

[Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

[Psalm 99](#)

[Matthew 22:15-22](#)

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Come, Lord, come to us.
Enter our darkness with your light,
Fill our emptiness with your presence,
Come, refresh, restore, renew us.
In our sadness come as joy, in our troubles, come as peace,
In our fearfulness, come as hope, in our darkness, come as light,
In our frailty, come as strength, in our loneliness, come as love,
Come, refresh, restore, renew us.
By Eleanor Daley (b. 1955)

How often do we sit in curiosity?
Sit wondering without presumption, to be present and to learn?

How often do we ask a question as a litmus test, testing someone's stance
on a subject?

How often do we risk being fully alive by opening our eyes and hearts to listen deeply?

The questions we ask, matter.

The questions we are asked, matter.

How we receive an answer matters

How we answer matters.

In High School, I remember spending a lot of time asking questions, learning learning learning. In an environment that encouraged questions, I loved to hear people's stories and listen, craving more. Sometimes this dialogue led me to forgetting time and having to run to my next thing.

I remember one evening being exactly where I was supposed to be on my boarding school hallway, in my room, but pushing every other boundary. I was hanging my head into the hall to finish the conversation that we had not quite yet finished... but I was IN my room.

At that moment, the dorm mother came up to me and asked me point blank, "Abi are you in your pajamas?" And I looked down at my jeans and sweatshirt and knew I was doomed. I was in trouble regardless of my answer. If I answered "Yes"- it was clear I was going to sleep in street clothes, which was a bold-faced lie. If I answered "No"- well, then I was also going to hear some sort of "why aren't you in your pajamas?"

Which I also thought was a dumb question, CLEARLY I was finishing a conversation... I was stuck. My wise dorm mother knew the answer to the

question before she asked it and I felt trapped. There was judgement coming.

While the tension was all of my own doing and preventable, I felt stuck.... And yep, I shushed my mouth and changed into my pajamas.....

We can ask questions to which we already know the answers.

We can ask questions to test people.

We can also ask questions to be curious, to wonder, to walk alongside of and become one with the other.

Curiosity and wonder invite the unimagined and refocus our attention in a new way.

Today we read the next portion of the gospel of Matthew's Chapter 22, immediately following last week's gospel. The tension is building in the community. We are 22 of 28 chapters of Matthew completed. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem with only a fraction of his life left to live on earth. Jesus' parables and teachings are building tension. Each parable has consequences, often in the gnashing of teeth. People have questions. Jesus has lived a full life and is speaking about matters that are ruffling feathers.

The Pharisees today were not curious.

They were not wondering with Jesus and imagining a new way of living.

They have come to trap Jesus.

They ask a question that **they** know he will be stuck answering.

The Pharisees want to hear Jesus speak out against God's law or the Empire's law.

They, like men of today, could not stop thinking about the Roman Empire, either!

And Jesus is not trapped.

Jesus does not choose between right and wrong.

Jesus redirects the Pharisees' understanding.

In what they thought was a Yes or No question, Jesus reminds the Pharisees to give to Caesar what is Caesar's.

And to God, give to God.

The image of Caesar on the coinage reminds everyone who claimed authority, led the army, build the roads, that profile on the coins was a visible reminder.

But in the face of the person beside you, you see the face of the one true God. God who created all of what we have to begin with, setting all that we have in motion.

Give to God what is God's. Live your whole life belonging to God, first.

You see, this image of God that is more than you can imagine and requires each of us to come together to more fully see the image of God.

Give to God what is God's.

We live in this world, governed by man, and we are to commit lives to God- living out our fullest in relationship with one another and striving to preserve the dignity of every human being.

I think the Pharisees were afraid.

I think their tricky questions came from a place of fear of losing control, fear that God would actually love the world so much that God could actually reconcile the world through love and relationships, proving their places of authority misplaced and often flawed.

I think the Pharisees did not want to be wrong but wanted to be right, to gloat and show their wisdom and obedience to the law. The Pharisees did not have a desire to get it right.

And yet, here is the thing, in a world where judgement was the motivation and fear the underlying cause. The last line of our gospel is that they were amazed.

Rather than humiliated and shamed, they, too, were transformed.

Amazement

Wonder

Curiosity

The Pharisees were left wanting to know more

Wanting to ask more questions, questions that deepened understanding.

Questions that would build up relationship rather than increase distance.

Questions that would fill ones soul up with the indescribable yet fully experiential love that Jesus stood in their midst to give.

Have you ever walked into this space with someone who is seeing Trinity for the first time?

I love walking in here with friends and bringing them in from the side and listening to them as they sharply intake their breath as we stand in the back absorbing all of the beauty in this space.

There is a glow about them, an awe.

You can describe the space all day long but in coming in and experiencing this space for yourself, you see the divine at work through the art, the space, and after I tell them snippets of what is where and why, through each of you.

This space is beautiful, but this space is only a historic landmark if we do not talk about the people of Trinity coming together to pray, to break bread, to act in the world as the hands and feet of Christ.

Coming together creates the image of Christ for this greater world. Each of us is the image of God and a part of this body, sharing the gifts and talents that we have been given to be the living household of God.

And that household of people is more than we can imagine, but each day we have a chance to glimpse it in our midst. Sometimes through that friend who realizes sees the holy for the first time in our familiar space and sometimes it is in the questions we ask, even when we think we know the answer.

God will meet us here and invite us to go deeper.

We are always in the right space at the right time to be the love this world needs.

In our fearfulness, come as hope, in our darkness, come as light,
In our frailty, come as strength, in our loneliness, come as love,
Come, refresh, restore, renew us.

Amen.