

Trinity Sunday - Year C

June 15/16, 2019

Haven Lutheran Church Hagerstown, MD

Readings: Psalm 8, Luke 3: 21-22; Matthew 28: 18-20; Acts 1:6-8
Grace and peace to you from God --- Father-Son-Holy Spirit. Amen

A third grade class in a Chula Vista, California parochial school was given this assignment - "Explain God". This is part of what Danny wrote:

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that dies, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way He doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting His time by going over your Mom and Dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church...If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids."

Not bad a, huh? Better than one daughter who asked her father, "Dad, do you know how you and God are alike?" Feeling his heart swell with the girl's sweetness, he said, "No, how are we alike?" "You're both old," she said.

How would you describe God? What words might you chose to describe who you know God to be? (*Wait for several*) So which one is right? ("*All of them*") Each of the words you've chosen captures some aspect of God, doesn't it? Yet, even if we put them all

together, along with all the other names and describers people have used in prayers and hymns, would we even get close to fully explaining God?

Tradition tells the story of Saint Augustine walking along the beach one day, puzzling over the doctrine of the Trinity, when he came across a little child who was running back and forth with a bucket, pouring water from the ocean into a hole he had dug in the sand. Augustine asked the boy, "What are you doing?" The boy replied, "I'm trying to put the ocean into this hole." Augustine abruptly realized that he had been trying to put an infinite God into his finite mind. An ocean into a hole."¹ Impossible, right?

Yet today is Trinity Sunday — a festival that celebrates that we cannot fit the infinite God in our finite minds. It is the only church festival that celebrates a doctrine — a belief we hold about God — rather than an event or person important in our faith. This description of God as Trinity is singularly Christian. It is unique among the three great Abrahamic faiths [of the Judaism, Christianity and Islam] ... No other major faith captures the dynamic mystery of divine love in quite this way, [speaking of] God as Trinity and Unity,"² as relationship and mutual devotion.

On this Sunday we celebrate our God who has chosen to reveal God's self to us in Scripture and human history as Father-Son-Holy Spirit — One God revealed to have the dynamics of an inseparable community of love, three who are equals, yet distinct and one at the same time. It is a mystery the church has come to call the Trinity, our inadequate attempt to explain the unfathomable, our declaration of a God who passionately loves us enough not to leave us to our own images of God. ³

If your mind is feeling a bit muddled and your eyes are glazing over at all this theological talk, you are not alone. I get lost in its language, as I can when a scientist or computer technologist tried to explain something in their own lingo. Perhaps one aspect of

Trinity Sunday is remembering this paradox - faith does not mean leaving behind the gift of our rational minds and curiosity yet God will not be reduced to science, mathematics or technology. God is not One to be captured in a God box like some manageable pet. So instead of pitting the logical mind against the gift of faith, consider Trinity Sunday an invitation to get lost in the presence and wonder of Father-Son-Holy Spirit who is love.

Rejoice in our Lord, Creator and source of all that is good. Our God who intended for all creation to be splendid and harmonious. A God who created us to bear God's image and be a part of the ongoing creation. Rejoice in our Lord who stayed in love and involved in our world... who continued to work to restore creation and relationship in the face of human sin and unfaithfulness. Sing praises to the Lord who will settle for nothing less than divine truth, justice and rightness and yet is a compassionate, steadfast, kind, loving and forgiving Father.

Marvel at our all-powerful, sovereign God who came to walk on earth, in human form, so that we could know God not only as holy and awesome, but also as God who wiped tears and wiped feet, put his loving arms around children, sought out the hurting, and rejected. Marvel in the mystery that God would want to be born as a vulnerable human baby — to experience as we do tears, discouragement, love, frustration, friendship, fear, forsakenness and even death. Celebrate God the Son who came to be with us, to close any gap between us and God, to let us see and hear and touch our Lord who yearns to be included in our lives, as close to you as your heartbeat.

Praise God who did not come to our world some 2,000 years ago and then leave us with only some sort of memory. "We believe in the Holy Spirit, God present with us for guidance, for comfort and for strength."⁴ Rejoice in the Holy Spirit, God of surprises who comes to each of us and to communities gathered around the Triune God. Give honor to

God the Spirit who will teach us God's ways, give us the courage to seek them and the strength to follow.

God - Father-Son-Holy Spirit. God Creator-Redeemer-Sustainer. God - for us, with us and among us. It's not a mystery to be solved but a truth to be trust. Yet Trinity Sunday reminds us that what we **do** know ---- what God has revealed to us in Scripture, history, the cross and tomb, in bread and wine is more than enough to celebrate. We gather each week to proclaim to the world and remind one another that our Lord is amazing yet steadfast and intimate enough to entrust our lives, our inner most thoughts and feelings and our church. This is why we gladly spend a lifetime learning more and growing in that Lord. Trinity Sunday reminds us that we need not defend, apologize or make sense of God. When we talk about our faith with others, we do not have to try to explain doctrine but share our experiences of God's faithfulness, presence and love. God is not a problem to be solved or a power we can control. We are to simply trust, worship, follow, love and profess our Triune God with our hearts and minds, words and lives. And bask in the wonder and freedom of being loved so thoroughly, completely and eternally... of being called into the dance of the Trinity — where all are welcome and everyone is united together in love. Thanks be to God! Thanks be to our Triune God! Linda M Alessandri

ENDNOTES

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1. As recounted by Camille Cook Murray, "I'll Tell You When You're Older," June 16, 2019 as posted on www.day1.org
 2. Adapted from Rev. Sue Eaves, "We Don't Know Much," © 2019 as posted on <https://asermonforeverysunday.com>
 3. William Willimon, "The Perils of 'Spirituality'" Pulpit Resources June 10, 2001 p. 47
 4. E.sermon Staff, "The Trinity," www.e-sermon.com p. 3