**Trinity Sunday, June 15, 2015; Genesis 1:1-2:4; Ps 8; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Matt 28:16-20; Rev Mary Trainor**

They used any scrap of fabric they could get their hands on, even rags. They took clothing that was ripped and cut it into squares, sewed them together into different patterns, put old blankets in between and made quilts that kept their children warm in the cool nights of winter. They created something both beautiful and practical from virtually nothing. I am speaking of the quilters of the isolated community of Gee's Bend, Alabama. This small group of women, beginning before the civil war, were slaves who lived on the cotton plantation there. Their life was really tough; they had so little. They were eventually freed, but remained on the property and their poverty continued as they lived as sharecroppers through the depression. Their amazing quilts were discovered just a few years ago, and have now been displayed in major Art Museums throughout the country. The women of Gee's Bend knew about creating things from very little, and using their creativity. We have many in this church community who create wonderful things too: we have people who take logs and make log cabins, we have people who knit beautiful afghans from simple spools of yarn, we have people who make beautiful jewelry and wooden crafts from basic materials. Oh yes, we know about creating things from simple materials.

Today, here in Church, we are talking about creating -- specifically the kind of creating that God did. Our first reading this morning was from the 1st chapter of Genesis: these famous words that begin the Bible: "***In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void...."*** The examples of creating that I just gave you were wonderful examples of how we create beautiful and useful things out of raw materials....but those raw materials had to come from somewhere, and we had to come from somewhere. "***In the beginning***" there was nothing -- there were no raw materials...there was only God. We live in a human-centric world; we see ourselves as THE center of life. Yet, we are only here because of God, we were made for a purpose by God, and given what sustains us by God.

God creating everything from nothing is famously called in Latin, "*creatio ex nihilo:*" out of nothing creation was made. Why did God do this? what was the point? We know the answer: God created the world and us because of love; we are the crown jewel of God's created order. We are the only ones made in God's image. He gave us what we need in the world to sustain us. In days 1-3, He created the habitat: structure, light, sky, water, land, and plants. On days 4-6, He created inhabitants to fill the habitat: birds, sea creatures, animals and us (in His image)..

And then we are given the responsibility to be caretakers of creation - our Psalm for today put it this way: "***You give him mastery over the works of your hands; you put all things under his feet."*** This does not mean exploitation or domination, it means responsible caregiving - as a legacy to those who go after us. In this process, as we care for creation, we pass on the love that God gave us when He created us. Our reason for being here has everything to do with our connection to our creator, and our connection to each other. Nothing was made for itself alone: each part of creation contributes to the whole. It is about relationship. God is one: God is universal, sustaining, preserving, providing, and loving of the universe and its inhabitants.

It has been a challenge cooking and cleaning in the kitchen of our daughter and her husband in Denver. I have spent several weeks there helping out in the past year. Part of this work includes dealing with trash. There, they have an incredibly complex process of trash sorting. They have several bins, and different trash pick-up days for the different type of refuse or recycling. The most challenging thing that I did there was to sort out the compost bin trash; yes, the city of Denver picks up the tops and bottoms of celery stalks and apple cores and rough outer lettuce leaves and rotten berries - all mixed together in a dark green bin. Working in their kitchen forced me to think a whole lot about what came from what and what went where when we were done with it: I had to get this right! Everything comes from somewhere and everything has to go somewhere. Sounds simple enough, but we in our 21st century lifestyle tend to live in a bubble, thinking that our food comes from the grocery store and trash just goes into the garbage truck. The creation story reminds us to spend time being grateful for the chain of events that led to our being here, and to being able to survive here on this planet. It reminds us to be grateful we can breathe and eat and live in our homes and learn and work and play in the woods and on/in the lakes. It reminds us that everything we are and have came not from anything we did, but from God: God created it all -- and He created it from nothing. Each time He made something new, He declared: "***It was good."*** Translated, this means God blesses all of creation -- and especially us. Please turn to page 846 in the BCP, and look at what our Catechism says about God the creator and our place in the universe. We see what Genesis 1 says echoed back to us. **"The world belongs to its creator...we are called to enjoy it and to care for it in accordance with God's purposes."**

We indeed were created by God for a purpose. Our Gospel reading today tells us our purpose; it is called "The Great Commission" to, **"*make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*."** Yes, we are called to care for creation -- and part of that care is to bring others to Christ.We are stewards of the earth and we are stewards to each other. We are to share this vital message about God the creator, redeemer, sanctifier with others. They cannot know unless someone tells them, brings them, shares with them, teaches them.

We don't usually think that taking care of how we sort out trash is part of our Christian responsibility, but it is! So is tending our gardens, so is caring for others and the earth, and so is sharing our faith. We were created by God for a purpose, a holy purpose. Let us end this sermon time with praying together the two prayers on the bottom of page 827: First the prayer for *knowledge of God's creation* and then the prayer for the *conservation of natural resources*. "**Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures. Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus our Lord Amen.**

**Almighty God, in giving us dominion over things on earth, you made us fellow workers in your creation: Give us wisdom and reverence so to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them, and that generations yet to come may continue to praise you for your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."**