

Trinity Sunday

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Friends, I am so glad to see you on this memorial day weekend for Trinity Sunday especially because we might as well call it “I don’t get it” Sunday. The idea that Jesus is God, that the Holy Spirit is God, and that um.... God is God. I’ve struggled a lot with it because I’ve often felt it was a part of my Christian faith that I needed to hold onto even though I didn’t understand it and frankly didn’t really care about it. It is one of those pieces of the faith that feels like eating your vegetables to me. It’s not like getting to eat the main course and think about God’s love and how that fits into our lives. Making sense of the trinity kinda feels like fitting a square peg into a round hole.

But, today we’re gonna fix that (I hope) because being the church dork that I am and as I know I’ve got solidarity with quite a few of you as fellow church nerds, I really believe that the Trinity is one of the most practical ways of how to see God in day-to-day life. And I hope that we walk away from church with the trinity in our tool belts as a way of helping us follow Christ’s call to love in a very practical way.

Now I’ll start by saying that for the longest time, my biggest reason for understanding it wasn’t exactly the best. I felt the real reason to understand the trinity was to defend to my friends how smart I was in being a Christian and that going to church wasn’t a dumb idea. Friends RIGHTLY challenged me as I hung out in circles that would say Noah’s ark is an archaeologically founded historical fact, that the world was created by God some 6000 years ago, that Jesus literally and physically fought demons like it was a seen straight out of the Exorcist.

For a long time and still to some degree my wanting to understand the trinity has so often been a matter of wanting to defend my being a Christian. I've often felt like I've needed to prove why Christianity is monotheistic despite our seeming to have three Gods in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that I've needed to prove that the Trinity makes sense.

Understanding the trinity for the longest time has just been a way to justify myself to others instead of being a way to understand who God is and my own relationship with God.

So why does the trinity matter? Before I get into it, I totally called former rector and former my boss Eric Bidy to see if what I'm about to say I'd stolen from him and he told me I preached this back when I was the intern, so I am so sorry if somehow you folks remember rosy-cheeked intern George's sermon from 6 years ago but here we go. I want you to mentally take everything you know about the trinity, every image, every three leafed clover, every catechism lesson about the Father Son and Holy spirit, and I want you to lay it out for a second. Now put it all in a box and set it aside.

Here's what I want you to add to that box at the end of this sermon. The trinity is about relationship. It is what I would argue is the foundational core of our faith, of Christ's call to love, relationship is what undergirds every word of scripture, every historical document of the church, every moment from St. Christopher's founding in 1911, and everything we do from weekly communion to the parish picnic. Everything is about relationship. And we need the trinity because God is all about relationship.

Take a look at the cover our your bulletin this morning. This is Rublev's trinity. The three figures are God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. If you look at their eyes, you'll find that the middle figure is looking at the figure on the left who is looking at the next figure on the right who is looking at the middle figure. Now you might ask, George, why the blue blazes is this picture of

father son and holy spirit any better or any different from any other random picture you could have found on the internet?

Do me a favor and look at the bowl of food in the middle of the table; given our particular culinary passions at St. Christopher's I imagine it's a bowl of chili. Now I want you to look directly below that bowl of chili. Do you notice that rectangle right there?

What was once in that space, when the icon was originally created, was a mirror, gorilla glued directly to that spot. And the implication is not just that seated at the table is everything reflected in that mirror, the infinite possibilities of the cosmos, the imagery of anything and everything from the furthest stars to the deepest depths of the Marianna trench and all creation in between, the imagery of the trinity, of the Father, Son, and Holy spirit it is an incomplete understanding of God without everything that might be reflected in that mirror. And it is especially an incomplete image of the God of all relationship without you. The viewer looking on Rublev's icon.

Any understanding of God, of the trinity is incomplete without the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and it's incomplete without knowing you're part of that relationship. I'd argue it's a lot like St. Christopher's this morning. This morning St. Christopher's-ness is all made possible because you are here. If you were not here, it would not be the same. Your presence, even if you don't say a word to another person, if you don't come up and communion, if you were literally invisible, it wouldn't be the same this morning without you.

If you walk away today from church with anything about the trinity and from this sermon, first, please let it be this: The trinity is about relationship. And if you less squirrell-brained than me, take with you're the picture of Rublev's Trinity. Because the trinity is all about relationship and its an incomplete image of God without you. Amen.