

Trinity Sunday. May 30, 2021. S. Stephen's, Athens

Revelation iv, verse 8 - *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

A separate feast of the Most Holy Trinity began in the Middle Ages. The feast was particularly beloved by Saint Thomas Becket, who was Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry II in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The result was that in England both before and after the Reformation, Sundays in the second half of the Church year are counted as Sundays after today, after Trinity, while in the Roman Catholic and Lutheran worlds, they are counted as Sundays after Pentecost.

That little bit of trivia aside, what are to make of this day? Clearly the first half of the Church year moves towards this feast. The Trinity, the personal and perfectly united community of the one true God, is the goal towards which we all move. This life is passing quickly, but you and I, although we were created and have a beginning, are now eternal and will have no end. Unity with God the Holy Trinity is the goal of your life and of mine. This life is brief and passing, eternity is unending. Human desire is infinite. It can only be satisfied by an infinite good. We long for God, even if we do not understand that longing. Our hearts are restless until they rest in God. So this feast of the Trinity is at the hinge of the Church year, as the great seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, give way to the long green season of Trinitytide.

The temptation for the preacher on this Sunday is to try to *explain* the Trinity, as if God is fundamentally a problem or a puzzle. If God is basically a problem or a puzzle, then you and I would like the solution or the answer. Last week at S. Francis' in Gainesville I saw a cartoon in the sacristy. Two priests are having coffee in a breakroom: an older priest is looking in an open door and says, 'Okay, fellows. Breaks over. Those mysteries of the Trinity aren't going to grapple with themselves.' Well, if God is a puzzle, then we'd like someone to give us its solution.

Of course there are things that Christians believe about the Trinity, answers that we can make to some questions. We say that there is one God, not three. That there are three divine Persons. We say that Jesus Christ is one of those divine Persons, and that in his human life lived in our world we saw as much of God as our limited human minds can grasp. Theologians do think and speak and write about these questions and answers. But in the end, God is infinite and we are not: our small human minds cannot understand God directly and fully. We cannot look at the sun

directly either, but the sun makes it possible for us to live and to see everything else. We cannot understand God directly, but only by what he does in our world as Creator and Preserver, as Saviour and Sanctifier. We do not grasp God, because that would make him smaller than our minds. Yet God is and in him we live and move and have our being.

If we can only understand God partly, then the most important thing today is not to *explain* God. Our main goal today is not to grasp God but rather to love God. My text today from Revelation is a glimpse of the worship of heaven. Today is not mainly about a sermon in which things are explained for our minds to understand, but rather is about the hymns that we sing, the music that we hear, that beauty of this very beautiful place that we enjoy, and the prayers of adoration by which our hearts are lifted beyond this passing world into the peace and eternity of heaven. Today is mainly about our hearts. I am not telling you to turn off your minds, but rather to recognize that in regard to God, love reaches farther than intellect and that our hearts grasp more than our heads.

In this regard, think about families, at least good families. Little children do not much *think* about their parents. Perhaps later in life we think back about our parents, about their strengths and limitations. But while we are little we simply – to use those words from Paul again – simply live and move and have our being under the shelter of our parents and other, we hope, loving adults. Those adults are the horizon of their children’s lives, and the most important thing about family relations are not matters of the head, but of the heart. I do not think that our Lady mainly *thought* about her divine Son and the amazing facts of his conception and birth and later life. I think she mainly just loved him, because he was her child, and then because he was full of goodness and kindness and compassion.

So too with us and the Trinity. As we grow we may or may not think much about God, about the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons and one God. But mainly you and I are called, not to understand what will always be more than we can grasp, but rather to love him, to worship him, and to sing his praises. There are things about God that would be false to say and things that are true to say. But mostly for Christians, God is like a parent and we are like little children. Our relationship is mostly one of love, not of thinking, and our hearts will take us further into the mystery than will our heads.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.