

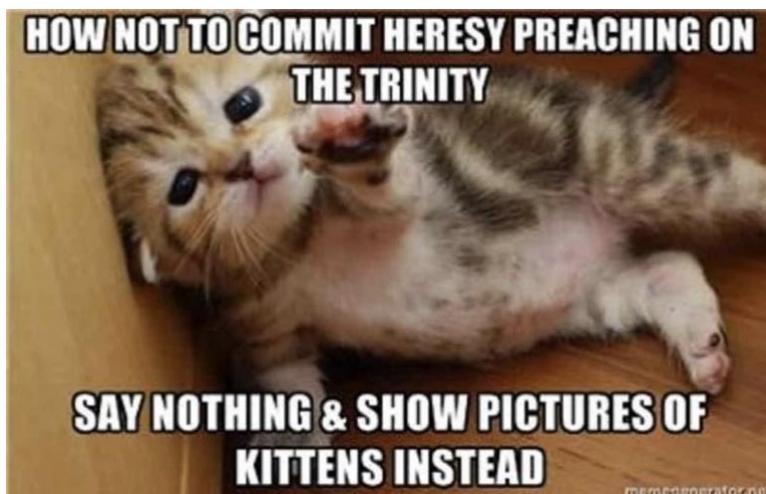
It's Trinity Sunday! The Trinity is hard to explain. It isn't a term that is used in the bible, but the concept is found all over it right from the beginning in Genesis 1:1, where the Hebrew word Elohim that we translate to 'God' is *plural*. And in Gen 1:26, God refers to God's self as plural when God says, "Let **us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness."

We see the Trinity in the New Testament in several places as well, like in Matthew 3:16-17, when Jesus was baptized, we see each member of the Trinity all together in one place: "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'" And in the Epistle we heard this morning, St. Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." And in our Gospel passage for today, Jesus commissions his disciples to go and "make more disciples, of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." There it is: The Holy Trinity is actually a **multiplicity of personality** in the **singularity** of God! (repeat for emphasis!)

No wonder there's a lot of misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. Some other faiths think that it means we have 3 gods, which isn't the case. Generally, many people just aren't aware that Christians believe in One God, who is a triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Yes, it **is** hard to explain! In fact, in the effort to explain the Trinity, most people end up using heretical illustrations, and here are some examples:

Water. Water can exist in 3 forms: liquid, ice and vapor – yet all are water. **The sun:** some people use the sun to describe the Trinity – that it's one sun, with three attributes – it's a star, it gives light, and it produces heat. Or how about "3-in-1" shampoo? Or a three-leaf clover? No, all of these analogies are actually heresies, for complicated theological reasons that I won't go into today, but you can look them up – just Google "Trinitarian Heresies!".

Evelyn's shared a funny meme on Facebook the other day:



So why should we even try to understand the Trinity? Well, for one, thing, it helps us understand more of God's **personality** – more about **what God is like**. We are confined, of course, by the limits of language as we try to describe not three Gods, but one God, in three persons: God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sustainer; Almighty God, Incarnate Word, and Holy Advocate; Presence, Wisdom, and Power.

The most important thing to remember is that at the heart of the Trinity is a **dynamic relationship**. Relationships are of the *highest priority* to God. God is love, and for love to be real, there has to be relationship. **Relationship is at the core of what it means to be a Christian** – of being in Christ with the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Relationship is what the Trinity is all about. It's about how God relates to God's self, as a unity of being in three persons. In the Trinity, God co-operates. In the Trinity, God communicates and God shares. And the Trinitarian God is reaching out **to us**.

We were created out of the overflowing love of God – we are born for relationship – not just with each other, but with God. And for us as “the Church,” this relational aspect of God is the foundation of our purpose in the world, as we glorify God through our love for one another – as we are drawn into the community of God, we in turn reach out to draw others in – remembering the love that God has for **all** of God's children.

There is a vision that I'm holding onto these days, considering the movement we are now witnessing of all kinds of people coming together in the long-overdue recognition of the need for racial justice in this country. And in my vision, **God our heavenly parent** is looking down on **all** God's children with so much love and compassion at this challenging time – and **Jesus** is showing us the way, the truth and the life – and the **Holy Spirit** is helping us to wake up, to stand up and to speak out the truth of our history and the experience of many people of color – to really reflect and to repent and to move forwards towards justice and reconciliation.

The other day, my mom and I attended a “justice and prayer” event at Laurel Creek Park, where faith leaders gathered with the community to speak and to hear truth and to repent and to pray together. It was a very hopeful and positive experience. There are many actions we need to take, but two very important ones: first, to learn – there are some great resources out there that teach about the truth of racial injustice, and I will be emailing and posting those – and second, to vote. We need to be sure to vote for candidates that will bring forward real criminal justice reform and who have a heart for all of God's people. We heard again the words of the prophet Micah: “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

The vision that we share is that the powerful response to the murder of George Floyd that we are seeing and that many of us are participating in **will not be in vain**. We pray this in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.