

Trinity Sunday Year A

[RCL] Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20

The Mystery of the Trinity

Today, on Trinity Sunday, we enter the Divine Dance, a dance that pulls us inside the circle of love that is our Triune God. This beautiful metaphor is being used by Father Richard Rohr to interpret the Holy Trinity not just to Christians, but to all believers. In his new book, *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation*, he writes that in the past,

“In our attempts to explain the Trinitarian Mystery we overemphasized the individual qualities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but not so much the relationships between them. That is where all the power is! That is where all the meaning is!” Please note the word relationship in this Divine Dance and imagine not the classic dances of the forties and fifties when dancing meant two people responding to music together, nor the dance of the young today who seem to be dancing with their own selves, but the traditional folk dances of the Middle East— holding hands and moving in a circle.

Another image, a metaphor that Father Richard borrows from St. Bonaventure, is that of the water wheel. The wheel, carrying three buckets, fills and empties, fills and empties unto eternity. There is the constant emptying of the God-self and the constant filling up, world without end, Amen.

The gift of Father Richard Rohr is that he has become so popular through his writings and speeches that he appeals to all religions and even to atheists. His other gift is his insistence that because of the tremendous advances in scientific thinking in our times, science is agreeing with religion, with the reality of our interconnectedness with the universe. So, surprisingly, this mystery of the Trinity that many preachers dread to approach on this given Sunday is becoming less daunting, much popular, and it is making sense.

The Unity in the Trinity explained in a popular book is not something new, however. The brilliant Anglican writer Dorothy L. Sayers wrote a small, tightly packed treatise on the Trinity in 1941, in the midst of the war that was devastating her native England and the rest of Europe. She had become famous and popular as a mystery writer, but her great passion and the focus of her extraordinary mind were meant for theology. And on this, she studied and wrote in a dizzying diversity until her early death in 1957. Her book on the Trinitarian nature of God and of humanity is called

The Mind of the Maker and was praised as the best exposition of the Trinity by no less a writer than C.S. Lewis. The book is short but dense, exploring a number of difficult subjects. She makes it clear that the Doctrine of the Trinity is neither obscure nor impossible to comprehend since our own natures, made in the image of God, is also trinitarian. This is what the first chapter of Genesis says:

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness. . .

*So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

In *The Mind of the Maker*, Sayers explains that "in our image" refers to the creativity that exists in God-in-three, a creativity which was also given to humanity. She writes that everything begins with the *Idea* which finds its reality, its incarnation, in *Energy*, and is disseminated through *Power*. In theological language, God the Father is the Idea, Christ is the Energy or Activity, and the Holy Spirit is Power. This is also the way human beings think and create. They have an idea, which becomes real only through implementation, and is disseminated through interaction, as someone else put it. The analogy Sayers uses throughout is that of the creation of a book, since that is what she knew best. The writer has an *idea* for a novel, but if it stays in the mind it has no reality. In the process of writing the idea becomes enfleshed; it is now *energy*; and then when the book is read by others, it has *power*.

All of creation was in the mind of God but it became real when "in the beginning God created. . ." St. John, in the prologue to his gospel tells us that "In the beginning was the Word." Notice that in the Old Testament lesson, in the beautiful creation story, words became important. The phrases, "God said" or "God called," meaning "named," occur fifteen times in the chapter. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "The only continuity between God and God's work is the Word." So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. This is the eternal Christ who was with God from the beginning. Because of love, the Eternal, at one specific spec of time—thirty-three years—in a specific place—Palestine—became as one of us and lived among us as Jesus of Nazareth. The mind reels then kneels and offers thanks.

The dramatic beauty of the Creation story as found in the fist chapter of Genesis and the first four verses of chapter two continues in the Psalm appointed for today. This is a Psalm that should be memorized. How many of us who did so as children pause before a sunset, or a clear moonlit night to cry out in awe,

*“Oh, Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is your Name in all the earth! . . .
When I consider the heavens, the work of your hands,
The moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
What is man that you should be mindful of him?
The son of man that you should seek him out?
You have made him a little lower than the angels. . .”*

Of course, women are included in this wonder but language had and has its limitations. What matters is that the One who was with God from the beginning of creation, the One who participated in the glorious act of creation is the One who took on our flesh and lived among us. This is the gift that also revealed the character of God as Father to us. But even that was not enough. When the hour came for the Incarnate one to leave the human flesh and return to the Father, he gave us the gift of the Paraclete, of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath of God as the Greek language calls the third person of the Trinity.

On this day, let us lose our apprehension in trying to understand the Trinity or to explain it in Athanasian terms to others. Let us rejoice in the most loving promise given to us as we read in today’s Gospel lesson:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Let us then rejoice and take comfort in these last words of Jesus: “I am with you always.”

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