

There's More

This Sunday we will celebrate the Doctrine of the Trinity. I will offer for this message what I believe is the simplest description of the Trinity: "The Trinity is the distinctively Christian doctrine of God, a doctrine which seeks to reflect the complexity of the Christian experience of God."

I think that on Trinity Sunday, when tenuous analogies and theological gymnastics will be in play in churches everywhere, this simple definition of the Trinity is something we can wrap our minds around. The Trinity is simply how we try to talk about our multiple and diverse experiences of God at work in our world and our lives.

But suddenly we are faced with a huge challenge. As soon as we begin to talk about our experiences of God, we very quickly realize that mere words are not sufficient to the cause. And more than that, we find we experience God in so many different ways that it ultimately seems impossible to capture a definitive description.

Perhaps this coming Sunday is the day, that with all due respect to shamrocks and other ideas about describing our three in one God, we will merely surrender ourselves to the fact there is a fullness to God that is, in the end, indescribable.

We can say that God is the Creator, and that is true, but we know that there is more. We can say that God is love and that is true, but there is more. We can say that through the experience of Jesus, we are made whole, and that is true but there is more.

We say that through the experience of God's presence with us through the Holy Spirit, we continue to be enlightened---and that is true but there is more.

Time and time again our encounters with God lead us to know there is more. And often these encounters lead us to more questions than answers.

I think this is why we sometimes create security by keeping our relationship with God's rich, Triune life at a firm distance; creating a barrier that insulates us from the flames of fire that might dance over our heads like the disciples at Pentecost.

An experience of God can change us forever, knock us for a loop and make us question everything we know.

When we allow ourselves the crushing vulnerability of experiencing such an encounter with the fullness of God it can feel scary, but that is precisely when we get caught up in this wonderful dance with God's amazing grace.

This kind of experience of God calls us into a whole new messy and demanding place. And this is where we meet the tempestuous reality of our Triune God. Once our eyes are opened and we begin to see the world through God's eyes, we become like stumbling infants trying to find our way in a world that suddenly looks very different.

We only have to look at Jesus' early followers to get a taste of what this means. Look at Paul; He was a persecutor of those early Christians, but suddenly his eyes are opened to his cruelty, cruelty he perpetrated in God's name.

He suddenly sees those he sought to destroy through the eyes of Christ and all that he thought he knew about God and faith is turned on its head. His life will never be the same again. His life became far more complicated and harder to negotiate, but he tells us that everything he thought was important before was like garbage in comparison.

Peter, a faithful, observant Jew, ends up arguing for an end to the Jewish purity laws for those early followers; he had to question a long-held and treasured religious belief when he saw it had the potential to exclude some people from the love of God.

The stories go on and on—and I know many of you could add your own to the mix. Where have you found yourselves questioning something you thought you knew about God and your faith that suddenly seems shaky---I think God is trying to teach you something new and important!

The pull is there for all of us. The divine spark within calls us to see and acknowledge the divine that is everywhere—we can resist and often do, but our lives suffer as a result.

Even if we are yet still afraid to surrender ourselves to the wild storm of the Three in One, we still feel that yearning---even as we seek safety and certainty from our faith, we hear the call of something much wilder.

We strain toward that same tempestuous Spirit that was unleashed at Pentecost, that spirit that seeks to catch us up into something new and wonderful and asks us to dance with tongues of fire that hang above our heads.

Each of us, in our own everchanging experiences of the Holy, have felt the sweet and gentle touch of this God who is at once a small baby wrapped in fragile flesh and a voice like a great wind that breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

Let's give ourselves over to the unpredictable elation of simply living at the eye of the storm, a storm that keeps us awake and alive, one that simply crackles with fearful beauty, joy and wisdom; the beauty, joy and wisdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

Grace and Peace, Stephanie+