

Matt Rawls  
St. Mary's, Goochland  
November 13, 2016

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 28)**  
**Luke 21:5-19**

So this last Tuesday was a pretty big night, right? The main reason was because we started a middle school girls cooking class here at St. Mary's. My girlfriend, Ann Taylor, and Ashley Cameron, who works here, taught five girls how to make a pasta dish, salad and they made cookies. It was a great time. Now, my role in this which is not cooking at all was to clean up after them. Now if any of you all have worked in the kitchen here at St. Mary's, it is not the easiest thing in the world. There's a lot of things you have to do. And I, of course, forgot how to learn how to work the dishwasher before I got there. So I was scrubbing everything by hand – scrubbing pots, scrubbing mixing bowls, scrubbing spatulas. Turns out, I didn't quite do a good enough job.

So I went home after that on Tuesday night and like most of y'all I was up until three a.m. watching the results of this election. Tired, groggy, confused, and processing, I showed up for work the next morning and I proceeded to walk in to the kitchen because people were there preparing the lunch for the seniors lunch. Well, Fay Lohr was there and Ralph Fisher and immediately when I walked into the kitchen, they just started chewing me out: "you've got to clean up better, we don't mind you using it, but leaving the kitchen messy, etc etc etc."

As I sat there, sleepy and a little bit slow from the night before, as they started to get mad at me and a smile started creeping onto my face. All I could think was "this was just the same as it would've been yesterday. We're going to be ok!"

Elections are a weird thing. They all are, but presidential elections are especially so. The week or so after the election, half the country feels as if their view of the world and humanity has been validated. The other half feels like the world is probably getting ready to end and everything is going to go up in flames.

This is how it has been for every election I've been around for, but it feels this time like that is even more so. This year's election has felt as nasty and divisive as anything I can remember. Maybe those of you with more experience in life can remember times like this, but I think everyone can agree that this has been divisive.

My message for us this morning though, is hope. Not the simple hope of "everything will be ok." Maybe it will. Maybe it won't. It's true that things are rarely as bad as the

losing party in an election thinks it will be with the other candidate and party and power. But it's also true that sometimes the world falls off its tracks and goes haywire. So that message of simple hope is not what I have for us.

But what I do believe is this: there is hope. Not because our party won and we feel good about the direction of the world. And not in the sense that our party lost, but the world will be ok. As Christians, we have hope whatever the outcome of an election, because our hope does not rest on the rulers of this world.

That's what Christ is talking about in the gospel reading this morning. The temple that he says will be dismantled was a crowning achievement of the Jewish people. It was magnificent. It was huge, beautiful and awe inspiring. People from every tribe and country would come to admire it. As a people, the Israelites found power and affirmation in it. It represented for them their collective importance. In their eyes it reflected their collective beauty. It symbolized the ascendancy of their collective worship.

But Jesus, almost calmly, seemed to look at the temple and say, "this old thing? This thing won't exist in a few years." Almost like he was saying: "This? You're putting your hope in this?!"

We as humans like to put our faith in things that are temporal. Things we can see feel and know. We put our faith in buildings that represent our collective ingenuity and power over the elements. We put our faith in ideals and political philosophies. And we put our faith in leaders, hoping they can save us from the mess in the world and in our lives.

But God, through Christ, offers us something different. God offers us hope in, and connection to, the Divine and the Eternal. In Christ, God became human to reach us and connect us with that hope and that life source.

Christ didn't promise that he would make the problems of the world go away. Obviously that's not the case. In the last 2,000 odd years, there have been a lot of bad and terrible things that have happened.

But in Christ we have the hope we can find in the Divine. That's why we gather together and worship; that's why we come together and celebrate the love of Christ in the Eucharist. Whether the world is feeding us plenty or the world is leaving us hungry,

we find our spiritual nourishment in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. It feeds us and it connects us. Both to the people we worship with today, and the people who have worshiped with the Eucharist for last 2 millennia.

So I woke up this last Wednesday and I was discouraged. As a individual, I did not vote for President Elect Trump. If you did, please don't judge me for it. Some of y'all did, too. Some of y'all, on the other hand voted for Trump. Or for Gary Johnson or Evan McMullin. Some of us were sad on Wednesday morning and some of us were happy on Wednesday morning.

But you know what? All of us are here, worshipping Christ together, taking the Eucharist together. That should give us all hope! Regardless of whom we voted for!

And as I said, this deep hope is not a simple panacea to our problems. We have hope, but the world still needs us. Every time there is a large national election, there is a group of people that feels scared. I remember in 2008 and 2012 friends of mine, particularly evangelical Christians and social conservatives were scared. They were scared their values were under attack. They were scared they were going to be persecuted for the things they believed were right.

This year, minorities, the LGTBQ community, immigrants, people who have disabilities are scared. They are scared that the rhetoric they heard this election season will turn into persecution and abuse in this new era. We learned this election that other people are scared, too. People whose voices hadn't been heard too well for while. These are people in coal country, and rural America. People who used to have reliable, well-paying factory jobs that don't exist anymore. People whose communities are racked with unemployment, poverty and opioid addiction. They're scared too.

So I did a lot of thinking and processing this week. And here's what I think is true regardless of who we voted for. I think that we are all in this together. This life, this earth, this process of taking part in the ongoing creating of the world. We're all in it together.

As Christians, as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement, we have two jobs as Christians. The first is that we are to find our hope in God through Christ. As we say regularly, we are Easter people. We are people who believe in the hope of the risen Christ. Finding hope in that is our first job.

Second, we have a duty, as citizens of God's kingdom, to love each other as Christ loved us. We have a duty to fight for the dignity of all other human beings as image bearers of God. And this job is serious work. Particularly when know people who are scared and suffering. Those who are marginalized and in need.

The BCP has something wonderful to say about this. It's words we've all said and heard. I want us to do something different today. Something collective, and community building. This may be a little charismatic and "unepiscopal" but don't worry. We're just the using the BCP. So please take a BCP, stand and open to page 304. We're going to read together the words of the baptismal covenant.

*Celebrant*      *Do you believe in God the Father?*

*People*          I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

*Celebrant*      *Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?*

*People*          I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*Celebrant*      *Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?*

*People*          I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

*Celebrant*      *Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?*

*People*          I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant*      *Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?*

*People*          I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant*      *Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?*

*People*          I will, with God's help.

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*Celebrant*      *Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?*  
*People*            I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant*      *Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?*  
*People*            I will, with God's help.

Amen.