

Trinity C: 6/16/19
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“Wow, you were really getting into last Sunday’s anthem singing along with us,”
a choir member said, approvingly, to me this week.
And of course she was right.
Anyone here last week at the 9:30 had to be swept up in the choir
and chorister’s joint rendition of that jumping spiritual for Pentecost,
“I’m Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing.”

Well, thanks be to God I turned off my microphone before bellowing along.
Because, sadly, this has not always been so.
A while back I heard a recording of a service where I had clearly NOT muted my mic.
My voice was booming over the choir – a truly cringe-worthy moment!

It’s not just that my enthusiasm far outstrips my natural talent.
It’s not just that the choir had put in weeks of rehearsal and I was crashing the party.
It was that it was a piece of *choral* music,
meant to be sung by a choir and here was I,
a big mouth with a microphone drowning out all those blended and balanced voices.

Even if I had the most beautifully trained solo voice in the world (which obviously I do not)
it still wouldn’t have sounded or felt right in a piece of music
intended to be sung by a choir of four parts.

This is on my mind today not only because we’re recognizing the choir
for another year of service,
but because it’s Trinity Sunday.
The Sunday after Pentecost,
when having received the gift of the Holy Spirit,
we celebrate the fullness of the One, Holy and Undivided Trinity:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And while those words are some of the most often spoken
in our liturgy, they may also be among the least understood.
One God in three persons?
God from God, light from light,
eternally begotten, not made,
as we’ll profess in the Nicene Creed in a moment?

What if we experienced the Trinity like a magnificent piece of choral music --
each part distinct and necessary in its own right,
yet harmonious creating a greater whole?

Serious singers tell me they feel it deeply when a part's missing.
Even the less musically inclined can sense when something's lacking.
The piece just doesn't capture us as when all the sections are working together.

It's true that sometimes, say, the sopranos or altos may take the lead
or maybe the tenor or basses have their moment,
and we certainly appreciate each member of our choir here.
But it's when all of the voices come together as one that I find myself truly transported.
I know (and love) every single member of our choir
and yet there are moments of grace when I marvel,
How did they do that?
Where did that big, beautiful sound come from?

A common sound coming out of those distinctive parts,
that unity in diversity of choral music,
not such a bad way of thinking about the Trinity, is it?

I'll tell you a secret.

Among theology types, Trinity Sunday is sometimes called "Heresy Sunday"
because it almost invites convoluted explanations.
In fairness, most of our big days at church are not organized around "doctrines"
but an event or action in the life of Jesus.
Christmas = birth.
Ash Wednesday into Lent = joining Jesus on his 40 days in the wilderness.
Good Friday = betrayal and crucifixion.
Easter = resurrection into new and unending life.
Even Pentecost = sending the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

But Trinity Sunday?

We've proudly referenced a bona fide heresy right in today's bulletin.
Our lovely little "Litany in Praise of the Trinity" seems benign enough,
but it's attributed to a 4th Century Archbishop of Constantinople named Nestorius
who was condemned as a heretic for having an insufficiently high doctrine
of Jesus as a fully divine and co-equal member of the Trinity.
And yet, we'll soon pray a rather nice (and, as far as I can tell, orthodox)
litany attributed to this heretic.

So, in that spirit, even with our seminarian,
 a recent Yale Divinity School graduate, here listening,
 I dare propose my own blatant heresy.
 And that is that there just might be a *fourth* person of the Trinity.

Not literally of course.
 More of an honorary role seeing as who I have in mind
 is not fully divine but all too human.
 Nevertheless, I boldly invite you to consider your role in relation to the Trinity.
 Think of yourself as something akin to the ladies' (or gentlemen's) auxiliary.

For God Almighty: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is One, *The One*,
 who loves you into creation,
 loves living this life with you,
 loves guiding you through it all.
 The one, holy, blessed, and undivided Trinity is not a puzzle for us to unlock
 nor a conundrum to dissect,
 but a reality to live
 knowing that we are encompassed by God's love through and through.
 Knowing that God will go to any and all lengths to be *in us, with us, and for us.*

Maybe it is like a piece of choral music where the parts *are* the whole,
 and we as listeners become one with the music.

There's something called the Chorister's Prayer which I hear our choir and chorister's
 pray faithfully at their Thursday and Sunday rehearsals.
 It's always struck me as somewhat Trinitarian
 (although it doesn't explicitly use that language).
 You may not hear it that way, but I do think you'll find it beautiful.
 To me at least it expresses the arc of the Trinity in our lives.

Let us pray:
*Bless, O Lord, us Thy servants who minister in Thy temple.
 Grant that what we sing with our lips
 we may believe in our hearts,
 and what we believe in our hearts
 we may show forth in our lives.
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

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