

Today, *Trinity Sunday*, we are called to think about God, as the *Holy Trinity*. And that is quite a challenge. Because this is a very *big picture* idea.

References to the Trinity are so pervasive in *worship* and in *symbols* in church that it can easily be invisible to our attention. It is kind of like: How often do we notice the *air we breathe*? In church life, *the language of the Trinity is as pervasive as air*. Almost every single part of our *worship service every Sunday* references, in some way, the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The many *fleur-de-lis* found on the chancel ceiling and the two right here on the steps at the entrance to the chancel—are also often associated with the Trinity.

Baptisms are always done in the name of the Trinity. That is why those words are carved into the floor around the baptismal font. And the Trinity is so important that the last thing that is normally said over a person's life in a church or at the graveside is the blessing of the Trinity: "The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always."

It is very curious that a way of naming God that is...so unusual...is so thoroughly embedded in Christian tradition. Yet when we read the New Testament carefully, what we can see is that the language of the Trinity is already starting to emerge, such as we heard in the reading from Romans today. Instead of the Trinity being a doctrinal *invention*...or some kind of peculiar spiritual "higher math problem" of $1 = 3$ and $3 = 1$...it looks a lot more like the knowledge of the Trinity was something that the earliest Christians were...*given...to help us*. So the Church began to realize that as *Jesus spoke of the Father and the Holy Spirit*...that a unique revelation of God...was appearing to us. The challenge in every generation, is to rediscover why...*Jesus himself used trinitarian language to speak of God and his relationship to God*.

One way I have thought to describe it this year is to say...that *the Trinity names a God...that we do not know*...a God...*we*...would not be inclined to imagine (except perhaps for a while as children).

What we have been given is this language of *the Father completely loving the Son...and the Son completely loving the Father...and the Holy Spirit completely abiding in this love. And then it is out of this complete love that eternally happens within God...that God's love overflows...creating all things seen and unseen...and eternally loving all things that God makes*.

Once Christians received the gift of the knowledge of the Trinity, we received a revelation that God in fact is *not* a god who is detached, self-absorbed, volatile, and potentially destructive. That is *not* God—that *would be us at our worst. And that would be the whole created world at its worst. | We come to exist within God's love...and yet...mysteriously become detached...within the very freedom...that the Trinity's love has for us*.

Every time we name the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" we should be jolted, and reminded, that we speak of a God who is far better than we may assume...a God who is far better than the world is...and a God who is far better than the Church often manages to clearly say. Instead, we keep making God over into *our own image*.

This is why naming the Trinity is so important...*so that God can truly be for us...the God who truly loves*.

In every baptism...where the Trinity is always named...we are also asked two fundamental questions: (1) Do we *renounce* sin and the powers of evil? and (2) Do we *affirm* our trust in God's grace and love as revealed in Jesus Christ? | Those questions are never done with us. | Every Christian stands at the strange *disjunction*...between *what God is really like*...and...*what the world has tragically become*. | Even trusting in God and trying to do the right thing...our lives are still endlessly complicated...so often ambiguous...and seldom with clear victories. | *And yet the Holy Trinity puts within us a yearning...for a homecoming of we ourselves and the whole world...to the true and living God...who truly loves...and is our only hope*.