

When I was at seminary one of my mentors taught me that I should be able to sum up my sermons in one sentence. And each time before I preached he'd say "Well?" So for today how about this: the Trinity is sign, symbol, and catalyst for God's unending delight in the wholeness and mystery of the world and in us as part of the world. And that, my friends, means we are graced with the capacity to immerse ourselves in God's abundance and delight. We are hard-wired to be aware of and awake to God in every part of our lives, God surrounding us in every moment of our living. We too have the potential to embody wholeness and mystery.

If we were in church today and could sing together I might have persuaded David to have St Patrick's Breastplate as one of our hymns. The words of that hymn are from an ancient Celtic prayer that names God's presence in our lives, inside and out. It begins with "I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity..." but the really significant words are quietly inserted in the middle – Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, beneath me, above me. Christ, the God-head surrounding me in every breath of my life.

A form of this prayer exists in other equally ancient cultures. The Navaho call theirs the Beauty Prayer, Beauty being one of their names for God, for the sacred. At the beginning of each day they stand outside, face the sun, and pray

*In beauty I walk*

*With beauty before me I walk*

*With beauty behind me I walk*

*With beauty above me I walk*

*With beauty around me I walk*

And sometimes they end with: *May my words be beautiful.*

With the early Celts, or with us when we sing St Patrick's Breastplate and with the Navajo, it's a prayer of thanksgiving for the presence of God, the three-in-one wherever we turn. And it's a prayer of petition, asking help to remember that God is here, with us, always and for the grace to live in love, beauty, harmony.

It reminds me of that classic of Canadian Kid-Lit, W O Mitchell's 'Who Has Seen the Wind.' Turn the first pages and there is a poem:

*Who has seen the wind?*

*Neither you nor I:*

*But when the trees bow down their heads,*

*The wind is passing by.*

Magic! I immediately loved this poem by the poet Christina Rossetti. As a child it was utterly clear to me the wind was God. And it was a form of God that I understood. Of course the trees bowed down their heads. Those great heaven-climbers know all about the Creator. Of course the trees are in awe of and give glory to the Creator.

The Trinity is about mystery and the Trinity is about wholeness. What does that mean - the Trinity is about mystery? This: even though we cannot truly understand or comprehend God in God's fullness yet... we can be filled with the sensation of God, we can overflow with the pervasive, exquisite beauty and abundance of our Creator who loves and lives in us. Even in our limited awareness we can sense that the mystery of God is everywhere and that we are breathing it in every minute, whether we are paying attention or not.

What does it mean for the Trinity to be about wholeness? Here's what I think – no matter who you are or how you live – you are beloved of God. Whether you are funny or serious, regal or frivolous, stormy or serene – you are exactly right in the eyes of God. In all our great variety and complexity as humans, God's heart encompasses us all, no matter who we are. Whether we feel painfully different or stiflingly normal God perceives us as treasure. That is what God's wholeness is about. Beloved.

But the Trinity even more than that. It's this too - whatever most touches and moves your heart – that is your way to find God. If you are someone whose most profound experience of God is as healer and friend – Jesus is there. Emmanuel, God With Us. Human enough to invite your vulnerability. Human enough and close enough to understand your struggles and the entire emotional gamut of being human. Jesus also experienced sorrow and joy, companionship and loneliness, anger and laughter, community and solitude. Humanly. Like you.

But wait. Maybe that's not your way to experience God. Maybe your way is to lean into that vast greatness of might, the power and the glory that is God the Creator. So that your experience of God is permeated with surrender and awe, or perhaps passion and a hunger for justice and mercy. Yes, the Trinity includes that.

Or... you might be one of those who thrives spiritually from a mystical, mysterious, and deeply intimate encounter with God, one that enfolds your life, moment by moment. And *there* is the Trinity. Or maybe I haven't even begun to describe for you the way in which you experience God! Apparently it pleases God that we should be amazingly varied and complex. We give thanks.

The ancient Celtic Christians, the ones who wrote and prayer St Patrick's Breastplate, embraced this delight God feels for God's creatures and for all that is. It was their good pleasure to reflect that delight back to God. Every moment of their ordinary days were embraced as an opportunity to give thanks for the blessing, and also to become the blessing. Their prayers were as abundant as God's love – a prayer for getting out of bed and another for lighting the fire. A prayer for the first opening of the door in the morning to God's beautiful world and another for drawing water from their wells. And of course a prayer for the mysterious stranger at the door. The stranger who might be Christ. The greatest mystery of all.

So let us love the mystery of the Trinity. The mystery which says it doesn't matter if you understand exactly what or who God is. What really matters is that you open the eyes of your eyes and the ears of your heart to feel God's presence in your lives... as the wind at your back, the caress on your face, the light in your heart. This is beyond your imagination – we pray it every Sunday... God, whose power working in us can do *infinitely* more than we can ask or imagine. God whose mystery working in us can heal us into greater wholeness than we could ever understand. Amen.