

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

Today we celebrate the three persons of the Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three persons and yet one is a concept that is nearly impossible for human minds to understand and yet that is the concept that our God presents to us – not one entity, but three in one.

Theologians over the centuries have defined the Trinity by saying that each of the three parts is coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial. Coequal, of course, means that each part is equally important. Coeternal means that they exist equally

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

in eternity, and consubstantial means that they are all three made of the same stuff. The same essence. Since the beginning of the Church, various councils have tried to establish a central doctrine of the Trinity to satisfy the needs of the believers in understanding God's relationship to Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

But, thankfully, I am not going to bore you all with the historical details of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. I'd like to invite you instead to consider what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit represent to you – in your own spiritual

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

journey and in your prayer life. In my own religious experience, I was taught as a child to pray to God and to sort of see Jesus as my buddy. The Holy Spirit was some strange entity that electrified certain members of the Southern Baptist Church where I grew up and made them tearful and ecstatic during the altar call.

Like most believers, though, my relationship with the three persons of the Trinity has changed over time. As an adult I began to study the Bible and think about the ways that the Trinity was represented in scripture. In our long reading

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

from Genesis today, we hear a beautiful, poetic description of God and the Holy Spirit working together to form creation. In today's Gospel from Matthew we hear Jesus issue the Great Commission to: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." Scripture has taught me many things about this complex, mysterious entity that we call the Trinity.

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

Over the years as I have grown in my faith, I realized that I could call upon the persons of the Trinity for different things at different times. I could ask God for strength and courage. I could ask Jesus for comfort and healing. I could ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and blessing. I could appeal to these different aspects of the one true and Holy God based on my needs at the time.

As a spiritual director I have also learned that sometimes people who have experienced religious trauma, or who are fearful of the idea of God as a male with

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

a white beard, can find a non-threatening way of visualizing God by connecting with one of the three Divine Persons of the Trinity as they perceive them, and not as they have been taught to perceive them.

Just about every sermon on the Trinity these days references the 2017 film called *The Shack*. If you haven't seen it yet, I highly recommend it. It's a great way to get your mind around the idea of the triune God. The three parts of the Trinity are portrayed by three different actors with different qualities, and it provides a

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

wonderful starting point for thinking outside the box when you form your own visualization of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Since I entered a religious community, I have also developed a greater appreciation for the fact that God did not choose to be a lone character – a monolithic entity. God instead chose to be one and yet three, which provides a perfect example of what God wants us to be. Humans were not created to exist in silos, alone against the world. We were created to be in relationship with each

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

other, and Jesus commanded us very firmly to love one another. The Trinity is the perfect example of that relationship. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work constantly together, and yet they are one. God urges us to work together and to always remember that we, too, are one. We were made by a loving God to love each other.

Richard Rohr, who is a Franciscan priest and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation, wrote a book called *The Divine Dance: the Trinity and*



Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

*Your Transformation.* I highly recommend that book, and I particularly love the title. A Divine Dance is certainly the way I perceive the Trinity acting in the world. It is a perfectly balanced and gracefully choreographed example that invites us to join in.

At the end of every meeting at the Convent, we always close with the Grace which is from today's reading of 2 Corinthians. It says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us

Trinity Sunday Sermon for June 4, 2023

all evermore.” The repetition of this prayer every day of our lives helps us to understand that our community should always be filled with grace, love, and fellowship. I invite you to bring the Grace into your own daily prayer life so that you, too, can remember that you are part of the fellowship of humanity and with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.