

Sunday, May 28th, 2008
The Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1-2:4a, John 1:1-14
God?

Quite often I get visits, or calls, from folks who aren't quite sure what they believe, or if they believe, or what it is that they think they might believe in, or what they think that the church they thought they were a part of believed, or Well, I think you get the idea. By the time they come to see me, they have usually talked to family and friends, tried to read the Bible that they were given once upon a time or that they stole out of a hotel room, and had numerous conversations with the divine being that they are uncertain about even existing.

So what do I do when they come to me? I'll let you in on a dirty little secret. It is very hard to logically persuade someone of the existence of God. But that's really not that big a deal because most of us aren't that logical to begin with. So where can we start but the beginning?

Both Genesis and John's Gospel start with the beginnings. They come from very different tacks, of course. But right from the beginning, they establish one thing. God always was. In the beginning, God was. Before the beginning is irrelevant, so from the perspective of Scripture, God always was. There is no great concern over what was before God, or who made God, even though those questions quite often come up with teenagers and during children's sermons. So if God was there in the beginning, then what? Well, three things. God doesn't need us or Creation to exist. God was here first. Secondly, if God is the only thing there at the beginning, then everything must come from God. And lastly, God's nature is eternal. God isn't going anywhere.

The God we talk about is eternal. And the God we talk about is creative. After all, isn't that what the entire passage from Genesis is about? God speaks, and understand how important that is for John to speak of God's Word, for that is the vehicle of Creation. Trinitarian scholars among you can see the interactions of the three persons of the Trinity in these two passages quite clearly. The Father speaks the Word that is the Son as the Spirit (wind) settles on the face of the waters. And things begin to happen as God speaks. Light and darkness, water and dry land, trees and birds, fish and cattle, you and I are all created by the God who is eternal.

And beyond just the very impressiveness of that, you and I are created in the very image of God. But how can that be, you say, how can **all of us** be created in the image of God? Depends on the meaning of the word image now, doesn't it? What if image isn't what we think of it as, a physical representation, but more of a characterization? What if it means that we are called to be creative too? What if being in the image of God means that we are to be forgiving and gracious? What if it means that we are to be slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, a favorite phrase of the Hebrews in referring to God? What if it means that all of the language we use to describe God is equally applicable to how we **should** be? (And yes, I know I went off the deep end there.)

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Ultimately, these folks haven't come to me because they want to know about God. They come because they want to know about themselves, but are either too afraid to ask, or have looked in the mirror and aren't quite sure they either like what they see or that they know what to do with what they see. And, I know that's happened to me, and I suspect that's happened to most of you. And when this happens, we often go looking to find out if it could be someone's fault other than our own. And ultimately, this reveals that we have become disconnected from who we are supposed to be.

And who we are supposed to be is revealed in our Creator. We are made in the image of God, a God who is creative, and active, loving and more than a bit awe inspiring, sacrificial and loving, anguished over those that God loves making mistakes, and filled with hope.

So my God is vastly more creative than I, incredibly more generous than I, infinitely more forgiving than I. Yet because God is, I am drawn to be more than I am currently. And in coming to know who God is, I learn who I am. And at times, in learning who I am, I learn more about God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and was God, and in that Word, we find God and ourselves all at the same time.