

Trinity Sunday
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Dr. Nancy Ring
All Saints Church, Syr., NY

Trinity Sunday

I have a Carmelite friend who is a theologian, who says: “If a homilist doesn’t have anything to say on Trinity Sunday, she doesn’t have anything to say on any Sunday of the year.” Still it’s a little “iffy” to speak about God – and expect to get it right. If God is Divine Mystery, then this Mystery is beyond conceptualizing. This mystery is boundless, beyond our comprehension. Still we try. We try, because as humans, we need some kind of image, of metaphor, to direct our thoughts to this Transcendent Mystery. We begin with our experience of the divine and our Christian experience is that the God of Jesus is Trinitarian.

But the doctrines of our faith, including that of the Trinity, are not intended to be mind-puzzlers, but patterns for living. The main insight of the Trinity is that *God is relational*. This Trinitarian God is the still point of the turning world (with thanks to Dante). This Trinitarian God is the *pattern of reality* and tells us that *reality is relational*. All aspects of nature have unique purposes, but all of these purposes are related. It is like that for people, also. We all have our own path to follow, but all of our paths are interrelated. In our interactions, in our living our lives together, no one is without importance, everyone is indispensable, no one is more worthy than another. The mystery of the Trinity reveals to us that we should not strive to ‘Lord’ it over others. We are to give life to others.

It is a little more complicated when we turn our thoughts to our Church. As someone once said, how different our church would be if it had patterned itself on the Trinity, the pattern of reality, rather than the hierarchical model of the Roman Empire. When hierarchy is involved, there are always superiors and subordinates. There seem to be those who have rights, and those who have duties. There is ‘clericalism,’ where what the cleric says and thinks is innately wiser than what a layperson says. When you have superiors and subordinates, there is no equality in the relationship: whether among individuals dealing with one another or among nations fighting to maintain their position. Not many people like to go from being in charge to being subject to others. Where there is hierarchy, we have intrigue and we have wars.

We are certainly not all the same; we all lead in some way, and we all follow in some ways. I may be the leader in my classroom – not the superior – but the leader. I’m certainly the learner, though, when I go to my music lesson. But even there, my teacher does not dictate. He leads me to understand.

We are urged to reflect the Doctrine of the Trinity by living our lives as fully as possible by reflecting the energy and vitality of our Trinitarian God. The Persons of the Trinity know who they are. We, too, come to know. Perhaps that is what Matthew is encouraging us to do when, 40 or so years after the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, he has Jesus saying: “Baptize them in the name of Abba God, and of the Only Begotten, and of the Holy Spirit.” Baptism claims us for Jesus and sets us on a journey that follows that of Jesus. We are claimed for Jesus, but also for the Trinitarian God of Jesus, a God who demands that we witness to Christ with vitality, life and hope.

The most beautiful words of this Gospel passage are these: “Know that I am with you always, even until the end of the world.” Those words are addressed to the community of faith and also to us as individuals. As the Second Reading told us, we are co-heirs, along with Christ, of God. God does not promise to make life easy for us. We encounter what life brings us. But God does promise to be with us every step of our journey. Since we are co-heirs with Christ, Divine Mystery will embrace us in the same way that Divine Mystery took Christ into its embrace. God will do for us what God did for Jesus. *We can trust that.* We know that God is completely trustworthy and so we can trust that our life will be blessed and that we will live forever in God’s embrace.

So, Trinity Sunday is not about puzzling over a problem. It is about inserting ourselves deeply into reality, a reality marked by relationship and coming to self-knowledge; a reality spinning with the aliveness that is God; a reality that is the still-point of the turning world, our center, our stronghold – that around which our life turns.

Amen.