

Last Sunday, the Day of Pentecost, I tried to talk about God the Holy Spirit. Today, Trinity Sunday, I'm supposed to try to talk about God the Holy Trinity.

The language of both permeates Christianity: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And it has generated an enormous amount of reflection by Christians over the millennia. It can easily seem like you need an advanced theological degree to talk about it or understand it. So there may be a lot of Episcopalians sitting in the pews this morning, wondering if they are going to be overwhelmed by theological abstractions. Well, that is probably going to happen! It is almost inevitable.

And yet, while priests and doctors of theology have pondered the Trinity all these many years, and still are, it isn't necessary for everyone to do that. What is so special about the language of God the Trinity which has been given to us is that it is not first an invitation to *understand*, but an invitation to *deeply trust* in God.

I have noticed in reading the lives and prayers of Christians of the past, that the Christians who spoke the most of the Trinity (i.e. Celtic Christians, Julian of Norwich, Karl Barth) were people who intimately trusted in the goodness and companionship of God in their lives, regardless of what was happening in their worlds. Of course, we can trust God with our lives without having the language of the Trinity to talk about it—the Holy Spirit does things like that. But it is curious to me that a deeper awareness of the Trinity does so often seem to translate into greater trust in God. And I have wanted to understand why.

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So here's one way I think about it, that built into the spirituality of the Trinity is an awareness of three things that matter a lot for living:

#### The mystery of God

The mystery of God doesn't mean that we *cannot* understand anything about God—it means that God is the One whom we can *endlessly* understand. We all end up, without intending it, with small ideas of God, and we often don't realize it until something shakes our world and some of our assumptions about God don't seem to fit anymore. Hard changes can lead us to give up on the idea of God...or it can invite us deeper into the mystery of God. When we encounter the inexplicable in our lives we are not far from the mystery of God. The Trinity is mysterious.

#### The love of God

The mystery of God harbors a secret, of sorts. It is that God is extravagantly, long-suffering, and patiently in love with all humanity and all creation. We are all God's idea. We have never stopped being God's passion. And this is why there can be such a thing as trust in God and faith in God. Trust and faith are not some kind of transaction where if we can manage to feel or think a certain way about God then, maybe, God will love us. Instead, the love of God is *foundational*, making trust and faith possible at all. This is so much what Jesus is all about. The Trinity is the love of God.

#### The involvement of God

We could possibly have a belief in God the Father, the great mystery, where that mystery is cold and uncaring. We could possibly have a belief in God the Son, where Jesus, even in God's love, has come to us and gone, leaving us alone and on our own. But to believe in God the Holy Spirit, reveals that God is neither cold and uncaring, nor has God left us bereft. The love of God is steady and sure, and God is intimately involved with us. Our whole lives and the whole history of the world and the universe is in movement toward a greater destiny than the news and social media feeds and our self-examinations can ever tell us. The Trinity is the involvement of God in this world.

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One Christian of old, Julian of Norwich, who was steeped in the spirituality of the Trinity, put it this way: “And thus our good Lord answered all the questions and doubts I could put forward, saying most comfortingly as follows: ‘I *will* make all things well, I *shall* make all things well, I *may* make all things well and I *can* make all things well; and you shall see for yourself that *all things shall be well.*’”