

Earth and Peas

Rob Gieselmann, Trinity Sunday 2014

Bill Bryson explains the size of the universe this way: If the earth were the size of a pea, Jupiter would be 1000 feet away, and Pluto – which would be the size of a bacterium – would be a mile and a half away. The closest star – *proxima centauri* - would be ten thousand miles from our sun. Proxima centauri, of course, is one of our own – a star in our own Milky Way - which itself is one of millions of similar galaxies. *The great expanse of interstellar space*, we say in the Eucharistic prayer. You can ponder this expanse in any number of ways – With despondency, at our smallness – or nihilistically, wondering whether *anything* really matters at all.

Brother Martin of St. Gregory's Abbey in Michigan, finds *joy* in our smallness. It is *humbling*, and wonderful, he writes...that the God of the expanse loves us, and is actually interested in our well-being. *In the beginning* – or more accurately translated, *when God began to create* ... in this ancient explanation of the ordered world, God creates by speaking. Words coagulate into the bricks and mortar to build the universe. And at each day's break, God assesses the work, and finds it to be good. But next, and here is the surprise, God takes what he has already made, and uses that to make something else. In other words, God acts in partnership with the earth. Land creates plants, and plants sustain animals. The earth with ruach breathes life into the human flesh, that has been made of earth and soul. Both God *and* ocean are necessary to create fish, God *and* sky to create birds and heavens. And we know, we just know, that this poetry tells truths deeper than the universe is wide...Truths about God, and about ourselves. ...About God in intimate intercourse with you and me and the whole human race...And ... this is the same God who replicates creation by recreation - in John's Gospel – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. That Word formed flesh, and dwelt among us* – And to this day, God is still creating and using creation to recreate – for that is the nature of God, and doesn't it give you a sense of joy and wonder to know God *cares* that much about you? Like Brother Martin says, What greater joy than to *experience* in the human heart the life of the same God who spoke space and dust into existence? God is not the deist's clockmaker who merely wound the world up like a clock, and left it alone.

\*I'm fond of quoting Alice Walker's line in The Color Purple – when Shug says to Celie, *I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it*. But I seldom give the quote context. Shug is trying to help Celie understand God – God, she says, “*love admiration*”, but she clarifies – It's not that God is vain. It's that God *just want[s] to share a good thing*. And then when a person screw it up – Shug says, *[God] make something else. People think pleasing God is...But any fool living in the world can see [God] always trying to please us back*. Like St. Augustine wrote, the Trinity of God is not an object, but living action - three-fold love – the love, the lover, and the beloved. And it is about the universe in motion with swirling galaxies and the graceful waltz of solar systems, and perhaps atom dancing with atom, molecule with molecule, in symmetry, in exorbitant and exquisite symmetry. And at the end of each day, when it appears that something might not be good – well, God starts all over

again...creating...even at the smallest level of life – *Don't you know that a sparrow doesn't fall to the ground without God knowing it*, Jesus said. *Why then do you imagine God doesn't care?* The problem, you see, isn't that God doesn't care. It is that we don't speak God's language. God speaks the language of love, while we speak the language of division, and hate. God writes using the script of hope and redemption, while we write characters of fear and rejection. People imagine God to be absent from their lives – that perhaps absence is why bad things happen to good people – But bad things do not indicate God's absence. Rather, bad things are bad things – and indicate that all is not good in the world, that we aren't speaking the correct language – And when all is not good, to quote Shug, *God make something else*. Creating, recreating, and recreating again. And the whole time, God is right there, holding your heart kindly in his hands. And so, God, you see, is not afraid of your tough times or difficult circumstances. For your tough times form the dust of further creation. God is moving heaven and earth on your behalf. God, as your lover, giving you - the beloved – love.

**38** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

**39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.