

SERMON July 8TH 2012 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church , Makati

Gospel: Mark 6:1-6

The Higgs Boson, the so-called 'God Particle' and Reactions

I Heard the Owl Call my Name is a heart-catching story about Mark Brian, a priest with a terminal illness sent by his bishop to a wilderness area where the north American Indians taught him many things, including listening for the call of the owl when his time came. The call of God came to Jesus of Nazareth. When did it come?

The One solitary life, the universal human, could not live alone.

He saw Joseph come in at the end of the day, his face lined with tiredness.

His mother called him to the table and watched his manners. Love circled around the table, including everyone.

The Spirit of the Burning Bush called his name.

He walked out of the door at Nazareth and walked away, heeding the beckoning voice of the Spirit who called him. It kept calling his name and led him to the Jordan.

He entered the Jordan and emerged with the water dripping from his shoulders. John the Baptist baptized him, but Spirit Dove and the voice of God confirmed it.

He walked away, looking back at John standing in the water with his camel's hair vesture weighted down with water.

He walked away into the wilderness. He stared at the face of evil in the rasping dryness of the land. The Spirits of evil whirled around him, tormenting him. He had to fight our greatest battle before he could fulfil his testing. That is, the battle between good and evil, good and bad.

The Spirit of God drove him forward while the discords of evil surrounded him and crashed into his ears.

He fought our most significant battles long before he came to the Cross. His temptations are our temptations and his overcoming creates our possibilities.

At Jesus' baptism and in the wilderness he was drawn into the heart of God by the Spirit. He entered the depths of water at his baptism and the depths of evil in his Temptation. He emerged transparently sane and whole, utterly convinced of God's presence in the world. He would henceforth speak of the Reign of God, the making-present of the Divine Mystery.

He called his disciples and they walked with him. The Messiah called their name. He did not baptize them, he taught them and loved them by example.

Like all of us, he had to return to his roots. He went to Nazareth and his childhood home. He no doubt walked back into the house of Mary and Joseph and reflected on his formative years. We all do that sooner or later. For some it is a joy and a heart twinge that we cannot live it again. For others it is a reminder of constraints and threats and demanded duties rather than love, best left behind.

Some at Nazareth doubted his powers or rather the source of his powers. Significantly, he names his kin and his relatives and his actual home as sources of dishonour. Apparently those close to him could not see the total picture and glean from his words and deeds that within him circled the dove of the Spirit and the word of God.

We know that his mother was always looking for him with her heart and her eyes. That is how a mother looks for her child. Her presence at the Cross reminded him of his huge love for her. He did not want to let her go, settling for placing her in the care of the Beloved disciple in the absence of Joseph.

He died trusting in God, and he rose trusting in God. Evil abounded at the Cross. He was tormented but not mentally destroyed as it whirled around him. He encouraged his disciples in his resurrection appearances to bring peace and forgiveness to the world.

Twelve apostles and countless disciples shaped the mission that he had taught them and commissioned them to do.

We need to find out what “home” really means to us.

Our vision of God sustains us. Everyone at Nazareth believed in God. As far as we know, there were no atheists in Nazareth.

Militant atheism is one of the significant new ‘religions’ in the 21st century, like godless Communism in the 20th century.

The so-called ‘God Particle’, the Higgs Boson, may indicate how density is achieved in binding the incredibly miniscule particles of the swirling mix of Creation. All shall have prizes as Canon Streeter once said of the various forms of ministry that can be drawn from the New Testament. Atheistic scientists and many others can rejoice at this discovery. Believing scientists such as Francis Collins, Alister McGrath and John Polkinghorne, the latter two Anglican priests, can rejoice with the Rabbis and other believers at such discoveries which enhance our view of the beauty of creation and its immense star-spangled vastness.

We should embrace such discoveries and celebrate the intense hard work of those whose acute intelligence has revealed them to our vision and reason.

We believe that the Spirit of Creation is the explorer par excellence leading us into all truth about ourselves and the creation that is all around us, above us, and beneath us. When all is said and done, the deepest problems remain.

What do we do with “indwelling sin”? ‘Sin’ is different to breaking a rule of conduct in society. It is an offense to God. Only a believer understands “wrong” to be ‘sin’.

Does it take away our assurance that the Creator is behind it all, and in all, and through all? How do we face our own death without the abiding assurance of faith in Christ?

Can we make or remove God with the undoubted splendour of our minds?

Does this take away one iota of our commitment to Christ and his welcome of us in the Eucharist today?

Does it say that the Scriptures are only human productions which should be set aside? The Scriptures also give us the voice of God because God speaks through them. They would have been tattered leaves decaying in the dust long ago if this were not so.

The non-Spiritual in the believing sense do not understand us. We understand them, except when they cloud it with technicalities, because they speak of the bread and butter fabric of our lives and how it works.

Let us not fall here into the old and fruitless arguments about evolution and Genesis. We may then pass one another even in the light of day and miss what each one is saying: **once more**. We cannot enter the more detailed intricacies of science: and they have no word for us about faith. Like Jesus at Nazareth we need to go home to our roots.

Let us celebrate creation! Let us celebrate the unravelling of its secrets!

Let us celebrate the One who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. The One who has no Alpha and Omega, no beginning and no end!

Let us admit our need of redemption and the grace of God. Otherwise we will be mired in our sins and unable to rise above them, even with a large library of self-help books! What are we saved for! We are saved to walk with God and serve God in this life and always. What are we saved from? We are saved from ourselves and the consequences of our “indwelling sin” as Paul calls it. We are a forgiven and redeemed people and we make no apology for trying to live it out in all our days on earth. *Spe salvi facti sumus*, “In hope we are saved” (Romans 8:24). We are a Resurrection people in a Good Friday world. Death is still fearful for us, but it is not empty, not oblivion, offering hope enmeshed in the glory of God. Alleluia!

Let us go home every day to the home of our heart and mind in the circle of love shaped by our faith and our reason. Lift up Your Hearts. We lift them up to the Lord.

Amen.