

## “Completely One”

Rev. David Gregory

May 29, 2022

Easter 7



### Readings

John 17:20-23

from the New Revised Standard Version

I pray not only on behalf of these (disciples), but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Bishop John Shelby Spong

in *The Fourth Gospel: Tales of a Jewish Mystic*

Unity, the inner connectedness of life and love, brings together God and the human, the Ground of Being and being. God is not an external distant entity; God is a life we enter, a love we share, the ground in which we are rooted. The call of Christ is not into religion, but into a new mystical oneness.

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We have been expressing all week that there are no words to describe what we're feeling in the wake of the latest shootings of elementary school students. Even as I write this message, the words "shootings," "elementary," and "students" are incomprehensible to me when used in a single sentence. In a week when the lectionary reading is from John 17, our focus is on the mystical oneness of all beings. It is very real to me how absolute that Oneness is; divinity rests within all of us, we say. And yet, one of us has fired a weapon into the core of this Oneness, which is why we all feel it so deeply. The collective trauma is our own. The victims are not unknown to us. Neither is the perpetrator. They are us. We are them.

The prayer of Jesus was that all of us would recognize our interdependence, our mystical union, our sharing of Divine Life. For him, it was "so that the world would know" that he had been sent, that he was in every sense the Logos, the "message," the expression of the character and mind of God with a single message: LOVE.

In moments like these we are tempted to decry the "other," the murderer among us, the betrayer of the hope that lies within. There is no excuse for what happened, and there is apparently very little political will to make the changes that would bring us into company with the other developed nations of the world, who now regard our society as barbaric and violent. They are correct.

If one should wish to speak of being "pro-life," then it must start here, with the realization that we are partakers of the Divine Essence, that we drink from one cup, and that we are members one of another.

A political union is formed by a collection of separate individuals who have argued their way into some kind of agreement. Mystical union is the undeniable truth that we aren't individuals at all, but together we are One. That's why it hurts so much, and why we must find our common path to healing.

