

Blessed be God who animates our lives and calls us to a conspiracy of love! amen

A word we have heard all too often in the news lately is Conspiracy. Masses of evidence are collected and resources deployed and dollars spent to uncover secret illicit collusion. Because conspiracy has been attached in our secular word with illegal action we often cringe when we hear it, wonder how to prove it, hope we are not a part of one...whatever the purpose of the conspiracy might be...We avoid conspiracies unless we are reading about them or watching a movie depiction of them!

But here is the thing...The word Conspire actually in itself has no negative or illicit implication...society has added that. Legal rules have surrounded it.

Conspire literally means to breathe with...con =with and spire = breathe...just like the Holy Spirit eternally breathes with and through us.

Today I invite us to think about how important the idea of conspiracy is for Christianity. Today I invite us to take our place as co conspirators in a conspiracy theory...a conspiracy of love!

Just as Jesus flips the world assumptions on their heads so too might we cultivate a desire that our conspiracy be discovered or uncovered; that we assist in our own trial and conviction! that when all is said and done we resoundingly plead GUILTY

For Ours is a Conspiracy of Love to love! The Holy Spirit breathes the love of God through us. We share that divine breath and conspire to help God bring about the Kingdom! May we be guilty as charged!

Before we can even consider such a possibility, we need to pull ourselves back from the fear and negativity associated with the word and begin to adopt a radical subversive notion of conspiracy. We are talking about the kind of thing Jesus did again and again, turning traditional notions on their heads with stories and actions and we need to resist our fears and our pushbacks, to access our compassion (another co word meaning to feel with) and to love, and thus jump on the bandwagon of a movement using our swells of imagination and sense of purpose to fuel our transformations.

“To breathe with” sounds a lot like accompaniment..to be with...It has the ring of collusion, another word we have tended to avoid being associated with but again, Jesus beckons us in all kinds of ways to be part of a holy collusive activity...even worship!

Worship, or liturgy, the work of the people, is but one very important part of our conspiracy, as is service. We gather, breathe together, we collude, sing, pray, eat that we might go into the world and carry out our conspiracy!

Such collusion strengthens our faith! at least so long as it remains true to its mission and all members. We humans have a hard time remembering...remembering that it is not OUR conspiracy; we are not in charge. God is!

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Our conspiracy, or our attempts to realize God's conspiracy, is imperfect. We serve to a point, we follow to a point, we evangelize to a point. When we get uncomfortable or when an other not like us wants to join, we balk, we panic, we build walls, we exclude, we stop breathing with. We hold our breath!

God calls us to exhale...

God wants the love conspiracy to succeed. God wants all to become members. All are welcome here. And all means all!

In today's Gospel after Jesus repeats the prophecy of Isaiah and rolls up the scroll and before sitting down proclaims "Today the Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" well the next thing you know is all heck breaks loose. When confronted with the enormity of God and God's love for all, not just a select few, not just the correct and self chosen worshippers but rather all who are faithful and righteous, in right relationship with God, we are often filled with fear instead of wonder love and praise. Fear and flight options are triggered instead of remain and trust ones.

the human conspiracy falls apart...
but the divine center holds
we cannot drive God out

I am reminded of the story told in the incredible sermon by Michael Eric Dyson published as Tears we cannot Stop. When he, a black man, prayed to the God of all to help end racism, chaos ensued. He was praying to a congregation of white folks. How dare he proclaim the Gospel to whites! their faces spoke! Whiteness, hear chosen Israel, rose up perceiving threats from an other. Fear of otherness rose its ugly head.

Jesus tells us whiteness, nations, are social constructions which have nothing to do with God's mission. Jesus stretches out his arms on the cross that ALL, all, might come within His embrace.

while we argue about this Jesus passes through...He always does.
While we argue about who is in and who is out, who should lead and who should not, Jesus passes through the middle the center of us. The way continues.
The Holy spirit still breathes...on everyone.

the conspiracy falls apart when we forget this truth...God doesn't fall apart...the conspiracy does...

If we take anything away from today's lectionary let's take this....Conspiracy of love, God's conspiracy, only succeeds if we remember who and whose we are. We co

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conspirators are made in God's image. We are the Body of Christ. We are the incarnation of love in the world. When we do not breath with each other inspired by the Holy Spirit, God weeps. When we do not breathe with each other; Jesus reminds us of Elijah and Elisha with whom we are to take our place. Their ministry was to the other, the unexpected, the oppressed.

Isaiah's words are still ringing in the synagogue when Jesus walks through and on his way. They might still be ringing in our ears today...

I give you a paraphrase of today's conspiratorial tenets:

The Spirit of the Lord is breathing on you and inviting you to conspire to
Bring good news to the poor
To proclaim release to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind
to let the oppressed go free

We having been formed by God in our mother's womb and known and consecrated, made holy, before entering this world, we are to pluck up and pull down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.

We are to be conspirators in God's building project: to destroy and overthrow that which is not of God and furthering of God's mission, that which is not compassionate or merciful or righteous.

We are to be co conspirators with those in Corinth whom Paul taught to remember faith hope and love and thus to adopt a motto of patience and kindness and humility in the carrying out of our conspiratorial behavior!

May we walk faithfully into the tribunal when charged and plead guilty to this subversive conspiracy of love! Guilty as charged!

And you know what my sisters and brothers!?! when the conspiracy is realized and proven the sentence will be imposed: Eternal Life in the Beloved Community!