

Feast of the Trinity

Cycle B, 5.27.18

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40;

Romans 8:14-17; Matthew 28:16-20

NO LIMIT TO THE MYSTERY OF GOD

One man writes about his first memory of understanding God: "I was two or three," he recalls, "and I was angry about something -- very angry. I threw a tantrum and flew through the house crying and stomping. I ran and hid under my bed where I lay muttering to myself about how awful my mother was and how much she hated me. Finally, when I ran out of steam, I looked out from under the bed and there was my mother.



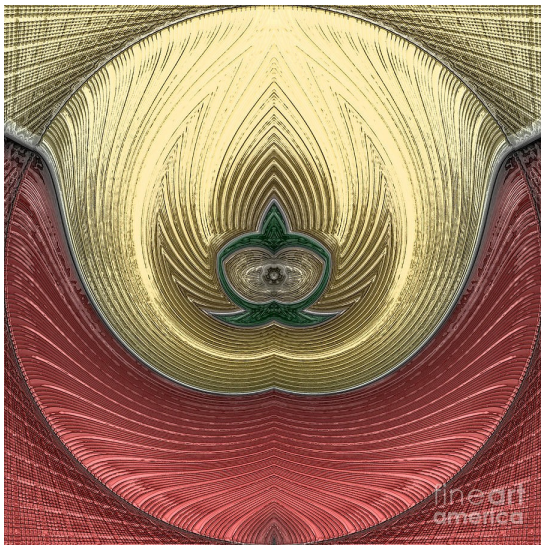
She had been sitting quietly the whole time in the rocking chair, holding a glass of milk and a chocolate chip cookie and patiently waiting. She wasn't angry at all, just waiting until I was ready to climb into her lap to be comforted . . . " That may be my earliest memory of any kind . . . a memory of God, because it's what I think of when I read, *God is love.*"

People all over the world and through all generations affirm the existence of God in many ways and call God by many titles. The early American Indians on the plains, the Incas in South America, the people of Islam – all cultures affirm the existence of God in one way or another. Within our Christian revelation, as we celebrate today's feast, we are given access

to know the secret of God's inner life and to know God as truly a Trinity of Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Throughout the centuries philosophers and theologians, artists and poets, ordinary folk like you and me have tried to depict, explain or imagine what this Holy Trinity – this inner life of God ---- is like. The author Anne Lamott said: *"I didn't need to understand the hypostatic unity of the Trinity; I just needed to turn my life over to whoever came up with redwood trees."*

Over the centuries artists have depicted the Trinity in myriad ways, such as this Russian icon, Celtic symbol, German Renaissance altarpiece and contemporary abstract:





A legend is told about St. Augustine who used to meditate long and hard on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, as he tried to understand it. Strolling along the seashore one day wondering how there could be Three Persons in one God, he noticed a small child repeatedly scooping up water from the sea in a shell and carried it to a hole in the sand into which he emptied the water. Curious, St. Augustine walked over and asked the child what he was doing. Smiling up at him the child said, "I am

emptying the sea into this hole." St. Augustine replied, "Why, even if you spent your whole life at this task, child, you could never complete it. The sea is far too vast and deep to be contained in so small a hole!" The child looked up solemnly at St. Augustine and said: "Yet I will complete this task before you can ever fully comprehend the Mystery of the Holy Trinity." and with that, the child vanished. St. Augustine then realized that he was an angel sent to him by God to point out the futility of his efforts to understand this Mystery.

It may be a mystery, but we've staked our faith and our lives on our belief in the God who reveals himself as Trinity. So, I think we should do all within our power to humbly try to understand this triune Mystery we call God. At one of our morning chapel Masses which fourth graders were attending I shared some pages of an illustrated children's book I discovered called: *Images of God for Young Children*. Each page had a beautiful illustration of the artist's expression of the divine and a corresponding text reflecting God such as God as "Smallness" and God as "Friend."



An Irish Dominican wrote a beautiful reflection on a childhood memory about coming into the presence of his father after his bath, wrapped in a white bath towel, like a newly baptized Christian, filled with delight at his father's pleasure in him, who lays his hands on his child's head, as if in ordination:

I was five or at most six years old, the second youngest. But once I braved the darkness of the stairs alone, my trial was over.

From shadows into light the door opened, and I stepped into the hush of the room. So vivid, I remember that bright threshold!



But real illumination came moments later, when I knelt down next to the fire, as near as I could to my father's chair and bowed my head. I remember as soon as he began to dry my hair with the towel and warm my hair with his hands lifting his two palms to the fire and letting them rest on my head.

I thought I was the son of a god.

So make the Trinity the heart of your faith. Nurture that faith through personal prayer so the life of the Father, Son and Spirit will echo within your own life. Be an effective witness to the gospel by testifying that Jesus is the Lord of your life and start with your own family and friends who need to hear Jesus' message of love. And look at the world with a sense of wonder. God is so much bigger than any definition we can devise or category we can conjure up. St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans for today's Feast said: *You received a spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, 'Abba, Father.'* He could as easily have said:

When you go to God, cry out, 'Mama, Mother.'



Surely, the Spirit of the living God is most evident here.

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