

Good morning! It's good to be back and Happy Father's day! It's a happy day for me because my daughter Danielle came home for a visit. She and I got to ride in the Solvang Pride Parade yesterday. Elizabeth and many of you were there to join in the celebration. It was a real treat and a moment of hope in a world that seems to be unraveling before our very eyes.

Quite frankly, I'm often feeling overwhelmed these days and just wish IT would all go away. But, thanks to so many of you for not rolling over and playing dead while so many seem content to ignore the constitution and prefer a dictator to a president. My favorite sign at the Pride parade yesterday was "Say No to Kings, But Yes to Queens."

So today is Trinity Sunday where preachers like me try to explain the unexplainable in around 12 minutes. Not possible. In fact, as get older, I am becoming more and more comfortable with the notion that God cannot be explained. To paraphrase the Tao Te Ching, a god who can be explained is definitely not god but just another figment of our collective imagination. But, having said that, Richard Rohr and others continue to encourage all of us to try and make some sense out of it. Reminded by what the Buddha said as we point our finger at the moon and marvel at its beauty, we also need to remember that the finger is not the moon. So, let me take a stab at what seems to make sense to me. That may or may not make sense to you, but together, we just might be able to make more sense together. And at the end of the day, this notion of Trinity is all about being connected. There seems to be something deep inside all of us that is sacred.

Richard Rohr in his book, *The Divine Dance* helps us understand that the Trinity is much more than a noun, it's more like a verb, a metaphor for relationship.

That notion is supported by today's scripture readings. the relational and dynamic nature of the Trinity, emphasizing how each person of the Godhead interacts with creation and all of us.

- **Proverbs 8:** speaks of Wisdom, personified, and her role in creation. The Greek word for Wisdom is Sophia, a feminine name and my personal nickname for the Holy Spirit. Some theologians interpret Wisdom as a prefiguration of Christ, highlighting the interconnectedness and unity within the Godhead.

- **Psalm 8:** reflects on the majesty of God and humanity's place in creation. It underscores the relationship between God and humanity, which can be seen as a partnership between God and us as caretakers of our beautiful home.z
- **Romans 5:** Paul speaks about the peace and hope we have through Jesus Christ, and how God's love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.
- **And finally in our Gospel reading this morning:** Jesus speaks about the Spirit of truth guiding believers into all truth in order to glorify the union between God and humanity.

In the Rublev icon from the 15th century which is on our Trinity banner to my right, Rohr notices that the Holy Spirit is pointing toward the open and fourth place at the table! Some art historians believe that the glue found in that space, that square at the front of the table might have included a mirror. Can you imagine what that means? “It’s stunning when you think about it—there was room at this table for a fourth and that fourth is us! You and me!” A mirror symbolizing God inviting us to participate in the eternal relationship and by looking in the mirror, we are reminded that we were made to exist as co-creators with God in the collective consciousness of the universe! In fact, in his high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus prays for all of us that we might all become one the same way Jesus was one with God the Father and mother—Why? “So that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

I don’t know about you but I am blown away by that imagery. When we remember that we were created in the image of God, the eternal relationship that is God, we begin to see ourselves and others participating in the God dance. In fact, the 8<sup>th</sup> century church father, John of Damascus was the first to describe the Trinity as a circle dance: “An infinite current of love that streams without ceasing, to and fro, to and fro. This circular current of trinitarian love continues night and day. . .”

And for the first time in human history, scientific discoveries in the realm of physics and quantum mechanics bear testimony to this reality. For example, scientists have proven something that Einstein could only call spooky. In quantum physics, when two particles become entangled, the state of one particle instantly influences the state of

the other, no matter how far apart they are. This "spooky" action seemed to defy the laws of classical physics that say it's impossible to exceed the speed of light, which is why Einstein was so skeptical about it.

There is also a growing belief in the scientific community that what mystics have known for centuries might actually be true, namely, consciousness is embedded in the very fabric of the universe. My brainiac brother, Dr. Paul Draper who is a philosophy of religion professor at Purdue University. came up with an analogy that has helped me to wrap my mind around how all of us might be connected to Divine Mystery. He writes, "Like other living things, our bodies make use of sunlight. Indeed, they have evolved to make use of it in very complicated ways. Sunlight is a sort of electromagnetic radiation. Human bodies are immersed in it, but are not composed of it. Similarly, perhaps the brain makes use of a consciousness that already exists independently of the existence of brains or nervous systems. On this view, human organisms are immersed in a sort of conscious awareness that we are not alone.

When we start to embrace this notion that we are all somehow connected to a universal consciousness, we begin to realize that we cannot embrace a relationship with God without embracing a relationship with others. And in order to do that, we have to figure out a way to embrace that we are one big family. When we honor and accept the divine image within ourselves, we cannot help but see it in everybody else, and we know it is just as undeserved and unmerited for us as it is for them. That can be challenging to say the very least which is why I carry a picture of our president in my journal when he was a 3 year old. From this frame of reference, **sometimes** I can stop judging and start loving unconditionally, without asking whether someone is worthy or not.

David Richo, a psychodynamic therapist here in town, offers some suggestions for how to tackle that behavior in his book, *The Power of Coincidence*, "Spirituality is the intersection of three paths: letting go of ego, an unconditional Yes to the conditions of human existence, AND universal compassion."

**Letting go of ego** means freeing ourselves from self-centered entitlements and from the need to be in control. Such letting go is a challenge to the part of us that insists on being first and right. (p. 158).

**We say Yes unconditionally** to the conditions and predicaments of our existence: things change and end, suffering is part of growth, things are not always predictable or fair, etc. We assent to these givens of life because we trust them as necessary ingredients for us to grow and deepen. Spiritual progress does not mean that we are always serene or happy but that we have a formula to accommodate any state of mind: **an unconditional Yes to what is unfolding.** (p. 158).

**Compassion** means acting with love and a caring heart toward those who suffer. Tikkun olam is a Hebrew phrase meaning “repair of the world.” Such engaged concern is proof positive of an authentic spirituality that does not end in “feel good” but in “do good.” (pp. 158-159).

But as I close, I have to keep it real and recognize that wisdom metaphors like Trinity and Tikkun olam seem to have been lost in a sea of hate and vitriol. Most Christians would rather argue about the Trinity or ignore it altogether and just focus on one member of the Godhead. And as far as repairing the world, a recent poll shows that a majority of Israelis favor ethnic cleansing as the only way to ensure their own safety and peace.

GOD HAVE MERCY!!

So, what is Trinity? It is a Divine Mystery that connects us all together whether we like it or not. We can either learn to live in a relationship of mutual support and respect or we can continue to vilify anyone that seems to threaten our way of life.

And my daily mantra of “Get up, suit up, show up” is all that I can do. And when I do, it’s amazing how things seem to work out in a way that serves the common good instead of just taking care of me. Even now, I hear Sophia whispering in my ear, “It’s not about you John, it’s about all of us.” Maybe we can all say that together using our own names.

It’s not about you, (say your name).

It’s about all of us.

Amen!