Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



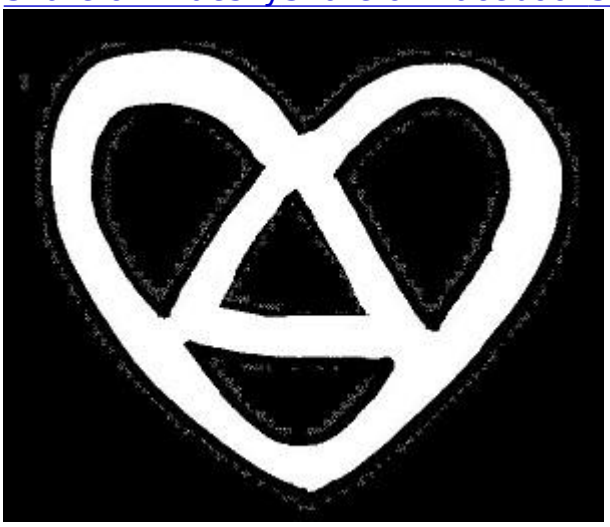
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"*If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company*" *(Exodus 34:8).*

Trinity Sunday

Ex 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18

We approach the mystery of the Trinity by keeping in mind that everything we know about God we have learned from Jesus. He is our point of entry into the

unfathomable question of who God is and who we are.

The early church experienced Jesus first as a human brother and fellow human being, the man from Galilee who went about announcing a radical notion of God and the purpose of life. Unlike the images of God people heard from organized religion - a distant, unapproachable judge -, Jesus spoke of God as his "Abba" a loving father who offered his children, including sinners, unconditional love and acceptance. The essence of Jesus' message was that God was filled with mercy and compassion, a generous father willing to take back his prodigal children, a good shepherd out looking for lost sheep. This was the Good News.

His death on the cross seemed to shatter their dream of a restored Israel, but his resurrection from the dead took believers to a whole new level of understanding, that this man Jesus was much more than a charismatic leader meant for their time and place. He was God's chosen one, the Christ, whose death and resurrection had to do with redeeming the whole world. He had fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, overcome sin and death. He was none other than the Lord, the revelation of God present in history.

This awesome realization began a profound theological reflection in the light of their experience and of the many images and prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures that produced the letters of St. Paul and the four Gospels about who Jesus was in relation to the One God. This reflection evolved within the faith communities' experience of the risen Christ, still with them and active through his Holy Spirit given to the baptized members of the church.

The translation of the Christian faith in Jesus through Greek concepts during a time of competing understandings of his identity led to the credal formulas of the first church councils. Jesus was the Son of God, yet equal to God the Father, and united in the Holy Spirit, three persons in one God, the divine Trinity. These words somehow contained the truth about Jesus but as a mystery that could not be explained logically. It could only be believed and lived.

How we understand this brings us back to the same starting point of our encounter with God in Jesus. We only know about God and about Jesus from our own human experience. Because we were made in the image and likeness of God, we already know something about the Trinity - the challenge of love that produces unity in diversity. We also know from experience that we only know ourselves in

relationships. No human individual is complete in himself or herself but only becomes fully alive in community. And just as our desire for maturity and wholeness leads us to community, so our journey toward God is toward the Community of God, the inner life of God as Persons united in love - the Trinity.

God comes to us in encounter. On this celebration of the Holy Trinity, we pray to encounter Jesus, our brother, who draws us through his human nature and experience toward his divine identity. This is our destiny, to share the life of the Trinity. We will know it by seeking an intimate knowledge of Jesus, who is one of us. He is also our point of entry into the inner life of God.