

Trinity Sunday A
Grace Lutheran Church
Lakeland, FL
June 3, 2023

Genesis 1 & 2
Psalms 8
2 Cor 13:11-13
Matt 28:16-28

Grace to you and peace from God and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Would you please pray with me. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen

It is a basic teaching of the Christian faith that God is one God and three persons. And this is confounding isn't it. People have tried to explain it for millennia and in so doing some have come up with analogies. Perhaps you've heard some of them. Some say that God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit – 3 in 1 and 1 yet 3 – is like a pizza – crust, sauce and toppings. 3 components yet one pizza. Others have said that God is like H₂O – God is like water and ice and steam. The problem with this is that H₂O can't be water and ice and steam at the same time. And then there's the egg – yolk, white and shell. And of course there is the infamous shamrock – one stem and three leaves, each looking very much like the other.

You see, despite the many volumes that have been written about the Trinity, despite all the metaphors that we have strained to explain this teaching, the fact of the matter is that this teaching defies explanation. It is a mystery. And that is one of two things that I want you to remember about the Holy Trinity. It is a mystery. It is something that defies understanding. It cannot be explained through any number of symbols or analogies, despite our belabored and futile efforts to the contrary.

Generally, we are not comfortable with mysteries – we tend to want to solve them, figure them out, to have the answer. When we read a mystery, sometimes we turn to the last page to find out whodunit. But not all mysteries are susceptible to this kind of logical deduction. You know this, of course. There are mysteries in your life as there are in mine –

How is it that you love that one dearest to you?
How can it be that you love this new child in your life without even knowing her?
How is it that when you walk paths in our parks and forests, you feel a sense of the divine?

This is mystery. This is Holy Ground. And we cherish these moments. We relish the peace that we find there. So too God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is mystery. The Father is not the Son, the Spirit is not the Father, the Spirit is not the Son. But Father and Son and Spirit are one God. It's a mystery.

These three – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – appear simultaneously in Scripture only a few times. – we see this at Creation – God created all that was, the Son of God was present and all things were made through him and not one thing was made without him. And at the beginning the Spirit hovered over the waters.

And then there is Jesus' baptism – Jesus in the river, God speaking clearly, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. And in today's Gospel reading, Jesus' words before his ascension speak of the Trinity when he told his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit.

And in various of the Epistles, Paul makes reference to the three persons of the Trinity. One of those is our second reading today where we heard words that are a regular part of our worship liturgy.

So, friends, this is the second thing that I want you to know today about the Trinity. The God who loves us and created us, this God is not a static monolith. Within the Trinity there are wondrous relationships. Father begat the Son – that is to say that the Father's DNA is fully in the Son – all that the Father is the Son is. And between them, that is, in their relationship, is love – among them is relationship. And from the two persons there is another – the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father. None of these things happen sequentially – please remember that our God is a God outside of time – unlike we who are rarely without a calendar, clock or watch. Without these relationships, God would be nothing more than an inanimate object, would be still and static – well, not unlike a pizza or an ice cube.

This God is a God of relationships, one who lives in relationship – relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to and among each other. And in this relationship reaches out to us and draws us in so that we may have peace with God through Jesus because God's love has been poured in to us through the Holy Spirit. God is life-giving and quite lively!

Think about what liveliness looks like – one of the images that comes to my mind is a classroom full of pre-schoolers. Or the kitchen of a busy restaurant on a Friday night. Or perhaps better is the beautiful image of a dance floor.

Having been drawn into relationship with God, each of us are swept up into God's arms to join in to this dance and cavorting. Dancing with God. Sometimes slow steps. Sometimes a polka. Sometimes we are led around the dance floor that we don't even recognize.

And, my friends, as important as this dance is to each of us individually, we must also remember that this dance is one that we as a community of faith engage in together. Because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we are drawn into the dance of the persons of the Trinity, the dance of God. A dance in which relationship is paramount. A dance in which we indeed Dance with the Stars. A dance where we follow where our Shepherd leads. A dance that may take our breath away.

A dance that happens in this sacred space, where we baptize – we welcome and receive and embrace all who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We walk wet.

In this sacred space, we feast – bread and wine are prepared. Prayers are offered. The Holy Spirit is invited to join us and make this meal holy.

In this sacred space, we are girded up and prepared to depart this place to be the hands and feet and heart of Jesus in the world around us.

Mystery and relationships. The God of mystery who is beyond anything that we can fully know or imagine, this God whom we worship, is a God of relationships. Dear friends across the miles. Parent and child, growing and stretching and wondering what is next. Newcomer among us. Those with whom we may be at odds. Closest ones. Those whom we cannot even name because they are at distant lands.

Because of the dance of the Trinity, we are knit together into a fabric of faith.

Let's dance!

In the name of God who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.