

Trinity Sunday YB 2024

[Props: circle of the church year, circles of the Trinity]

God in Tri-Unity

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The poet Rilke said that there's nothing as wise as a circle. From its center, the circle has the same distance in every direction of its circumference. It is a thing in unity with itself. If we can pool all our wisdom in a lifetime of knowing and unknowing and find no real separation between me and you, me and myself, and me and God, then we will be like the circle, in unity.

The Church has used the image of the circle to describe God's unity with God's self. What could it mean to be in unity with one's self? Maybe, it means not being tossed about by not knowing who one is. Maybe it is about not being taken by spikes of worry, anxiety, and fear. Maybe it is about clarity of love and seeing all things as connected and beloved. Maybe it means there is no one to blame. Have you felt tossed about by anxiety and uncertainty? Have you felt disconnected from people who think differently than you? Have you doubted that all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well? We are all mired in this thing called the human condition. We seek after symbols of safety and security, power and control, esteem and affection. We get lost; we get stuck. Jesus, the Word from eternity, entered historical time, to pour from himself the unity that is the love of God. He came to free us from this condition so that we can be more of ourselves and more of our purpose, which is to be loved and to make connections in the right way.

God in Trinity is God in Tri-Unity: [lift up each circle and put on circle of the church year] the Source of Love, the Embodiment of Love, and the Love that binds all things into communion. We say that the Tri-unity is three persons: Abba, Son, and

Holy Spirit. We talk this way, using the metaphor of persons, because in the Tri-Unity there is infinity communion. The nature of this communion is self-forgetting, self-giving love. This communion exists in right relationship. There is no selfishness, no self-preservation. No desire for power over and control of the other persons. The trust flows unhindered among the persons of the Tri-Unity so that no person seeks safety in anything but the relationship of self-giving, self-forgetting love. God in Tri-Unity shows us how to find our way back to our original blessing. We are called to build community that mimics the nature of the Trinity.

The Church forms us in this way in a circular path called the liturgical calendar. Round and round we go; each turn is like a growth ring in the tree trunk; circles within circles within circles. On this day, called Trinity Sunday, we begin a period of Christian formation called the Season after Pentecost. It is also called Ordinary Time. It is so ordinary, you can count them one by one: First Sunday after Pentecost, Second Sunday after Pentecost...until we reach the end of November or the beginning of December for Advent. Throughout Ordinary Time, we hear from scripture the teachings of Jesus—the parables, the sermons, the stories, the sayings. In a three year cycle, we follow the Gospels of Matthew (year A), Mark (year B) and Luke (year C). What about John, you ask? Well, John, is special and we spread this Gospel across the great seasons of deep mysteries. John's Gospel takes the mysteries even deeper, in the Seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, when we ponder how divine light manifests and how it is communicated to us. Like, in the season of Easter, when we ponder how love is never destroyed. Each of these mysteries have their own time of preparation. Advent for Christmas and Epiphany. Lent and Holy Week for Easter.

For now, for today, we have walked across the threshold from Pentecost to the Season after Pentecost. Today, we know we have everything—everyone we need—the three persons of the Tri-Unity. Jesus who is now the Cosmic Christ after the ascension. Jesus' Abba is now our Abba. The Holy Spirit our advocate, who stays with us to teach us, comfort us, transform us. The thing about this ordinary time is that it is hidden in eternal time. We are walking our eternal life as we grow up in Christ. The grace that accompanies us can transform the way we see the world

and how we live our life and make community. Each day is an invitation to live as the Trinity lives, in self-giving love.

As the days grow shorter, the readings we hear in church will turn blessedly apocalyptic. For those who don't believe that God loves everyone and everything God has made, the apocalypse will feel like destruction, like the end of the world. But for those who trust God's promises, it will be a true revelation, which is what "apocalypse" means. It will be a revelation that we don't have to live afraid of life, thinking that the old world order will save us. In fact, the grace of Ordinary Time has shown us God's new world order, the Kingdom, and we long for its fulfillment. We are ready for Advent then, the season of longing for God's new world order to manifest fully. Advent is the season for keeping awake to how it is already showing up. Even as it gets darker outside, we are lit from within.

On and on we go. At Christmas—the mystery of God's power as a baby, in fragile human flesh. At Lent and Holy Week—to God's self-giving love for us, even to suffering and death. At Easter, to God's very self, where love never dies. Always this circle is here for us, to show us the way home, to union with God, self, and all of creation. May each turn we take around the circle remove more and more our resistance to this love. So that even as the circles of grace layer like the rings of the tree, each turn sloughs off a layer of resistance, till all of it falls away and what remains is glory.