

Today is Trinity Sunday. And on this day we praise God the Father (touch head), God the Son (touch heart) and God the Holy Spirit (shoulders) 1,2,3. The Trinity. And I wish it were as simple as that.

When we're talking about God as Trinity we are talking about God as three different persons, and also one whole God. Three in One. We remember this when we make the sign of the cross. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We don't know how God manages to be both 3 and 1. But we know that Jesus related to God this way. And that people have experienced God as three persons who have a relationship with each other – we imagine that it is a unity fueled by love. The bible tells us about God in this way.

- How in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. And stars and trees and people and animals – everything. So we call God the creator or father – God's love caused everything we know to come to be. God makes life out of love.
- And we know about Jesus, – anyone who met Jesus when he was walking and talking and preaching and healing on the earth, met God. And afterward people met Jesus in one another, and in Awesome Communion, and the stories we told about Jesus, the Word of God. And every time they met Jesus, they met God.
- Then Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us – which is what we celebrated last week at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit brings God's love to everyone, blows like the wind, warms us like fire, helps us to love like Jesus does. If you've met the Holy Spirit, perhaps in the love that someone has shown you, then you've met God.

All three members of the Trinity showed up in our readings today, which the McCrea siblings shared – In fact Gabe and Olivia and Alistair are also a trinity come to think of it. Because Trinity just means three.

Here are the three ways we met God in our readings:

In our first reading from Isaiah that Gabe read we went back to an ancient image of God as a supreme ruler, sitting on a throne surrounded by angels and flying beings with lots of crazy eyes. The hem of God's robe fills the whole place. God is so big, it's almost impossible to imagine. In the Psalm, Olivia reminded us that God "sits high above the floodwaters on a throne like a king for ever." And God has a voice that splits trees and can be found in the thunder and the waters. This is God Almighty, who we also call creator and father. This is God who is kind of hard to picture.

When Alistair read our version of Paul's letter to the Romans he reminded us about how we recognize God as the Holy Spirit, who leads us and helps us to understand that we are truly God's children. And

Jesus showed up in that reading as well, as the Christ who connects us to the life of God. So we learn here that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit work together to bring us into the life of God.

So three different persons and One Whole God. I'm not sure how God manages that – God's math is very different than the kind I learned. It's too big for my head. But it's not too big for my heart. And that's where I meet God the most.

But maybe we don't have to get the math exactly right. Maybe we just have to get our hearts right so that God fits inside, and to believe that the heart of the Trinity is open wide for us to fit inside. "Here's the most important thing you need to know," our Gospel reminded us today. "God loved everything and everyone in the world so much that he gave up his Son for them, and everyone who believes in God's Son will live with God in their hearts forever. "

Maybe the important thing for us is to figure out what it means to live with God in our hearts forever.

When Isaiah saw God sitting on this big throne with all these blinky angels flying around, Isaiah thought that he was going to get in big trouble for seeing God, that he wasn't good enough or pure enough to face the perfect God and live to tell about it. But Almighty God needed little Isaiah to help with the work that God was doing on the earth. God got rid of any sinfulness that was in Isaiah's way, and made it possible for Isaiah to do what needed to be done – which was to be a prophet who helped Israel remember that they belonged to God, and God was devoted to them.

Isaiah went from being afraid of God to having the courage to say to God: Here I am. Send me.

That's what the Trinity, working together in their love of one another, help us to do. They help us to recognize God among us and to say to God: Here I am. Send me.

God the Creator sends us into the world to help tend it and love it as God tends and loves it. God the Son, Jesus, shows us what that tending and loving requires of people. And God the Holy Spirit who came on Pentecost gives us the power to tend and love the way Jesus tends and loves.

The three in one and one in three add up to -- love. Love that surrounds us and empowers us and draws us into the life and love of God.

Some say that St Patrick used a clover leaf to explain the trinity. And others say that's a pretty lame way to describe God because God is not something divided into three separate parts. But St Patrick gave us an even better way to think of the Trinity – as God who is everywhere all at once. He gave us a prayer called St Patrick's breastplate, which describes how this everywhere all at once God surrounds and protects us with love and empowers us to say "Here I am. Send me." We even have a song in our hymnal based on this prayer that I find as hard to sing as it is for me to explain what the Trinity is.

But it is a good poem. And as I read part of it, I want you to imagine God surrounding you and protecting you and empowering you in this mysterious, all-encompassing way, that we don't need to understand as much as to welcome into our hearts:

1. I bind unto myself today
the strong name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.

4. I bind unto myself today
the power of God to hold and lead,
God's eye to watch, God's might to stay,
God's ear to hearken to my need,
the wisdom of my God to teach,
God's hand to guide, God's shield to ward;
the word of God to give me speech,
the heavenly host to be my guard.

5. Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

6. I bind unto myself the name,
the strong name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, the One in Three,
of whom all nature hath creation,
eternal Father, Spirit, Word.
Praise to the Lord of my salvation;
salvation is of Christ the Lord!