

May I speak with the Breath of God, from the Word of God, in the Name of God, Amen.

- A few weeks ago Christina and I watch a movie about the life of Bob Marley called “One Love”
 - The movie uses authentic Jamaican dialect, which can be difficult for people like us to understand
 - So we turned the captions on, which helped but only a little
 - Much of the Jamaican grammar and vocabulary is just a product of regional dialect
 - But some of it is deeply spiritual and philosophical
 - Based on the Rastafari worldview
- My favorite example of this is how often characters in the movie say “I and I”
 - In one scene, Bob Marley uses this phrase when talking to a non-native, who asks him what “I and I” means
 - So Bob says: “The [prophet] knows that we are all one. Words like you, me, they and them, separate people. That’s why we say ‘I and I’.
 - “So it’s a unity thing?” the outsider asks.

- “No,” Bob replies. “I-nity.”
- This is a beautiful, inspirational concept
 - But it can get confusing pretty quickly.
 - Is it the grammar that makes it difficult to grasp?
 - Or is it the idea that we are all one?
- John can be a little confusing too, actually
 - Look again at his phrasing in today’s gospel
 - “You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”
 - “the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you will also live.”
 - “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”
 - It sounds a little convoluted, a little too reflexive and tautological.
- And we might use that as an excuse to keep our distance
 - To admire the verbiage from afar, like the mysterious lyrics to a favorite song
 - But let’s not do that.
 - Because maybe, John writes like this for a reason.
 - Maybe Jesus speaks like this for a reason

- Maybe the unity that Jesus speaks of is so revolutionary, so mind-bending, so disruptive, that there is no straightforward way to talk about it.
- So we're left with these mantras that seem to fold in on themselves
- "You and me and I in you"
- Or to put it another way, "I and I"
- And the best we can do is to sit with them and try to let them soak into our mind and heart and spirit
- This evening we have good reason to meditate on that divine one-ness
 - Because this evening we have the privilege of welcoming these brothers and sisters of ours into, as the Most Reverend Michael Curry would say, the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.
 - These brothers and sisters have already completed the first step: being created in the image of God
 - And the second step: being baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
 - And some have completed a third step: being Confirmed by a Bishop in Apostolic succession

- And some of you will complete that step this evening
- But for all of you, the result is the same. Full membership in the Episcopal Church, and more specifically, in St. Michael's Episcopal Church.
- That is the ceremonial reality today. The ritual reality. The administrative reality.
 - But if we look deeper than that, at the spiritual reality
 - We will see that we have all been one from the beginning
 - And it's only our perception of division that divides us
 - Our ego. Our insistence on distinction.
 - When we believe... no, when we *recognize* that we are in the Son as the Son is in the Father...
 - *recognize* that Jesus abides in us as we abide in him
 - *That* is the moment when it's fully true. That is the moment we realize that we are truly one.
 - Because Jesus will not abide division within himself.
 - So when I abide in him, and you abide in him
 - We cannot help but be truly one in Christ. I and I.
- So when you are wounded, I am wounded.
 - And when you are healed, I am healed.
 - Amen.