

The Rev. Emily Dunevant

Isaiah 6:1-8  
 Psalm 29  
 Romans 8:12-17  
 John 3:1-17

May 30, 2021  
 Trinity Sunday

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Today, we observe Trinity Sunday...that one day out of the year we are called to go into deep theological discourses of the nature of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In as little as 10 minutes, we clergy are charged with unpacking one of the most complex teachings of our faith. And you are charged with leaving here today with a perfectly clear understanding of what our Trinitarian faith is all about. Something that scholars spend their entire life considering, you are going to get all the answers you have longed for right here, right now, in this brief homily.

Think we can do it?

Well, yes and no. Can I impart to you what countless books and classes and lifetimes have been spent trying to explain? No, I can't. But, can I give you an explanation of the Trinity that is worth believing in? Worth committing your life to? YES, I believe that I can.

As I was reading through our summer book selection, *Life of the Beloved* by Henri Nouwen, I found what I believe to be the most compelling rationale for the Trinity that I have ever read. Nouwen doesn't outline facts and figures or theological discourses. He doesn't try to parse scripture or recite debates from church luminaries. He doesn't even talk about the Trinity in theological terms. He just starts with a basic question. The question is this...how could he explain the nature of God in way that made sense?

Well, he decided to simply speak from the heart, to speak about his personal experience with God. And, through his sharing we start to uncover the heart of the Trinity in a deeply personal and understandable way.

The initial request for this dialogue came from Nouwen's dear friend, Fred, who was seeking to understand God more fully. And he said to Nouwen...

*"Speak to us about the deepest yearning of our hearts, about our many wishes, about hope; not about the many strategies for survival, but about trust; not about new methods of satisfying our emotional needs, but about love. Speak to us about a vision larger than our changing perspectives and about a voice deeper than the clamorings of our mass media. Yes, speak to us about something or someone greater than ourselves. Speak to us about...God."*

Speak to us about God. Fred desperately wanted to understand why God mattered and why God cared about his own life. How could a God "up there" care about an individual life "down here." Nouwen struggled with how to do this well. God is so big, so hard to explain. But his friend pressed him anyway...as Nouwen says, it was a cry welling up in the human heart...tell me about God.

Well, Nouwen knew that no hefty theological explanation would do. What he uncovers so beautifully for Fred, and for us, says something that scholars can never quite explain but that our hearts fully know...the nature of God is experienced in how we live each day, how we are uplifted and cared for, how we are forgiven and redeemed, how we are guided and comforted.

Nouwen says it starts this way...*“Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we are heard by our God who is all ears for us. Long before any person spoke to us in this world, we are spoken to by the voice of eternal love.”*

In other words, we are chosen and blessed...that’s God’s nature. And, in our choosing and in our blessing, God becomes a God who will never leave us alone. And to do that requires an expansive and far reaching manifestation of the Divine. A expression that pours forth in countless ways...through the Father who created us, through the Son who saved us, and through the Spirit who guides us. An expression that never, ever grows tired of being in our lives. And God is going to find a way, whatever it takes, to be with us and to love us.

Do you all know that old Gospel song:

And he walks with me and he talks with me  
 And he tells me I am his own  
 And the joy we share as we tarry there  
 None other has ever known

This is the God Nouwen is describing. A God that is involved in our lives and cares for us immeasurably. A God whose love is so personal and so profound that if we take time to listen and walk with God, we start to realize the value that God has placed upon each and every one of us. That is the heart of the Trinity...God’s love made manifest.

We are claimed by God through the Father, and through the Son, and through the Holy Spirit.

How might that look? Julian of Norwich reflects on it this way: *“And our good Lord answered to all the questions and doubts which I could raise, saying most comfortingly: I may make all things well, and I can make all things well, and I shall make all things well, and I will make all things well; and you will see yourself that every kind of thing will be well.”*

All will be well. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit open up avenues for God to be with us...to make things well...not a God up there but a God right here, right now.

I don’t think we need complicated descriptions of the Trinity. I think we simply need open hearts to say yes to being loved. You were created, redeemed, and continue to be guided in that love. Your life was chosen by God. Is there anything more powerful than to know that your

life was blessed from the beginning and that God is so invested in you that God finds these three ways to keep intervening and nurturing and encouraging you as you go about this life?

We know the nature of the Trinity in our heart. The Trinity of a living and active God. The Trinity who is strengthening us and encouraging us. The Trinity who is committed to us. The Trinity who seeks to always be in relationship with us...whatever it takes.

Speak to us about God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.