

## Into the Unknown

May 12, 2024

Gracious and ever-loving God. We thank you for all our mothers. For our biological mothers, our adoptive mothers, our spiritual mothers, mothers who remain with us in spirit, our chosen mothers, and the mothers who have chosen us.

For Mother Earth and for all those for whom this day brings with it complex feelings. Hold us as only you can. Open our hearts to your wisdom for us. **Amen.**

Yesterday was Trans Pride in Meadow park. It was a beautiful day outside, and there was a good crowd. There was also a separate Mother's Day event booked at the park yesterday too, so seeing that two separate events could co-exist in the same space was quite beautiful to me.

As we hosted our booth, folks would stop by and ask questions or, every now and then, thank us for being there. Some folks stopped by to ask us for more information or chat with folks they knew at the booth.

Often they stopped by for a sticker, candy, or the ever-popular dog treat.

The excitement and buzz of this event, however, had nothing to do with us or any of the vendors, really, but about providing a space for folks to be unapologetically themselves. To provide a place and time where people can safely be who they are, as they are.

Free of the judgments of a world that seems to extend and then withdraw its acceptance regularly. It felt so much like what we aspire to be and should continue to work toward here in our church community.

This Sunday is known as the Sunday after the Ascension of Christ. The Ascension on the church calendar is the Thursday that is the fortieth day of the Easter season. We celebrate it as a feast day in the church as it marks the conclusion of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and his "ascension to heaven," as we affirm in our creed each Sunday.

It marks a time when the disciples move into another liminal season. As the way they knew things, begins to shift to new ways of being, the disciples will now have to put Jesus' teachings into action on their own.

In our text for today, we hear Jesus offer an intercessory prayer for his disciple's upcoming journey and work in the world.

In his prayer, they are reminded they have what they need to move forward as a community. They have the word of God as Jesus shared it with them, Christ's joy made complete within themselves.

They are also reminded that even though they may be hated, it doesn't matter because those who hate them are part of a world they were never meant to belong to.

As members of the newly forming Christian community, they are being asked to do a new thing to be in the world yet act in ways that will

seem beyond it. To live as Christ lived, love one another, and love their neighbors as they love themselves.

The disciples are beginning a time of transition, a new liminal space where they will truly have to navigate life, living out the teachings of Christ as they have understood them as they begin to wait for Jesus to come again.

They won't be able to see Jesus anymore and as a community, they will have to figure out how to live out his teachings together.

We all find ourselves in liminal times where it may be harder to feel God's love for us, and yet, as we are reassured in our text today, Jesus reminds us that we are already God's own.

So, even in our liminal times, we are called into the world to do as Christ has taught us.

This prayer we hear from Jesus reminds us, as it did the disciples, of their responsibilities now that he was to return fully to the divine presence of God.

Our work now, as was the disciples, is to be in the world, yet not belong to it.

That the temptations and challenges that pull us away from God would not be stronger than our community and faith that re-orient us to the love of God.

This text calls us to ask ourselves important questions. How can we, as the continuation of the word and truth Jesus prays about in our

text , be more faithful to Jesus' radical demands? To truly be in the world, yet not of it. To live more freely in God's love and less captivated by those things that keep us from seeing God's love in ourselves and sharing it with others.

Doing the deep inner work to challenge that which might prevent us from fully welcoming all who walk through the church doors as they would want to be welcomed and accepted in our community.

I learn so much every time I go to a Pride event. The community is ever-changing. The younger generations always have new ways of showing up and being who they are as part of the community, which naturally changes and evolves the space over time.

The excitement of going back year after year to see what's new and how the spirit of creativity and change is moving within the community is inspirational.

We can learn a great deal from the Trans community. Their resilience, adaptability, mutual care, and respect are all admirable qualities for a community of care.

While no community is singular, I feel pretty safe making these generalizations based on my experience of the Trans community.

While we continue our own ongoing inner work, we must continue to turn our actions outward.

To be present at community Pride events, to continue our important work with feeding ministries and the Abundance Shop. To be

to each other, a supportive faith community. To continue to call out injustice when we see it. To continue to walk in the world as Jesus taught us and continue to share God's expansive love with all we meet.

As we continue to live out our faith in action by doing things like showing up in solidarity at local events and anywhere injustice has been done. We step out into the world, standing in our beliefs as people of faith.

We show up for ourselves and others in the world, yet not of it when we challenge the systems and structures perpetuating injustice in our world as it is today.

We connect with the humanity in others, honoring their dignity. Actions we are called to in our baptismal covenant.

Through Jesus' prayer for the disciples, we are reminded of the work we are called to today.

My prayer for us all is that we hear this call with new hearts and open minds. That Jesus, now divinely present with God, would continue to walk with us on our journey now and always.

**Amen**