

## Pastor Roy's sermon from May 27, 2018 (The Holy Trinity)

[Children: Here is a feather. Can you blow this feather off my hand? What animals use feathers? How are feathers helpful for birds? Feathers are light and flexible for flying. Not only are feathers perfect for flying, but also for keeping warm and dry. How many feathers would it take for us to be able to fly? Feathers are just one of the amazing things in creation. One of the gifts of God for birds.]

Today is Trinity Sunday, the day set apart by the church to recall God as Three in One, One in Three. How can we understand the Trinity? The more we study the details and try to define it, the confused we sometimes get. Perhaps the wisdom of Trinity draws us from precisely who and what God is, to how, when, and where is God? Trinity invites us to understand the Divine as a union. Specifically, Holy Parent/Creator mystery relating to the human/divine mystery relating to the Spirit of life, Love, and raw being in the universe today.

God the Father is an emotional word picture. Father for some brings up feelings of protection, nurture, fun, and loving discipline. But tragically for others Father brings up memories of abuse or an undependable absence. God as Father is intended for good. But those for whom this image does not work, there are plenty of other helpful ways to ponder God and experience the deepest mystery of the universe. God as Creator, as Love, as Life.

God the Son. The Church has always wrestled with the mystery of Jesus as human and divine. Incarnation is God among us, God with us. Incarnation refers first to Jesus as God's Son. John 3 reminds us that Jesus reveals the life of God born of the Spirit. This second member of the Trinity is the union of God and humanity. This is not tidy theology. If it ever becomes convenient theology, I believe the truth of the message is lost. We serve a messy God. If God is made too simple, tidy, something we lean on for our own benefit, we are no longer engaging divine mystery. We have lost our way. But if we *are* in touch with divine mystery, we will *never* be disappointed, we will *never* come face to face with untruth. And we will definitely not be in control of the universe as a prize for having God is on our side. God cannot be tamed. We know that very, very well. I think our doubts about God come from believing untrue things about God. The Doctrine of the Trinity at its best points us not to an explanation of God, but an invitation to lean into deeper mystery even as we let go of untruths along the way.

Back to Jesus, Son of God, human son. God in Jesus reminds us that God is very much a part of us. In our birth, in our new birth, in our journey in salvation by grace, in our limitations and glorious gifts given by the Spirit, God is with us—God is in us. The ground of our existence is God. Of course there is much, much more to God than me and you.

So God as Son opens us to God working in and through us in our humanity and that Jesus is the proclamation that divinity and humanity work well together.

God the Spirit. In the Bible Spirit is named breath and wind. All of the living breathe with the breath of God. What an intimate way to remember that God is filling us moment by moment. Even as our lungs fill and release.

Beyond the living, Spirit is as the wind which blows through the trees, which we feel on our faces and arms. The Spirit is God relating to, forming, and connecting all of creation. This Spirit wind can be gentle or landscape altering. But the Spirit is always reality. We do well to listen to the Spirit. One of my missions profs. in seminary would say, "Our job is to figure out what the Spirit is doing and then join in.

Whether as Creator-parent, the divine man Jesus who teaches us about ourselves and leads us into the depths, or Spirit Breath Wind who imparts life and devastating hope. . . \*God is the strong presence of life, love, and peace holding all of creation in union. Yes, there is pain. There is weariness, there is conflict and competition among the living. But God as Trinity binds itself in love and unity. Trinity invites us to lean in that same direction because whether we realize it or not, we are united in so many ways to all which is in the heart of God. If we don't understand that now, some day we will in the merciful kindness of God. God is the journey upon which we are all embarked.

We cannot define God except as source and relationship in love. Jesus revealed that. The Spirit continues to do so. God invites us to join the relationship, the dance, the conversation. May we be filled with courage in our life together with the Trinity.