

August 13, 2023

Pr. Steve

Texts:

In the name of God, Abba Imma, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is good to be back. Montana is a pretty nice place though, too.

Some years ago, mid 90's, I was invited to lead/facilitate a Sunday Salon series on interfaith studies. There were 6 or 7 couples in the group: Jews, Buddhists, Christians, atheists, and '*I don't know what I am's*'. It was a marvelous group--the median age was about 80. The youngsters were coming in at 77-78. (You know what they're like--so much to learn.) These folks had a vast work experience. There was a publisher in the group, writers, artists, a woman who began the Women's Studies in the 70s in the Contra Costa College District, business folks, financiers, a research biologist, and two physicists. Of course, we talked about Interfaith, which meant we had to talk about God, and life, and death.

Well, at one of our sessions, one of the physicists shared that he had been part of the Trinity Project. (Much in the news now, right? We have the Oppenheimer movie, Nagasaki this week.) Trinity--how did it ever get that name? Trinity--of all the words in the English language. Trinity?

Well, on the morning of the day of the first test (of the atomic bomb) they all gathered together, and the countdown began--3, 2, 1.... Nothing, nothing.... So, all the scientists huddled. '*What's going on?*' Finally, my friend in this group, Barney, volunteered to go figure it out. Now I don't recall remember the distance of the trenches. You remember the iconic tower in the Oppenheimer trailers? Several hundred yards, at least.

He crawls up the trench, and he said that every step, ' Life, Death...Life, Death, Life...Death' what might happen at any moment, made the adjustments he thought he could. Crawled down and went back, fast but not running

3-2-1 [Explosion] Life forever changed on this planet. The Germans called this a '*Totentanz*'—comes at you so many ways—a dance with death. And Barney asked me rhetorically, 'Should I have done it'?

In our text today, King Herod is having a birthday party. Everyone who is anyone was there for the celebration. And King Herod had his wife's daughter, Salome, dance. And she was good, really good. King Herod said, "How can I compensate you? I'll give you half of my kingdom. What would you like?" She said, "I want John the Baptist's head."...a *Totentanz*. What was a birthday party becomes a banquet of death.

Meanwhile, Jesus is out in the wilderness with 5000 people, feeding them loaves and fishes—a banquet of life, a banquet of abundance.

