

ASC Trinity May 26, 2013 G. West

We are living in a time conflict. I must assert that there has been conflict in all times but today we receive the news instantly and we might receive this news while blissfully eating our suppers or desserts.

Our nation seems to be at war with itself with contending parties and groups seeking some kind of advantage. Even in our church there is division and tension. I would not be surprised if many of us have come here today seeking a place of peace or comfort. It would be nice if we could all be united and I think often we mistakenly say if only we could be like they were when. This implies that there might have been a division free time but I think there have always been divisions even in the best of times: there was a time, we convince

ourselves, in the beginning when people said of Christians, "See how they love one another."

I think we divide because we believe that we cannot be truly human, truly ourselves if someone or something is challenging us or threatening us.

When we first fall in love with someone, we cannot do enough for the object of our love and nothing they might do or say would get to us and probably we did not need to worry about what we said to one another. But then as time goes on some things begin to bother us and they become things of which we do not speak or address in any way and the divisions and tensions grow. Often times the two which became one begins to drift apart and become two again.

It is in this backdrop that we are confronted with the problems of the Trinity which we celebrate today.

If we talk about God in the traditional way, then two-thirds of the persons of the Trinity are male, the Father and the Son, and the third is kind of neutral, since the word for spirit, *pneuma*, is neuter, neutral in Greek. There is no reason why we shouldn't refer to Mother, Daughter and the Holy Spirit, but this language tends to be a bit jarring. Some of you may have caught me doing just that last week when I referred to the Holy Spirit as She. Some today like to refer to the Godhead as Creator God, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit. This avoids the trap which sometimes our traditional language causes.

When the Gospel of John was written, it would appear that the world was dealing not with a divergent sect of Judaism but a growing body which we call the church.

One of the positive things about the Holy Trinity is that it is a social Trinity, the life of a social God. The Orthodox Church of the East describe this using a Greek word which means "dancing in a circle," like the chorus in the ancient Greek theater. This means that the persons of God weave in and out of each other in a dynamic circle.

If God was a solitary God, it would be too much like the rule of kind dictator, and if it was just two persons, the Father and the Son this would suggest a kind of mutual preoccupation of one with the

other like two human lovers who only have eyes for one another. But three--that is a society.

And this is a society of equals because the persons of the Trinity are equal in that equally form the Godhead. By extension, Christian communities should also be communities of equality and joyful sharing.

The Holy Trinity is an inclusive society. It is true that God is in Heaven and we humans are on Earth. God is often described as being wholly other—completely different and unique from us.

For Christians that is only half of the story. Jesus in chapter seventeen of John prays that those who love him may be one with him, just as he is one with the Father. In other words, the unity of love

within the Holy Trinity is intended to include us in the circle.

There would be greater truths which would be revealed through the power of the Spirit. Jesus made it clear that he was only the beginning of teaching us the truth. God is still making Himself/Herself known in the world and it is our job to listen to the Spirit and proclaim that message to the world. Jesus did not tell his disciples all the truth because they were incapable of taking it all in but he did tell us that the Spirit would continue to reveal truth to his followers. And that truth is to spread the love of God to the world.

To this end, our human communities should also seek to be inclusive. The church becomes the mirror of the Holy Trinity when everyone is

accepted whether male or female, white or black, rich or poor, gay or straight. Yes, there are borders around the Christian community but the church is marked by a series of welcome mats and not by a brick wall.

The Spirit is the effective agent in the accomplishment of God's purpose. By our baptisms we are all called to join in the dance with the Trinity.