

**Trinity Sunday  
June 7, 2020**

**In the name of God, who in Jesus,  
taught us the meaning of unconditional Love.  
AMEN**

I would like to begin this morning by acknowledging so much that I know is on the hearts and minds of this St. Cyprian's Community of Faith. I know from talking with several of you, and I know from my own thoughts and those shared with me by our adult children, that the ensuing manifestation of our fractured country after the killing of George Floyd leaves us stunned, confused, and totally, totally not knowing what to do to help, trying to know what we should be doing to help make a difference, to aid in making it reality that justice is for ALL in America. So I would like to share some thoughts about all of that before moving on to the celebration of this Trinity Sunday, the day the church celebrates God made known to us in three different ways.

I know well the frustration, the anger at the injustice, the yearning to know what to do to make things better, especially for those who are undeservedly Victims. We can feel overwhelmed with the pain others are experiencing, with so much that is heart-breakingly wrong, dreadfully wrong, in our society. But even with all that, I really believe that it is essential that we each do all we can to take care of ourselves, so that we do have something to offer in some way for the good of another. And those needs and those ways we can ease another's burden will continue to present themselves. And your involvement, your thoughtful, loving response to another will always be such a gift that will make life a little easier for those who are touched by you.

Let me share a little story that may help say what I mean, because I too struggle with how best to try to make the world a better place, how to help fix things that are so wrong, indeed evil.

*A little boy was walking along the edge of the sea where the waves had washed up many Starfish. He knew they belonged in the sea, so, as he walked he picked up one after another of the Starfish and tossed them gently back into the water.*

*A man, who had been walking toward the boy from some distance away, had been observing this strange behavior of the young boy. When he was near enough to be heard, he asked what the boy was doing, to which he replied, "I'm returning these Starfish to their home in the water." The man said, "Well, that's silly. What difference is this going to make? There are hundreds of them." The boy replied, "Yes sir, but it makes a difference for this one."*

I hold on to that. Anything we can do to help ease the way for another "makes a difference for that one". And even though we would like to be able to make a significant change in the hate and selfishness within our nation at this time, I believe there is a ripple effect to our being loving, kind, accepting, compassionate and as helpful as we can be to ease even one other's burden every day, in every way we can.

Don't be overcome by the magnitude of what's wrong. Rather, continue to focus on what is good, kind, just and loving, and ADD your Love to that, everywhere you can...and especially add it to a troubled life or a difficult, sad situation whenever and wherever you can.

I say all of this with a heart filled with great respect and the utmost high regard and so much love for all that each of you is experiencing and for the love you are manifesting in these hurting times. I am grateful to God to be among you.

And now, I had better consider the message of Trinity Sunday or I will lose my job. So, shift gears with me, if you will, and let's consider the word of the Lord from our Holy Scriptures this morning.

Today is Trinity Sunday – the day set aside to focus on God in three persons – one of the profound mysteries of the Church. In fact, the church has traditionally referred to this doctrine as the MYSTERY of the Trinity. The fact that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all mentioned together in both the Epistle and Gospel, reminds us that God IS experienced in different ways...and THAT really IS the good news of the doctrine of the Trinity. We are assured that the different expressions of God... are not three different realities, but rather, different manifestations, different expressions of the one Reality - our ONE God. That ONE GOD is made known to us... in creation,... in history,... and in the sanctuary of our own hearts.

Long ago, St. Patrick tried to teach about the Trinity by using a shamrock, a lovely bloom with three separate green leaves, each distinct, but all as one shamrock.//

But I think of the reality that each of us lives, perhaps says it even better. Each of us has different ways we are known. I am my mother's daughter, but I am also my daughter's Mother and certainly I am my husband's wife. But I am just one being...me, Deena. And YOU know that same reality for yourselves. In today's Gospel, Jesus devotes some of his final words to telling the disciples about the interconnectedness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. ..and adds those wonderful, comforting words: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

We know that some people say, "I don't need to go to church; I can experience God in nature." I cannot agree that they do not need to be a part of a worshipping community, but they are right about finding God in nature, in the created world. The order, the beauty, and the wonder of the world about us...that part that has nothing to do with what human beings have assembled. Certainly, it is this awe and wonder of God's world that prompted the words of Psalm 19: *The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.* Meeting God in nature can be VERY humbling.

Let me share a little story that I probably offered once before. A young boy once asked his father, "Has anybody ever seen God?" His father, who was preoccupied at the time, said, "Don't bother me with such foolish questions." Sometime later the boy asked his Pastor the same question. The Pastor said, "Nobody ever sees God and lives." As we can imagine, this scared the little boy, so he stopped asking the question...for awhile. That is until some months later when he went fishing with his grandfather on a beautiful autumn afternoon. He loved his grandfather and he thought he was very wise and always truthful, so he asked his grandfather, "Has anyone ever seen God?" The old man replied, "Sometimes I think I never see anything else."

Indeed. Those who are in tune with the sounds and wonders of nature can hardly help but praise God, the creator of all that is, seen AND unseen.

But the Trinity reminds us that God can also be met in history. When we read about Jesus of Nazareth, the living expression of God, who walked on this earth in the first century and who died on a cross in Jerusalem in the time of Pontius Pilate, we are reading about God in history. Granted, Jesus is much more than history, for our resurrection faith declares that Jesus lives on today. But, generally speaking, we first met Jesus as an historical person, a person who figured into certain events and incidents at a specific point in world history.

WE call this: GOD THE SON, because in him God exists as a real person, assuring us that God knows what it means to be human...the pain of it, and the joy of it. The historical Jesus is not an end in itself, however. The gospel writers were not really interested in showing who Jesus WAS...but who he IS. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did not write to provide biographies of Jesus. They wrote so that we might believe in the LIVING CHRIST. And certainly, a significant part of what Jesus says to his disciples in today's Gospel is about the Holy Spirit, just as it was last week. Jesus wants his disciples to REALIZE that the reality of God they WILL experience is the SAME reality they have BEEN experiencing outwardly, in walking with Jesus. In other words, the expression they will know from now on in the Holy Spirit IS God, the same God they have already met in Jesus.

I think it comes down to this: It matters little what name we use for the presence of God. What DOES matter is that we respond to this GOD-NESS. The voice of God WITHIN is as divine as the EARTHLY VOICE of Jesus. AND as Divine as the wild splendor of God which shouts in creation. Jesus spoke of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to enable us to recognize the Divine Presence, whenever, and however we encounter God. /// //// The noted theologian and author, Frederick Buechner, whom Fr. Ted has quoted in his previous two sermons, says: "Still it is...Father, Son and Holy Spirit mean... that the MYSTERY beyond us, the MYSTERY among us, and the MYSTERY within us... are ALL the same MYSTERY." Unquote. So, I say, for us,...the need is NOT to UNDERSTAND and EXPLAIN the mystery but to BASK in it. And to joyously respond to the Divine Presence of God whenever and however God makes that presence known.

Last Sunday was the feast of Pentecost. ...the gift of the Holy Spirit being shared with the disciples of Jesus. With that gift and its strength, the disciples went out to heal, to preach, and to teach all over the known world. Thus, the church was born. Pray God that that same Spirit and that same strength may be upon the church today.

The Trinity...Three Persons – One God. Maybe if we did not say three persons it would help.

Scripture and Tradition show us that people experience God in three very different ways: first, as above or beyond us, as God the Father, the Creator God. Second, as God alongside us...as God the Son, or God made known to us in Jesus. And third, as God within and among us...as God the Holy Spirit. This is all an effort to say that the three "persons", the father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveal that God is active and dynamic, reaching out in love to people and to the world...not unreachable and unapproachable. As Christians, God is Love... Love known to us in countless ways, in BOUNDLESS

ways. We are assured that the different expressions of God are not three different realities, but, different expressions of the one Reality...that God is ONE...Our God of LOVE.

May WE respond joyously to the Divine Presence of God...whenever, wherever, and however, God makes that presence known.

As Father Ted would say in his prayer with us before he preaches:

In the name of God made known to us in the wonder of creation;

The God alive in each of us as God was alive in Jesus;

The God made known to us in the power of the Spirit;

THAT'S THE TRINITY! Amen