

TRINITY SUNDAY John 16:12-15

Today is Trinity Sunday... Father together with Son and Holy Spirit which we talked about last week! God as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer...So Is it One God or Three...who is Jesus talking to when he prays...who is this Spirit that Jesus leaves behind? Do you guys actually sit around and think about this stuff? Does anyone even care?

St. Augustine said "If you deny the trinity you lose your soul, if you try to explain it you lose your mind!

In the Psalm we heard today they really didn't care about trying to explain God... When this Psalm was written people could only see about .001% of the 100 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy...and there are probably more that we still can't see! God's Creation boggles our imaginations...Wait till the new telescope comes on line next month
WOW

The Psalmist gazes upon the heavens with awe!

Life defies explanation...yet there is this wisdom...there is understanding. Sometimes this comes through articulation, but most often it is felt through inspiration. The heart often knows what the mind supposes! (We don't create anything without first having imagined it).

In all this vast creation, what are human beings that you should be mindful of them? This is not a question to be answered; it is the answer! Perspective...It's a THANK YOU, a HELP ME and a WOW all in one!

Sometimes we can't explain things with scientific evidence, especially the Why's... Why does God continually choose to love us, knowing who we are...knowing the smallness of our minds? Do we really need an answer or is it just enough to say....THANK YOU! HELP ME and WOW!

Often our lives are driven by the quest to seek answers or to get things just right. We think that if we can make just a little more money our problems will go away. If we can get our children in the right schools, they will be content later in life. If we can only do this; then that will be better – but the amount of THIS & THAT's always keeps growing doesn't it?! See wherever you go...there you are!

There are always answers and still questions we have forgotten to ask. A life built around only finding answers is a life driven by anxiety and stress...believe me, I know!

The Psalmist calls us to live not by stress... but by awe and wonder! Not by answers, but trust in knowing that we can never comprehend it all! The mystery...the ability to hold life and everything in it loosely!

In Romans this morning we also hear that it is in trust that there is peace with God...and this allows us to be open to God's grace being poured into us by the Holy Spirit!

Real "peace" is a verb...It means living in relationship with God...And how do we maintain a healthy relationship with our creator?

See how we view God, Great or Small, actually becomes the upper limit to our own potential. A friend of mine Kent Dobson once told me our only problem with God is that we limit Her by our own imaginations!

Now, in our Gospel this morning John tries to talk about this relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit!

And Jesus says, "I still have many things to say to you, but you can't learn them all now!" There are many times that someone has more to say than folks are able to process! We will never comprehend all this! The Shepherd will always know what the sheep do not. You know what your dog doesn't.

As a (rabbi) a teacher, Jesus was aware that his pupils couldn't comprehend everything. Just like we parents have hopefully a little more wisdom than our children...and we decide what, when and how much to teach our children at any given time...when they are ready.

And today, God in the form of trinity, offers us much more than any of us may yet to understand... but this concept hints at a picture of God... but again know that our view of things will be limited by our experiences and imagination...it's only our point of view after all.

So it's Trinity Sunday and I like swimming in the deep end of the pool so I'm gonna share my limited view of Trinity anyway...how I imagine all this...right or wrong...and skewed as well! But my goal here is to hopefully expand your own imagination and view of God.

While pondering this question driving to work one morning the idea came to me that God is like a painter; a cosmic painter if you will, painting and creating all that is...

The Spirit of God is the "stuff"...the Paint... that is used to create the world within the frame of our universe...

And Jesus is how God imagines Godself to be as one of us...Jesus is God's self-portrait within the frame of our world, inside the creator's two dimensional painting!

In this analogy, we see how hard it would be for us to grasp the mind of God...God being "outside" the frame we are contained within as we are part of the painting itself...in here we can study the paint and the brushstrokes, but that will only reveal so much about the painter itself.

So the Spirit is left for us...all around us and within us!...the paint and colors of the universe (matter and energy and intelligence) and so we look more closely to Jesus to see a glimpse of God's qualities in human form: qualities like compassion... forgiveness... love... mercy... sacrifice...

That's how I imagine the Trinity! And how each of us imagines God again becomes for us the frame around our own perceptions of the painting... and the painter.

Now let's connect the dots:

When we love **ourselves**, we love our own spiritual self-portrait, here at this time and in this place...God then is **here** inside of us!

When we love **others**, we recognize Jesus' self-portrait within and the connection we have with one another. God is also **there** inside of others!

And when we love **God** we come to recognize the source of all things, the creator. We come to realize that God is actually **here and there and in ALL things**... Both inside and outside creation.

For God is the Painter and the Paint... and the creator loved us so much that God painted Godself into the painting to be WITH us and to teach us a little about the painter!

And that's just one way of looking at it...if you ever feel you need to look at it at all.

The other important part of having this idea of Trinity is the concept of transcending our duality and human nature. What do I mean? We humans like to look at things in the binary...black and white, good and bad, in or out etc.

But as we go through life things are never quite so simple, so dualistic are they...Black and White is actually lots of shades of Grey! In fact to transcend this myopic, dualistic view of the world one must transcend the frame and we do this through using our imaginations.

Here's an example. We have day and night. We can talk about it and we can experience it. But if we imagine taking a rocket outside the earth's atmosphere here we would find that there really is no such thing as day and night outside the frame of being on the planet.

The earth is now seen as part of a cosmic dance of planets around moons around suns around solar systems. Here day and night really have no meaning. So it is with our concept of God. That's why God isn't to be reduced to dualistic/binary human terms.

It's a cosmic dance of God in relationship with God self. In the ancient world they looked at this relationship as The Creator being Father, The Spirit being Mother and then Jesus as the Child of God. A very human way of looking at a familial dance that is always in relationship and in perpetual motion.

Jesus also points outside binary thinking to what is called third way thinking. When Jesus says "You've heard it said...but I say" That's the key that Jesus is now about to transcend our dualistic viewpoint and point to something beyond how we humans tend to categorize and label things.

Now this wisdom of God in relationship with Godself is there right out of the gate in the story of creation... In particular Genesis 1:26 – God says "Let US make humankind in OUR image, according to OUR likeness; and let them have dominion over...the earth...then God creates us in God's image..."

I find it intriguing that the Jews, when emphasizing the One True God in their Creation story would keep this verse intact...God – Hebrew El but here “Elohim” the plural form! The Jews established the first monotheistic religion...the One True God...yet here in creation God refers to Godself in the plural.

And no matter how we choose to imagine this idea of Trinity... There is one thing that ALL Christian views of the trinity have in common, we All share this one fact... God is a WE! Communal, Relational, Connected and Holy as one! God is not a He, or a She, or an it, but rather a WE!

So what does all this mean for us...As I've said - no one can rise above their concept of God, it's our limiter - our frame! So we must continually strive to imagine God in bigger ways...and we are created in God's image... so guess what folks...We are WE's as well.

The moment you are born you are a WE... totally dependent on your family for survival. We are born completely dependent upon others. And as we grow there we are also a WE. When we become married and joined to another we once again are a WE! And even if we believe we are on our OWN we are still WE's joined in community...connected to our world, to one another, and to God.

Now we can deny this all we want...and in fact this is where most of us go astray. And it's in those instances when our world turns upside down, the “W” becomes an “M” and we come think of ourselves as MEs.

ME - Smug and self-reliant... or ME alone and isolated. Think of a time when you allowed your ego or pride to become more important than your connection with others. Groups and countries also get into big trouble by thinking of themselves as Me's...not connected to the whole.

We are all connected whether we choose to believe this or not...it doesn't change a thing...When we believe we are all alone it's easy to lose our way.

We become isolated and turned inward, creating our own dark place...our own pain...our own Hell! So how does one become whole again...we must re-member...not only what was lost but who we are ...a WE!

You see we are never alone...ever...if we get turned around...we share our stories... and in connecting with other's stories we begin to become whole again...through support groups, through family and friends, through our connection with others, and our church. By becoming a WE, we become whole once again! For we are all WEs made in the very image and likeness of God – Whole and Holy!

And nothing in all of this created universe is ever disconnected...As soon as we reconnect, we right ourselves and become part of the whole once again...We're all in the same painting folks! And we are all made from the same paint!

Only together can we truly become WHOLY (With a Capital W) and when we imagine ourselves in this way we stay connected with all of creation, each other, and with God... as one. The Trinity then reminds us of who we are - we re-member...we re-connect, we are many... but all are one...and WE are God's.

So May you be at peace in the knowledge and trust that God has all the answers... and you don't have to! May you come to enjoy the awe and wonder of the painting that we are all a part of! And may you know... that like the Trinity – like God - you are all truly WE's connected to one

another and to God and made WHOLE and Holy now and forever!
Amen!