

## REFLECTIONS FOR TRINITY SUNDAY ~ 04 June 2023

### The Mount ~ The Residence at Littledale

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." How many times every single day we bless ourselves with these words – in the morning as we awake and at night when we prepare to sleep, as we begin and end our meals, as we pray, after we listen to the Gospel reading at Mass, when we pass in front of the church or enter the church. . . In doing so, we are remembering the incarnation with mind and heart and body, the crucifixion with the movement in the shape of the cross, and the Trinity with the words spoken. We do so usually without even thinking about these mysteries; but our doing so strengthens our spirits even as it engages our hands and our voices.

*Do you want to know what goes on in the core of the Trinity? I will tell you.*

*In the core of the Trinity the Father laughs and gives birth to the Son.*

*The Son laughs back at the Father and gives birth to the Spirit.*

*The whole Trinity laughs and gives birth to us.*

~ Meister Eckhart



***Holy Trinity*, Joó Zoltán, Hungary**

Today on Trinity Sunday, we bring together all the special feasts of our church year – Lent, Easter, and Pentecost – as we celebrate the *Three in One* and *One in Three* or, as Leonardo Boff, the liberation theologian, says, "In the beginning is not the solitude of a One, of an eternal Being, alone and infinite. Rather, in the beginning is the communion of the three Unique Ones." The mystery of God and the mystery of Trinity are beyond our understanding. The spiritual writer, Suzanne Guthrie, says it so well, "Knowing God is as illusive as predicting a firefly's trajectory over a field of hay after dusk, as futile as keeping track of a drop of rain fallen into the ocean in a storm, as blinding as gazing directly at the sun. But contemplating Trinity offers lessons in the dynamism of

creation, incarnation, delight, genesis, the inter-relationship of being, of nothing, of everything, of darkness, of light." Ron Rolheiser omi gives us some comfort with his words, "The Christian belief that God is a trinity helps underscore how rich the mystery of God is and how our experience of God is always richer than our concepts and language about God. All of us, believers and atheists, need to be more humble in our language about God. The idea of God needs to stretch, not shrink, the human imagination. Thank God, for the complexity of the doctrine of the Trinity!"

The Scriptures do not use the word Trinity to describe God. It was not until the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE that we named the doctrine of Trinity as one God in three persons. In the coming together of the Scriptures and the tradition, we find a way to deepen the relationship between God and us and find the ways in which we live into the image and likeness of God in which we were created by God (Gen 1:27). What is there about this Trinity that helps us do this? Three words come into our minds and hearts: love, communion, inclusion.

In the reading from the book of Exodus, from Mount Sinai God describes Godself in response to Moses, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex 34:6). “Merciful,” “gracious,” “slow to anger,” “abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” – these are the ways of being which God uses to describe who God is. Note the phrase not “showing” but “abounding in”! These are the ways of being of the God in whose image you and I were created – the ways of being in which we are to image the face of God. In that same passage, Moses pleads with God to understand that we humans will not always act in God’s image, so Moses gives God two more qualities for us to imitate: “forgiving” and “accepting” – “Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance” (Ex 34:9).

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century book, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, we read that our encounter with God and our relationship with God, not our knowledge of God, are what matters, “Thought cannot comprehend God. And so, I prefer to abandon all I can know, choosing rather to love God whom I cannot know. Though we cannot know God we can love God. By love God may be touched and embraced, never by thought.” Pope Francis reflects that this relationship of love is at the heart of knowing the Trinity, “And this is faith: to welcome God-Love; to welcome this God-Love who gives himself in Christ, who moves us in the Holy Spirit; to let ourselves be encountered by God and to trust in God. This is Christian life. To love, to encounter God, to seek God; and God seeks us first; God encounters us first.”

The 14<sup>th</sup> century mystic, Julian of Norwich, images God’s encountering us in a wonderfully inclusive way, ‘And the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enclosed. And the high goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and

in him we are enclosed and he in us. We are enclosed in the Father, and we are enclosed in the Son, and we are enclosed in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enclosed in us, the Son is enclosed in us, and the Holy Spirit is enclosed in us, almighty, all wisdom and all goodness, one God, one Lord.” Six centuries later, Rowan Williams, the former Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, echoes Julian’s words as he sees our imitation of the inclusion of Trinity leading to the harmony of contemplation and action in our lives, “Knowing the Trinity is being involved in this circling movement: drawn by the Son towards the Father, drawn into the Father’s breathing out of the Spirit so that the Sons’ life may be again made real in the world. It is where contemplation and action become inseparable.”

Thomas Berry cp broadens this love between God and us to the whole cosmos, “The universe is not a collection of objects, but a communion of subjects.” Veronica Lawson rsm deepens this image of an encounter with God shaping our encounter with all beings, “Trinitarian love calls us to live in harmony with one another and with the whole of the Earth community. It calls us to examine our tendency to privilege those who look and act like us and who see the world as we do. It calls us to hear the plea of Pope Francis to ‘enlarge the space of our tents’ (Isa 54:2) and walk together in faith and hope and love as we prepare for the October session of the *Synod on Synodality*.”



**The Holy Trinity, Mary Jane Miller**

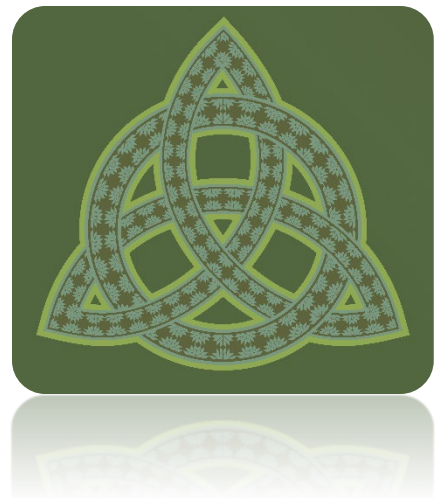
Knowing God as Trinity then means living in love and communion with our God and with one another (human and other-than-human). In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he says simply, "Agree with one another, live in peace" (2 Cor 13:11). For those of us who are Christians, we believe that Jesus the Christ is our way into the communion with God, "For God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). With the same understanding, the beautiful trinitarian blessing in Paul's letter begins not with the Creator but with the Son, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you" (2 Cor 13:13).

We return to the first part of our reflection when we noted that this feast of the Trinity brings together the great feasts of our liturgical year. It becomes the bridge between these great feasts and "ordinary time." We live our everyday lives in the real and in the ordinary. The spiritual writer, Jan Richardson, helps us make the link between the mystery of Trinity and the living of our everyday lives, "In ordinary time, God meets us also in the rhythms of our daily living: in the patterns and repetitions and rituals that give order to our days; in the relationships and connections that reveal the God who inhabits every hour. In the Celtic triple spiral, there is a space where the three spirals connect. It is both a place of meeting and of sheer mystery. . . We are to be a living sign of the Trinity who dwells in eternal, intertwined relationship within itself and with all creation. As individuals and as communities, we are beckoned to times of spiraling inward, to attend to our own souls. We are propelled, in turn, into times of spiraling outward, to attend to the world beyond us. In all our turnings, the presence of God persists."

We conclude our reflections on the mystery that is Trinity with a prayer-poem by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Names of God*. I encourage you to allow one of these descriptions of Trinity to resonate within you this week, to speak to you, to give you one more roadmap for the way in which you personally live into the image and likeness of God in your real and ordinary and precious life:

The Holy Trinity is not a doctrine but a mystery, a koan,  
the paradox of three persons in one, a meditation on the names of God.  
Meditate on the mystery. Pray with the names. Let them speak.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit.  
Mother, Child, Love Between.  
Creator, Christ, Holy Breath.  
Lover, Beloved, Love flowing between.  
Source of all Being, Eternal Word, Living Spirit.  
Abba God, Only Begotten, Spirit of Love.  
Infinite Parent, Infinite Sibling, Infinite Self.  
The One Beyond, the One Beside, the One Within.  
Transcendent Mystery, Healing Presence, Emergent Energy.  
Source of Love, Experience of Love, Energy of Love.  
Holy One, Holy Many, Holy Us.  
Lord of the Universe, Jesus of Nazareth, Heart of my  
Soul.  
Loving Silence, Gentle Word, Abiding Love.  
Mystery of Being, Gift of Love, Breath of Life.  
Mother, Son, Holy Spirit.  
Loving One, Loving One, Loving One.



Blessings on this Trinity Sunday!