

Trinity--What If the Secret Lies in Embrace

We begin with a prayer for memorial day weekend and then conclude with our prayer for our primary feast: Trinity Sunday.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, in whose hands are the living and the dead; we give thanks for all those thy servants who have laid down their lives in the service of our country. Grant to them thy mercy and the light of thy presence, that the good work which thou hast begun in them may be perfected; through Jesus Christ thy son our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Isaiah 6:1-8	The Lord Sits on His Throne; Here I am Send Me!	
Psalms 29		
Romans 8:12-17	All who are led by the Spirit are Children of God	
John 3:1-17	You must be born from above; The Son of Man must be lifted up. Nicodemus.	

Holy and undivided Trinity, you are an eternal harmony of gift and response: through the uncreated Word and the Spirit of truth **embrace** us and all creation in your extravagant love; through the Wisdom of God, whose raised voice calls us to life. Amen.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and **embraced** him and kissed him.

(Luke 15:20, Story of the Prodigal Son)

The Trinity! /// What if the Secret Lies not in understanding ///

But in embracing.

{Pause} Please Be Seated {Pause}

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I believe the Gospel reading for today: Trinity Sunday,

Is presented to remind us that, it is not through

‘Understanding’ but through ‘embracing’ that we are

Given a glimpse into the joys of the heavenly kingdom.

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Nicodemus, the antagonist of our narrative for today,

Has approached Jesus by night (likely so no one can see him).

He is already identified with the enemy party... In Fact →

This is the first piece of information we receive,

Before we even know his name! AND

From his first words, we are not quite sure,

If he speaks sincerely:

“Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God,

“For no one can do these signs that you do,

“Apart from the presence of God.”

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I do not know about you, but my antennae are up...

Does Nicodemus really mean what he says, or is it flattery?//

Jesus does not appear too impressed either:

“You are a teacher of Israel, and

“Yet you do not understand these things?” //

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But what if this narrative is demanding NOT that we understand...

But rather, what if this narrative is about embracing? //

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When next we hear of Nicodemus it is at Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin

Nicodemus, asks: “Does our law condemn a man without

“First hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

The response is hardly friendly: “Are you from Galilee too?”

“Look into it, and you will find that a prophet

“Does not come out of Galilee.”

Of course, we know, there is more to this prophet: Jesus... ///

Then Nicodemus or the Sanhedrin will ever know...

We know that Jesus came not only out of Galilee,

But from the city of Bethlehem, of King David,

But that is not yet the point.



The third and final mention of Nicodemus is when

Joseph of Arimethea (another believer & Sanhedrin member)

Claims the body of Jesus for burial:

Nicodemus brought a 75 pound mixture of myrrh and aloes, and

Taking Jesus' body, they wrapped it, with the spices,

In strips of linen and placed him in a new tomb,

In which no one had ever been laid.

Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation

(John 19:39-42)



Though Nicodemus' lack of understanding is clearly highlighted

In today's reading, it is clear that Nicodemus eventually

Embraces the crucified Christ.

Likely even carrying him to the tomb! It seems that

Despite Nicodemus' lack of initial understanding

Nicodemus was able to embrace the crucified (and risen) Lord. ...



What of us?



Can we ever really understand concepts of:

“Before Abraham: I AM!” and “3 in 1 and 1 in 3?”

Can we truly comprehend the most ancient creed,

Found on page 864 of the Book of Common Prayer:

“The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, & such is the Holy Ghost.

“The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible,

“And the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. ...

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As Dorothy Sayers said of the Trinity

The Father Incomprehensible, the Son Incomprehensible,

The whole thing ‘incomprehensible’

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That is really pretty much the very point...

God is not able to be classified and placed into a box!

Otherwise, God is not God, we are God making him

In our image and not the other way around!

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In introducing the concept of the Trinity, my Seminary textbook

On Christian Theology begins with a famous story

Regarding Augustine of Hippo of the fifth century.

Augustine is noted for his massive treatise titled:

On the Trinity, dealing with the mystery of God.

It is alleged that perhaps in the middle of composing this treatise,

Augustine found himself pacing the Mediterranean Shoreline. →

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While wandering across the sand, he noticed a small boy,

Scooping seawater into his hands, and

Pouring as much as he could into a hole in the sand. ///

Puzzled, /// /// Augustine watched as this action

Was repeated, again & again.

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Eventually his curiosity got the best of him, and he asked:

“Boy, what is it that you think that you are doing?”

The boy’s reply, perplexed Augustine even further.

The youth told him that he was busy emptying the ocean

Into the tiny cavity he had scooped out,

In the hot sand...



Augustine was dismissive: How could such a vast body of water,
Be contained in such a small hole?

The boy was equally dismissive: How could Augustine expect
To contain the vast mystery of God,
Into the mere words of a book?



This story, illuminates of one of the central themes of
Christian Theology and of Spirituality alike:

There are limits placed on the human ability to
Grasp the things of God.



We are meant not so much to understand, but to embrace.



Embrace God, Embrace Christ, Embrace the Holy Spirit,
Embrace the 3 in 1 and 1 in 3; Embrace Love your neighbor;
Far beyond our ability to understand,
But always within the reach of our embrace. → →

Embrace things known, and embrace things unknown,

Embrace those around you (That is the purpose of the peace)

Embrace those you know and embrace those you do not,

We are all somehow made in God's image.

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The Trinity! ///

What if, the Secret Lies not in understanding ///

But, in embracing?

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

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Please turn to page 358 {326} and let us embrace the words

Of the Nicene Creed.