

Trinity Sunday, Yr C
May 30, 2010

In the name of the one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever stopped to think about what I just said? "In the name of the ONE God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." One God. Three persons. Three in one and one in three.

Yep, it's that time again...Trinity Sunday...the first Sunday after Pentecost...always...the only Sunday in our liturgical calendar that celebrates a Doctrine. And if there's one doctrine of the Church that nobody understands very well...if at all...is the Doctrine of the Trinity. Right now, you are probably squirming in your seats, thinking, "Oh no, we're going to have to sit through a boring, irrelevant, mind-numbing sermon that is sure to put me to sleep. I hope she doesn't see me nodding my head! What does the Trinity have to do with me anyway?!"

Well, don't worry. Most priests I know who are preaching about this today feel the same. They are wondering with you, "Why do I have to preach about this thing that nobody cares about?" And I'm with you all the way. I have been reading material about this all week, and it has put me to sleep a number of times already!

So I'm going to shoot for at least not boring or mind-numbing, and perhaps, even relevant...and short.

There is one Greek word you need to know...you can use it during your holiday cookout this afternoon or tomorrow. That word is *perichoresis*...*peri*, meaning around...and *choresis*, meaning dance...like choreography. The ancient ones of the Church who decided this was an important concept to argue about, described the Trinity as a dance...a dance with three partners dancing together.

A lot of scholars and some not so scholarly folks have tried to find the best way to explain this word that is almost as strange to us as the Trinity itself. Being the up-to-date person that I am...I googled the word. Some guys back in the day defined perichoresis as 'co-indwelling, co-inhering, and mutual interpenetration,' - the last a word that Jim says his theology professor wouldn't let them use in class! A big fight erupted over the discussion (in the early 300's of the Common Era, mind you) of whether the Triune God is *homoousia* (the same nature/essence) in three *hypostases* (persons) ...or not. Doesn't make sense to me...does it to you?

There are analogies that have some degree of popularity. Some have described the Trinity as the lover, the beloved and the love between the two. Others describe it as H₂O - same essence but different properties: water, ice and vapor. There are poems written about this dance of the Trinity, essays, books - way too many Google entries to count. So I shouldn't have been surprised to find a video on YouTube concerning this word. Hundreds and hundreds of years of debate, reduced to 2:14 on YouTube! It is done by a British man

at his kitchen table - of course anything with a British accent sounds smart to me. First, he produces a piece of paper upon which he has written the word, *perichoresis*, in Greek with a marker, saying that he will demonstrate it as the dance of the Holy Trinity.

He has five objects on the table. The first...a pot of coffee, labeled **Father**...the second, a carton of ice cream, labeled **Son**...the third, a bottle of Bailey's Irish Cream, labeled **Holy Spirit**...the fourth, a blender, labeled **perichoresis**, and the fifth, a glass with a label on it that is turned away from the camera. He opens the blender, pours coffee into it, scoops some ice cream into it, and, finally, adds some Irish Cream (not too much!).

- He says, "Each one is individual but they join themselves in love."
- He puts the top back on the blender, takes a remote in his hand, points it at something off-camera, and says, "Start the dance!"
- He punches the button on the blender. The blender grinds loudly and swirls around. He turns it off.
- The introduction is playing...can you guess what it is...it's British...we've talked about it before...the band starts to sing...it's *I am he, as you are he, as you are me, and we are all together!*
- He turns off the music, turns the glass around and pours the liquid in and says, "And what we are left with is the Trinity in one body, which is God."
- (The label on the glass, which we can now read, says **God**.)
- He says, "So the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make up God in one image." (He picks up the glass.) "Each retains their individuality." (He points at the bottle of Irish Cream, and takes a big swallow from the glass.) "Aaahh! And that is divine!"

 No matter what words we use to describe or explain the Trinity, the important thing to remember is that this doctrine is about community. Those three persons - the community of the Trinity - that community creates and redeems and blesses each and every one of us so that we can be part of the community as well. We've all been invited. There will be no outcasts, no outsiders. We are called by God to recognize ourselves as children of God...as God's beloved. There are plenty of us, though, who don't recognize ourselves as beloved, and we don't recognize everyone we see as beloved, either.

What if we looked at ourselves and each other with different eyes? New, fresh, clear eyes. On this Trinity Sunday, can we share God's gift with those we meet around us and in the mirror at home so that we all will know who we are and whose we are? Look at the faces you see and say, "You belong to the one God, who is community, who is the Divine Dance, who is Love." Tell them, "You are God's beloved." AMEN.

(Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFWf5iMNFjA> to see the video)