

## Trinity Sunday – May 31, 2015

Is three a good number for relationships? I've been told more than once that it's not. Don't date in threes, don't live in threes, and don't jointly own anything in threes. One person always gets left out; another tries to take over; then there is the person in a muddled middle of it all. Aren't threes a disaster? Odd, then, to learn a few years back that the quark, the smallest subatomic particle, the fundamental building block of everything, only comes in threes. In other words, it only comes in relationship. You see where we're going. God, the creative force behind everything, also and only exists as a threesome: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Whether one is Creator or created, being in relationship is primary, and threesomes are apparently where it's at.

It may help to remember that the Trinity, a dogma hotly debated over the centuries, is not first and foremost a doctrine. Rather, it is how God has been experienced through the ages, as a Unity of Creator, Savior, and Spirit: God eternally in relationship. So, today's readings at Mass are not about the doctrine of the Trinity, but about the experience behind it. In the first reading, we experience the almost childlike awe at the wondrous things God has done among the Israelites. Has anything like it ever happened before? Awesome deeds. Awesome.

From St. Paul we hear about the dynamic relationship between Jesus and his God and the Spirit. How does one search for the right words to express it all? Downright mysterious. Mysterious.

And in the Gospel, we listen as Jesus invites his disciples into a loving relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit that will flame out into all the world. Dazzling work for the ages. Dazzling.

So, how would we describe our run-in with the Trinity? What is our experience like? Sure, the Trinity has entered our lives because we belong to the Christian Catholic tradition. To belong to a religious tradition is to have a faith delivered to your door. However, we have to cooperate. The adage is: faith seeks understanding. What is handed on to us needs to be understood and communicated.

My own present path into the Trinity comes from a growing sense of the dignity of the human person. Human dignity is grounded in the faith conviction that we are made in the image of God. But if we are made in the image of God and this means Trinity, our human dignity may be more than we imagine it to be. If we are made in the image of Trinity, then we are essentially plural, an ongoing and interpersonal flow of energy. Perhaps, then, our dignity, is essentially social, not individualistic, not solitary, not self-enclosed. I don't get it all, but there is a truth about it I am eager to pursue. Made as we are in the image of the Trinity means to escape the confinement of the solitude of the solitary.