

I come in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is customary to haze deacons and the newly ordained by having them preach on Trinity Sunday. I have decided to face the challenge of preaching the mystery of the Holy Trinity by mostly avoiding it. Instead of twisting our brains over something that is not comprehensible, it might be worth taking a crack at celebrating the Trinity from a different perspective.

People, especially non-Christians, have a difficult time understanding this the idea of the Holy Trinity. “How can you say that you worship one God, but you say there are three Gods – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Aren’t you worshiping 3 Gods?” Great question - without a really great answer. But let’s take a look at it from the perspective of unity in diversity.

God the Father is usually seen as a distant, untouchable, unchanging, all-powerful, all-knowing entity. God the Father is the mastermind of creation and maintains its order. We point upward when we talk about God – so we can say that God the Father is the God above us.

Jesus, the Son, is the God that walks with us and beside us. He is our companion, our friend. He is the one who came to live with us, as one of us, to be in solidarity with us, and to suffer pain and death – as one of us. He is one we lean

on, whose shoulder we cry on, the one who speaks truth that we don't want to hear, and the one in whom we trust. Jesus was tangible, and real.

Finally, we have God the Holy Spirit. This is the God that dwells within us, in our heart and soul, gives us life, motivates us, guides us, encourages us, and even prays for us (especially if we can't). It is the work of the Holy Spirit, Sophia, who nudges us towards truth. It is Sophia who strives to protect us from ourselves.

It is almost possible to envision the Triune God as one God who dwells above us, beside us, and within us. In unity, this is the God, the "I AM", the essence of all of creation, that is woven into every element of all that was, is, and will ever be. Our Psalm today is a snippet of the Song of Praise. In its totality, we give glory to every aspect of creation, and in the doxology (the grand finale), we give glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and highly exalt God forever. In Proverbs, we hear how Holy Wisdom works side by side with God the Father through creation, and rejoices in the birth of humankind. Holy Wisdom, the Holy Spirit, Sophia works in unity with God the Father and God the Son to be an Advocate, a voice, for humanity. That's all very nice, but so what?

Through the creation of humankind, a new form of unity in diversity emerged. When we look at the complexity of a human, we find that 99.9% of DNA is identical between all humans.

According to the National Library of Medicine, the remaining .1% defines – skin, eye, and hair color, blood type, stature, behaviors, and can indicate some potential health issues, and has genetic components that influence a person’s sexual self-identity. Of course, there are many other influences that form us, such as environment, opportunities, nurturing, etc.

I suggest that the .1% is what God uses to create the collage of humankind. God chose to use the 128 box of Crayola crayons to decorate His creation and give it vibrancy and texture, rather than the basic 8 color box. In our .1%, diversity comes alive through our personalities, appearances, disabilities, and sexual preferences and identification. Out of this, countless cultures, traditions, relationships, and belief systems emerge. These give us reason to celebrate the vibrancy of God’s palette and His desire to create each person as a unique and blessed creation, united in humanity, while being united in Him.

In a documentary called ‘Biking Borders’, two men had the crazy idea to bicycle from Hamburg, Germany to Beijing, China to raise funds to build a school in Guatemala. They traveled through Germany, Austria, Iran, Turkey, Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkistan, and China. That story revealed how unity in diversity could be achieved through immersion, conversation, and understanding, leaving judgment and division behind. As they traversed from culture to culture, religious tradition to religious tradition, from

political environment to political environment, they came to understand that almost everyone they met extended hospitality, warmth, and welcome. There was a genuine desire to learn about the other person. It was an intentional exchange of cultures in hope, honor, and respect. Even in the most extremely divided cultures, respect and love for the other survived.

Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can be glorified in unity, we, as individuals, can celebrate our unity as members of the human race. Even more so, the God above us, the God beside us, and the God within us is active in creation. We are able to participate in the unity of creation, and meet as one where the physical world intersects with the divine.

Today, we have another close-to-home example of how our Triune God intersects with us. We celebrate with Ann and Gordon, 40 years of marriage. In 1982, they were 2 diverse people living within a world population of 4.5 billion people. They had their own hopes, dreams, talents, preferences, and desires. Their .1% made them different from each other, as well as from everyone else on the planet. Out of the 4.5 billion other people, they said, “I pick you.”, and united their lives in a covenant of marriage. Each and every day over the last 40 years, they wake up and re-choose to be united to each other in love and in God. Any of us who have been married for any length of time knows that faithfulness to the marriage covenant takes work. We promise to be true to each other in good times

and in bad, in sickness and in health, and promise to love and honor each other all the days of our lives. This is not for the faint of heart. The unity in diversity of Gordon and Ann relies on the unity and diversity of the Holy Trinity to grow in love and care for each other, and trusts in God's promise of love, grace, forgiveness, and mercy. But wait, there's more. Their unity with each other and with God could not be contained, and was manifest over and over in the growth of their family. That is worthy of profound celebration, and we, as your parish family, rejoice in unity with you!

There is so much to celebrate, but there is so much more to learn. God uses the .1% of diversity to unify, and humans use the .1% of diversity to divide. We divide over theology. We attempt to limit God's love by causing division based on culture, ethnicity, skin color, age, gender, sexual preference, and self-identity – the products of the .1%. How often is the unity of marriage pried apart?

Today, I challenge you to bring unity into your corner of the world. Do not only welcome others, but accept them as they are, and seek understanding. May you give voice to those who have been silenced, and inclusion to the marginalized. May you respect all faith traditions that try to live out the Good News of the Gospel. Remember, God made humans in diversity, but also to be united as one with each other, and with Him. God created us in unity, so "What God has joined together, let no man separate." Amen.