

May ground below, air above, sea around, be hallowed,  
filled with the 3-in-one – God of life, Christ of love, Spirit of peace.  
May all cry Glory before the 3-in-one – God of life, Christ of love, Spirit of peace.  
Amen.

There is a term in chemistry called supersaturation,  
which acknowledges that every liquid has a finite ability to dissolve a solid  
and once that point is reached, the remaining solids remains a solid.  
That is one description of how I and perhaps you feel after these past 10 days.  
Many, many people have spoken out,  
notably the Episcopal Bishop of Washington DC,  
with comments more eloquent and insightful than anything I can add  
except to say that justice must prevail.  
So we aren't going there this morning.

Secondly, today is officially Trinity Sunday.  
The Trinity is a notoriously impenetrable and difficult subject  
and I realized that I normally resort to quoting other people about what it means,  
always of course, acknowledging that it remains a mystery.  
So instead of pelting you with further deliberations  
on our national situation or theological quotes  
I thought that we might turn our attention to the first reading today –  
the ENTIRE first chapter of Genesis plus a few verses from the second.  
But it's so L-O-N-G you may be thinking.  
I agree and my first thought was, what can be cut out?  
But in this case should one delete the birds of the air and the fish of the sea  
in favor of the cattle and other creeping things?  
Or maybe we could just skip over the 2 great lights, the moon and the sun,  
and get to the living things?  
But we can't do that.  
Every day of creation is important.  
Each day or age builds upon the next,  
as the writer lays out in this brilliant anticipation of evolution.  
And instead of resenting having such a long reading,  
I realized how lucky we are to get to listen  
to this story of the miracle and beauty of creation.  
We can never hear it enough.  
And in reading through it again,  
I found myself starting to relax all those muscles  
that have been so tensed over these past few months

and my breath begin to slow down  
and I began to rest in the miraculous unfolding of life, all overseen by God.  
Almost like floating in space and looking down on the earth  
as life began and developed.

I've been trying to figure out why it helped so much to read this now,  
with the backdrop of pestilence and riots.  
And I think maybe it's the idea that in the beginning there was *tohu wabohu*,  
those wonderfully musical Hebrew words, which mean chaos or formless void.  
Nothingness. And out of that chaos, God brought order –  
days and nights, light and darkness, and finally, all living things.  
So that even when chaos seems to have the upper hand,  
there is a much bigger, badder Dude out there who is in charge.  
That of course, doesn't mean life is free from pain and suffering.  
We all know that.  
But it does mean that it unfolds with the purpose and love that God intended.  
So we begin this morning with this foundation,  
a story that sits upon the rock of God, who is the rock of our lives.

And that realization triggered a memory of another time,  
when change and uncertainty seemed to have the upper hand, at least in my life.  
Many years ago, we set off across the high plains of Colorado  
for the town of Kearney Nebraska.  
It was a cold, windy weekend in late March and the land was brown and dry.  
We traveled past old wagon ruts left by the pioneers  
and arrived in Kearney just as the sun was setting.  
As we crossed the Platte River, more a series of braided streams than a real river,  
we saw stretched out before us the reason we had come,  
tens of thousands of birds, sandhill cranes,  
that had settled down on the river to spend the night.  
Every March for at least hundreds, if not thousands of years,  
sandhill cranes make their journey from Mexico to Canada in the spring,  
stopping along the rivers and streams to rest  
and to find food to continue their journey.  
Kearney is an especially welcome spot because of all the grain left over  
in the fields from the previous harvest season.  
The river is wide and flat, able to accommodate the thousands of cranes  
that travel together.  
Sandhill cranes are unusually beautiful birds –  
tall and elegant, with grey wings that can spread up to 6 feet across

and a bright red spot on their foreheads.  
But what is even more appealing is their song.  
There is no melody, no catchy phrase like Bob White or chick-a-dee-dee-dee.  
The cranes send forth a low vibration  
and when thousands of them make that sound together,  
the strength of it makes the river and fields and trees vibrate along with it.  
It is as if you are inside the mightiest organ in the world  
or as if you were there at the dawn of creation,  
when all kinds of sounds, melodies and vibrations were being sent forth –  
the song of labor pains, the song of the universe.  
Sitting there, looking out over that vast carpet of birds,  
the sound seemed to take us out of that time and place,  
to a time when the prairie was a sea of so many kinds of life –  
herds of buffalo, seas of grains and grasses, waist high.  
Those immense flocks of birds must be one of the last vestiges  
of the great Midwest prairie.  
As I alluded to, I was in the midst of breaking up with a longtime boyfriend  
and about to leave my career as a civil engineer and go off to seminary in the fall.  
But all of that was overshadowed, at least temporarily,  
by the loveliness of the birds.  
They were doing what they had been created to do so naturally  
and that they were a healing presence amidst the regrets and the change.

In Psalm 104, part of which we read last week,  
it says that God renews the face of the earth.  
And throughout the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures,  
the Bible speaks not just of the face of the earth  
but also the faces of the wilderness, of the field, of Israel,  
the face of the sky and of the deep.  
The many faces of the earth.  
Not just the faces of human beings but the faces of animals and insects.  
All those faces – not literal eyes, noses and mouths,  
but faces some of which breathe in and out,  
some stare and chew,  
the face of the deep that sways to the rhythm of the moon's pull,  
the face of the fields with mice scampering over them.  
The face of the earth is made up of all the faces that live upon it –  
some beautiful and, let's face it, some faces only a mother could love.  
But all of them from the pesky Miller moths to the sweetest furry dog  
bear the imprint of God.

And behind it all is that face of God – Implacable? Terrifying? Tender?  
in whose image we are made.  
And as Christians and, honestly, as human beings,  
we are called to honor every living thing.  
It's hard work treating all life as sacred, but it is.  
It's frustrating and sometimes threatening to look at the diversity and abundance  
of life that is right outside our front doors.  
But that's our challenge and we can live it out in so many ways –  
from saving the errant spider in our bathtubs  
to demonstrating for justice for all people.  
It's really all part of the same call to love as God loves us.

Before I end with a quote from Job,  
I also want to add that I am so sad we are not meeting right now  
as the gardens around the church have never looked lovelier.  
All kinds of flowers and many happy bees and butterflies zooming all around.  
So if you have a chance, stop by the church and enjoy its beauty.

“But ask the animals and they will teach you; the birds of the air and they will tell  
you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will  
declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has  
done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every living  
thing.” (Job 12:7-10)

May the Father of many resting places, grant you rest.  
May Christ who stilled the storm, grant you calm.  
May the Spirit who fills all things, grant you peace. Amen.