

**Catholic Church of the Beatitudes
Santa Barbara, CA**

Trinity Sunday—May 21, 2016—Cycle C

Chris Fahrenbach

Reflections on **Prov. 8:22-31; Rom. 5:1-5; Jn. 16:12-15**

On my first day at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Sister Mary Ranier had us draw a picture of God . . . And as it turned out, God was a bright yellow triangle, equilateral.

I had always wondered what God looked like. And here it was, straight from the source: a definitive picture of God. For years I held in my mind, the image of a huge yellow triangle perched upon a very ornate throne nested in a bank of beautiful white clouds, festooned with angels all around. That was my God. Very simple and specific, and yet, conveying a complexity that made sense to me: the three in one, the one in three.

I didn't have to worry about what "consubstantial with" and "proceeding from" meant. I could see that all the angles blended into each other as one triangle while remaining distinct angles. You couldn't tell one angle from another.

More than thinking about it, I experienced this mystery -- at least part of it. But there's a little bit more to explore about the Trinity and how to live its mystery. The triangle could have been dancing. I'm still at it, and perhaps you are too...attempting to grasp and live the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

We have struggled for centuries with the ideas of the immanence and transcendence of God, and especially *three* persons *one* God. Much of the struggle with dualistic thinking such as this comes from seeing God as outside of ourselves, creating the universe and acting upon the universe as a causal agent, something of an "I - it" relationship.

I wonder what our world would be like if we understood God as a *relational process* in which we participate. As St. Paul tells us, "In

God we live and move and have our being." "In God, we live and move and have our being!" This is a perspective-changing statement. What about God creating us and *giving us* the world? You remember the story in Genesis. When we change our perspective from being outside of, created by, to finding ourselves contained *within* God, our perception of God and all of creation changes.

We aren't mere objects created by God for God's amusement. Instead, God gives rise to creation from God-self. God is the ground of our being, from whom we arise and within whom we live and move and have our being. We are the stuff of God, though we are not God. We are part of one another, thus we live in constant relationship. This means that God exercises enough self-restraint (i.e. not pulling strings to make things go a certain way) to allow for the natural development that is inherent in Creation. God contains our growth and allows our growth.

Jesus gives us a succinct lesson on the Trinity in today's Gospel. He says that "Everything the Mother/ Father/Creator has is mine," meaning that he and the creator share the same mind and being. He also instructs on the Spirit: "The Spirit of Truth will guide you to all Truth. The Spirit will not speak on her own." In other words, the Spirit will speak what she hears in concert with the Creator and the Redeemer as she is poured out as part of and in the process of creation.

In the Trinity we can imagine the Divine Dance of Creation, and Creation going on creating in a dance of relational evolution—a forward-moving cycle of letting go and rising, the redemption of our separation to embodied one-

ness with God and one another.

- Creator God imagines creation into being,
- Redeemer God brings God and creation home to one another through the Incarnation, and
- The Holy Spirit sanctifies creation, making it whole and unified.

God shows us Godself through different manifestations in community even as the Three in One are in community with each other. In other words, God is *under* community as the ground of our being . . . as creator. God is *with* community as Spirit. And God is *in* community as Redeemer.

In this way, we are contained within the greater Oneness of God, while also having God close by on a very personal level. We can deeply love Jesus, be in awe of Creation and be personally inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus, as we are made in the image and likeness of God, we too create . . . with one another and with God. We create through the inspiration of the Spirit incarnated in the world through creativity. We make our gardens grow. Ernest Simmons, author of *The Entangled Trinity*, instructs us to feel our pulse. Pause now and feel your pulse. . . And as we each feel our pulse, he tells us to say with each beat, “grace, grace, grace . . .” He says, “If God is as close to us as our next heartbeat, then how should we live? This (our heartbeat) is the creational *grace of life itself* that courses through our veins with every heartbeat and reminds us not only of the contingent nature of our existence but also its giftedness.

It is the creational “green grace” of life itself which reminds us that we do not live *from* or *for* ourselves alone, but within a much wider web of life in which everything is interrelated and mutually existent.

It is the concrete love of God found beating within the human heart as our hearts mirror the living love and grace of God within our lives. We are with God in a more profound and intimate way than we can ever imagine or express.”

St. Patrick, as we know, shared the idea of the Trinity with the King of Ireland in the image of the three leaf clover— a metaphor for both the Trinity and creation itself. He tells us through the epic poem attributed to him, *St. Patrick’s Breastplate*, not to leave home without it—the Trinity, that is. We cannot live without the power of the Trinity; it carries the power of the three in one, manifested in creation itself.

With its image emblazoned on our hearts, we carry Love’s message into creation even as we are part of creation.

I arise today through a mighty strength, an invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness and through confession of the oneness of the Creator of creation.

- I arise today through
- the strength of heaven,
- the light of the sun,
- the radiance of the moon,
- the splendor of fire,
- the speed of lightning,
- the swiftness of wind,
- the depth of the sea,
- the stability of the earth,
- the firmness of rock.

I arise today through

- God’s strength to pilot me,
- God’s might to uphold me,
- God’s wisdom to guide me,
- God’s eye to look before me,
- God’s ear to hear me,
- God’s word to speak for me,
- God’s hand to guide me,
- God’s shield to protect me,
- God’s host to save me.

Let us arise each day supported by God’s creative love, and *be* God’s creation: creating out of God’s love, living the mystery by participating in it.

And let us do this in the name of God, in whom we live and move and have our being, God creator, redeemer and sanctifier.