

Trinity – Year C

In the name of the Divine Triune Mystery, who made us, who loves us, and who travels the way with us.

God is indeed Mystery. We believe in a God who continually tries to reveal Godself to us, and we keep trying to describe that experience of God. And sometimes those attempts at describing how we experience God in words end up creating descriptions that try to *define* God. And we end up with doctrines – formulations that *do* tell us something about God, but the words, the formulations must never be taken as God themselves.

The Trinity is a doctrine – but wasn't defined as such until the 4th century – when Constantine made Christianity legal, and the church decided to formalize, to set in stone what constituted what Christians believed about God.

My own belief in the Trinity is this: I believe in a God who not only created all that is, and continues that creation, but who entered into that Creation fully – in the Incarnation – the “taking flesh”. And I believe that God's presence continues to permeate us and all of creation through the Spirit – through the very breath of God that enlivens us all.

What that means in practical, day-to-day terms is that I believe God continues to reveal Godself, that the Spirit prods and pokes us, even as she accompanies us on our journey. It means I have to keep my eyes and ears open for the presence of God in the experiences of my life here and now. And today, that meant I had to rewrite my homily – because I believe God is very present to us here these days, and we need pay attention to this moment.

On this Trinity Sunday, many of you present may hear and see in your mind's eye our dear Rev. Wayne Nicholson transformed into Julia Child as he tried to explain the Trinity as yeast, flour, and water combining to make bread. The memory brings a smile, even as it brings a pang of heartache at his absence. That same Wayne witnessed the marriage of Daria and Peter in this church some 10 years ago. Later they brought little Eva to be baptized by Wayne here in this church, and today, we will baptize her baby sister, Karina.

Daria and Peter lived on the opposite corner of the block from St. John's when they were married here. Now they live near Ann Arbor. There are lots of churches in Ann Arbor – and lots of churches between there and here. But they have come back to St. John's for this baptism of Karina. And many others have done the same – come back to this church, this community, for the rites of passage of baptism, marriage, or burial.

And I think what this all tells us about ourselves and our experience of God is this: We are relational. We are made in the image of God, and our God – Father, Son and Spirit or Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier or the one who made us, loves us, and travels the way with us – however we want to name it – our God is relational. We come back “home” – for these important moments, because we want to return to the ground from which we came. Our “insides” are reminding us of the One who made us. We want to be with the people, in the place, where we were “born” –

And we return because we want to be where we have felt love – where we have been in relationship – where we have found God taking flesh. And we want to let the Spirit of God blow over and around and through us, where we have known that Spirit before.

Another “doctrine” we profess is belief in the communion of saints – which means we believe that we are in communion – we are linked with, we are deeply connected to – all those folks who have gone before us, and to those who are here with us, and somehow even to those who will come after us. That, my friends, is what we experience this morning.

Wayne is very present to us today, in our memory of that silly Julia Child impersonation, in Daria and Peter and their marriage and Eva's baptism, and in each memory that comes when you look around this church or around your own soul. And so are Forrest and Joan and Paula and all the others gone from our sight, they are present, too. The living are present with us – even when they are not here in body. How often have we said, “I'll be there in spirit.” That is the communion of saints – and we *experience* it - and it tells us we are related.

Because God created us each and all, because Jesus took flesh and revealed a God who loves us unconditionally, because the Spirit of God continues to move in us all, we are related.

Our practice of baptism is most closely linked to a passage from Matthew's Gospel: "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..."

This same gospel passage from the *Complete Jewish Bible* translation – and yes, there are Jewish translations of the entire Bible including the New Testament - reads: "Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim [disciples], immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh [the Holy Spirit or Divine Inspiration]." ***Immersing them into the reality...of God, Father, Son, and Spirit.***

That's what we are doing in Karina's baptism today. We are immersing her into the reality of God, who created her, who loves her, and who will travel the way with her. We cannot change what already is. We are already in relationship with God. God is continually creating us, loving us, abiding in us. What we *can* do is enter *into* that relationship, *immerse* ourselves into that reality.

Karina is already a child of God. Today her parents and godparents and grandparents and all of us here are proclaiming that we *believe* that. And we are committing ourselves to helping her – and one another – come to know and believe and live that, too.

May we all be *immersed in the reality of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who made us, who loves us, and who travels the way with us. Amen.*

[Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31](#) [Romans 5:1-5](#) [John 16:12-15](#) [Psalm 8](#)