



**A Sermon preached in Christ Church, Grosse Pointe, Michigan  
by The Reverend Andrew Van Culin, *Rector***

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (Year C)  
22 May 2022**

*Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove, with all Thy quickening powers.  
Come shed abroad a Savior's love and that shalt kindle ours. Amen.*

File this away under the heading, words I never expected to hear from an Episcopal priest. I love the Book of Revelation. Its chapters are filled with wonders of every kind. Of course, there's the great serpent that struggles against the good and kindness and justice of God. But even more woven throughout its chapters is the glorious and fantastic vision of God's dream for humanity.

A new type of city, Jerusalem of Old, as we heard today, but remade. A place so united with God that God needs no temple, nor sun, nor moon, for God's glory shines in all its places. A place so at unity with itself, that is, a place so at peace with itself, that nations will stream to its life and dawning. A place so secure in the order of the world that it need not shut its gates in fear. And so in love with its neighbor, that its gates shall ever be open in expectant welcome for the arrival of a new friend. A place so holy that we bring only our best. We bring only our best so that there shall be no uncleanness within it.

That is God's dream for us, here and now, that we as a people, not just as a Christian community, not just as an American society, but we, a human community may live in such peace and with such affection toward one another. But sadly, we get it wrong. Too often we misunderstand the dream of God.

The dream is so beautiful that many have incorrectly thought that God resides only in that dream. That God waits, if you will, in this glorious, heavenly Jerusalem for us to arrive. That is, God waits for us to die and slough off all our mortal imperfections, then basks in the glory of our eternal praise. That is a perversion of God's dream.



Yes, it is God's dream that we will so organize our lives with kindness and peace and justice and love that our gates need never be shut, but God is not waiting somewhere out there, for us to get to Him. In fact, while John's Revelation reminds us of God's eternal dream, that is God's dream from the first word of creation to the last twinkle of a star. His record of the words of Jesus, remind us that God's dream is also God's eternal action.

Those who love Me, will keep My Word, and My Father will love them and will come to them and make Our home with them. Not waiting, not waiting for perfection, but coming in the midst of life. Notice what Jesus doesn't say. He doesn't say that God will wait for them. Rather, He says that God will love them, that God will come to them, that God will make His home with them. That is, that God is ever working, ever loving, ever coming, ever dwelling with them, even now.

So it all begs the question, who is the them of whom Jesus speaks. It is you, of course. It is in fact, all people, not just us good Christians. In fact, it is all people of all times and in all places, for we all, in our various and imperfect ways, have and do love God and keep God's Word. Some may do it more overtly and clearly, some may do it a bit obnoxiously. Some may do it more consciously and committedly. But anyone who has loved another, even for the most fleeting of moments, has participated in the love of God.

Notice again, Jesus doesn't say, all those who love God perfectly, or those who love God unceasingly, or as Jews, or as Christians, love God. Rather, He simply says, those who love Me will keep My Word. And that is His Word of love, to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself, to love one another as He first loved us. Do this but once, for a fleeting breath, and you will have kept the Word of God, as perfectly and imperfectly as any other. And in that spark of love, when your heart extends beyond yourself, then you will have touched the very heart and dream of God, and God will make God's dwelling with you.

Consider the result of such love. It is everywhere, of course. Wherever love is extended, wherever love is received, God is there. Not dwelling in rock, stone temples or in light inaccessible, but here and now in the presence of two gathered in peace and love. Look at it here. We are not one birth family. We are not of one original community. We are not even of one common, original community of faith. Look around and take in. I mean, really look around for a moment and take in the beauty of this community.



Lifelong Grosse Pointe-ers, here. We've got Texans here, too. There are a few Brits in our community. Folk from Kansas. Although, where is Adam? I know he was here. Now, here's the \$20,000 question. Is it Kansans, or just folk from Kansas?

Kansans.

People from the Carolinas. California. Heck, you even got Hawaiians and Yoopers here. I got it right. Former Catholics, Roman Catholics, and Methodists, Lutherans and Presbyterians, lifelong Episcopalians, and questioners and seekers all. Straight and gay, trans and questioning. Single and married, partnered, and widowed. Divorced. We come. One beautiful and remarkable community. Arguably, unlike any other community at its core.

We come with one common inheritance. It's not a unique inheritance, but it is one common inheritance. The love of God. Full stop. And one common desire, to love God more truly. And in that outpouring of love, the love of God toward us and our love toward one another in the world, we find our joy, our greatest joy, and God's eternal presence. I must say, I love the dream and vision captured by John. Even more, I love the activity of God who comes to us and makes it true. Amen.