

Trinity Sunday II ~ June 19, 2011

Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20; Psalm 8

This Sunday, which is Father's Day, is also Trinity Sunday on the church calendar. It is a day when we honor our earthly fathers while we pause to grapple a bit with the Doctrine of the Trinity which tries to explain how "Our Father, who art in heaven" can be three different beings, yet one. Those of us who have lived with an earthly father might have a little insight into this.

I can only use my own life as a window into what I mean. Perhaps, you can peek through this window, too.

My dad was a chemist who worked in the shoe industry developing finishes for shoes. Often he worked on these projects in the basement of our home. He not only developed the finishes, he traveled to many shoe factories in Wisconsin and Illinois and tested them out. He was dedicated to his work, as many fathers are. But, he was also dedicated to his family.

As the youngest of three children, I was almost a second family for my parents. As many of you know, my sister is 13 years older than I and my brother 11 years. My parents had them when they were very young and then I appeared when they were in their thirties. My dad named me for my mother and my aunt.

I think my brother and sister knew the jig was up when I arrived and that someone new had usurped their positions in the family. And, I had. I was the apple of my father's eye. He treated all of us well, but I always had a little extra attention probably, because, I came along when my brother and sister were entering those early teen years. I was easy to handle.

While he was ill much of my life, suffering from rheumatoid arthritis and rheumatic heart disease, we did many things together and I saw many facets of his being. I saw the element within him that longed for every hunting season when he would be in the northwoods with his cronies in some smoky little shack. I also saw the man who could not bear to kill anything and who would end up sitting high up in a tree just watching the wildlife pass by. I watched as he made the best barbeque sauce I ever had, creating it using some chemical formula and having it come out just right after many tries. I saw a man who could be very impatient with my brother and infinitely patient with me. I saw a person struggle to decide if he wanted to be a candidate for a heart transplant, while wondering what it might be like to live with someone else's heart. It was in the early days of that surgery and he examined and researched the pluses and minuses with a scientist's mind.

My father died when he was fifty-nine and I was twenty-five and expecting my first child. I have missed his wisdom. I have missed the many facets he had to his personality and that he revealed to me.

I have looked at the Trinity in the same way. I have considered that God has many facets, three of which are inherent in Christianity. We consider the God all around us, the Father, the God who moves among us, in the person of Jesus, and the God who dwells within us, as the Holy Spirit, as all part of our eternal God. Each of these elements also has many qualities. This is a very simple explanation.

We can try to put some theological terminology on it, but it just seems to become more confusing when we do. It is up to each of us to puzzle through any thoughts we might have about this and to arrive at a conclusion that fits into our faith journey and that makes the most sense to us. At times it is just best to leave these doctrines developed by the church alone and proceed on our way seeking to become the very best humans we can become while keeping before us the image of Christ. We are multi-faceted individuals, too, created, we are told, in the image of God.

By our revelation of the God who dwells within us, we make life better for all those we touch. By leading our lives in a more Christ-like manner, exhibiting patience, love, understanding and forgiveness, we help fulfill the Great Commission, which tells us to encourage others to go and do likewise. That's what we are called to do, all the days of our lives. To set before others what it means to live in enduring love never forsaking the God who dwells all around us, among us and within us and within all others.

Amen