

Bone of My Bone

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October 3, 2021. All the creatures around us remind us that in the brokenness and sin of the world, the Spirit is still alive, and there is also unconditional love, healing, joy, and peace.

Readings: [Genesis 2:18-24](#), [Psalm 8](#), [Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12](#), [Mark 10:2-16](#)

*** Transcript ***

In the Bible, our sacred text that has thousands of pages, it only takes until Chapter 2 of Genesis before some very significant things happen.

Just before this passage, God has breathed Spirit into Adam — that's Hebrew for earth-person, or human — to life. God formed Adam out of the earth with her hands, like a potter working with clay, and breathed into them. Think about that for a moment. Our life came to be out of God's very breath.

Right after that, still not out of Chapter 2, God knew the human she had created needed community. It is in fact why God created us, for community. And God invests creative energy — more Spirit unleashed — to bring about more life, all around the original human.

And already, here in Chapter 2, God invites us into her creative work. Naming is a profound thing, isn't it? Think about your own names for a moment. My first name, Meagan, is unique in my family. My given middle name, Catherine, connects me to my mother's mother, an Irish Catholic doctor's wife with an epic sense of humor. And Anne, a name I chose at Confirmation, connects me to my father's mother, a tough-as-nails Croatian who grew up trading with her native neighbors at her father's store in the Iron Range in northern Minnesota, and her gift for making friends of strangers and feeding anything that moved was legendary. I carry their names, Catherine and Anne, given by their parents when they were born.

Parents everywhere have the joy of choosing a name for their children, and those of us with animal companions listen closely for their perfect name. I had the privilege of being present for a dear friend's court hearing, where they chose a name that fit who they had come to understand themselves to be. And God invites Adam into this creative venture, giving Adam the responsibility for seeing, knowing, and naming the beings that are created around them.

And then, God created a partner for Adam, giving them to one another so that neither would ever be alone. God gave us all to each other, in all of the ways that we humans can be together — friends, siblings, ministry partners, spouses, neighbors, parents and caregivers, colleagues in learning. God gave us to each other so that we would never have to be alone. And Adam exclaims, perhaps even singing or dancing with delight, that they and the one God created to be with them, are connected, from the flesh, right through to the very bone.

All of our readings today talk about this intimate connection we have with one another, from Genesis, to our Psalm and Hebrews where we are reminded that we are responsible as people to care for all that God created. Love, care, responsibility, commitment, mutuality are held up as ideals in our relationships with God, one another, and the world around us.

In Mark today, we are reminded that sometimes our human relationship fail. Sometimes human

brokenness leads to abuse and other harms or dysfunctions that make it clear that remaining in contact is not healthy or even safe for ourselves or for our families. As in all things, we humans are not perfect, and the truth is there is brokenness in our relationships that may not be healed in this lifetime.

And yet, the dream of God, the vision of the one who unleashed the Spirit and breathed life into us, prevails. In a culture that allowed men to wield divorce as a weapon over women, Jesus called his listeners back to the ideals of Genesis, where Adam claimed the companion God made for them not as a servant to be owned or controlled, but as “bone of my bone,” an equal partner with the same rights and responsibilities. Even when our relationships with individuals in the world end, God wants for us to experience the mutual love and intimacy they meant for us to have, with God, our fellow humans and with the creatures created in the world around us, from the very beginning.

Today in this messy, complicated, broken, healing, renewing, creative world, we remember God’s vision for creation. On the eve of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, we especially celebrate how this vision is revealed in the relationships we have with our beloved animal companions, with all their fur, scales, feathers, and fins. Sometimes, it seems, these relationships can be so much easier and smoother than our relationships with other humans, right? St. Francis is thought to have said, “Ask the beasts and they will teach you the beauty of this earth.”

We often in jest think of creation of animals as failed attempts to find a partner for Adam, but it occurs to me that there may have been a beautiful wisdom in imagining God creating animal companions for Adam first, after all. As a cat-parent myself, I know the truth of another St. Francis quote: “A cat purring on your lap is more healing than any drug in the world, as the vibrations you are receiving are of pure love and contentment.”

Our human relationships are messy, and we get frustrated with ourselves for not being perfect, for not showing up as God intended us to. But today, we are invited to celebrate all that we can be, all that God created us to be. All the creatures around us remind us that in the brokenness and sin of the world, the Spirit is still alive, and there is also unconditional love, healing, joy, and peace. We learn from our pets especially that God’s vision for intimate connection is not only possible, but is embodied in the created world God gave us to live in and care for. We listen to the words of Genesis, and Hebrews, and even Mark, and know that this promise of God, like all others, will never fail.

Thanks be to God.

*** Keywords ***

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