

Evensong St. Michael and All Angels

In the beginning was singing....I hate to burst your cosmological bubble...but the writers and editors of the first chapter of Genesis got it wrong....God didn't speak the creation into being; God sang the creation into being...I have several reasons for thinking this way....first, plain spoken words just don't have the power of words set to music...when one sings, one uses most muscles in the body....singing takes speech to powerful new heights; St. Augustine said singing was praying twice; singing awakens the imagination, the human imagination that which Samuel Taylor Coleridge equated with the Holy Spirit itself....Long before physicists in the late twentieth century discovered that the most rudimentary element of the universe is tonality, primordial music in other words....the poet Dante already imagined, already knew through the power of the imagination that it is music that moves the spheres of heaven....it is music the creative energy of the created order...not a regimented equation, a scientific palindrome... but a beautiful, flowing and all-enfolding order.

Last week in our churches we heard from Paul's letter to the Philippians in which he stated that we are to live lives not for our own interests, but for the interests of others....that sort of sums up the whole of scripture, does it not?....and he goes on to say that the model of such a life is Jesus the Christ, who for Paul is the symbol of the church...a collective and communal life of ekenosis in the Greek, which means to empty... a life of emptying ourselves for the good of the whole...lives of loving sacrifice in short....singing is a cardinal symbol of emptying ourselves...we empty our body not only of breath, but of our hearts and minds and souls...we empty ourselves for the greater glory of God...and...and for the greater glory of what it means to be human, made in God's very image....In the Holy Eucharist we say that we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God....we're talking about the sacrifice of our hearts, souls and bodies, and the most profound, the most resonant way to do that is to sing...what we humans have been doing for thousands of years.

So we gather tonight because sing we must... for the sake of the created order we must sing. I'm dead serious....both lections for tonight are of the apocalyptic genre, that is, literature that speaks of the end times, the final judgment, the day of God's wrath...The Book of Daniel is one early such work written in the second century B.C.E.; Revelation is another example...here Mark is poaching a bit from Daniel, writing some two

hundred and fifty years later as to the end of time and space...stars falling from the heavens...the moon and the sun gone dark.

But, brothers and sisters of faith, not as long as we sing, because beauty will, as it ever has...beauty will hold all things together.... And the end, the end will be just as it was in the beginning...a beautiful, beautiful song.