We come to know God because we have been known. Knowledge is a gift in relationship to God and one another. Knowledge is the offspring of community. Knowledge is intimate and connecting.

We are soon to come upon Trinity Sunday. Trinity is the theological understanding of God as the ground of all being: God is, Creation is, I am, and we are. Trinity resolves this tension between the one and the many. God is eternal and complete relationship. Just as we are in God's image. We exist in relationship. Me, you and us. Wife, husband and marriage. We are Trinity. Here is triune knowledge.

Let there be knowledge. Worship is knowledge. Gathering here in Community, listening to and responding to the Word is the knowledge of the way of God being known among us. Our Heritage is deeply connected to do this. Even if you only listen to Compline on

FM; Let your ways be **known**. Share this knowledge. It is a calling in the way.

“Let your ways be known upon **earth**”. We are earthly creatures. We live on this Earth, our island home. The journey that we are on is deeply materialistic. We care about our planet, its trees, its creatures, its chemistry, its energy, its waters and all that give us and those who share life with us the grace of abundance. We care and are connected to our solar system, the galaxy and the cosmos that is, as God is. Carla Pryne, who was Carla Berkadal when she worked here, started the work *Earth Ministry* to take action to care of the environment which sustains us. Earth Ministry is a great part of our Heritage. St. Mark’s has been a leader in the religious understanding of the heritage of ecology as a part of our journey in faith.

“Your saving health among the **nations**”.

Yes, it is about the nations, those political collectives that exercise power and rule among us. Health among the nations requires justice in and among the people, the creatures and the environment. Our Heritage is to seek justice and peace among all with our actions. John Leffler, the Dean that I followed, became

concerned about our war in Vietnam and his reflections in preaching somewhat trimmed the size of this congregation. I kept that tradition going, especially on the Christmas Eve on KING TV when we were bombing Cambodia with a flock of students lying on the cathedral lawn as dead coolies.

The incident that I most remember was on a Sunday when I had invited William Stringfellow, a lawyer who had served, published and spoken for the people on the margins in New York and elsewhere came to preach.

Betty Perry, a great and noble woman, was sitting on the third row with her silver tipped cane by her side.

Stringfellow analyzed the war and concluded that it was a violation from God’s ways. His last line was as this: “and Richard Nixon be rebuked!”

Instantly Betty Parry rose from her pew and dashed down the aisle, leaving the silver tipped cane behind.

In the sacristy afterwards I said to Bill, “you don’t know it, but you healed a woman this morning!”

So it is that our Heritage is one path among the many. It is a journey that you are invited to join, here at St. Mark's and elsewhere. It will be filled with the knowledge of God in worship and action. It will affirm your living connection with

the earth and all of its dominions. It will call you to the reconciling work of justice and peace.

“Let your ways be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.”

I speak to you in the name of God, who in Christ Jesus has reconciled the world to himself and entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation.



Saint Mark's Cathedral lives in a grounded faith and spirituality; we seek to liberate people for ministry. We are grounded in ancient Christian scripture and tradition while at the same time remaining open to the insight and truth of contemporary life. You'll find Saint Mark's Cathedral actively involved in service and outreach to our community. Together we pray, worship, study the scriptures, and explore the richness of twenty-one centuries of Christian experience. Wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here!