

Pastor Roy's sermon from June 16, 2019 (The Holy Trinity)

Each year Trinity Sunday comes around and pastors are challenged to offer up a message on the nature of God. **As each year passes I think I ask less the “who” and “what” of God and more the “How” of God. The how of Trinity is “by relationship.”** That is important. And we do well to keep it simple—God is Love. God is Justice. God creates. God sustains. God redeems. I believe we also do well **not** to put limits on God—as in—God loves the ones who. . . Or God blesses those who. . . God's love and blessing seem to extend without regard for the details of our lives, choices, or whether or not we are human. God's blessing is inclusive rather than exclusive. Justice is woven into creation. And it's not a justice of “oughts” and “shoulds” but of constant new beginnings, new opportunities, new hope. Trinity baffles our narrow, personal sense of justice, good and bad, right and wrong, deserving and undeserving, friend and foe, safe and dangerous.

God as **Trinity offends** us because we have favorite images of God and at least one member of the unity of God is always bound to offend us. Maybe it is the Holy Spirit who is constantly wrestling our ability to have the say. . .from us. **Trinity messes with our tidy understanding of God.** Trinity is like a **speed bump** in our short cuts to understand and tame God. Try figuring out God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. Three, one. One, three. Eternally in relationship. Simple but **not** so simple. God revealed in unlimited relationships, but in particular relationships. We experience God in prayer—however you pray. Prayer touches a particular relationship. Prayer holds that relationship up to the light, or perhaps, holds a way of relating in darkness, in uncertainty, but with honor and dignity. Each relationship is unique. Each revelation is particular. So what works for me, might not work for you. What works for you, might not work for me. But that is ok, because Trinity has lots of room for you and me and every living and non-living element of creation. No exceptions.

So, God as Trinity is God who relates. Father, Son, Holy Spirit relating to themselves, relating to us. Father, Son, Holy Spirit is just the tip of the revelation, of the relationship. If any of these trips you up, set it aside. That was the particular relationship and revelation in the centuries around the time of Christ. God's relationship with all of humanity and creation did not freeze in that time and place. It worked for them, perhaps it works for you. Pray as God reveals Godself to you. Pray according to the relationship you have with God.

For example, I have a friend who finds the word “God” to be a horrible, unacceptable distraction to prayer. When he hears the name God, he thinks of all kinds of violence and people who use the name of God to take advantage and have power over other

people. But I have no doubt that he prays. It's a very different kind of prayer, but he is in communion with the Ground, the Source of all being—profoundly in touch with that which holds all of the life, love, and every relationship together.

Clearly God's welcome envelops each of us, whether the word "God" has meaning to that person or not. And this God who unifies and brings new life every step of the way, I do not believe this God is ever offended by the language someone uses to describe the inexpressible divine mystery. The Welcome of God is the essence of life and love, and no one is excluded. Ever.

Trinity Sunday brings hope not so that we can believe the right things about God, or tell others what to believe or in whom they should trust. Trinity reminds us that we can look to God, our home, in profound humility and welcome this basic relationship of unifying life and love. A relationship which is very particular to me and to you. However you define God and express your profound humility before this Power at work in the universe. That is the Good News of Jesus Christ for many of our neighbors.

May we proclaim it with grace and courage. Amen.