

**Genesis 12:1-9; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26**  
**The Second Sunday after Pentecost A; 06.11.23; G. Miles Smith+**

Now we have come to that time...when we are just on the other side of the greatest time of our church life.

And I'm not actually talking about the Farm Tour and Country Fair! :) Although it is one of the greatest times of our church life—a many splendored effort of so many people to accomplish something greater than ourselves. And we did, again!

What I'm actually referring to is that we have just spent the last six months worshipping our way through the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith, the foundational mysteries of God revealed to the church and the world:

- Christmas and Epiphany / the mystery of the Incarnation of God in Christ
- Holy Week / the passion and death of Christ
- Easter and the Ascension / the mystery of the resurrection of Christ
- Pentecost / the mystery of the Holy Spirit
- Trinity Sunday / the mystery of the Holy Trinity

These are always some pretty intense months of heady, heartfelt, and often beautiful worship as we return to these central mysteries of the Christian faith.

I could imagine—although I doubt it will ever happen—I could imagine however that there could be a time and a place where the church might have a completely different practice than what we are accustomed to all these many centuries. That the church would gather together, even more intensely than we have, for some six months of worship, beginning in Advent, and going through Trinity Sunday, going deeply into the foundational mysteries of God revealed to us. And then after Trinity Sunday (last Sunday) the church could break up into small groups and task forces that would meet together and talk through what all these revelations of God mean for how we live our lives in our inner being, with our families and friends, our neighbors, our places of work, and our communities small and large. And we would spend at least the next six months—*doing* our faith. Maybe we would gather together once a month as a whole congregation still? I don't know. But you get the idea. Six months living deeply into the great mysteries of faith and six months living deeply into our lives and the world with that vision. Interesting?

In a way, the church year is already set up in this way. In the language of the church year, these are called the Sundays “after Pentecost” and this is the longest church season of them all, stretching from the Day of Pentecost until shortly after Thanksgiving Day. It is marked by the color green—we are going to see a lot of green for a long time. It is insightful, I think, to note that in the Roman Catholic tradition, they observe the same season but they call it “ordinary time”. Which in a sense is true. We are in the time after we have worshipped through the great mysteries of the Christian faith—until they return again next Christmas—and the gospel readings now for the months ahead will variously challenge us instead with *what are we going to do* about all these great revelations of God.

So, in the gospel story today, there are no revelations of the mystery of God, but there are instead, stories of Jesus and...*tax collectors...sinners...the sick...and the dead*. Except for the *raising* of the dead young woman, these are more familiar areas of human life.

There is no standing still after the revelation of the mysteries of God. We are supposed to...go...into all the ordinary of our lives in the world. It is supposed to be this way. It is a rhythm which has been given to us, going deeply into revelation of God, and deeply into a renewed way of being in the world.

Here we go!