

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

June 12, 2022



TRINITY

awe man, not theology!

by Drew Downs

When we gather for church on Sunday, we will be celebrating a second principle feast in a row: Trinity Sunday. And every time it comes around, I make the same statement: the feast of a theological concept.

What we celebrate, of course, is the idea that God is three persons and one god. Three. And one. At the same time. And also, not ever not. Always three and always one and never not three and not one.

This, of course, is an obsession for the Western Church. We try so hard to maintain this paradox of eternal singularity for God that I can't help thinking we've got an unhealthy attachment to certainty.

Another vision of Trinity is less *constructed*. The Trinity as a divine dance, a trio: community. That God reflects who we are to be as the church. Not individuals looking out for ourselves, but one. Always one.

EASTER

Spring 2022

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Looking at this past week, it would be easy to get tangled up in the anxiety we no doubt find in the church. Then, of course, we glance out and see the troubles of the weeks before: the murder of school children in Texas and black elders in Pennsylvania. And then our minds get pulled to Ukraine, the pandemic, and all of the events that seem to be pulling us all apart at the seams. And we think, *well, of course we're losing our minds!*

The constant in all that we are experiencing: with its confusion, pain, and sense of division: is that we feel like we are at a loss to figure out how to be together. How to live with one another. It is at once both obvious and bedeviling.

And yet, what is *politics* but the attempt to find order? It is the attempt of a people to figure out how to be a **WE**. Together.

It seems natural, then, that the impulse to be an **I** doesn't go away. But an **I** doesn't fully understand how to be a **WE** without a little bit of help. And some of that comes from a system. Rules. Boundaries. Expectations. And some of it comes from another **I** who can point us in the right direction.

But most often, how **WE** can handle a thing, comes from **WE** striving to make it work together.

If **WE** have a problem of gun violence then **WE** can solve it. There is no way one single **I** can handle it. No single party. And no single "good guy". It is a **WE** thing and all of us need to pull our weight.

With love,
Drew

EASTER

Spring 2022

FOR SUNDAY

Trinity Sunday

June 12, 2022

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

From John 16:12-15

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

Reflection

I like to refer to the farewell discourse in John as Jesus's long goodbye. It's him, standing by the car, telling his people he really has to go, but here they are, still chatting an hour later.

It is, however, rich with connection. He's trying so hard to communicate an idea that *still* tangles us in knots.

How to say "*I am* going away, but we aren't going anywhere." There's a sense of wrap-your-heads-around-my-leaving in this and yet also don't-act-like-I'm-going-to-be-gone. It both makes perfect sense and no sense at all.

EASTER

Even this now/not yet is being lived out in Jesus's speaking. He's telling them that there is so much they need to know and yet they can't know it yet. How he'll be gone and yet he'll be right there. We can certainly make sense of it, but we're not 100% confident, right? Like, we all smile and nod and say "I get it" but if somebody said "so, explain it to me like I'm 5," we'd go "hey, look at the time!"

And yet, we can all relate to this feeling, can't we?

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

We know what it's like to know truth that cannot be said. Ideas that cannot be appreciated. Life that we are not prepared to experience.

We know what it's like to learn before we are ready. To be exposed to life that should not be for us to know. And what comes immediately to mind are my children suffering through active shooter drills. Babies having to prepare for a nightmare scenario long before they are developmentally ready.

There is more that needs to be said, but we aren't ready. Not yet. And I won't be here to say it. But someone else will.

There's something comforting in Jesus's message. Something we're inclined to just nod and rush through. A promise of wisdom and truth. Of participating in the bigger story when we're ready. Of dialogue and understanding.

Like going out for coffee. Chatting for a couple of hours. Getting caught up on the latest. *That is to come. Soon. Not with me, of course. I'm taking off. But with another advocate. One that will always be there.*

A promise that this Spirit is *just* as good as Jesus.

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