
Holy Holy Holy – And The Trinity

An article from the Cathedral Times.

Here are several excerpts from my sermon from last Sunday, Trinity Sunday. You can read the entire sermon [here](#) or find it in the Cathedral kiosks.

“I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.’” (Isaiah 6:1-3)

Yes, in the year that King Uzziah died, the prophet Isaiah came to life! He began his public ministry in a spectacular divine vision. Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and sitting on a throne; and his robe, his “train,” filled the temple. So great was the Lord’s presence that the angels surrounding him—they were called seraphs—covered their faces and their feet. They dared not gaze upon the Lord’s majesty, nor did they dare to step upon such holy ground.

But the angels were saying something. In fact, the angels were singing. They were singing a chorus, I believe, that has existed forever, from before time and forever. It is a chorus that we try to sing, too, every week, “Qados, Qados, Qados. Hagios, Hagios, Hagios. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. Holy, Holy, Holy.”

There are different words for “holy” in different languages, but every culture sings it. Holy, Holy, Holy. The word “holy” means “the presence of God.” To be holy is to practice the presence of God. To be holy is to acknowledge the presence of God. To be holy is to make room for God. To be holy is to sing the presence of God. The angels were singing “Holy, holy, holy” because they knew and rejoiced that they were in the presence of God.

In the Christian Church, we hear these words, we read about this vision, at a particular time of the year. Today is Trinity Sunday, one of the major feast days of the Church, and the only feast day—the only feast day—that commemorates a doctrine and not an event.

[Unfortunately,] the word “doctrine” has the power to put us to sleep immediately! But “doctrines” are those very principles that describe spiritual experience! In themselves, certainly, “doctrines” can become dry and irrelevant. But when we understand doctrines as a way of describing spirituality, then something wonderful and mysterious happens.

Especially this doctrine, the doctrine of the Trinity. “God is One, and God is Three.” That’s a simple enough definition for it. “God is One, and God is Three.”

I love this this doctrine, because it is completely illogical. It defeats our usual forms of logic and our linear thinking. In this age of idiotic fundamentalism, and rampant literalism, in the church—two twin dangers to our spiritual and imaginative life—the doctrine of the Trinity leads us away from shallow cerebral logic and into the depths of soul-ful spirituality. The doctrine of the Trinity leads us into the true mystery of knowing God with our full imagination.

...Ultimately, it is the doctrine of the Trinity itself that reminds us never to take language about God to be literal. Is God a shepherd? Is God a literal rock? Is God a son? Is God a heavenly dove?

Yes, God is all these things, but God is not all those things literally. The doctrine of the Trinity allows the image of God to be

more than one image. The spirit of the very doctrine speaks against narrow literalism. The doctrine itself proclaims various points of view about God!

...However we describe the Trinity, one principle stands out: God lives in relationship. Even God, who is above all and in all, even God lives in relationship. In fact, God is relationship. God does not fit inside just one person. God is three persons living in the ongoing event of relationship. And those three persons, living in relationship, allow so many millions of us—living in relationship—to know God.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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