

Chris Murphy

June 4, 2023

Scripture: John 14: 15-31

Sermon Title: Pilgrimage with the Trinity

Prayer...

Introduction:

Karen, Cate, Chiara and I are getting ready for a family vacation to Europe. We will be here at church next Sunday on June 11th for worship and then we will drive to Seattle and fly out of Seattle to Ireland on June 12th and return to Seattle on June 30th. We will drive back to Newberg in time to join you for worship on Sunday, July 1st. As part of our preparations for our trip, we are watching videos of Rick Steve's Travel Show.

Rick Steves' Story: The Shamrock as Saint Patrick's example of the Trinity.

Today is Trinity Sunday where we celebrate knowing God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As some of you know, I like to expand our image of the

Trinity: For me, I enjoy seeing God as Mother and Father as parent, Jesus remains a male image of the Son, and I enjoy imaging the Holy Spirit as a more feminine presence in my life.

However you image the Trinity, the beauty of seeing God in this way is to know that God is love and is described as a community of love. God is three in one. One God is three persons. This is a great mystery. We are invited to relate to all three parts of the Trinity.

On the portion of our pilgrimage in England, Karen, the girls, and I will visit the town of Norwich made famous by Julian of Norwich, who was an anchoress that lived in that town during the 14th century. An anchoress was a woman who would live in a building attached to a church and provide spiritual direction to people who would visit her through a window. Julian of Norwich is famous for her spiritual writing called Showings. She had a vision of the Lord and wrote down wisdom from God. Here are some reflections from Julian about the Trinity:

“For the Almighty truth of the Trinity is our Father, for he made us and keeps us in him. And the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enclosed. And the high goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and in him we are enclosed and he in us. We are enclosed in the Father, and we are enclosed in the Son, and we are enclosed in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enclosed in us, the Son is enclosed in us, and the Holy Spirit is enclosed in us, almighty, all wisdom and all goodness, one God, one Lord. And our faith is a power which come from our natural substance into our sensual soul by the Holy Spirit, in which power all our powers come to us, for without that no person can receive power, for it is nothing else than right understanding with true belief and certain trust in our being, that we are in God and he in us, which we do not see. And this power with all the others, which God has ordained for us, entering there, works great things in us; for Christ mercifully working in us, and we are by grace according with him, through the gift and the power of the Holy Spirit. This working makes it

so that we are Christ's children and live Christian lives. (Showings, P. 285-286).

Do you hear in Julian's words her Celtic Christian faith. Remember Celtic Christians had a special love for the Trinity and understood the sacredness of all of creation, including the goodness of humanity. She helps us understand how the Trinity partners with us so that we can do great acts of love in the name of Christ.

In our passage today John chapter 14, we see the three persons of the Trinity revealed in Jesus' message to the disciples.

Jesus is explaining to his disciples that he will be going away soon and will return to the Father. Rather than being worried about this, Jesus encourages the disciples to not be troubled because he will send them an advocate called the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be the Spirit of Truth and will remind the disciples of all that Jesus has taught them.

The Holy Spirit will also make sure the disciples do not feel orphaned.

The disciples will not be alone because the Holy Spirit will be with them

forever. It is implied in Jesus' teaching that the Holy Spirit will also be the one who provides peace to the disciples. I love this part of our passage. Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

In our passage today, Jesus also reminds the disciples that God the Father will send them the Holy Spirit. Do you see how all members of the Trinity are active in our story. Jesus is active loving the disciples and preparing them for his eventual departure after his death on the cross, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven. God the Father is described as being the one who will send the Holy Spirit as a wonderful gift of peace. The disciples are encouraged to follow the teaching and commandments of Jesus, so that that they will be open to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We read this story as disciples of Jesus who have also been given the Holy Spirit. We are not alone on this journey of life. The Holy Spirit lives

in us and we are joined therefore with the community of the Trinity in a holy dance through life.

Story of this last week worshipping God and imagining the Holy Trinity dancing with me. We get to experience the deep love of God our Mother/Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Another image of the Holy Spirit is a Dove. We get this image from the story of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. At the baptism of Jesus, a voice from heaven says, This is my beloved Son and the Holy Spirit is described as descending upon Jesus like a dove.

I used to be less excited about the image of the Holy Spirit as a dove, but I am learning to enjoy this image because the Dove reminds us of God's connection to her creation. God the Holy Spirit is like a beautiful dove. God is revealed in the beauty of nature, the beauty of birds and other animals, the beauty of the trees and flowers. The Dove also symbolizes the Peace that Jesus offers the world through the Holy Spirit.

This week in Men's Fellowship Armond Kalesse was teaching us guys about God's rest and a few of us mentioned that we experience God's rest when we experience peace. At our church, we have the Newberg Peace Garden. When people walk back there, I feel like the Holy Spirit descends upon them like a Dove and offers them peace. You can see a Peace Pole made by Ciaran Hynes with the image of a Dove and inscribed in the Peace Pole are four sayings: Peace begins when expectations ends. Peace begins with a smile. Love is the Purest form of a Soul at Peace and Let the Peace of Christ Rule In Your Heart.

As I reflect on the role of the Trinity in our lives, I go back to this invitation to find peace. We are to find peace, Shalom, wholeness in God our Father and Mother, In Jesus the Son who offers us the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that comforts us in our troubles, and the Holy Spirit who is the presence of peace, the Dove, Lady Wisdom, the one who hovered over the waters at the birth of Creation. Praise God for the beauty of community with the Holy Trinity.

One final image for you as we go on our pilgrimage with the Trinity, as part of our church's call to be a Christ centered Church of grace, hope, and love, God is inviting us to foster peace and unity in Newberg. I had an image of what that looks like recently during a time of prayer with a group of other Christians. We were praying about love and God gave me a picture of what we are called to be and do.

(Describe Right and Left and the call to come together and curve ourselves into a heart, so that we can demonstrate God's heart of love for the world)

The Holy Trinity invites us to walk in love with God, with one another, with ourselves, with our neighbors, even with people who we might find it hard to love. It is a call of humility and faithfulness to God. Our journey or pilgrimage with the Trinity is an invitation to a joyful dance of love, embracing the beauty of the sacredness of life itself. May we be so bold as to join the dance and to live an abundant life in love with the Trinity.

Let me pray for us and I will begin with a couple excerpts from the prayers of Saint Patrick.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,

Through belief in the Threeness,

Through confession of the Oneness

of the Creator of creation.

I arise today with:

The strength of heaven,

The light of the sun,

The radiance of the moon,

The splendour of fire,

The speed of lightning,

The swiftness of wind,

The depth of the sea,

The firmness of rock.

I arise today with:

God's strength to lead me,

God's might to uphold me,

God's wisdom to guide me,

God's eye to watch over me,

God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's shield to protect me.

Christ be with me, Christ be before me,
Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie, Christ when I sit.

Christ be in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me
and Christ in every ear that hears me.....

Thank you God for the reminder today of the gift of the Trinity....