

**Theme:** The Gospel Brings Us into a Relationship with the Triune Nature of God.

**Sub-Theme:** The Trinity, like Creation, is intended to be enjoyed, more than explained.

Today is Trinity Sunday. It is the only Sunday in the entire Church year dedicated to a Christian doctrine. But as we concern ourselves with the concept of the Trinity, it is presumptuous to think that we can wrap our minds around the fullness of God, much less explain how He is revealed in three divine persons, who are different, mysterious, communal, and relational, yet are one in substance. But what we can do is enter into a relationship with him.

Our catechism states, “*We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we are brought into love and harmony with God, ourselves, neighbors, and all creation.*”<sup>1</sup> This is one of the reasons why the creation story is included in our Old Testament reading today. It speaks in poetic language because poetry has a way of expressing spiritual matters that touch the heart without getting too entangled with technical details and definitions. Its beauty and rhyme quickly move us into music and singing in the repeated refrain, “It is good.” The other repetition in the lyrics of the song also has significant meaning. Eight times the writer uses the phrase, “And God said . . . .” The reason the Father’s word can bring things into being is that his word is an integral part of himself. John’s Gospel *explains*, “***The Word was with God, and the Word was God.***”<sup>2</sup> This word became flesh and dwelt among

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<sup>1</sup> Book of Common Prayer, Catechism on the topic of the Holy Spirit, p. 852

<sup>2</sup> John 1:1

us.”<sup>3</sup> It was “***through him all things were made, and without him, nothing was made that has been made.***”<sup>4</sup>

So what we see in both John’s Gospel and Genesis is that God is a community. St. Augustine said that unless you have a triune God who is a community, love would not be the ultimate reality, nor would it be intrinsic to the universe. So God speaks to creation because he wants a relationship with all he has made. This is why the Psalmist speaks poetically about “***The heavens declaring the glory of God; the skies proclaim his handiwork.***”<sup>5</sup> It is through the things that God has created; his invisible power and divine nature are revealed.

But most often, when modern people read the words from the first chapter of Genesis, they bring with them questions that it was not intended to explain. For example, if I were to open a box with a new iPhone in it, my first question is not, “How was this gadget created?” Something that took hundreds of thousands of hours to design and create is too complicated to explain. But the more important question is, what was it made for, and how do I use it, without getting bogged down with matters that are too great and too marvelous for us to handle.

If the world was designed to display our Lord’s handiwork, then are we open to the message his glory declares? And in return, do we honor him as God and give thanks to him? This kind of response is spoken about in the Great Commission, which speaks of being brought into a relationship with God as we are “***baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.***”<sup>6</sup> The preposition that is used in this verse is significant. It indicates the purposeful result of being brought “*into*”<sup>7</sup> a

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<sup>3</sup> John 1:14

<sup>4</sup> John 1:3

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 19:1

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>7</sup> Strong’s Concordance, #1519 eis (ice), “to or into” – (indicating “motion into which” implying penetration)

personal relationship with the triune nature of God. And the way we experience a taste of his fulness is through our baptism, which unites us with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, as Paul explained in our New Testament lesson from Romans when he wrote, ***“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”***<sup>8</sup>

Living into this profound reality is expressed in *The Parable of the Blind Men and an Elephant*, which originated in ancient India. It is a story of a group of blind men who have never encountered an elephant before. Therefore their only means of conceptualizing what the elephant is like is by touching it. Each blind man feels a different part of the elephant's body, but only one part, such as the side, the tusk, or the ear. They then describe the elephant based on their limited experience, and their descriptions of the elephant differ. In some versions, they suspect the other person is dishonest and come to blows.

The parable's lesson relates to our limited comprehension of God's fullness, for we “... ***know only in part,***<sup>9</sup> yet what each of us can get our hands on is profound. But we also need the humility to acknowledge the validity of what others claim to see. Hopefully, we will all come to know that we are born out of love, and therefore we are born for a purpose: To know, love, and serve God, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This reverential response is part of ***“the mystery from which true godliness springs.”***<sup>10</sup>

When Jesus gave us the Great Commission, he said, ***“All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations.”***<sup>11</sup> This commission is daunting

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<sup>8</sup> Romans 6:4

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, NIV

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 28:18-19

because we live in a world with divisions, different opinions, personalities, viewpoints, and traditions that quickly divide us.

Just a few years ago, after George Floyd's death, there were riots in Greensboro that destroyed street-front property. Amid the vandalism and pain, my daughter and son-in-law joined me as we packed up my tools and drove to downtown Greensboro to help store owners whose property was damaged. While we went from store to store, boarding up windows that had been broken, something of God's love connected us to the hurt and devastation. It also bonded us with the people we were there to help.

Today, we continue to express our love in different ways. For example, our daughter has taken on the care of two foster children, which she said could not be done without our help. In each case, the brokenness in the family background is profound, but the joy and grace available to us as we reach out in love to each child is also amazing.

As we engaged the world with all of its brokenness, we go with the assurance that God is with us. None of what we do for others relies on us alone. Therefore we have been given the promise of the Holy Spirit, who Jesus said will be with us always. He will work through our imperfect words and actions to connect us to others if we only do what we can.

Therefore *“may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.”*<sup>12</sup> Amen.

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<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:14