

**Three in One
(Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-8)**

5/26/24
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It might seem that the readings for today have little to do with what is happening in worship today; with loving and caring for each other from one generation to the next, with baptism or with remembering fallen soldiers.

The readings are directed toward a sermon on God as a Holy Trinity as this is Trinity Sunday. The insistence that God is three-in-one has been a foundational belief since the earliest centuries of the church and mountains of scholarly work have been done in order to make sense of it. And much of it is beyond the grasp of the average person (point to self).

Overall my understanding is that the Trinity helps us to understand the nature of God's love. And God's love has everything to do with everything.

So, I'd like to give the Trinity it's due, but we I want to keep it very short, so I'll give you my favorite example of God's three-in- one love at work:

God's Love in Action

A child falls off his bike in a very frightening way and begins to cry. A parent hears the child's cry and sets aside what she is doing and comes running out of the house and goes down on a knee to take the child in her arms and to speak words of comfort to the child. And very soon the child stops crying.

There are different ways that you can describe this scene. One way would be to call it an expression of God's love alive and at work in the parent, for the sake of the child. And if you look at it from the child's point of view, you can discover that there are three things involved in the way the parent relates to the child; they are what tradition calls the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Using the language of tradition, the first person of the Trinity is God the Father, who's life is a mystery beyond the grasp of our understandings; much the way a parent exists in the mind of a child. The child who has fallen off of the bicycle has no grasp of the world of obligations and bills and relationships that the parent was dealing with at the kitchen table, when he or she heard the child cry out for help, crying "Abba" - Father, Father" or "Mother, Mother."

The second person of the Trinity is the one who comes to save us. It is the same Father, who's life is above and beyond our understanding. But

now he comes to us in a way that is less seemingly aloof or distant to our understanding. He bends his knee and stoops down to our level and takes us, his children, into his arms and speaks the words the we need to hear. He becomes one of us. This second person is the Son, the Redeemer. It is God who has come running out of the house to stoop down and share himself with us in our distress.

And finally, there is the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is what is conveyed between the parent and the child as a result of the actions of the parent. It is a mysterious gift that is transmitted to the heart of the child, when the parent stoops down to take the child in her arms. The Spirit conveys to the child qualities of the parent that bring comfort to the child and make it possible for the child to get back on the bike and ride again.

The church's claim is that, when God's love is at work, it is always somehow present in these three inseparable ways – as the one who is a mystery beyond the reach of our minds; as one who reaches out to us out of concern for our well-being as Jesus did, and as the one who touches and moves our hearts with saving power and lights our way forward. The church has tenaciously claimed throughout its history that these three must be present as a way of being sure that the God we serve is truly God.

