

3 in 1

For me, it's standing on the shore overlooking the ocean or in the foothills of the Smokey Mountains looking to the valleys and peaks above. That brings that sure and certain sense that you are both completely enmeshed in something yet that something is far greater than you know?

It happens also when we worship, there are moments when I strongly feel the presence of those from other places and other ages. For some it comes with being a part of a team, working together and achieving something simply marvelous, such as the wonderful production of Camelot at our Looking Glass Playhouse. Knowing we may have each experienced it in different situations and circumstances, can you grasp a hold of a memory which captures that knowing in the midst of mystery feel?

That sense of knowing and mystery is very much a part of the concept of The Trinity which the church universal is focusing on today. Hear how it echoes in the words of Psalm 8, as translated in "The Message": ***"look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous, your handmade sky-jewelry, Moon and stars mounted in their settings. Then I look at my micro-self and wonder, Why do you bother with us? Why take a second look our way?"***

Trinity Sunday has been celebrated in the Christian church since the 10th century. It is on this occasion that ministers around the world address themselves to the subject of the triune God. It is important to note that doctrine of the Trinity does not attempt to explain God. It only explains to us in a very elemental way what God has revealed to us about God's self so far. To describe the tip of the iceberg above the water is not to describe the entire iceberg. So we Christians affirm the Trinity, not as an explanation of God, but simply as a way of describing what we know about God.

The early Christians soon discovered that they simply could not speak of God without speaking of the three ways in which God had revealed God's self to them. This doctrine does not claim that there are 3 Gods, its claim is that within the Christian church and experience, God has been revealed in 3 primary ways or "persons". God is known to us a Father, Son, Spirit, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, also named power, person and presence. Understand and embracing the Trinity does not take away the mystery of God, it is not the answer to a problem, for our inability to fully understand God is not a problem, it is an aspect of the holy and wholly otherness of God.

Tertullian, one of the theologians of the early church, explained the Trinity in a metaphor. God the Father he described as "a deep root, the Son as the shoot that breaks forth into the world, and the Spirit as that which spreads beauty and fragrance." Much like the wonder we experience on the shore or foothills

or in those other remembered ways of being fully aware of something vast beyond our experience. Our experience enriches us, yet does not dilute the wonder of God's creation. Such is the way in which we should embrace and share our understanding of a Triune God, as a way to help us know and share of God's wonder, not as the answer to "what God is".

Describing the Trinity is one purpose for this day, yet each time we gather we come with the expectation that God not only offers us awareness or knowledge, but that God is in relationship and interactive with all aspects of our lives. Just as we celebrate not just that those recognized today have achieved certain education or foundational levels, but that we celebrate what this time in their lives invites us and them to consider about their future, so on Trinity Sunday and in the wonder of joining with the church throughout the ages in proclaiming and celebrating how God has been known to us, we also have an opportunity to look to this aspect of God to see how it might share our lives and our life together as the Body of Christ in this day and place.

For hearing the word of God and considering what faithfulness means juxtaposed against who we are and how we go about our daily living is how God continues to be revealed and experienced. On continuing challenge for the church is not to mirror the following oft told story: There once was out-of-shape, overweight man who decided to take up tennis. He took lessons from a pro. He read several self-help books which advised him to "think positively" and "develop a winning attitude."

A friend asked him how his tennis was going. With a positive, winning attitude in his voice, the man replied, "When my opponent hits the ball to me, my brain immediately barks out a command to my body: 'Race up to the net.' Then, it says, 'Slam a blistering shot to a far corner of the court. Then immediately jump back into position and return the next volley to the other far corner of the court.' And then my body says, 'Who, me?'"

When we hear of the Trinity and consider the completeness and wholeness of God's revelations, we are called to look to our lives to see if we live as "3 in 1", if our faithfulness and our beliefs are consistently shown when we are working, playing, resting or worshipping. We are called to be deliberate in having our priorities, from whence we draw power, our personality, the essence of our choices, and our interactions, our presence with others, all united in and shaped by God. This is called today "holistic living". It is refusing the call of the world to live and act differently based on where we are or who we are with. It is a commitment to the way of God that is never set aside or left behind, not even when our own desires or best interest could be better served outside of this awareness and obedience to God. May we be more than willing to live so completely in the image of our Triune God that all experience in us "3 in 1", hope, faith and love, past, present and future, loving, caring, sharing