

Sunday, May 7, 2023

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-14

*It says in the Bible, in plain words, that God made a self-portrait —
God created humans in his own image. —Thor Heyerdahl*

Many famous artists indulged in self-portraits. Albrecht Dürer painted himself so that he looks remarkably like Jesus. It was no doubt intentional. *Self-Portrait at the Age of Twenty Eight* shows the artist staring directly at the viewer, and his hands are on his chest and fingers in a configuration that suggests he is blessing the viewer.

Equally well known is Vincent Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*.

Frida Khalo said that her "painting carries with it the message of pain." There are not many female artists more prolific than Kahlo, and she, like her peers, painted self-portraits, the most famous being *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*. Here, too, she looks directly at the viewer who can feel her pain, as well as her strength and determination.

Rembrandt was perhaps the most prolific of those who painted self-portraits. More than 40 such works exist, and some are usually hanging in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

We could list a number of artists, but let's stop with a mention of the famous cubist, Pablo Picasso. Like others, he painted more than one self-portrait, but a most remarkable one is *90 Years Old (June 28, 1972)*. The painting is full of dread and the macabre — understandable for a man who was staring death in the face.

Studying some of these self-portraits caused me to wonder how I would paint my own self-portrait. Would there be fear in my eyes? Would it be the face of a gentle man? Would it rather be a rollicking, joyful face, as Rembrandt sometimes saw himself? Would it be confident and upbeat or full of shame, with my wounded spirit on display, like Van Gogh?

Perhaps, like Dürer and others, I would need to paint more than one. Life is a journey, and our experiences along the way color the way we see ourselves.

So how would you paint yourself today? Would you stare directly into the eyes of your viewers, or would you look away? Would we see the love of God and compassion for your neighbor? Would we see uncertainty and fear?

Understanding how you might paint yourself could help you clarify and understand the state of your emotional and spiritual health.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Help me, O God, to paint an honest portrait. Banish pride and arrogance. I want to understand myself, so that I can serve you and others better. Amen.

*Blessings,
Lisa & Pastor Ben Metz*

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Luke 22-24
Monday: 2 Samuel 9-12
Tuesday: 2 Samuel 13-15
Wednesday: 2 Samuel 16-18
Thursday: 2 Samuel 19-21
Friday: 2 Samuel 22-24
Saturday: Psalms 49-51

VERSE TO REMEMBER
Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing
love.
 —Psalm 51:1 (NIV)

- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE TRIVIA**
- True or false: The sun is the closest star to Earth.
 - Which countries border the United States?
 - Who was the first person in space?
 - In which year was Pearl Harbor attacked?
 - Who painted the Mona Lisa?
 - How many feet are in a mile?
 - Which is the smallest planet in our solar system?
 - What's longer, a nautical mile or a mile?
 - In what city would you find the Colosseum?
 - Frasier*, the multi-award-winning TV show, was set in which US city?

SINGULARS & PLURALS

Our language has many ways to form plurals of singular nouns. Can you give the singular or plural form of these words? Unscramble the circled letters to reveal a book of the Bible meaning "songs."

SINGULAR	PLURAL
1. _____ O	Bacteria
2. Salmon	O _____
3. Sheep	_____ O
4. Species	_____
5. _____	Criteria
6. Crisis	_____ O
7. _____	Data
8. O _____	Wolves
9. _____	Phenomena
10. O _____	Beaux

SECRET WORD: _____

May 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Pluralization: 1. bacterium, 2. salmon, 3. sheep, 4. species, 5. criterion, 6. crises, 7. datum, 8. wolf, 9. phenomenon, 10. beau. **Secret word:** Psalms; **General Knowledge Trivia:** 1. True; 2. Mexico and Canada; 3. Yuri Gagarin; 4. 1941; 5. Leonardo da Vinci; 6. 5,280; 7. Mercury; 8. A nautical mile; 9. Rome; 10. Seattle.