

Sunday, June 9, 2013
Rev. Diane Monti-Catania

Sermon – “Imagine Sharing Your Last Piece of Bread”

C. S. Lewis once said that the most frequently spoken word in heaven would be, "OH." As in, "Oh, now I understand." Or, "Oh, now I see what God's plan was."

I hope that he is correct and that everything we believe will be fully explained one day.

In the meantime, we must rely on our faith and embrace what scripture tells us, accepting that there is mystery – and with mystery comes awe.

Our opening hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy extols the wonders of God-merciful and mighty- God in three persons, blessed trinity.

The psalmist sang of the glory of God’s creation, *O Lord, our sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth.*

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established....

Lady Wisdom sang of the joy of creating the universe with God –*When he established the heavens, I was there...*

Jesus promises his disciples that the *truths that are too overwhelming for them to bear now, will be made clear by the Spirit.*

All of this speaks to us of a God whose greatness is beyond our human capacity to understand.

We can’t possibly understand or explain who was with God at creation or how God manifests his love for us in the world.

We simply trust that God is God.

Today is Trinity Sunday –the day when we celebrate our triune God – one in three.

"Trinity"—surprisingly a word that never occurs in the Bible.

The concept of the Trinity was developed to affirm the Church's stance on the nature and essence of God.

Trinitarian belief was formally stated in the Nicene Creed developed in 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicea, convened by Roman Emperor Constantine to resolve theological differences that were threatening to split the church.

The concept of God as one – in three persons remains a foundational piece of our theology today.

As I was reflecting on this my mind wandered to a warm up exercise used in my hotline volunteer class 30 years ago.

We were asked to introduce ourselves by naming all of the descriptive roles in our lives.

So for example, I would say,

“I am Diane, a mother, wife, sister, daughter, minister, community member, walker, gardener....you get the picture.

I realized that while I can define all those roles – just as we can define Father, Son and Holy Spirit – I really have no idea how they come together to make me the person I am or how they converge to create miracles like my grown sons!

Spiritual writer Richard Rohr wrote "Trinity leads you into the world of mystery and humility where you can not understand, you can only experience."

When you experience something that you cannot understand you have entered the realm of the sacred.

This is where and when and how we meet God.

These moments are created when we let our hearts take over – when we surrender –when we trust.

Most of us can remember an experience of profound love, a time when we held a new baby or embraced a lover, reconnected with a long lost friend...a time when everything else stood still and for a brief moment the world was different.

This is love. Countless songs and poems have been written to describe this feeling.

Can you remember a moment of profound love?

This is how God loves us. Deeply. Unconditionally. Without reserve.

The Trinity is God’s expression of love for us – God as creator; Jesus as incarnate God -as man; and Spirit – ah the Holy Spirit – alive and moving among us this day.

There are two prerequisites for experiencing deep love – trust and humility.

Without humility we can’t let go and trust that something or someone other than ourselves is in control.

When we fall in love we learn that regardless of how much we worry or how much anxiety we generate, we can’t make the other person love us.

When a parent feels that deep love for a child, he or she knows that their love alone will not keep that child from harm or hardship.

In The Underground Church, Robin Meyers writes that

“Trust, together with forgiveness, is the way human beings act like God. It is a derivative of grace.”

He continues, “A person whose faith is based on trust rather than certainty is easy to spot in this world of self important nonsense. First, she is humble. She is slow to judge. She gives the benefit of the doubt. She sees through the bravado of others, around the corners of the ego and into the heart of their brokenness—just as she understands her own brokenness.”

The Wisdom proverb that Ron read earlier is a testament to God’s love affair with humanity. In the verse that follows our reading, Wisdom says “*The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago...before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth...I was beside him...and I was daily his delight, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.*”

I remember the first time I heard the wisdom literature. I was completely engaged for here was a description of a God delighting in creation – in relationship with another being.

I had always pictured God as an old man sitting alone in a chair someplace and all of a sudden I had this picture of a dancing, frolicking God delighting in what he was creating.

I imagined God and Wisdom coming up with the colors for flowers or the song of a bird – having a discussion about making some people with blue eyes and some with green.

One writer suggested that wisdom literature might be taken to say that as human beings our role is not to create the world or to create our own order, but to fit into the divine order, the plan and purposes of God.

A loving God, working with Wisdom, offers a pattern, an order, a way of life.

Our role is to pay attention, to heed the plan with its limits and its possibilities.

In heeding this eternal plan and purpose our own lives find order, meaning and sanity.

I like the description of creation as a holy web of relationship, a gift meant for all.

This is what we learn from the triune God – relationship-mutuality-care for the other.

In response to the tornadoes in Oklahoma this week

Mary Luti wrote “If you pray, pray more than ever today, for many people in the town of Moore are unable to utter a single word to God in their shock and sorrow. Their hearts are locked down today. Your prayer may be the prayer they would say if they could.

If you cling to God, cling more than ever today, for the trust of some people in Moore is as shattered as flattened schools and the bodies of children. Their arms are limp today. Your clinging might be the clinging they would do if they could.

If you hope, hope more than ever today, for some people in Moore are wondering with Job why they were ever born and whether life can be good again. Their eyes cannot find the horizon today. Your hope may be the light they would see if they could.

If you love, love more than ever today, for many in Moore have nothing left but each other. They have only their love for each other. Love, the great survivor, is all that remains to them. Enrich, strengthen, and sweeten it with your own. It will return to you when you need it most.

We are one body – the body of Christ.

Our communities are bound together by trust.

Our lives are a series of trusting relationships – each and every day.

Our world is a grand and glorious place and our lives are complicated and complex.

It is good that we have God to guide us, to care for us.

John Calvin wrote "You cannot in one glance survey this most vast and beautiful system of the universe, in its wide expanse, without being completely overwhelmed by the boundless force of its brightness."

That brightness shines in our lives, we just need to notice.

In *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor writes "The easiest practice of reverence I know is simply to sit down somewhere outside, preferably near a body of water, and pay attention for at least twenty minutes. It is not necessary to take on the whole world at first. Just take the three square feet of earth on which you are sitting, paying close attention to everything that lives within that small estate."

Whether you take on the whole universe or one small patch of life and look for God's grace at work, you cannot help but be in awe of the power.

Today embrace trust.

Decide that you are going to trust God that God knows what to do and, perhaps more importantly, that you – God's creation—also know what to do.

You don't have to wait for heaven to say "Oh, now I understand." Wisdom is waiting at the crossroad to share her good advice, insight and strength.

The Spirit is here to make clear the truths that you have yet to understand.

God has crowned you with glory and honor.

Abundant life is yours for the taking. Help yourself.