

Trinity C

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Psalm 8

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

Title

Today, Trinity Sunday, is one of the few Sundays the Episcopal Church dedicates to an observance of the Doctrine of the Church.

It's kind of odd, in that sense, so it might — or perhaps should — lead us believe that this *is really important*.

In the Catechism of the Episcopal Church (found on pages 845 - 862 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer), in the sections covering The Creeds and The Holy Spirit, we are told that the Trinity is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as proclaimed in the Athanasian Creed, an ancient document proclaiming the nature of the Incarnation and of God. “We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost.”¹

Theologians have spent entire careers attempting to unpack the singular and yet triune nature of our God. Though this scholarship has netted us an almost endless number of ways to describe our one, true, triune God —

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athanasian_Creed

any of which may be correct or true or accurate — none of which proves to be complete.

So, *why* dedicate a Sunday to The Trinity?

Well, that question is, perhaps, kind of the point.

...or, an important piece, anyway.

What do I mean?

The development of the doctrine of The Trinity stems from the wrestlings of the early church, and their desire to make sense of their belief in one God and their actual, lived experience of God's activity powerfully witnessed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and after an encounter with the power of the Holy Spirit.²

At some point between then and now the Trinity became more about accepting metaphysical doctrines and definitions of God than describing an experience of the living God: the relational, communal, accessible nature of the God we know in Christ through the testimony of the Spirit.

This relational, communal, accessible nature of God is told to us in today's Gospel: Jesus promises that the Spirit will *come* and *guide* into truth those who follow in his ways.

² <http://www.davidlose.net/2016/05/trinity-c-shh-dont-mention-the-trinity/>

Jesus knows that there are some things the disciples simply can't bear to know or understand yet. They need more time, opportunity, and experience to learn. Jesus knew that the disciples – those who had spent so much time with Jesus – did not have all the answers.

Then, as now, the community of those who follow The Way continues to be dependent — on the Spirit and on each other. Christian community is just that, a community, *relationship* because the Spirit so often speaks to us through those around us, their person, their action, and their words.

What we hear is that part of being a Trinitarian community is to strive to be a place that knows it doesn't have to have all the answers — it can't, it doesn't. This opens up space for conversation that values those who bring different voices and experiences within its circle. Conversation, valuing difference, being inclusive — these ideas are given plenty of lip service these days, and they aren't easy. Genuine community, beloved community, is often challenging, and it is also creative, productive, enriching: life-giving.

In Paul's epistle, he insists that it is because we have the peace of God “through justification” that we can endure almost anything — and not just *endure* it, but grow stronger, and find hope.

What Paul means by justification here is simply that God promises to accept us as we are — not because of who we are or what we have done,

or what we might do or who we might become, not because of who we have promised to be or what we have pledged to do.

God accepts you because that is who God is and what God does. The worthy and the unworthy are loved equally by God so that we will know God's peace and in turn extend the same love, grace, mercy, and acceptance to those around us.

Trinity Sunday reminds us that the essential nature of God *is relationship*.

This week, take some time each day to look around you and see the gifts of God that already surround you. Notice them and give thanks for them.

Listen for how the Spirit, the Paraclete, the Comforter is calling you to do your part in creating communities that value each other and responds to the needs of the world in confidence, hope, and love.

Amen.

The Rev. Lauren Sayre Lukason

June 12, 2022

Christ Episcopal Church, Needham, MA (with Livestream)