

## *Seventh Sunday of the Easter Way*

May 8, 2016

### The Nature of Self-Surpassing

We refer to God in many different ways. The **God** “*in whom we live and move and have our being*” from the Apostle Paul. The *Light behind all lights*, from Celtic Christianity. The **Spirit** moving over the deep waters of chaos, from the book of Genesis. The *Higher Power*, from A. A. The **Mystery** in the midst of life, from the modern day Mystics. **God** however we understand the idea; acts through the *pressure to self-organize and the possibility of self-surpassing*. The **Mystery** continually calls the universe to unfold in surprising and novel ways. The pressure to *self-organize* and the possibility of *self-surpassing* lead to a bias towards beauty, diversity and complexity.

The life force, the **Spirit** which is loose in the universe, both within and around all things, gently nudges all life forms in the direction of their fullest potential. At the point of *separation challenges* the **Mystery** suggests *attachment solutions* and life leaps forward. That is a little dense don't you think?

So, let me unpack this for Mother's Day and Christian Family Sunday. Somehow it appears that the Universe is influenced from a hidden wholeness, a non-coercive intelligence, an uncontrolling love nudging hydrogen and helium atoms to *self-organize* into galaxies; galaxies to birth solar systems, solar systems that establish the conditions for life to begin.

With the transformation of chemical compounds into the most basic life forms the *possibility of self-surpassing* had arrived. When the environment became toxic for bacteria to survive, a hidden wholeness, a non-coercive intelligence, an uncontrolling love somehow guided bacteria to stop competing and collectively form more complex cells that could survive and thrive. Bacteria self-surpassed into a higher life form and **self-surpassing** was off to the races. Cells now clustered together to create more and separate

life forms of increasing elegance, beauty, complexity and diversity: Life building on life, responding, evolving, becoming, cooperatively by its very nature, all through a mysterious collaboration. In other words over and over again by attaching to some other living creature a solution was found to further life.

Each creature then, at each evolutionary level is absolutely necessary and intrinsically valuable. They are each a full and glorious manifestation of the mystery of *Spirit, guiding and self-expressing through Creation.*

Coming to consciousness about this process constitutes the glory and dignity of our human nature. We see this in full flower in **Jesus**, where love and compassion, healing and wholeness consciously connect. When we find ourselves drawn to this life and when we choose to give our lives to this **Jesus** revealed evolutionary thrust, we experience joy: A deep, full, grounding, connecting joy. It is what our life in Christ is intended to be about.

So, our nature as human beings is so much more than the old interpretation of red tooth and claw from a century ago. The dogma of survival of the fittest has given way to growing awareness of survival of the kindest. Our nature is fundamentally collaborative, cooperative and compassionate. We thrive by finding *attachment solutions* in the face of **separation challenges** which evolve to consciousness.

*The two become one and are increased by one* is the mantra of procreation, of *self-surpassing* collaborating evolution. Every mother knows the collaborative processes of nature taking over her body: The growing, still, mysterious transformation from tiny fertilized egg to new born babe. It is so amazing I can't begin to take it all in. Every family participates in one way or another in this conscious, collaborative, compassionate dance of new creation which brings us to this celebration today.

### **So the first Application for Today**

The nature of our nature is to cooperate and collaborate, to participate in **attachment solutions** inspired by the **Mystery** in the midst of life. We evolve together.

John17: 21-26 From Covenant to Unity

I came across a saying the other day that read *“I didn’t change, I grew up. You should try it sometime.”* I think there is a hidden message in there. Somewhere along the road of life we eventually grow up. We realized that we have actually grown up and following the rules and getting along isn’t such a mystery anymore. We recognized the inner logic of life together and just start living consciously, responsibly and thoughtfully. For the most part the rules of relationships are now within us not just demands from outside of us.

Our Gospel lesson reflects the transition from the external model of Old Testament covenant living to the internal experience of New Testament living in unity. It is a shift from the external promises and demands of covenant relationships to the gift of **God’s** indwelling Presence. It is the transition beyond connectedness, to oneness. Nurture lies at the heart of it all.

Let me tell you three stories about motherhood and family life that point to this Mysterious unity in our midst.

As we know, now-a-days families come in all shapes and sizes. My daughter Tasha started a family, almost three years ago and added a second child just a few months back. This profusion of new life got me remembering how Tasha entered my life thirty-seven years ago. When I think of Tasha, I think of sunshine and that happens to be the nickname I’ve had for her for decades.

But she wasn’t always that way.

My wife and I adopted Tasha in our hearts, sight unseen when she was fourteen months of age. However, we were Tasha’s fourth set of caregivers, fourth set of parental figures in her short life. So she wasn’t adopting anyone, any time soon, and we had no idea what we were getting into. If she fell and hurt herself, she would run into her bedroom and cry all alone. This went on month after month: And was breaking our hearts.

Then one day, we were sitting on the sofa in the living room. Tasha raced out of the kitchen and failed to negotiate the corner into the hallway and banged into the wall.

I will never forget that day! Instead of running to her room to cry alone, she turned around and raced toward us. I stretched out my arms to receive her as she raced right by me and into her new mother's arms. And that became Mother's Day / Christian Family Sunday for us. The transition beyond connectedness to oneness, to unity had occurred. Nurture lay at the heart of it all.

About fifteen years ago, Vicki's daughter Michelle told her quite clearly that if she ever became serious about another guy in her life, Michelle needed to meet him. She would decide if he was adequate for her or not. When things were looking serious between Vicki and I, a lunch date was set for the three of us.

Now, I had never laid eyes on Michelle. Vicki and Michelle have always had a close connection, but Vicki wasn't aware of the **oneness** of it, the unity that they shared. That is until I pointed out that I had just observed the two of them carrying on an entire conversation with only facial expressions, body language and hand gestures. Let me tell you, it was amazing and a little intimidating. What was I getting into here? Or. Could I as an outsider possibly participate in that oneness, that unity, where nurture lay at the heart of it? Well, I was soon added in and now I'm doing my part nurturing two grandchildren here in Montreal.

Now the third story: Only a few decades ago, adoption by single people was unheard of. One of the joys of ministry is that I get to share a lot of wonderful life experiences with so many different people. One of my parishioners was the first single woman to legally adopt a child in Alberta some forty plus years ago.

Now, the adopting mother was a curly red headed Scot with a complexion to go with these attribute. The baby girl she adopted was a straight, black haired Cree with a complexion to go with hers. I first met the two when the little girl was around 6 or 7 years old. To meet them, they were as different as could be. That is until they spoke and

gestured and moved. And wow! What an unexpected experience. My eyesight just sort of exploded as all superficial visual differences fell away and they were almost indistinguishable in sound, movement and mannerisms. Their life together communicated an **oneness**, an amazing **unity** which was breath taking to encounter and actually changed what one saw. **Nurture** lay at the heart of it all.

### **The second Application for Today**

If our **nature** is to connect, cooperate and collaborate,  
then our **nurture** can lead us into a profound **unity**.

As **Jesus** revealed now we can consciously share in this **unity**  
with the **Mystery in the midst of Life**.

Thanks be to God.