

TRINITY SUNDAY
May 18, 2008
by
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IN THE LOVE OF THE BLESSED AND GLORIOUS TRINITY, WE ARE SAVED.

You may be wondering what is in my bag! Well, my sermon is so long I had to pack a snack. Just joking! I brought some visual aides.

I want to start my sermon with a historical understanding to Trinity Sunday. This information is from the Episcopal Life magazine that had a nice column. It said the celebration of Trinity Sunday was approved by Pope XXII in 1334. 674 years ago! Prior to that the nearly complete doctrine of the Trinity, announced at Constantinople in 381, held that God is one being in three equal and consubstantial persons. Trinity Sunday is also associated with Thomas Becket (1118-1170) who was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury on Trinity Sunday in 1162. (674 years ago) The day celebrates the Christian understanding of the Trinity as a perfect relationship of love in which neither unity nor distinctness of the divine persons is compromised. God's life is understood to be dynamic, loving and available to be shared in relationship with humanity for salvation.

So we have the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: Last year for the Lenten program we took the Lord's Prayer verse by verse and discussed the significance and meaning. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be they name"....there is a sense of respect and distance. We, as human beings, are not equal. Our Father is loving, perfect, complete, holy, true and good. We would like to be that way, but seem to find ourselves unhappy, doubting, wavering or falling off the wagon so to speak!

The Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. God can call us into relationship through Jesus. We spend a lot of our time reading the gospel stories about Jesus, interpreting and giving sermons. We read about the unwavering patience Jesus had for his disciples. His ability not to be drawn into some sort of trickery. His ability to remain steadfast. Don't we feel like we can have a relationship with Jesus? A friend and a teacher? He doesn't ever give up on us even though we doubt his credibility and we do the wrong things.

Finally the Spirit. Last Sunday in I Corinthians it says "there are a variety of gifts, but the same spirit" and further on it says "To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good". Through the Spirit we are given the utterance of wisdom, of knowledge, of faith, gifts of healing, of prophecy, of working miracles, interpretation of tongues and of discernment. We are all given the same spirit and it is up to us to act. The Spirit of God is within us. When we are baptized we say "Sustain (them) O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them a discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works." We need to know, understand and use our Spirit.

We talk about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three that are so intricately entwined, it takes three to make one. Here is my example. I have a braid of wool roving. In order to make a braid you need three pieces. It is impossible to have a braid unless you have 3 strands. I also have a can of three in one oil. It isn't like a salad dressing that separates and you need to shake to use it...this oil stays as one and functions as one. Three oils that act as one.

Jesus' final command to us is "Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you." This might be a tall order for some of us. Not every one is comfortable talking about faith to another person. We may not feel qualified or educated enough. Some of us may feel we shouldn't be telling people how to run their lives, as the expression goes. We are to go out in the world to love our fellow humans, teach and baptize them. And yet I'll bet that most of us at sometime have told a couple with a newborn baby (maybe a grandchild or niece or nephew) they should get the baby baptized. A couple planning to get married and one of them is not baptized...don't we suggest during the counseling process that both be baptized. We do these things, but not in a grand and glorious way. We know the expression "action speaks a thousand words"...this may be the way to respond to Jesus' request. Be a witness to your faith. You have love, you have the knowledge of the teachings, you have the Holy Spirit. If you put them to work you are a disciple.