



June 16, 2019 John 16: 12-15 & Prov. 8: 22-32

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#### ENTERING THE SCENE:

One of my favorite symbols for the Trinity is an equilateral triangle. I have a prayer bowl full of small triangles on which I put the names of people I am praying for. I hold this bowl as I sit in quiet and offer them up to the Lord. Fr. Beck images this triangle with the heat of the Holy Spirit burning so hot that one side of the triangle is melting. It is as if God's love is so intense it cannot be contained within itself and is flowing outward



into creation. Our ability to bear this intense heat of love is made possible only with the help of that same Spirit. Now listen to these words again which continue to guide us into all the truth.

Jn. 16: 12 I have much more to say to you, **more than you can now bear**. 13 But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will **guide** you into **all truth**. He will **not speak on his own**; he will **speak only what he hears**, and he will **tell you what is yet to come**. 14 He will **bring glory to me** by taking from what is **mine** and **making it known** to you. 15 All that belongs to the **Father** is **mine**. That is why I said the **Spirit** will take from what is **mine** and **make it known to you**.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What have you experienced in this past year, that opened you more fully into God's love? Was there anything about the experience that was more than you could bear at the time?

**PRAYER:** "Eternal Trinity, you are my creator. I am the work of your hands, and I know how deeply enamored you are with the beauty of your workmanship. O Abyss, O Godhead, O Sea Profound, what more could you give me than you already have given, for you have given me yourself. You are that fire that burns within me to consume my self-love, a fire that takes away the chill in my heart." Amen. - St. Ignatius of Loyola -

#### WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

**MORE THAN YOU CAN NOW BEAR:** At any given time, we can only bear to experience so much because of our inherent limits. Jesus knew very well that the disciples were not able at this time to take in all that he was giving them, but also knew that the Spirit would enable them to hear what they could bear to hear in the time to come.

*Has anyone ever recognized that you were not able to hear something now? Were you eventually able to hear it? What made that possible? Did that person's waiting help? How?*

**SPIRIT OF TRUTH:** The spirit of truth is that which enables us to know that something is authentic and warns us when something is not.

*How do you know when something is true? Untrue? Have you ever connected the Trinity and the Holy Spirit with this process?*

**COUNSELOR / GUIDE:** A guide is a reality that enables us to move in a desired direction toward our goal.

*Does scripture study function as a guide for you in your effort to "hear" more from God? How?*

**ALL TRUTH:** In space and time we are necessarily limited in our ability to see the "big picture". We needed to go into space to even see the wholeness of our earth and realize that this is only a small part of reality.

*Are you conscious of your limits when it comes to knowing the whole truth? If so, how does that help you to be compassionate like Jesus? Patient like Jesus?*

**NOT SPEAK ON HIS OWN:** No part of the Trinity speaks only on their own. They cannot be separated.

*How would your understanding of God be affected if there were only the Father? The Son? The Spirit? How does this triune expression of God enlarge your experience/ knowledge?*

**TESTIFY / SPEAK ONLY WHAT HE HEARS:** Jesus only spoke what Father revealed to him. Now he tells us that the Spirit will only speak what is given through him from the Father. All the members of the Trinity express what is given to them through their relationship.

*Which 'voice' of the Trinity do you relate to the best? Why? What might that reveal about your ability to 'hear'?*

**TELL YOU WHAT IS YET TO COME:** Jesus realizes that the disciples are only at the beginning of the beginning in their effort to understand what he is sharing with them.

*When was the last time you recognized that you were only at the beginning of the beginning in your faith life? What caused this realization? Was it helpful?*

**BRING GLORY TO ME:** Realizing the truth of his being the beloved is the source of Jesus' glory. When the Spirit enables humanity to realize this wondrous truth, Jesus' glory will be revealed.

*Can you imagine Jesus saying YES when that moment comes for you? Can you see him glowing with joy as he sees his truth dawning in you?*

**MINE:** Jesus made God's revelation his when he accepted being totally loved by God. He has made God's reality his own in such a way that he cannot distinguish between them.

*What will it take for you to do the same? Will you then be 'one' with the Trinity?*

**MAKING IT KNOWN:** Revelation is the process of God making known the truth of what is. Jesus is laying it all out there for us to see.

*Is there anything preventing you from seeing at this time? What would help you to get beyond this barrier?*

**FATHER / SPIRIT / SON:** The Trinity is the original relationship. Jesus is telling us that we exist within this relationship, and have done so since the beginning of creation.

*Has this study time helped you to go deeper into this mystery? Do you trust that the Holy Spirit will reveal more to you as you are able to bear it?*

**PARALLEL TEXTS:** Jn. 16: 12 // Jn. 14:26; Jn. 16:13 // Jn. 14:26; Jn. 16:16 // Jn. 7:33; 14:19;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Prov. 8: 22-31; [Ps. 8: 4-9](#); Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15;

Revised Common Lectionary: Prov. 8: 1-4, 22-31; [Ps. 8](#); Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15;

#### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**



It's hard to see the whole picture  
if you are inside the frame.  
Fr. Ralph Powell, O.P.

The Christian belief in the Trinity makes it clear that God is an event of communion. God is not a noun nearly as much as a verb. We've always thought of God as an autonomous Supreme Being, rather than as Being itself, as an energy that moves within itself ("Father"), beyond itself ("Christ"), and drawing us into itself ("Holy Spirit"). When Christianity begins to take this pivotal and central doctrine of the Trinity with practical seriousness, it will be renewed on every level.

Collectively, we're moving toward the Omega point; but every time you and I hate, fear, compete, attack, judge, separate—thus avoiding the necessary letting go—we are resisting the full flow of Love, the energy which is driving the universe forward. The "Three Persons" of the Trinity—the template for all of reality (see Genesis 1:26-27)—can only pour themselves out because they have agreed to let go, and they can only receive because they have made space for the other. Self-emptying and infilling in equal measure is the only sustainable meaning of Love, growth, and Life Itself. Richard Rohr on Teilhard de Chardin

"Unless we are able to view things in terms of how they originate, how they are to return to their end, and how God shines forth in them, we will not be able to understand." Bonaventure, Collationes in Hexaëmeron (Lectures on the Six Days of Creation), 3.2.

Building on the work of the Alexandrian school, the Cappadocian Fathers (in what is now Turkey) further advanced early Christian theology with their doctrine on the Trinity. The three theologian saints Basil the Great (330–379), his younger brother Gregory of Nyssa (c. 332–395), and Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389) sought to give Christianity a solid scholarly status, on par with Greek philosophy of the time. They developed an intellectual rationale for Christianity's central goal: humanity's healing and loving union with God. Richard Rohr

God the Father is a deep root, the Son is the shoot that breaks forth into the world, and the Spirit is that which spreads beauty and fragrance. - Tertullian

... the Father laughs and gives birth to the Son. The Son laughs back at the Father and gives birth to the Spirit. The whole Trinity laughs and gives birth to us. Meister Eckhart

With the Law of Three as its hermeneutical key,, The Trinity reveals the knowledge of how God, the hidden, unmanifest, inaccessible light, becomes accessible light, manifesting and creating love; and how love in turn becomes the driveshaft of all creation, bringing all things to their fullness not by escaping createdness but by consummating it Pg. 17  
Bourgeault, Cynthia The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three. Shambhala Pub, In. Boulder, Co 2013

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (330–390) emphasized that deification does not mean we become God, but that we do objectively participate in God’s nature. We are created to share in the life-flow of Trinity. Salvation isn’t about replacing our human nature with a fully divine nature but growing within our very earthiness and embodiedness to live more and more in the ways of love and grace, so that it comes “naturally” to us and is our deepest nature.

Paraphrasing physicist Niels Bohr, the doctrine of the Trinity is saying that God is not only stranger than we think, but stranger than we can think.

Scottish theologian Richard of St. Victor (1110–1173) reflected this early theology. He taught at great length that for God to be truth, God had to be one; for God to be love, God had to be two; and for God to be joy, God had to be three!

The shape of God is the shape of reality, and the shape of reality is the shape of God. The Trinity clarifies that God is a fountain fullness of outflowing love. God is relationship itself, and the flow is always in one direction, that of outpouring love. It’s a theological impossibility, if you get the doctrine of Trinity correct, for there to be any hatred, wrath, or pettiness in God. A Trinitarian God is internally and externally the same--infinite generosity. Fr. Richard Rohr

“This principle states that in any new arising, anything that comes into being at any level, from the quantum to the cosmic, at whatever scale and in whatever domain—physical, physiological, or spiritual—is the result of the intertwining of three independent strands: affirming, denying, and reconciling. Note that reconciling is not the synthesis, but a mediating principle between the other two. This is a ternary, not a binary, system. Instead of paired opposites, we have the interplay of three energies that in turn creates a whole new realm of possibility.

Recall a time when you experienced an ease of being and doing, where you felt focused and energized and full of joy, where you were wholly present and yet more than yourself. Psychologists call this “flow.” Perhaps these moments come while writing poetry, dancing, playing an instrument, painting, or non-artistic tasks such as washing dishes or solving a mathematical equation. Experiencing flow is like participating in the divine dance of Trinity—a relationship of continuous giving and receiving between you and the task. Seek out these times when you are actively one with the energy flowing through you. Listen within for hints of what may be your soul’s calling and vocation, your unique way of participating in the life of the world.

If the Trinitarian life flows between us, then every aspect of our lives is something that we can allow, enjoy, and steward. A Trinitarian theology gives you the understanding that you are being guided and you are participating in the Great Mystery. And it has very little to do with you except, like Mary, your “yes” seems to be crucial. It matters. It seems that God does not operate uninvited.

In the Greek translations, the noun used for face was *prosopon*, which literally referred to the stage masks that Greek actors wore, which seemed to serve as both an enlarged identity and a megaphone. Teachers like Tertullian and the Cappadocian Fathers used similar language to show how God could be both one and three at the same time: ultimate autonomy of three persons, who are nevertheless in perfect communion. Each member of the Trinity was considered a *persona*, or “face” of God. Each person of the Trinity fully communicated its face and glory to the other, while also maintaining its own “facial” identity fully within itself. Each person of the Trinity “sounded through” (*per sonare*) the other.

In the Trinity, love finally has a solid definition and description, and cannot be sentimentalized. If Trinity is the template for all creation, from atoms to galaxies, which now appears to be the case, then a water wheel that is always outpouring in one direction is a very fine metaphor for God. Giving and surrendered receiving are the very shape of reality. Now love is much bigger than mere emotions, feelings, infatuation, or passing romance. With Trinity as the first and final template for reality, love is the ontological “Ground of Being” itself (Paul Tillich).

The Trinity can only be understood with the contemplative mind. It is only God in you that understands; your small mind cannot. I call this participative knowledge. The Trinity can’t be proved rationally. You must experience its flow in your life. You must have moments where you know that a Big Life is happening in you, yet beyond you, and also AS you!

Trinity is the very nature of God, and this God is a circle dance, a centrifugal force flowing outward, and then drawing all things into the dance centripetally. If this God names himself/herself in creation and in reality then there must be a “family resemblance” between everything else and the nature of the heart of God. Scientists are discovering this reality as they look through microscopes and

telescopes. They are finding that the energy is in the space between the particles of the atom and between the planets and the stars. They are discovering that reality is absolutely relational at all levels. When you really understand Trinity, however slightly, it's like you live in a different universe. And a very good and inviting one! Richard Rohr

This Holy Spirit is the divine life itself by which we become not only brothers and sisters of Christ but also sons and daughters of the Father. This is why Jesus could say: "It is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Advocate (the Spirit) will not come to you...But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth...all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine: (Jn. 16: 7-15). Thus, receiving the Holy Spirit is receiving the life of the Father and the Son. This Spirit makes true discipleship possible, a discipleship that involves not only following in the path of Christ but also participating with Christ in his most intimate life with the Father. Pg. 105.

Spiritual life is life in the Spirit, or more accurately, the life of the Spirit in us. It is this spiritual life that enables us to live with a new mind in a new time. Pg 106. Nouwen, Henri, et al. Compassion. NY. Image Books. 1983.

The church becomes the body of Christ, the presence of God here and now, only in the absence of the body of Jesus, who rose and then ascended to be with God. For Christians, the incarnation is like a rainbow: it makes God unmistakably present, and yet also inherently elusive and utterly transcendent. Ochs, Peter, et al Ed. Christianity in Jewish Terms. Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2000. Pg. 267.

Information gives order, prompts growth, and defines what is alive. At every level of the universal web of relationships there is a constant exchange of information with life. The sharing of information is the underlying dynamic process that ensures the life of any organization. Wessels, Cletus. The Holy Web. Maryknoll NY. Orbis Books. 2000. Pg. 146

It is often in our absence that the Spirit of God manifests itself. When Jesus left his disciples he said, "It is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you...However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth". It was only in Jesus' absence that his friends discovered the full meaning of his presence. It was only in his absence that they completely understood his words and experienced full communion with him; and it was only in his absence that they could gather in a community of faith, hope, and love. When we claim for ourselves that we come to our friends in the Name of Jesus – that through us Jesus becomes present to them – we can trust that our leaving will also bring them the Spirit of Jesus. Thus, not only our presence but also our absence becomes a gift to others. (March 14<sup>th</sup> reading) Nouwen, Henri. Bread for the Journey. NY. HarperSanFrancisco. 1977.

If Jesus had remained among the disciples, they would have "clung" to him (Jn. 20:17) and thus would have stood in the way of his universal presence to the whole world. Ten days after Jesus' ascension, the Spirit of God came upon the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-4), and with that, the church was born, a birth made possible, oddly enough, by the absence of Jesus (Jn. 16:7). The church becomes the body of Christ, the presence of God here and now, only in the absence of the body of Jesus, who rose and then ascended to be with God. For Christians, the incarnation is like a rainbow: it makes God unmistakably present, and yet also inherently elusive and utterly transcendent. Frymer-Kensky, Tikva et al Ed. Christianity in Jewish Terms. Boulder, CO. Westview Press. 2000. Page 267.

I believe in humility as a way of descent to self-truth, and as an ascent to the Truth that is God. Page 419. Olivera, Bernardo, O.C.S. O. The Search for God: Conference, letters, and homilies. Kalamazoo, MI. Cistercian Pub. 2002.

"Truth is not flat like a sheet of paper. It has a body, a third dimension. It has gradations, is hierarchical. What is true at one level is not necessarily true at another. ... The higher a level lies, the more a knowledge of it presupposes the moral preparation of the soul. This structure of truth makes blockheads think that truth is subjective." Hans Urs von Balthasar

This is the truth. As from a blazing fire, sparks of like form issue forth by the thousands, even so, O beloved, many kinds of beings issue forth from the immutable and they return thither too." The Mundaka Upanishad (III.4)

When we put ourselves fully before another, it makes love possible, the way the stubborn land goes soft before the sea. Mark Nepo.

Neither [Tertullian](#) nor [Hippolytus](#) approached the questions of the nature of Christ as God and man and of the relationship of the divine members of the Godhead with the erudition, nuance, and acumen of [Origen](#). But in some ways, their less daring approaches became more useful to orthodox thinkers of later times. Their opposition to [patripassianist](#) understandings (the belief that "the Father suffered") forced them to think in trinitarian terms, of God being distinctively three in expression though one in essence. As Hippolytus puts it, "With respect to the power, God is one; but with respect to the economy [i.e., to how this power expresses itself], the manifestation is triple" (*Refutation* 8:2). In Tertullian's formulation, God is three in degree, not condition; in form, not substance; in aspect, not power ([Against Praxeas](#), 2). Tertullian was the first Latin theologian to use the term *Trinity*.

Within the broad contours of proto-orthodoxy, then, one can see development and variety. As time progressed, theologians became more entranced with the mystery of the Trinity and developed a more highly refined vocabulary for dealing with it. But that was long after the major issues had been resolved, of whether Christ was man but not God ([Ebionites](#); [Theodotians](#)), God but not man ([Marcionites](#), some [Gnostics](#)), or two beings, one man and one God (most Gnostics). The proto-orthodox opted for none of the above. Christ was God and man, yet he was one being, not two.

Once that was acknowledged, the details still had to be worked out. And they were worked out for centuries. If it were easy, it would not be a mystery. Theologians began to be obsessed with the question of how and in what way Christ could be both human and divine, completely both. Did he have a human soul but a divine spirit? Did he have a divine soul instead of a human soul? Was his body really like everyone else's body? How could God have a body? Was he subordinate to the Father, as in Origen? If he was not subordinate to the Father, why was *he* the one sent, rather than the other way around? And so on, almost ad infinitum. In this earlier period, however, the debates were both more basic and more fundamental. As a result, the alternatives *within* the proto-orthodox tradition - as opposed to the alternatives that separated the proto-orthodox from everyone else-were less clear and less obvious. All that was to change when the [protoorthodox](#) found themselves to be the last ones standing and were forced then to move forward into the orthodox forms of Christianity of the fourth and fifth centuries. Pgs. 156-7.  
Ehrman, Bart D. *Lost Christianities*. NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 2003

#### **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: [www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)

Beck, Robert. *Sunday Homilies: Cycle C* 2013. Pgs. 108-112.

Beck, Robert. *Sunday Homilies: Cycle B* 2007. Pgs. 107-110.

Beck, Robert. *Sunday Homilies: Cycle B* 2010. Pgs. 87-89.

The wedding ceremony was over. The guests were celebrating is poignant concoction of the bitter and the sweet. The bride wore white and an almost natural wig to cover what was left of hair after chemotherapy. The groom swallowed hard as they danced "The Anniversary Waltz." Something in their resilient spirit said that making this commitment was "the right thing to do. They knew the future was both unknown and certain. In the eye of the swirling storm, they found a quiet space.

Then the wedding party gathered arm in arm for the video photographer. Sensing that movement was essential to memory, she coached, "Wave!" So they lifted their arms and the corners of their lips and hailed the future. I glanced up at the drama. The bride's face and hand and motion jumped off the flat page of the -soon coming future and into the foreground of the moment. .

She's not waving at the camera or the celebrants, I thought, and she's not waving "Hello" from Now. She's waving "Good-bye," and she's looking from Tomorrow. She's giving her bequest. She knows they can't hear the wisdom she could share about life is brevity-and eternity. So she silently gives them herself. And she looks at them with longing and comfort and promise and peace.

Was it like this for Jesus and his disciples in their last celebration? Could he speak of Comfort coming into their midst despite the indescribable pain and loss just before them? Was the essence of it the same as for the bride and groom-that in the face of the worst that life brings, the commitment not to abandon is way of claiming us, now and always?

Prayer: God of the Now, and the Then and the Always, help us to see your face in the faces of all who stand like the bride on the edge time and eternity. Give us again the gift of your eternal seeing, that you may claim us and that we may claim one another love's sake. Amen.