

**Trinity Sunday C**  
**In God's Image**

**Introduction...**

This is Trinity Sunday. What can we say about the Trinity? Most of us never even think about the Trinity. The Holy Trinity doesn't mean anything to us.... And if I were to preach to you some of the attempted explanations of the Trinity –most of you would quickly nod off. It reminds me of the story of the preacher who said...

There's so much about the Trinity I could say... the circumincession explanation of the Trinity, the economic interpretation... there's so much I could say that I don't know where to start.

And from the back of the Church a voice was heard...

"Start as close to the end as possible."

Refrain... In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

**I The Sign of the Cross**

The sign of the Cross which we just made so effortlessly and so automatically recalls the Trinity to us, as we have experienced the Trinity in our lives. For many of us, soon after birth we were signed with the cross and were claimed for God, and blessed with God's name, and consecrated to God – then water was poured over our heads....

Refrain.... In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## II The Trinity

What can we say about this God?

For one thing, don't think you ever have God figured out...

when all is said and done, God is a mystery, and God's ways are not our ways.

And when all is said and done, probably the best way to think about God is what John said over and over in his epistles which we have just finished reading in the Easter Season just ended...

### **God is love... self-emptying love... agape**

- God is not some cosmic cop waiting to zap us for doing wrong.
- God is not a little old man with a gray beard watching over us from above.
- God is not the mighty fatherly figure in Michael Angelo's creation scene in the Sistine Chapel.

Simply put, God is love... not even lover, but the very act of loving, of giving unselfishly, of pouring out life and beauty and compassion and well-being.

This loving God pours God's self out in creation, and sees and loves what has created – God doesn't make junk!

Genesis 1 says that God saw that what God created was good, very good. (That's us.!) This creating and loving God we call God the **Father...**

But humanity gets into trouble, sin enters our world. We are broken.

You know what "sin" is...

You encounter it every day of your lives, and perhaps even in your own life.

How does God react?

Loving God sees struggling and sinful humanity unable to rise above its sinfulness,

and loving God does not deem equality with God something to be clung to, but once again pours God's self out

and this time takes on a human nature, and becomes one of us...  
and goes further, even enduring death on a cross,  
in order to confront sinfulness,  
take sin into His very heart,  
and save beloved humanity from itself.

This is God the Son, whom we call **Jesus**.

Loving Jesus pours himself out, even unto death... for us.

Then this loving God sees that we still need help,  
and once again pours God's self out, into our hearts,  
to continue our redemption, to continue the work of Jesus in our lives and  
others...

Today's second reading says this:

... The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy  
Spirit that has been given to us.

This God we call **Spirit**.

**Refrain... And we can each day, many times a day, pray...**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

For we are now God's children, brothers and sisters of Jesus,  
heirs of a heavenly home where Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us.

### **III We Are Made in God's Image...**

One last thing... our **So What?**

Question. OK, this is the Trinity... so what?

Genesis reminds us that we are made in God's image.

What might that mean?

Our society tells us that we are made to be entertained consumers. Our salvation and redemption and happiness and worthwhileness are assured by buying things, bigger things, better things, more expensive things, nicer things.

The **consumer** is the image we are made into.

But we Christians say... we were created in God's image, and therefore we were created to be people who love and who learn to pour ourselves out in unselfish, disinterested, compassionate love – as does God, as does Jesus, and as does the Spirit.

This is what will bring us happiness.

This is what will bring us fulfillment.

This is what makes us human.

Because this is the way God created us.

This is what we believe.

And certainly we can remember Jesus' teaching reminding us of this...

the one who selfishly holds onto his or her life, who is not loving and compassionate – such a person will never enter God's kingdom.

Look at Mathew 25 where Jesus says that we are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick...

and Jesus even goes so far as to say that when we do this to those in need, we do this to Him.

Be loving... that's Jesus' command.

Such a way of living is not easy, since it goes against the way our society teaches us to live...

enlightened self interest,

having it our way,  
being sure we get our piece of the pie,  
do unto others before they do it unto us.

the Christlike way of living with concern and compassion for others,  
especially the needy, is not easy  
because our society today seems to be very mean spirited about the needy,  
blaming the poor for being poor,  
looking right past those with handicaps or mental illnesses,  
warehousing the elderly in nursing homes,  
then never giving them a second thought.  
Christians act differently. For we act...

Refrain... In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...

### **Conclusion...**

*Let's see where we've been this morning...*

*The doctrine of the Trinity reminds us that our God is a mystery – far  
beyond our understanding.*

*But we do know as Christians that probably the best way of thinking about  
God is to recognize that*

God is love – self emptying, self giving love.

In this love God creates us – the Father

God redeems us – the Son

And God lovingly pours God's self into our hearts – the Spirit.

And finally, God reveals to us that we are made in God's image – and that  
means that we were made to be people who love.

Final image... heaven and hell...

### **A Story**

#### *Heaven and Hell*

*Hell... Picture a circle of people sitting side by side, so close to each other that their shoulders are touching. In the center of this circle is a big pot of delicious looking and smelling stew. The scent of it makes you want to try some right now.*

*The folks in the circle have a large wooden spoon with a long handle taped to their right forearms. They are yelling at each other angrily, they looked lean and hungry... there was no happiness there. The problem was that because they were so close together they couldn't get a spoon of the delicious stew into their mouths. They would bump into each other when they tried to feed themselves.*

*This is truly hell.*

*Heaven... Picture a circle of people sitting side by side, so close to each other that their shoulders are touching. In the center of this circle is a big pot of delicious looking and smelling stew. The scent of it makes you want to try some right now.*

*The folks in the circle have a large wooden spoon with a long handle taped to their right forearms. These folks are happy and joyful, smiling and joking, and well fed.*

*What's the difference... ah, then you notice it. Each person is dipping his or her spoon into the stew, and then feeding each other. They are taking care of each other first.*

Where are you going? Heaven or hell? How do you act now?

May we be people of love who know that life is about sharing, caring, and unselfish love and compassion.

For this is what our God is all about.

**Refrain... And what do we call God, and how do we sign ourselves each day....**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

