

I vividly remember one specific clergy meeting during my internship days in Richland Hills, Texas. Area clergy would regularly gather to discuss scripture readings for future Sundays. On the day of this memorable meeting, we were discussing scripture passages for the Sundays of Pentecost and Holy Trinity. Everyone was excited about preaching on Pentecost Sunday, but hardly anyone looked forward to preaching on Trinity Sunday. You see, the doctrine of the Trinity is one clergy would often rather avoid. Anyway, Pastor Phil, my supervisor, joked that the **Intern** is always given Trinity Sunday as a preaching Sunday. And, later that day, he jestingly told the Calvary Café crew that this is a test to see if the intern is heretical or not!

Talking about the Trinity is not easy! Have you ever really tried to explain the Trinity? We say God is one, and yet we have these three, what? Persons? Spirits? Beings? What is God? Who is God? A triangle, a whole, but with three sides? We say we believe in One God, and then we sing, “God in **three** persons, blessed Trinity.” How do we make sense of this and what does it mean?

Quite honestly, Jesus did **not** talk about the Trinity; neither did Paul. We find what appears to be an early form of developing

theology on the Trinity in Paul's writings as well as in the gospel of John, but it was not until the fourth century, 300 years after Jesus, that Christian leaders formalized the theological doctrine of the Trinity. They did it at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE and the result was The Nicene Creed. Then, in the fifth century, Christian leaders wrote another creed trying once again to clarify the Trinity for folks, particularly the Jesus part. That Council resulted in the Apostles' Creed.

Over the years, there has been much adversarial, bitter fighting over the concept of the Trinity and throughout history, the church has split because of controversy surrounding this doctrine. Yes, the idea of the Trinity is hard to understand and nearly impossible to explain. So, I am **not** going to try to explain the Trinity, because it truly is all **mystery**. However, I am going to attempt to take you deeper into the **mystery** and the **wonder** of this One in Three.

I like to dance, and I **love** to watch people dance. Dance is made up of many different components. Motion, emotion, resonance, rhythm, beat; all of these relate to each other and they come together as one to create a whole when we see people dance. There is something about dance that is like the nature of God.

When we look at the idea of the Holy Trinity, we stand on the edge of mystery, and the model of the Trinity is one of interactive and open relationship. God's nature can be thought of as a three-way **dance**, a **dance of relationship** and incomprehensible **love**.

Through the metaphor of dance, we see three distinct movements of Parent, Son, and Holy Spirit, and these movements exchange life-giving energy. These movements create unity, a perfect unity and oneness. This dance is one of mutual devotion and shared love, a love that is expansive and generous, a love that **cannot** be self contained. It overflows from Parent to Child to Spirit and back again. The love of God, the love that **IS** God, is like a divine Dance, a dynamic, graceful, and deeply intimate movement. In this movement, the God who is "I AM" is **never** alone because the very nature of God is **relationship**. In the Trinity we see a love that is **always** selfless, void of ego, and always pointing to the other. In the Trinity we see a oneness where the three are **one** in mission. When we consider the Trinity, we see a God who is all about **relationship, community, and unconditional love – pure, untainted, unreserved love**.

In this interactive dance of the divine three in one, we also see a coming together of power and majesty, love and tenderness,

oneness and movement, joining with the raw and everyday reality of life, the life of the cosmos and our very lives. In our gospel reading for today, the writer of John's gospel connects this dance to **our** lives as we hear that God **so loves this world!** And, the word John uses for "world" refers to the cosmos – to **everything!** The dance of love God shares is so overwhelming that God's love spills out on to everything, encompassing everything – the entire cosmos, the entire creation, this little, miniscule planet that is hardly a speck in the vastness of space, **all** the people, the land, the animals, the bugs, the world's goodness **and** even its evil because God's love is a transforming, redeeming love for **all** of creation. You see, God's love is just that encompassing, immense, audacious, unexpected, and even scandalous.

In this coming together of God's love for the cosmos, God gives life, enters **our** very lives, lives among **us**, and invites **us** to **participate** in the dance of agape love. And, what is so mysterious and remarkable is that while God, who in this Dance **needs** no other, chooses to create and redeem a people. Frankly, this is a love that disturbs us, gnaws at our hearts, creates a hunger for God, unsettles us, grasps us, and draws us into the dance, into the very arms of

God's love, and we become forever changed and transformed. Dear friends, God chose to create and redeem you, me, and **every** individual we encounter so that we might join in this Dance. The invitations to this dance have been sent, and there are to be no spectators, no outcasts, no outsiders. Friends, we are called by God to see ourselves as God sees each one of us, and thus discover ourselves to be, like the Persons of the Trinity, truly **beloved**.

Do you remember the words spoken to Jesus when he was baptized? The Father, Son and Spirit danced as the Father spoke saying, "You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased." Those pulsating, life-giving, creating words danced through creation as a message of divine love. That creative word danced through life, healing the sick, freeing the oppressed, feeding the hungry, breaking the chains of slavery, and transforming chaos into wholeness. When we consider the Trinity, we see a God who has entered the deepest darkness of our lives and walks with us in the places where we think God is most absent. We see a God who is with us at those times of deepest suffering when we ask, "Why?" and there simply are no answers. We see God **with** us because that God, that three in one, danced to the very hill of Calvary, to the **deepest** place of darkness.

And then, the life-giving, creative dance of love burst forth from a sealed tomb because **it could not be contained!**

This is the love that invites **us** to participate in the dance. God speaks to each one of us saying, “**You** are my beloved, with **you** I am well pleased. Deb, Bruce, Harold, Virginia, Hugh, Marge, every one of you, children of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever, come and join the dance!”

Friends, the Divine dance continues in us and through us. And, what does the Trinity dance look like in our lives? We dance with our God when we feed the hungry through our food pantry projects. We dance with our God when we walk with those who are mourning and grieving. We dance with our God when we, ourselves, are grieving. We dance with our God when we take in young refugees and house and care for them in our Parish House. We dance with our God when we participate in the work of our Caring Committee. We dance with our God when we work for **justice** and **peace**. We dance with our God when we gather to worship. Created to live in relationship, we move to the beat of divine, incomprehensible love as we dance with God’s very self and with each other. So, come, dance on the edge of mystery, live into the kingdom of God and join the dance of Trinity!