

“Rejoice in the Mystery of Faith”

Acts 2:14a, 22-36

Today we are celebrating the “Sunday of the Holy Trinity.” Trinity Sunday is the day that we take a special look at the relationship that we have with the three persons of the Living God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is truly one of the great mysteries of faith. We confess the creeds. We confess our faith in the Triune God, we know and believe that there is a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet not three gods but one God: as we confessed in the Athanasian Creed. But this is a hard thing to understand from an intellectual point of view.

We like things to make perfect sense and be mathematically and scientifically consistent. It is in our nature to be doubting Thomas's and only believe it when we see it. That is why faith, hope, and trust play such important roles in our lives. Faith is putting trust in something that we have not seen or do not understand. Scripture says, “Faith is being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see” [Heb. 11].

The three Persons in One God does not make sense mathematically, but as Christians, we should not be frightened by the

unknown. We rejoice in this mystery of faith. As I like to say, if we only believe the things in the Bible that our minds can understand, then the god that we believe in can only be as smart as we are, and that would be frightening.

We rejoice in the fact that God is complex and infinite and incomprehensible. He is not just some divine spiritual essence floating out there in the universe. He is a God with personality. He is full of mystery, but He is also full of truth. And He has given us all of the knowledge that we need in order to know Him. Even more, He has given us the faith – like that of a little child.

On Wednesday, at the graduation service for St. James School, I said to the graduates, that of all the things that you learned in your years at St. James, I pray you learned how to recognize truth from falsehood. Not everyone who talks about Jesus is bearing witness of the real Son of God. This is why we confess the Athanasian Creed today. It is important that we are faithful witnesses of the real, historic Jesus – the eternal One who took on flesh, bore our sin, died on the cross, and rose on Easter. Not everyone who offers clever or seemingly wise words is worth listening to. And false teachers love to present themselves as harmless. As I said to the St. James graduates, “Sometimes Dr. Seuss is really Dr. Evil.” I really did say that, but you needed to be there for context.

Throughout the centuries, false teachers have loved to attack the

incomprehensible nature of the Trinity. Sinful, rational minds always want to box God into a preconceived notion of who He is, or who they want Him to be.

According to our *great* intellect, God does not make sense – the three Persons being One God. But then it is not God’s fault that our finite limited minds cannot fully comprehend the infinite unlimited nature of the power and majesty of God. Because He is so much more than just an Almighty Sovereign Creator who “established the heavens and assigned the sea its limit” [Prov 8].

We see the depth of God’s love in Peter’s words, “this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified . . . God raised Him up.” This was the plan. This was always the plan. He is the epitome of love and He cares deeply for you and all His people. God has shown this from the day He created Adam. We are the reason that God created this marvelous universe. He has known us from eternity. He has loved us from eternity. And He sent His Son to die for us so that we will be with Him in eternity.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being three Persons in One God is a hard thing for our feeble minds to comprehend. We confess rightly that God is incomprehensible. Which is why we openly profess that we are a people of faith, hope, and trust. It is not necessary for us to completely understand everything in the Bible. It’s a good thing that God does not require that of us, or we would all be in deep trouble.

We are a people of faith called to have the faith of a little child. Although we may not be able to fully understand some of the mysteries of God, we know that they are true because God's Word is true and God has sent His Spirit of truth into our hearts. The greatest philosophers in the world cannot adequately, completely describe the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, even the smallest child who has received the Holy Spirit through Baptism has that truth dwelling in his or her heart.

The Sunday of Holy Trinity is a day that we take time to marvel at the greatness of the One True Living God. We see the greatness of the Father's creation when Christ "was the workman at His side." But more importantly for us, we see the greatness of God's redemption. When Adam ruined God's perfect creation through sin, God immediately put His plan into place to do away with that sin.

There have been thousands upon thousands of pages written explaining the complexities of the Trinity, but for God's people of faith and hope, it is God's perfect goodness and perfect love that stand out as the defining characteristics of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that flows through everything we can say about our Lord. Rejoice in this mystery of faith. Amen.