

Saint Matthew's/San Mateo Episcopal Church

Trinity Sunday June 12, 2022

READINGS:

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Canticle 13

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

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

Did you hear what I just said to begin this sermon?

The Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - is our natural way of saying who God is, isn't it?

We do it all the time!

Most of the time, we don't even think about it!

Most of the time, we just make the sign of the cross, and think how holy God is!

Well, today is Trinity Sunday, the day the whole church celebrates who God is.

God is Father and creator of everything.

God is Son and redeemer of everything.

God is Holy Spirit and sanctifier of everything.

God is three persons, yet only one God!

In our reading from Proverbs today, we stand at the shoulder of Wisdom as she describes watching God the Father establishing the heavens, making the skies and oceans firm, and marking out the foundations of the earth. The process of creation, we hear, made Wisdom rejoice. That sounds very much like love in action, doesn't it?

Saint Paul tells the church in Rome that we have peace with God through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We boast, he tells us, not only in the hope Jesus gives us of sharing the glory of God, but in our sufferings! They produce endurance, Paul says, which produces character, which produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us. God's love poured into our hearts – that sounds very much like love in action, doesn't it?

In our reading from John's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that he still has things to say to them that they are not yet strong enough to hear. The Spirit, he says, will come and guide them into all the truth. "He will take what is mine," Jesus says, "and declare it to you." Everything God the Father has is God the Son's, and the Holy Spirit will declare all of it to us! That sounds very much like love in action, doesn't it?

The following lines are from a Hymn of the Resurrection sung in the Eastern Orthodox Church. I think they express very beautifully what the creeds of the church say about the Trinity, and the truth we know in our hearts but can't really get our heads around!

I glorify the power of the Father,
I magnify the power of the Son,
And I sing a hymn of praise to the power of the Holy Spirit;
One Godhead,
Trinity indivisible, uncreated,
equal in essence and reigning forever.

On this Trinity Sunday, the whole church celebrates who God is.

God is Father, creator of everything, and God is love!

God is Son, redeemer of everything, and God is love!

God is Holy Spirit, sanctifier of everything, and God is love!

God is three persons, yet only one God, and God is love!

We cannot understand the Trinity with our minds – our minds are just too small. But we know in our hearts that God loves each of us, warts and beauties and all! And we know, and give thanks, that he does not see us as others, even very wise and loving others, sometimes see!

I would like to end with an old Eastern European “Trinity story” from Eastern Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware.

There was once a bishop of a large diocese who decided to visit every single one of his parishes. After spending years on horseback, he thought that he had seen them all, when someone told him about a tiny chapel, on a remote island in the sea. Faithful to his mission, he chartered a boat and set out for the island. Upon landing, he found it to be a desolate spot, inhabited only by three old men. He greeted them and began to question these isolated Christians about the orthodoxy of their faith. “Tell me,” said the bishop, “how do you pray?” They replied, “We simply stand, holding hands like this.” And the three old men clasped their hands together, saying, “You are three, we are three, have mercy upon us.”

“What?” said the bishop. “This will never do. Don’t you know the Lord’s Prayer?” “No,” said the hermits, “Please teach us, O holy man of God!” The bishop spent all afternoon teaching the absent-minded old hermits the Lord’s Prayer, and when they had finally gotten it, he said his goodbyes, returned to the boat, and headed back out to sea, puzzling over these odd, old men and their island.

It grew dark as he mused on the deck of his boat, looking out over the sea, when from far away he began to see a tiny point of light coming from the island. As it drew nearer, the light grew brighter and brighter, until he could see that it was the three hermits, holding hands, running swiftly on top of the water, beards flying in the wind, their faces radiant with the light of Christ. “O holy man of God, holy man of God!” said the hermits, “We have forgotten the prayer you taught us! Please teach us again so that we may pray rightly!” “On second thought,” said the bishop, “I think that your prayer must be fine.”

Today is Trinity Sunday, and the whole church celebrates who God is.

We celebrate God's love that creates, redeems, and sanctifies everything.

We celebrate because:

The faith in our hearts knows that God the Father is for us,

God the Son is with us,

and God the Holy Spirit is in us always and everywhere!

Amen.