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Immanuel Lutheran Church, New York, NY
6/3/2007, Holy Trinity Sunday
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31, John 16:12-15

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My text this morning is from our First Lesson, from the Eighth Chapter of Proverbs. It is the verse that speaks of the master craftsman. Wisdom is speaking:

²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there... I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

In the Venetian lagoon, there is a workingperson's island called Murano Island. It is famous for its beautiful glassmaking, stretching back in time to the 1290s. Two weeks ago, when Carol and I visited Venice, we took a boat ride to this island, and we witnessed some acts of creation right before our eyes. We went on a tour of a glassmaking factory and there stood Oscar Schaedle, fashioning creatures in glass. No, it wasn't really Oscar Schaedle, but it sure looked like him with his white hair, his heft, and most of all, his skill.

There is a kind of sadness about the Murano glass-making industry, because it is a dying art. The particular craftsman we watched work was sixty-eight years old and had been working at his craft for fifty years. But his training included a ten-year apprenticeship, and in this modern world, there are not many young people willing to take on that training. And there is just no way around it: glassmaking is hot work in the Italian summertime, requiring concentration all the day long.

But this craftsman was still happily at work, turning out vases and creatures before our eyes. I was especially amazed by a glass horse the man made. It felt as if we were on holy ground, as if we were transported back to the first chapters of Genesis. He gathered his sand and glass mixture on the end of his rod, twirled the rod in his fire till the glass mixture was molten, and with a few strokes, like

caresses with some kind of a tool, he began to shape the mass into a shape. A horse rearing up on its hind legs, with flowing mane, quickly came into existence before our eyes. Then, clip, clip, he separated the horse from molten mass and set it up on a tray and there it stood, perfectly balanced.

The mind of the maker was very evident in this creation. This horse that stood there before us was no random accumulation of atoms, but was the deliberate work of a maker who desired that this world should have some more good in it, some more beauty in it.

In the wee hours of the night, if you should ever be wondering about your existence, for the flow of life and the indifference of others can tempt you to feel of no account, then take comfort in the thought that you are more than some random collection of atoms. Oh yes: your existence reflects the definite desire and work of the Triune God that this world should include some goodness and some beauty in it, and that you are!

So, that is my first point in this sermon: You are not mere cosmic dust, but rather a creature of God and therefore full of dignity! You have the right to join Martin Luther in first-person confession of the doctrine of Creation. You have the right to make the doctrine of creation your own, as did Luther long ago:

The First Article: Creation
“I believe in God, the Father
almighty, maker of heaven and
earth.”

² What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that God has
created me [repeat it to yourself,
brother, claim it as your own, sister:
created *me!*] and all that exists; that
he has given me and still sustains my
body and soul, all my limbs and
senses, my reason and all the
faculties of my mind, together with
food and clothing, house and home,
family and property; that he provides
me daily and abundantly with all the
necessities of life, protects me from
all danger, and preserves me from
all evil. All this he does out of his
pure, fatherly, and divine goodness
and mercy, without any merit or
worthiness on my part. For all of
this I am bound to thank, praise,
serve, and obey him. This is most
certainly true.

Now, to this first point about the dignity
you bear as the very creation of God, let me
add this second point: Our Maker delights in
you, and yet, it is *not only in you* in whom the
Triune God takes delight, but also his whole
creation. Yonder oak tree standing strong in the
sunshine deep in the forest where no one sees it:
The Lord sees it and delights in it. And its little
acorn falling to the ground in perfect obedience
to the regularities by which the Lord rules his
creation: The Lord loves that acorn. And so it is
with the uncountable details of God’s creation.
He cherishes each aspect of it.

All the world belongs to the Lord and is
precious in his sight:

²⁵Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with things
innumerable, living things both small
and great. ²⁶There go the ships, and
Leviathan which thou didst form to

sport in it.(RSV Psalm 104)

Aye! The world belongs to the Lord and
each thing in it is precious to him, and to
anyone who abuses this earth, the LORD does
answer from the whirlwind:

RSV Job 38:

⁴“Where were you when I laid the
foundation of the earth? Tell me, if
you have understanding. ⁵Who
determined its measurements --
surely you know! Or who stretched
the line upon it? ⁶On what were its
bases sunk, or who laid its
cornerstone, ⁷when the morning stars
sang together, and all the sons of
God shouted for joy?

RSV Job 38:19

“Where is the way to the dwelling of
light, and where is the place of
darkness...

Job 38:35, RSV

Can you send forth lightnings, that
they may go and say to you, ‘Here
we are’?

Job 39:1, NJB

Do you know when mountain goats
give birth? Have you ever watched
deer in labour?

Job 39:26-28, KJV

²⁶Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,
and stretch her wings toward the
south? ²⁷Doth the eagle mount up at
thy command, and make her nest on
high? ²⁸She dwelleth and abideth on
the rock, upon the crag of the rock,
and the strong place.

Love for the earth should be a natural for
a Christian – love for the earth all the way
down to the sidewalk, on which you will not
litter, and the peace of the air, which you will

not disturb with shouts or frowns or horn-blowing.

So, that is my second point: Not only are you a creature of God and no mere cosmic dust, but so is all creation. And my final point returns to you: You are meant for fellowship with the Holy Trinity.

After all, you are a much more wonderful creation than the glass horse the Venetian craftsman made, for as lovely as that horse was, it was a poor, inanimate thing – something that neither breathes nor moves nor loves. Also it is something that the maker can release, sell, and leave behind. But not you! You are more than a statue: you are a living spirit, with all your unpredictability and surprises, and you are precious to your Maker. He will never let you go.

I cannot express this point better than does our Psalm for today:

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
mind- | ful 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 glo- | ry
and honor;

Indeed, you are the kind of creature who is meant and built for fellowship with your Maker. And so it was that in the cool of the day in the Garden of Eden, the LORD himself came down and walked in the Garden and called out to Adam, “Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:8-9) You are a creature of God, yes, like sun and moon and stars, and yet you are distinguished from them in that your Maker desires your company, your companionship, and, note this, your help.

Though you cannot clearly see them, still as you walk your path in life, you are walking

with a sacred society surrounding you, such that you walk through life, as it were, with the Holy Trinity at your side, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Four abreast, you walk through this world. The really interesting question is whether you are walking in their spirit and whether you are giving them your help. Are going to walk as true members of the divine family or are we going to disappoint them for now, or even break their hearts?

For you see, you and our world are caught mid-stride in the Triune God’s creation, like the glassblower not yet done with his work. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have their own intentions, their own ways, and their own suffering they are willing to accept for the sake of bringing you and our world to perfection. They are continually hard at work, saving you and yearning for your sanctification, along with salvation and sanctification of this whole blooming, buzzing world. Will you be their colleague? Will you be their co-worker in bringing in the Kingdom?

If so, have no truck with sin and vice, for they are not going to stand in that Kingdom. The mind of our Maker, his every instinct, and his every determination is only in the direction of love and purity. The story of our world is not done, nor can the work of the Triune persons be defeated. God’s creation is not meant to collapse like some molten mass on the end of a glassblower’s rod, but is meant to stand upright, perfectly balanced, perfectly blessed, perfectly fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And we are invited to join the Triune God in the sanctification of this world.

This morning’s text says that Wisdom “rejoices” in God’s creation:

²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there... I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,
³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

But the truth is even more wonderful than this. Not only does Wisdom “rejoice” in the Father’s inhabited world and “delight” in the human race. More indeed! He enters that world as a human himself and suffers death that the divine intention should not fail. I am speaking of Jesus, to whom you belong by Baptism. I am speaking of Jesus, the Master Craftsman, through whom all things were made and without

whom nothing was made that is made (John 1). I am speaking of Jesus who is risen from the dead and comes to us now in this Blessed Sacrament. Life teems with meaning because Jesus is alive and glad to have your company and your help.

To the Triune God belongs the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.