I speak to you in the name of the one Triune God.

Trinity Sunday… people may think that one goes to seminary to learn all the secrets, the answers of how to think about and explain the Trinity. If one did, I for one would just tell you those secrets and be done with it.

Lucky for you, and for me, I have very little desire to try to do that, and so we won’t.  As Christians we inherited the scaffolding of the Jewish faith, in which the one-ness of God is paramount. And so an understanding of faith in the Trinity, in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, did not happen all at once. Rather, it unfolded as a Mystery. The disciples and then early followers of Jesus, particularly those who had access to the Gospel of John, understood Jesus as God acting in man. This, incarnate in flesh, was what God looked like. This, incarnate in the flesh of Jesus, was nothing less than God’s wish for us as humanity, and for all creation, for humans to be not just individually in the image of God, but divinely knit together, with the work of the Spirit. They saw this so clearly in him that they understood Jesus himself to BE DIVINE, the one anointed by the Spirit in baptism and revealing the purpose of God the Creator in making and redeeming the world. That is as close as I get to an explanation, and since the Trinity is a mystery, that is the very heart of all the mystery there is.

Beyond that, it is hard not to say something heretical about the Trinity, As soon as you try, it gets at least close to heretical, by someone’s definition.

As an illustration of that: Earlier this week, I shared one of my favorite You-tube videos, with these twins Connel and Donnel questioning St. Patrick about the Trinity, asking him to explain the Trinity with analogies. Patrick tries, but each bad analogy shows a heresy. Finally Patrick gives up and simply quotes the Athanasian creed, of which the pertinent part is ….”that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.” So there we go, I might have said it more simply, but I could not have said it any better.

That creed does the heavy lifting, but let me not ignore the readings. The first reading of the creation story of Genesis shows us the Creator God, and the Spirit present hovering/ or wind sweeping over the waters. There is also the creation of Light, which as Christians is often equated to Christ, as the one true light that darkness cannot overcome. The psalm and optional canticle each have robust praises of God.  The 2nd letter of Paul to the Corinthians gives us a blessing, a way of living that invites the Triune God into the life of the community. “Agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”  And Matthew’s Gospel ties being a disciple and follower of Jesus with spreading the Gospel by making disciples, baptizing into the Love of the Triune God.  The Trinity does not come out of thin air, it is present in the scripture.

Perhaps, then, for our own praise of the Trinity this day, we might enter into some creative ways of thinking about the Trinity that honor both its mystery and its relevance to the lives we live.

The first is a visual. There is an [icon](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Icon) created by Russian painter [Andrei Rublev](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrei_Rublev) in the 15th century. It is his most famous work[2] and the most famous of all Russian icons, and it is regarded as one of the highest achievements of [Russian art](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_art).

*The Trinity* depicts the three [angels](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel) who visited [Abraham](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham) at the [Oak of Mamre](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak_of_Mamre) ([Genesis 18:1–8](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0118.htm%231)). but the painting is full of symbolism and is interpreted as an icon of the [Holy Trinity](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Trinity). At the time of Rublev, the Holy Trinity was the embodiment of spiritual unity, peace, harmony, mutual love and humility. In the icon, the three divine persons are seated around a table, united as one in a common meal, and the third of the three figures gestures toward the open space from which the viewer looks on to the scene.

20th Century theologian Henri Nouwen wrote a reflection on this icon, during an extensive battle he had with depression.  He is not the only one but he did dwell on the open space at the table as an invitation for us to join the dance of the Trinity – the Trinity as a community of Love, a household of love in which we dwell- a place with no fear, no greed, no anger, no violence, no pain, no suffering, even no words.

A second moment of praise, this one literary: Meister Eckhart a 14th century German mystic, once thought to be a heretic and later venerated as one of the deep mystics of the Christian faith, had these thoughts on the Trinity. He wrote that when “God the father laughed, the Son was born. When God the father and the Son laughed, the Spirit was born. When all three laughed and the human being was born.” While the language of God is unconventional, he catches that same beautiful truth that Nouwen saw: that into the loving life of the three persons of God, we ourselves are invited!

And then from a 14th century Persian mystic Hafiz, here is a poem that sounds surprisingly similar. Clearly not usual for me to quote non-Christians, but I think things that are true are revealed in all religions. Hafiz wrote:

**Laughter**

What is laughter? What is laughter?
It is God waking up! O it is God waking up!
It is the sun poking its sweet head out
From behind a cloud
You have been carrying too long,
Veiling your eyes and heart.

It is Light breaking ground for a great Structure
That is your Real body - called Truth.

It is happiness applauding itself and then taking flight
To embrace everyone and everything in this world.

Laughter is the polestar
Held in the sky by our Beloved,
Who eternally says,

"Yes, dear ones, come this way,
Come this way towards Me and Love!

Come with your tender mouths moving
And your beautiful tongues conducting songs
And with your movements - your magic movements
Of hands and feet and glands and cells - Dancing!

Know that to God's Eye,
All movement is a Wondrous Language,
And Music - such exquisite, wild Music!"

O what is laughter, Hafiz?
What is this precious love and laughter
Budding in our hearts?

It is the glorious sound
Of a soul waking up!”

And lastly I will leave you with the quintessential understanding on the Trinity of the most Christian, 4th century theologian Augustine:

Augustine felt that the Spirit of God is Love itself. One could think of God as Lover, Christ as Beloved, and Spirit as Love.

And so, with these great people of faith, I think with some assuredness we can say the oneness of God, three persons in one, has it all— dance, love, and laughter. I for one can embrace that understanding of the Trinity. Because the Trinity, finally, embraces me, and embraces us all.