

Trinity Sunday
St. John 16:12-15
June 16th, 2019
St. George's Bolton
Fr. Chris

The Spirit of Truth

“When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.”

Trinity Sunday and the truth is...

One God is revealed to us in three ways, or more commonly as one God in three persons.

Who is God, do you think, or do you think about who is on the other end of your prayers?

There is one you. Yet you are made up of three distinct parts. There is your body, which we associate with you when we see it, not to mention when you look at yourself in the mirror in the morning. There is your mind, a unique set of memories, learnings, personality, humor, passions which are also you, and with whom we associate when we see you, and with whom you associate when you crawl out of bed in the morning. Finally, there is your spirit, your soul, which animates your body and mind. This life force is also unique and we don't recognize you without it, as without it, we would be nothing more than a bunch of robots. So we are one person, made up of three distinct parts that make us who we are.

This may not be the best metaphor for the Trinity, but I think it works and is helpful in seeing God as one God, in three experiences of God, three “persons” of God. There is God the creator, whom we associate with the God of Genesis, creating all that there is. This is the same God we have often depicted in our minds as the bearded white guy sitting on a throne in the clouds, sending rain on the earth to sustain it, and hurling thunderbolts and lightning when “He” is angry. This God is more akin to some Pantheistic notion, or perhaps sort of like the Greek and Roman Gods who had various functions in nature and the everyday course of the world.

One of the most famous depictions of God in this way is on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel in Rome, as God's fingertip touches that of Adam's

imbuing him with the spirit of life. It is tempting to think of God in these images that I grew up with, the grandfatherly bearded guy, yet my experience of God, my learning during my tenure as both a priest and a believer, leads me beyond such an image, and I no longer think of God in this way.

For one thing, God made us in God's image. This we read in the first chapter of Genesis: [Genesis 1:26-28]

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." If God created us in God's own image, God did not make two guys, but God made a male and a female, as the text says. So God is not one or the other: God is both male and female, so it is not appropriate for us to say God is one sex or the other. It is like the symbol of the Yin and the Yang. God is whole and complete, and we reflect partial images of this God.

Then there is the opening prologue to John's Gospel, where it says, [John 1:1-5] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." The Word John refers to is Jesus; so apparently, Grand-dad was not alone when God made the world. Jesus was involved in the creative act also. This makes sense because Jesus is fully divine, fully God, God walking the earth in the person of this first century Jewish Rabbi, the son of an earthly carpenter, sort of.

Who is God? We can get bogged down in sometimes boring theological ruminations, but the way we answer that question is very personal and is based on personal experience. Where have you met this God? Did you meet God in Church? Did you glimpse God in the sacrament of God's Body and Blood? Did you smell the fresh air yesterday and sense God in the breeze, the Spirit of God animating you and I -and the world around us, reshaping it, cleansing it, allowing the grasses and the trees to dance as a

community of beings joyfully celebrating their life on this earth. Yes I said beings. We hardly understand our own being-ness, never mind that of the world around us and the many living things God has created and placed in this Garden of Eden for us to enjoy. And yes, I said Garden of Eden, for with the eyes of faith, God will reveal to you the beauty which surrounds us in this world, in this community where we live. We will no longer see it as dark, foreboding and threatening, ugly and overwhelming, fearsome and inhospitable, as though we were aliens sojourning in a strange land. We will smell the coffee and the flowers in the morning and give thanks to God: for this is the day that God has made and I will rejoice and be glad in it!

Personal experience will dictate our own image of the Being on the other end of our prayers.

- It could be fearsome and could send us cowering if we only experience God as a harsh demanding Judge. Yet that image, I suspect, is largely a projection of our own self-judgments, for we are far more demanding than any judge could ever be.
- It might be meditative, meeting the Spirit of God in the moments of silence we have found in the din of daily life. And this God, much like the blowing winds yesterday brings peace and calm to our anxious souls.
- It might be that of a figure like Santa Claus, who sees all that we do, and cares about us, and perhaps will bring favorable answers to our heartfelt prayers and desires, what ever they may be.
- It might be that of a loving God, a God who reminds us of the loving parents, or loving friends or a loving spouse. Love is at the core of God's being and who God is to us. How do we know? Jesus.

The Trinity expresses the breadth and depth of the human experience of God. Whom have you met in your prayers? Who is at the other end of the prayer line? Whom have you encountered on a gorgeous day as you walk about, especially in a garden or the woods or at the shore? Who is with you every breath you take? Who has numbered every hair on your head, if that even matters?

To God it does, for this Triune Being loves you and cares for you and beckons you to join with God in this life and the next. AMEN