

John 3:1-17

Today is Trinity Sunday... St. Augustine said "If you deny the trinity you lose your soul, if you try to explain it you lose your mind!"

This idea of the trinity is relevant for us as a means of trying to understand our creator and our relationship to God.

Now my notion of the Trinity comes from science...matter, energy, and ground. I like to also say that we are a creation of the creator.

Maybe I can say it this way...Think of a painting... it's 2 dimensional. The artist has to be outside the painting in order to create it.

And in this case the energy that God uses to create this picture we call Spirit. Taken from God itself...The paint! The matter is the canvas and the painting itself and the many colors come from the artists imagination.

And Jesus, if you will, is God's self-portrait in the painting. How God thinks of itself in relationship with its own creation. Now we can never truly know the mind of the artist can we. But it doesn't keep us from trying.

Maybe we think 'cause we are in the blue part of the painting that God is really blue or that God's favorite color is blue. And those in the green part think likewise. You see the problem with this...and I'm sure God has other self-portraits as well. Why would God be limited by its own two-dimensional creation?

So this idea of trinity gets us out of our 2 dimensional dualistic ways of thinking...that there is more here beyond what we can perceive with our senses.

Today's gospel is a conversation with the Pharisee Nicodemus who comes to Jesus in hopes of getting some answers...and Jesus answers Nicodemus in a way that he might understand.

And so what is Righteousness? And what does that have to do with our view of God as Trinity!?

Self-righteousness is mostly how we look at things...something we define for ourselves... and then we impose our view of our world onto others...like blue is the best color...God is blue...and this generally doesn't end well does it because that makes everyone else wrong?

These notions can easily get us in trouble...we judge other people and we determine, from our small piece of the picture who is righteous and who is not...and in that very act we then become unrighteous ourselves...see we miss the plot.

Righteousness in Hebrew is the word Shalom meaning to be in right relationship with God and all creation...right perspective...and the byproduct of Shalom is that peace which passes all understanding... being connected to the Cosmos...to the painting...to the painter in some way.

The Buddhist call this state of being enlightenment...its timeless and it transcends our earthly circumstances. It's Shalom!

Self-Righteousness is based on a belief that God is transactional...conditional...2 dimensional...if you do this then I do this... And if you want to start damaging relationships and creation... start to impose your view of the world and God as THE right and only view and then start judging others as to their relationship with God!

What God truly is...is Shalom...relational! God in relationship with God-self and all of creation. We express this through this idea of trinity.

So how do we get into right relationship with everything? The two great commandments that Jesus gave us to follow...is how we connect!

Through love and openness! And by the way these tenants are found in every world religion...not just ours!

When you are in right relationship with God and others...you know it!

It's that feeling of wellbeing...that peace and connectedness we feel ...that feeling of a larger perspective... that we are connected to something greater than ourselves... that feeling of oneness where we imagine ourselves outside the picture frame and come to see a bigger picture.

The Gospel of John, as I've stated before, is ultimately about our Transformation.

This well-known passage from John is a rarity in the Gospels because it shows Jesus discussing all three aspects of Godself.

This view of God transcends dualism – black and white, good and bad, night and day. (Imagine a rocket going into space outside the earth...where is day and night...they don't exist outside the frame.)

Here Jesus is challenging Nicodemus to move beyond his smaller perception of the world and to be born again into right relationship with God!

He is challenging this well-educated man of God with seeing things in a bigger way.

See Nicodemus thinks that as an Elite religious leader he understands who Jesus is... and ultimately who God is... and Jesus calls him out on his narrow-minded book smarts here.

John is a master of symbolism and imagery and note that Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and Jewish leader, arrives at night, a symbolic time of ignorance.

Like a typical scholar, Nicodemus begins the conversation with a statement based on evidence. "We know" that you are a teacher come from God. Well how do we know? By observing with our senses...show me...seeing is believing! And Jesus' miracles provided empirical evidence that this guy was somehow connected to God.

But Jesus isn't simply performing miracles on Nicodemus's behalf... rather Jesus is revealing God's kingdom as a whole.

Jesus asserts that no one can see this revelation...this perspective...the kingdom of God ...without first being born from above.

And Nicodemus takes the more literal meaning as "born again" and is confused...which invites Jesus' to further elaborate between Spirit (God's Realm) and the Flesh (Man's realm)...think energy vs matter. The things that can't be seen or perceived...but exist as well.

One's participation in this new reality represents being awakened to the reality of being in communion with all that is... in relationship with God...through Jesus and Spirit...through matter and energy...through our life here and in the cosmos...All connected by Spirit as one.

And unless Nicodemus allows Jesus to change his way of seeing things, he will not be able to perceive God in our midst.

Being reborn from above through the Spirit (the Greek word pneuma). Pneuma like its Hebrew counterpart Ruach can mean either "spirit," "breath," or "wind," none of which can be seen.

Like the breath of God in Genesis...the Spirit gives life.

That's why Ruach is such an important word here. Nicodemus can't see or understand Oxygen when he breathes ...but let it cease to be and see what happens. No breathing... no life...

And like the wind, God's Spirit blows wherever it wants, and though we may perceive it, we can neither comprehend it... nor control it. And the word here Ruach...is feminine! The Feminine aspect of the universe. Jesus as male... Spirit as female and God as the whole of it.

Jesus shifts the conversation now from the smallness of Nicodemus' 2-dimensional point of view... to a larger view lived in right relationship with God as Trinity.

Think wholeness, think communal...our life in a cosmic dance with all that is...transcending our dualistic natures and certainly our dualistic views of the world.

Jesus goes from miracles... on which Nicodemus bases his understanding (seeing is believing) ...to the invisible mystery of God's Spirit... unknowable as the wind...yet giving breath and life to everything. We see matter but can't see the energy holding it and binding it all together.

We must be born from Spirit and so we are!

Jesus invites us to be born into a new perspective...where death is just a doorway...a transition from one state of being to the next...and this transformation, this metamorphosis is not just referring to our physical death...but also to the death of all the things that we cling to... the things that keep us from being in right relationship with God and others!

And citizenship in God's kingdom is never ever a solo affair. We are connected to everything...born into God's One Holy family...we are all children of the cosmos.

A child of matter and energy dancing in space and time. And John tells us that God is light...and what is light? Both matter and energy...separate yet one!

In context... here with Nicodemus... and throughout the entirety of John's gospel Shalom is a state of being lived out day to day!

In John's gospel, believing and doing are inseparable...you either are in Christ...that is you are part of the whole, or you choose to be separated out and disconnected (hell by the way).

Jesus invites us to open our imaginations and reconsider our relationship with God. God as Trinity!

You see the truth is - God is not a he, or a she, or even an it!

God is a WE! Communal, Relational, Connected... and Holy as One!  
And WE are created in our creator's image ...so guess what folks... you  
are also a WE as well! ALL else is just an illusion inside the frame!

Love God and Love one another...There's never a mention of loving  
oneself is there? I have always found that strange... but when looking at  
things through this idea of trinity it makes some sense.

For when you love God as an image bearer then you ARE loving  
yourself... for You are US!

The moment you were born you were us...vulnerable - a WE, totally  
dependent and part of your parents and your environment. In fact, when  
you look at it, we are ALL completely dependent upon others and the  
world for our survival throughout our entire lives...even though we take  
great effort to pretend otherwise!

When we seek authority without being vulnerable...when we seek  
independence from one another...when we seek idols, we turn creation  
inside out...And the world turns upside down.

The WE also get turned around. We can even see ourselves as being on  
our own. The "W" becomes an "M"! And we come to think of  
ourselves as MEs...either smug and self-reliant...or all alone and  
isolated.

An illusion...A Lie! – ALL of creation is connected...and when we  
view ourselves as WE, we come to see that God is with us - ALWAYS!  
This notion of the Trinity reminds us of who WE are...connected!

We are diverse...think many colors...combine all those colors and you  
get pure white light...all One...and WE together reflect the image of our  
Creator.

So may you come to realize that God has created you in God's very image...and like God... the Trinity - we are all truly WE's...connected and dependent upon one another and God...in relationship with all of Creation.

God's beautiful and diverse Creation!

Shalom my friends...Shalom!

Your faithful servant,

carmen