

## The Fourth Sunday after Trinity 2009

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

In the art and science of medicine there is a field of study called immunology. Immunology is the science of how organisms differentiate between what is part of the organism and what is not. We have learned that not only whole organisms have ability to differentiate between what is self and what is not self but that this ability exists down to the level of individual cells. It is in fact part of how we were created to discriminate between what is us and what is not us. What belongs to our organism and what is foreign.

This is not to say that we cannot find instances of cooperation rather than competition between that which is self and that which is not self. The bacteria that live in our digestive system is an example of a beneficial experience of living with non self. An infection is just the opposite it is damaging of our bodies and if allowed to continue unchecked destroys not only the body but the infecting organism as well when the host dies.

So we might suggest that we as human being are made to discriminate. That seems shocking, how can we be created in the image of God, to love our fellow man and worship God be made to discriminate? Our reaction is caused by our response to the word discriminate. In our time and culture it has taken on a limited and distorted meaning. Simply stated today we understand that to discriminate is to consider yourself to be superior or more important than another person or group of persons.

The word discrimination actually does not mean that at all. The word is from the Latin, *discriminatus*, to distinguish between. Webster's Dictionary defines the word in this way:

1 to mark or perceive the distinguishing or peculiar features 2 to distinguish by discerning or exposing differences 3. to make a distinction <*discriminate* among historical sources; to use good judgment

To use good judgment – that's an interesting phrase especially when we connect it to discriminate. And that is part of the message of the Gospel. We are to discriminate! We are to recognize what is self (A practicing Christian) and what is non-self (Actions which are not compatible with being a practicing Christian)

The Gospel uses the word Judge, "Judge not and you will not be judged." Modern man has found this passage very comforting. You do your thing and I'll do my thing and we won't judge each other and everything will be fine. Right? Wrong!

First of all everything is not all right and never has been. Some things are right and some things are wrong. Some things are sinful and some things are life giving. We as Christians are to judge between the two. We are to seek to do good and avoid sin. The way we do that is to judge.

Again let's examine the definition of the word to judge. Webster's first three definitions are:  
**1:** to form an opinion about through careful weighing of evidence and testing of premises **2:** to sit in judgment **3:** to determine or pronounce after inquiry and deliberation.

These three definitions give us an insight into the message of the Gospel. If we understand judging as careful weighing of evidence and determining after inquire and deliberation about our own actions; then judging is not only good, but is a proper activity for Christians.

If we understand judging as sitting in judgment of others activities, as evaluating the actions of other people; then we are in a dangerous situation for Christians. We are to lead others by our actions, we are to prove the worth of living a Christian Life with our witness to those who do not lead that life and we can and should separate ourselves from those who willfully choose to ignore God's Holy Word, but clearly God judges the world, we judge our own actions.

I began with talking about immunology, the study of the ability of an organism to determine self and non-self. Clearly this biological activity is not a perfect comparison for our religious life, but the part of the comparison that works well is the focus on self. Jesus is teaching us in the Gospel in fact in that whole section of Luke that we are to be concerned with our activities and how those activities affect other people. We are not to be concerned about what others do.

This teaching is not new. In Fact it has been a concern for human being since we became aware of God the Father Almighty. What is it we are to do and how are we to relate to other people?

His week in the daily office we read psalm 15. Perhaps we might open the prayer books to page 357 and read together the words of David's Psalm.

Israel's Prayer concerns the question, "Who will dwell with God". The focus is about our activities, not about how we should be concerned about what others are doing. It is not about how we correct or fix others, rather it is about our activity, our actions and how we live and the choices we make day by day as we struggle to be the faithful people God is calling us to be.

Immunology teaches us that the smallest part of an organism the cell can determine what is healthy and good for the life of the cell. Sacred Scripture teaches us that each of us as individual members of the Body of Christ can also determine what is healthy and life giving for us. We are judge, discern and discriminate as we consider our actions, and choose life, that we may find life eternal.

Amen