

Trinity Sunday Year C 2016

This is one of those Sundays that is somewhat unique in the church year because it celebrates a theological concept, that being the Holy Trinity. A trinitarian understanding of God is unique to Christianity, but it is not explicitly stated in holy scripture. The concept is the source of confusion for some people and has always been a challenge to explain. We all know the story of St. Patrick using the shamrock, a three leaf clover, to explain the Holy Trinity. It is one plant with three leaves as God is one God but three persons. Of course in using each of these explanations we are resorting to simplification and to making an analogy, as God is neither a plant nor does the one God comprise persons.

In the Gospel lesson today we are able to infer the Holy Trinity. When Christ speaks about the Holy Spirit which will come after him, Jesus is saying that all that the Holy Spirit will reveal is from Jesus as Jesus and the Father are fully one. As humans almost all of what we know or what we learn comes to us from a personal encounter or experience. I tend to look at the concept of a Triune God in the manner of how we experience the divine within our faith. Each of us knows God from God having had an effect on us. God affects us in three essential manners which correspond to the three persons of the Trinity. Of course the English word person is actually derived from persona which is more like an aspect than a person per se. The first way that God affects us is in our creation. The second way is in our salvation. The third is in supporting and sustaining us in life. Traditionally we viewed the three persons of the Holy Trinity with the terms of father, son, and holy spirit. We reinforce that understanding in our blessings, when we make the sign of the cross, and with church symbolism like in our altar screen and altar hangings with such symbols as a triangle and three interlocking circles.

God is a great mystery. In attempting to delve into that mystery we humans are limited by our intellect and our vocabulary. Traditionally we have used masculine terms to speak of God even though God does not have gender. Certainly some would say that the actions of the holy spirit in sustaining and supporting us might be considered to be feminine. The simple reality is that God is God. God is God regardless of how we think of him or how we

describe him. He is God. Let us be still and know that he is God.

AMEN