

TRINITY SUNDAY

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Trying to explain the Holy Trinity is both simple and impossible at the same time, so I'm going to stick with the perfect description that the Apostle John gives us, both straightforward and mysterious: God is Love.

- ❖ Explains the nature of God, total self-giving,
- ❖ the context for everything he's doing
- ❖ and the life he lives in us.

We can see that we were made for a loving relationship with God in today's first lesson, the Creation account in Genesis.

- ❖ God creates us in his own image, so that we can begin to know something of him through our self-knowledge
- ❖ God gives us dominion over everything he created, so that through our human experience in the world we can learn something about his lordship.

Finally, God invites us into his rest on the 7th day, which lets us know that God doesn't just want us to learn about him.

- ❖ He wants us to be able to relate to him so that we can be with him in a relationship.
- ❖ Of course, if we start struggling to relate to someone, that relationship is going to be in trouble, and we see the reason for our struggle to relate to God in the very next chapter of Genesis.

Until the serpent comes along, the roles of the relationship are very clear – God is God and we are not.

- ❖ But the serpent says, "Oh yes you are, he just doesn't want you to know it," and we believed him.

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- ❖ As a result, instead of letting God reveal what it means to be made in his image, we make God in our image.
- ❖ Then instead of our human experience leading us to God, we look at everything he does skeptically, thinking, “Well, that doesn’t make any sense,” or “That’s not how I would’ve done it.”

Still, God is Love, and so he doesn’t stop trying to love us back to him.

- ❖ The Old Testament bears witness that even those closest to him don’t always perceive it that way, so he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to perfectly reveal what’s in his heart.
- ❖ And seeing and experiencing God’s love for us changes everything.

Knowing God’s love changes the way we view our past -

- ❖ seeing the places where we didn’t understand that he was at work
- ❖ appreciating what his love for us must cost after an experience of paying that cost ourselves

Knowing God’s love changes the present –

- ❖ allowing us to trust him, love our neighbor, and to be thankful
- ❖ even when our circumstances would make any one of those things difficult.
- ❖ And of course, knowing God’s love for us changes the future – transforming uncertainty into a peace and stability that can’t be taken away.

Jesus shows us what makes this transformation possible in today’s gospel lesson.

- ❖ He says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”
- ❖ What Jesus is saying is that we’re all taking the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” as *our* name, and taking our place in the divine family.

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But that doesn't just magically happen – it's a relationship, which means we still have to learn how to relate to God.

- ❖ We do that by remembering that God is Love – total, self-giving love – and so we open ourselves up more and more to his life in us by surrendering to God in love.
- ❖ We do that by trying to move back to the right place in the relationship.

That means:

1. Letting God shape *us* in *his* image –
 - ❖ being willing to lay aside our pride and stand before God as we truly are, warts and all;
 - ❖ and to do that knowing that we are loved as we are, even in our faults;
 - ❖ and being willing to let God show us who we were made to be, even if it's not what we have in mind.

2. Letting God inform our human experiences –
 - ❖ praying our way through the things that have happened to us,
 - ❖ allowing him to lead us in the present moment and shape our futures
 - ❖ trusting that God is at work even when we don't like or understand what he's doing

3. Finding our rest in him – which of course is the only way all this can happen
 - ❖ frequently coming to him in prayer,
 - ❖ asking for grace instead of self-medicating when we're frustrated
 - ❖ offering our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, even when we don't feel like it.

Now, it's important to know that none of that is easy, but that's OK – that's the nature of love.

- ❖ It's always costly because we can only love at our own expense.
- ❖ So as we renew our baptismal vows and look forward to communion, ask God for the grace to know the love for which you were made and why you're loved,

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And be reminded that no matter how high the cost might sometimes seem, it's always a price worthy paying.

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