

Sermon
Trinity Sunday Year C (June 16, 2019)
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Today is Trinity Sunday. The one Sunday of the church year devoted, not to a story, not to an event, but to a doctrine.

If you want some Trinity Sunday homework, go to YouTube and look up

- [“3 minute theology on the Trinity”](#) for a quick and accessible, but fairly substantial, thorough, and orthodox introduction to the Theology of the Trinity
- [“St. Patrick’s Bad Analogies” by Lutheran Satire](#) for a hilarious summary of all the most popular metaphors used to describe the Holy Trinity and why they are actually heresies

But before you get sucked into the rabbit hole of Trinitarian Theology (or just the rabbit hole of YouTube for that matter) I should probably warn you that, at the end of the day, all our theological research and homework and study--when it is guided by the Holy Spirit and grounded in prayer--will lead to the same conclusion:

The Trinity is not a puzzle to be solved, a code to be cracked, a concept to be mastered.

The Trinity is a mystery to be inhabited.

We are likely to fall into error whenever we approach the Triune God (in whom we live and move and have our being) as an object outside of ourselves—to be studied, analyzed, dissected, or grasped.

So--Why bother? Why bother contemplating a mystery we will never understand? Why bother? Why read a poem? Why smell a rose? Why listen to a song? Why walk in the rain? Why behold a sunset, or a painting, or the contour of a loved one’s face? Why embrace a lover? Why whisper a prayer?

We are drawn to contemplate the mystery of the Trinity for the same reasons we are drawn to a poem, or song, a painting or face--not because we hope to *comprehend* these things, but because we hope that--by coming to know a little more of THEM, we might come to know a little more of life, a little more of ourselves.

Insofar as we are created in God’s image, the image of the Trinity reflects a pattern for our own best, truest selves, and our own best, truest lives--As individuals, and as the Body of Christ.

Whenever we pray in the name of the Triune God (which we do every time we gather to pray in community in this church--- in every collect, in every Eucharistic prayer, in every

doxology we invoke and affirm this mysterious One who is Three), Whenever we pray in the name of the Triune God, we are giving ourselves over to a life and identity that is **RELATIONAL and DYNAMIC** (and in so doing we are also rejecting the diabolical illusion of a life and identity that is SOLITARY and STATIC.) This is part of what it means to be Christian:

Life in and with the Holy Trinity is inescapably RELATIONAL:

We point to this RELATIONAL quality of the Divine Life whenever we call upon God in terms of the three so-called Persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

If God's nature is RELATIONAL, it follows that OUR own true selves, OUR own true lives, must also, must be fundamentally RELATIONAL as well.

When we take the time to engage in one-on-one conversations this summer at St. Mark's, we are not only getting to know more about another person--we are actually getting to know more about GOD--and we are getting know more about OURSELVES.

The Trinity reveals God's nature as RELATIONAL---and even more specifically as COLLABORATIVE.

We get a little hint of this RELATIONAL/COLLABORATIVE nature of God in today's first lesson...a first-person account by Holy Sophia aka Lady Wisdom, describing her partnership with God from the beginning of Creation...

Wisdom says: *The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.*

[If this sounds vaguely familiar, perhaps it's because of it so closely parallels the imagery from the Prologue to John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God...He was in the beginning with God.]

Wisdom says:

*when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race."*

Yesterday afternoon, we launched St. Mark's Summer Community Mosaic Project with a community workshop in the Parish Hall. About 15 of us, ranging in age from 5-75 or so, gathered to roll and press and cut and smooth clay leaves that will become part of a new "Tree of Life" mosaic in St. Mark's Courtyard. (If you missed yesterday's workshop, don't despair; you can join us today from 12-2)

Our artists, Manuel and Lisa, MIGHT have chosen an easier process for the creation of this mosaic. A more serene and efficient process. One where they maintained a lot more control over the process and a lot more control over the finished product, by simply doing it all on their own. But Manuel and Lisa---like the Triune God whom we gather to worship today--have chosen a creative process that values collaboration over control. No doubt, a collaborative approach to creation is a risky, demanding, and vulnerable approach. But a collaborative approach to creation also bears the potential to be infinitely generative, life-giving, and JOYFUL. What's more, it is a pattern of creation in imitation of the life of God.

Just as Wisdom toils beside the Creator and shares delight in the Creation; Just as we work alongside Manuel and Lisa and share delight in the Creation; So, the Triune God calls us all to join the ongoing Divine work of creating, healing, reconciling, renewing--and sharing delight in the Creation.

In addition to being inescapably RELATIONAL and COLLABORATIVE, Life in and with the Holy Trinity is inescapably DYNAMIC.

We point to this active, DYNAMIC quality of God whenever we call upon God in terms of God's principle ACTIONS in the World: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer; Earth Maker, Pain Bearer, Life Giver;

Just as we are made, in God's image, for relationship and collaboration, we are made, in God's image, for movement and action.

The dancer in me loves the word that the ancient Church Fathers chose to describe the dynamic movement of the Trinity: the Greek word *perichoresis*. Peri--as in "perimeter"; Choresis--as in "choreography". Perichoresis. Dancing around. The Church Fathers teach us that the life of the Trinity is an eternal *perichoresis*—an eternal dancing around—into which you and I and all of creation are being swept up.

At the church I served in San Francisco (the same church, by the way, where our high schoolers will worship as part of their J2A pilgrimage in just a few weeks) , at St. Gregory's every Eucharistic Liturgy (every wedding, every baptism, every Christmas, every Easter, every Sunday service, and perhaps most powerful, even every funeral) every single Eucharist concludes with the entire community--clergy, lay people, visitors, members, the very young, the very old, and everyone in between--doing a simple circle dance around the altar as they sing the final hymn. Max in his motorized wheelchair. 2-year-old Demi riding

on the shoulders of her daddy. 95-year-old Esther with her shuffling feet. 8-year-old Soren with his stomping feet. Whether or not you know the steps, whether or not you like to dance, somehow the circle dance sweeps everyone in and carries everyone around in this perichoresis.

When I imagine being held by God, when I imagine participating in the Divine Life, I don't just picture, I actually FEEL myself being carried by that eucharistic circle dance around the altar.

The movement of the Triune God in our lives and world IS life and GIVES life, but it is also demanding.

God calls us into relationship when we might rather be alone. God calls us into collaboration when we might rather just do it ourselves. God calls us to action when we might rather just sit and watch. God calls us to dance when God knows we have two left feet!

And still God's call is good, good news.

Reflect for a moment, notice if you will: Where in your life are you feeling alone? Where in your life are you feeling stuck? In your body? In your mind? In your spirit? In your job? In your family? In our church? In your work for justice and peace in this world?

Then hear this Good News:

The Triune God is here today on the move in our church, and our lives, and our world: calling us out of our silos and our solos and into community; sweeping us out of our stasis and stuck-ness and into a dance; crashing into the walls of isolation and self-sufficiency that constrain our movement and limit our life, shattering those walls into millions of pieces then inviting us to join in the work of transforming what has been broken into a beautiful New Creation.

Glory to the Holy and Undivided Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer; Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver:

Glory to God--Mosaic Maker, Circle Dancer, Community Builder:

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.