

Today is Trinity Sunday, when we explore the triune nature of God Almighty – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It's a mystery we all live with, whether we know it or not. Humanity is continually striving to grasp the meaning, the wisdom and the peace and comfort of God.

Given the events of recent weeks, I found the following quote by Madeleine L'Engle especially thought-provoking:

"The Trinity proclaims a unity that in this fragmented world we desperately need. We are mortals who are male and female, and we need to know each other, love each other. The world gets daily more perilous. Our cities spawn crime. Terrorists are around every corner. Random acts of violence increase. Less understandable and less advertised is the sad fact that Christians are suspicious of other Christians. Don't we have all the central things – God, making; Christ, awaking; the Holy Spirit, blessing – in common?"

That's from L'Engle's book "Penguins and Golden Calves: Icons & Idols in Antarctica and Other Unexpected Places." Interesting, right? The Trinity points to the three distinct persons of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and in the mystery of the Three-in-One, we are called to unity, not disparity. Three persons in one being.

St. Patrick is said to have used the shamrock to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity. He would point to the shamrock and ask, "Is this one leaf or three? If one leaf, why are there three lobes of equal size? If three leaves, why is there just one stem?" "Clearly, there is unity in the shamrock "he said", and each lobe of it can be seen distinctly, yet all are part of one leaf, and are organically related and united." That's kind of helpful, isn't it? And yet, of all the persons of the Trinity, the one most people find it hardest to relate to is the Holy Spirit. And that's OK. It's OK to have questions and uncertainty about God.

In fact, I heard something on Tuesday that I think would help a lot of people who get hung up on the mysteries of our faith, both believers and unbelievers. At the end of the podcast Up First on Tuesday, they promo'd another show saying, "Nothing in the news makes any sense. So Comedian Hasan Minhaj turned to his father and faith for answers. Hasan's father told him, "Don't worry about the number of questions. Just worry about which questions become more clear and solidified."

I like that, and I offer it here if it's useful to anyone in dealing with the mysteries of our faith. I mean, we will always be discovering more about God, right? So don't let your doubt and uncertainty get in the way of your faith.

Doubt and uncertainty is something Jesus' earliest disciples also struggled with. In our scripture for today, Matthew tells us that he and the other 10 disciples (after Judas was gone), they were in Galilee on the mountain to which the Risen Lord had directed them. "When they saw him," says Matthew, "they worshipped him; but," he says, "some doubted.

If Jesus' closest disciples can worship and have faith even amid their doubts, then so can we, and we do. Doubt and uncertainty is a part of faith, particularly in this fallen world of ours. So, how did Jesus and those disciples deal with their doubts?

Matthew tells us that while some of them were still in doubt, "Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...'" In addressing their doubts, Jesus points to God, saying "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." As the second person of the Trinity, Jesus is our connection to God. We see God through Jesus.

And when, amid this troubled world, we don't see God, it's because we've lost sight of Jesus. The mystery of our faith is that we can't know and love God without knowing and loving Jesus. Just as Jesus brought the disciples into deeper relationship with God, so we are to bring other people into relationship with Jesus. "Go," says Jesus, "... and make disciples of all nations," all people.

We bring people into discipleship with Jesus by bringing people into relationship with the Risen Lord, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in us. What are three things that you can tell people about Jesus that would make a difference in their lives? Well, we don't have to look far for the answer to that. It's right here for us in today's scripture lesson.

First, Jesus comes to us with all the authority of God, as God incarnate. We don't have some almighty god who sits far off in heaven. We have a God who reaches out to us through Jesus. No matter what difficulties anyone is facing, you can always assure them that God cares about them.

Donald D. Miller, in his book "Searching for God Knows What,"¹ puts it this way:

"If you believe Jesus was God, and he came to earth to walk among us, the first thing you start considering is that he might actually care. Why else would something so great become something so small?" So, tell that to people, tell them God cares about them so much that he sent Jesus to find them and bring them closer to God.

Second, you can tell people that not only does God care about them, but you care about them, too, and that you are there for them. You can tell them that Jesus sends people into the lives of others to be his hands and feet and heart in this world, that he wants us to be a blessing to one another, just as Jesus through his earthly ministry was a living, breathing blessing from God to us and all people.

And third, you can tell them that Jesus teaches you something new everyday about how to better follow the Lord, and that through the Holy Spirit, he gives you the strength and courage to face the hardest moments in life, and to help others do the same .In other words, God cares about us so much that he sent Jesus to bless us and teach us. And in turn, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower us and equip us, so that we can be a blessing to others.

There you have it – the mystery of the Trinity. Not really. There’s no way to fully explain the Trinity, except to say that God is three persons in one being – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And maybe that’s enough. As author Madeleine L’Engle said, “The Trinity proclaims a unity that in this fragmented world we desperately need.”

So really, it’s not about explaining the Trinity as much as it is embracing it, embracing the triune nature of God as a reflection of our oneness as God’s children, with no one left out, with everyone loved and cared for, through a Spirit of self-giving that is possible only by the grace of God. Amen.