

Holy Everything  
John 16:12-15  
Trinity Sunday, June 16, 2019  
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John 16:12-15 (NRSV)

<sup>12</sup>“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

If there is anything (anything) that we can agree on in the church it is that *trying to explain* Trinity is very, very (very) difficult. Today, in addition to celebrating Father’s Day, it is Trinity Sunday and because I craved being able to unravel the subject, (as I imagine fathers do often) I prayed and then I read blogs this week.

Some clergy called Trinity a doctrine.  
Others call that theory hogwash.

To be honest, I can’t tell you which came first, the chicken or the egg, but I do know that it is our belief, as United Methodists, that the Trinity is **not** a doctrine, but a Person - three Persons in One, who IS the God we worship.

And, as far as we **can** KNOW God, one way to define the Three-in-One, Trinity, is our Creator, our Redeemer and our Sustainer.

In fact, the UMC Articles of Religion say:

*“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity” the Father, the Son, and the Holy [Spirit].*

All THAT to say, is that the primary point of THIS Sunday (from all other Sundays of the year) is that today we focus on God's **being** rather than on God's doing...  
... on who God is rather than on what God has done.

Have you got it?

Trinity is not a doctrine but a mystery.

In theology, unlike a Scooby Doo detective story, a mystery isn't a puzzle we can figure out if we have enough clues.

In theology, the word "mystery" is a substitute for "sacrament".

We have two sacraments in United Methodism.

Baptism is a mystery that is more than water and words.

And Holy Communion is the mystery of bread and juice being, at the same time, the Body and Blood of Christ. In the prayer that closes the Great Thanksgiving liturgy we pray, "*we give to You [o God] thanks for this holy mystery...*"

And just because we can't explain *mystery*, ISN'T saying that instead it can lead us into something to be experienced and to draw us deeper than just what appears on the surface.

When I'm at school in the summer, students lead the daily chapel worship. The professor-mentors have planned a calendar of Scripture that will be used so that the student clergy are able to touch a lot of passages and when we come home, we have a worship book with notes and ideas and liturgy plans.

I can tell you, as seminary students, no one (!) wants to work on the service that includes the subject of Trinity. No one wants to make a theological foo-bar with seminary professors, authors, and theologians filling the chapel.

I recall one service that tried to explain the **unexplainable mystery**.

Suffice it to say, it was not a clearly defined service. And any clock-watcher would have been happy with its quick execution.

So, with that, I'll say that THAT is all the *fancy* theological talk you will hear about the Trinity today.

What we really need to talk about is how we can have the *holy mystery* draws us closer and deeper to experiencing Trinity, and *how we are* impacted by the Creator God, by the Redeemer Christ, and by the Sustainer Holy Spirit.

They are the 3-but-One who loved us first and will always.

The theologian Augustine used another three-word description when he called them the Initiator, the Mediator, and the Unifier. Augustine used those terms in his book called The Trinity (which was NOT one of his best sellers.) So, see, even someone like Augustine, an early influence to the Western Church, who wrote books on the subject of Trinity, spent his lifetime trying to understand.

And even though this mystery of God, revealed in three ways, is the core belief of Christianity, it's okay to struggle to explain it. Maybe what we should do, as one commentary said, "perhaps the best way to approach the Trinity is by not trying to explain it, but rather to imitate it."

The reading that Kim shared for us, from the Gospel of John, was just a snippet of what takes up FOUR chapters. Those chapters are known as the High Priestly Prayer or the Farewell Discourse of Jesus.

To me, it's more than a prayer.

And it's something sweeter than "discourse."

It's clearly from Jesus' heart, as he almost implores his followers to grasp that God first loved them.

You see, Dear Ones, God didn't NEED to create us.

God DESIRED to create us to have a relationship with us.

And God poured out LOVE that started at "in the beginning" and when we are believers in Jesus Christ, it will continue forever.

God had a plan when God created us.

Each of us was on God's mind and in God's loving.

This point, in the Gospel of John, is just before Jesus' arrest and all that follows.

And, at the risk of “blowing their minds” Jesus is being careful of what and how much he tells his followers. He says, *“I have many things to say to you, but you cannot hear them now.”*

He knows he’s told them all that they could bear; they’ve been shown all that they needed to see.

Did he think they really couldn’t handle anymore or was he concerned that they might not remember or miss the point completely?

Until we get to Heaven ourselves, (and can ask) we can only speculate. And trust.

Even though we celebrated Pentecost last Sunday, with the coming of the Holy Spirit onto the disciples, 50 days after Easter, today’s reading backtracks us a little chronologically.

The disciples’ hearts are breaking as they realize that Jesus is leaving. And frankly, they’re terrified because they think they’re going to be left totally alone. Praise God, we know the rest of the story.

We know they won’t be alone.

We know that the very spirit of God, The Holy Spirit that moved over the chaos at the beginning of creation, will move over (and into) them.

The Trinity, all parts of the whole, (here’s another trilogy description) are the Being, the Loving, and the Doing behind all created things.

And as we move into, beginning next week, the long, 26-week season of Pentecost, we recognize that we’re halfway through the Christian year. Can you believe it?

Since last November and Advent, we’ve focused on the **events** in the life of Jesus. Now, until Advent comes again, (on the first Sunday of December) we’re going to concentrate on the **teachings** of Jesus and practice living in the power of the Holy Spirit that is IN each of us.

The Creator sent the Mediator.  
The Mediator promised the Unifier.

Jesus' words, in his final discourse, gave a promise: "*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you....*"

And what does this tell us about God, the Trinity?

Well, that Trinity is "above all and in all and through all." (Ephesians 4:6)

We can't overlook Trinity, even though it IS a difficult subject.

And as difficult as it IS, it SHOULDN'T be a dusty "heard it so many times" Sunday School fact.

So, if we are going to live out our faith, even when it seems (like the disciples) that it is more than we can bear...

Let's live with "fresh-every-day" source of wonder...something that drives us to know God better, share Christ more, and work as an instrument of the Holy Spirit.

To understand the 3-part God we believe in, we have to embrace the awe-inspiring, life-giving truth.

God **is** reclaiming God's Kingdom.

God **is** redeeming all things, including us.

The Creator chose to reveal his love through the sacrifice of the Redeemer and then sent the *promised* Holy Spirit.

In the opening sentences of Confessions, another of his books, Augustine wrote: "You [God] stir [humanity] to take pleasure in praising You, because You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You."

I pray that's what the season of Pentecost will be for us. That our restless hearts will be soothed.

Because, Dear Ones, "God is both the goal of our journey and the means by which we find [God.]" (Alister McGrath)

Maybe Trinity Sunday isn't so much a mystery, even if it comes each year, right after the Sunday when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Maybe it is a point in time when we are invited **into** the season of Pentecost.

In the 1960's when the United States embarked into space with the Apollo program, we can recall that the astronauts and everyone that supported the program, were ALL on a journey. In the process, there'd be fear and challenges, but it is appropriate to say that those men and women were changed. As a country, we were changed. As students, we were changed.

Through a process there was change.

Our journey of faith should be that way, too.

Learning is a challenge.

I'm not implying that we'll "solve the Holy Mystery" but just as Jesus spoke to the disciples he told **us**: *"I have more things to tell you, teach you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will lead you into all truth."*

Dear Ones, I look forward to the season of Pentecost with you.

Jesus had things to say to the disciples and He has things to say to us, every day.

There will be limits to what we can take on and absorb.

Sometimes, we'll come to spots on the journey when we have to stop and rest, refuel...we won't *always* be stomping off to tackle another frontier.

But, we do know that the Holy Spirit is in us and the Spirit knows what we can handle at each point in our journey.

Our Bible is God's Truth and foundation.

It's where we begin.

And what's the greatest truth? Karl Barth, one of the great theological minds of modern times once said the greatest truth is this, *"Jesus loves me, this I know, for the bible tells me so."*

And because our Creator made us in love...to love...

And our Redeemer loves us..."the Bible tells us so"...

And the Unifier is IN us to lead us in love...  
What an equation for imitating!

I think we've got a firm grip on the route of our journey and we can repeat the words of our prayer earlier:

*We bind ourselves, O God, today, to the strong name of the Trinity.  
And we name you: Three in One, One in Three; and claim our place in your  
community of love. AMEN!*