

Trinity Sunday  
May 26, 2024

Creator, open our hearts to your holy mysteries and help us listen to how the spirit may move us to act in love. **Amen**

Today is Trinity Sunday; according to the Book of Common Prayer, “it is the Feast day that celebrates the one and equal glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in Trinity of Persons and in Unity of Being.”

As a child, my grandma explained the Trinity to me like a shamrock. She told me it was thought St. Patrick used it as a tool since it was one plant with three leaves, like our understanding of one God with three distinctive parts. That description has always stuck with me. She was always full of little tidbits like that. She loved the church and as some of you know, as I speak about her sometimes in my sermons, she sponsored me for confirmation. We often spoke about life as a person of faith.

She also told me that the beauty of the trinity for her was the mystery. It wasn't about knowing or believing a certain thing but being able to ask questions.

The Trinity invited her into the mystery of faith. She didn't need to know every council or theologian or how three can be one or one in three, yet she could feel how God loved her.

She could experience creation every time we went fishing, enjoyed laughing together, and volunteered together. She knew the abundance of life's blessings alongside its suffering.

Her faith was about a journey, even if it was imperfect, and had more questions than answers.

In our text for today, we encounter the story of Nicodemus, who is confused by Jesus' teachings.

He can see Jesus as a teacher yet is still trying to understand the bigger picture of Jesus' message as he says, "How can these things be?"

His story may resonate with many of us as we find ourselves lost in the mystery of God's expansive love for us, alongside the ideas of salvation, Spirit, and creation.

As I was reading through the commentaries for this week, I came across this as a summary of how the text approaches the Trinity: "Neither the Spirit nor Jesus can be separated from God. Both come from "above," and both are manifestations of God's truth and articulations of God's purpose. God loves the world beyond measure."

While the Trinity is hinted at in the text, it wouldn't be until much later that the early church fathers and councils would solidify the theology and doctrine of the Trinity for the church as we know them today.

The understanding of three in one and the threefold unity of God wouldn't be codified as doctrine until long after the establishment of the early Christian Church.

Many endured persecution in the name of The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not only those who were persecuted for believing in the Trinity but also those who were victims of abuse in the name of that very same Missional work.

It is important for us to remember all those oppressed in the name of the Trinity, which also liberates us.

The complexities of our church history can only help to guide our future as we seek to live more deeply into Jesus' radical call to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Like Nicodemus, we all find our way to a deeper understanding of Jesus.

As we might remember his story, he later goes to the tomb to anoint Jesus with spices. This is common of John's Gospel as an example of insight that grows over time.

Maybe we find this early part of Nicodemus' story compelling. He begins with questions, coming under the cover of darkness alone. He listens and still doesn't quite comprehend the full divinity of Jesus.

Maybe we still have questions about our faith journey. It would be concerning if we didn't.

Having a curiosity about our faith is healthy. Leaning into mystery and asking questions of scripture continues to open our hearts and minds to what the spirit truly is saying to God's people.

This is the kind of curiosity my grandma encouraged me to have. She never took the scripture at face value and always asked questions of the Priest, people in her bible studies, and God when she prayed.

Even toward the end of her life, she was still curious about God and what scripture had to say to her. It was always inspiring for me. She felt the trinity. She knew God was pursuing a relationship with her, and she responded in kind. Her faith journey and our conversations continue to inform my ministry.

God's love for us and the elements of faith we talk about today tell us it is God's nature to be in a relationship with us. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."

In so many ways we see over and over God yearning to be close to us, pursuing us, calling us to listen so that we may know God's love for us.

God creates us purely out of God's love and desire for relationships, even stepping in to offer to die so that we might live and walk alongside us.

It is this God we connect with in the trinity of Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

God then calls us to act in response.

To draw closer to God's self in each other.

To care for the oppressed and see Christ in the stranger and the world knit together through the Spirit guiding us into all truth.

Our response to this love must be active.

We must first actively receive God's love for us, willingly welcoming in the idea that God loves us with out condition.

Then, seeking to love others with the same vigor.

Work done in community together, over time guided by the spirit, doing what we can to follow the path of Jesus. No small task, but always worth the effort.

My prayer for us all is that this week, we feel the deep-abiding love of God as we continue our own unique and curious faith journeys, living deeply into the mystery of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. **Amen**