

Holy Trinity Sunday A June 07 2020
Matthew 28:16-20; Genesis 1:26-27
St Peter's Lutheran Church Elizabeth
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Grace to you and peace from God the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

'Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."' "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." *'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.'* From the very first verses of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul, the identity and truth of God in all his majesty, and his love and concern for intimacy with humankind, rings out for the world to hear. Let's pray:

Today is the Feast of the Holy Trinity. So, what I'm about to tell you may sound a bit strange. It might even sound unfaithful, irreverent, heretical even, especially today, on Trinity Sunday. But I think it's necessary if we're to engage fully with and in, the life of God. Are you ready? . . . Today, I want you to stop thinking about God. Did you hear me? I want you to stop thinking about God. Not what you expected? I'll explain what I mean.

How do you think I respond when someone says to me, "I don't understand the Trinity. It makes no sense to me. I don't get it, one God in three persons"? Don't worry. You're neither the first nor the last person who will struggle with that question.

I don't say anything, I just nod my head. After a while they'll break the silence when they realise that I'm not going to explain it. Eventually I might fire a hypothetical question back at them and say something like, "So tell me, what would you do if one day you finally figured it out, and you completely understood the Trinity?" Knowing you quick-witted lot, it'd be something like, "I'd probably come up

with another question, Pastor, another problem to be solved.” To which I would say, “You think too much.” And that’s the point. The Trinity is a mystery and one that can’t be comprehended rationally. Try studying the Athanasian Creed and you’ll understand what I mean.

Saints, I’ve become increasingly convinced that we spend too much time and effort thinking about God. That’s not just an observation. It’s also my confession and I love thinking about God. My point is, maybe we should spend less time *thinking* about God and instead simply *be* with God. For example, would you rather be with the one you love or think about the one you love? Would you prefer your relationships to be defined by love for someone else, or information about them?

We don’t think our way into relationships, do we? In today’s gospel, Jesus doesn’t say that we’re to make disciples of all nations by telling them to think about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He says, “baptise them;” immerse them, plunge them, wash them, soak them in the name, the attributes, and qualities, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This means we are all to live trinitarian lives. How could we not? How could it be any other way? We have been created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27) who is a trinity of persons.

In a way, I believe thinking about God keeps us from being present with God. In some way, thinking about God distances us from him and sets up a subject-object distinction; sort of a barrier between God and us. That’s the very opposite of trinitarian life. I don’t think we’ll ever truly appreciate how passionately God desires to bring us into his sphere of being, into his realm of love and protection, into conversation with him.

Think about it this way. We think about other people when we’re not with them, don’t we? We think about our children who have grown up and moved out. We think about our spouse when we’re away

from each other. We think about our friends when we're apart. We think about our loved ones who have died. But in that moment when we're really present, when we have truly shown up and offered all that we are and all that we have, we're not thinking about the other person, we're one with them. It's a moment of love, intimacy, and union. It's not defined by life or death, distance or geography. It's defined and made possible for us by God as an order of creation in human relationships.

To further understand this, I want you to think about the person with whom you have the closest, deepest, most intimate relationship. Picture him or her and your relationship. When you are with that person you don't consciously think about him or her, do you? In moments of ecstatic love, you look at him or her and see yourself in his or her life and he or she does the same with you. You open yourselves to each other. You give yourselves to the other and receive the other into yourself. That's the trinitarian life. It's the dance of love; an ongoing choreography that's happening all the time.

In the midst of an honest, real, and meaningful conversation you don't think about the other person. You're with them and they're with you. A single life encompasses and flows between you. You don't make that happen; it just happens. That's trinitarian life.

When you're rolling on the floor, laughing, and playing with your child or grandchild, you're not thinking about them, you're completely open and present to their life and they to yours. The line between their life and your life gets blurred and there's only love. That's trinitarian life.

Sometimes you see the world through other people's eyes and their joys or sorrows take root in you as if they were your own. When that happens, you're not receiving news or information about the other person, you're sharing a common life. You're loving your neighbour as yourself. That's trinitarian life.

Every now and then, you might get so immersed in prayer that you're no longer conscious that you're praying. You're no longer thinking about God. Rather, your life is one with God's and you're participating in the life of the Holy Trinity. I have personally experienced this and it's as indescribable as it is wonderful. That's trinitarian life.

Each of these are moments when we can honestly say, "I love, therefore I am" [1]. These moments and many others just like them are trinitarian moments. Love for one another and faith in the Holy Trinity are inseparable. You can't have one without the other. Our love for one another is crucial to understanding Trinitarian faith, and Trinitarian faith is what makes possible and gives meaning to our love for one another.

The Holy Trinity isn't a concept to be explained, numbers to be calculated, or a problem to be solved. The Holy Trinity, God, is a life to be lived, a love to be shared, a beauty to be revealed, a relationship to be immersed in. Stop thinking about God. Instead, live his life, reveal his beauty, and share his love with all the nations. Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

[1] *I Love, Therefore I Am* by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware
<https://incommunion.org/2009/06/23/i-love-therefore-i-am/>
accessed 03/06/2020.