

This is a Sunday like no other. Today we acknowledge a doctrine. Not a season. Not an event in the life of Jesus. A doctrine. It's doctrine created by human beings that tries, at once, to explain the nature of God and make it more difficult to understand. It's a doctrine demanded by an emperor because people were making so much trouble over this that his empire was at stake.

It's so hard to imagine that people were so wound up over whether Jesus was one with God or with one substance with God that they would have fist fights over it in the marketplace. It's beyond my comprehension. Aren't there more cogent things to fight over? Like..... is it Laurel or Yanny?

One of my Diocese of Ohio colleagues, to figure out how to preach this Trinity thing, invited his Facebook friends to chime in with their favorite, inadequate, and heretical metaphors for today. All sorts of replies ensued. A shamrock (hat tip to St. Patrick). An atom (protons, electron, neutrons). Rock, paper, scissors. (I don't get that one.) Water (ice, liquid, steam). An egg! (the white, the yolk, and the shell).

My favorite was “Bananas” because when you peel them, they will separate into three pieces – once that happens do you have one banana or three? Hmmm.

My answer was spumoni, or Neapolitan, ice cream. Three flavors, one ice cream. Someone noted that spumoni also contained nuts and fruit, which were defined as gifts of grace! We were having so much fun. I was tempted to just turn this whole thing over to you to preach. I’m sure we could fill up 10-12 minutes of sermon time engaged in heresy and have a wonderful time doing it.

I am a Trinitarian. I believe that through Jesus the Christ I have a relationship with the Father because the Holy Spirit takes me there. I need all the persona. I need a Triune God who creates, redeems, and makes holy the stuff of life. And, I need a God who knows the human condition.

On Thursday, about 3,000 people dared to claim publicly that Jesus, the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, was Lord. Three thousand people, mostly clergy (sadly), dared to claim that following Jesus was the priority of their lives.

The decision to follow Jesus as Lord means calling out the demonic forces of hate, fear, empire, and superiority. It means keeping people who claim to be following Christ accountable for their actions.

At the meeting before we processed to the White House, we heard statements of the elders of the Christian churches. Over and over, we were reminded that we are all made in the image of God the Father. That we are all children of the same God. We were reminded that, being Christian, we also are the body of Christ. We were being moved by the Holy Spirit to reclaim our faith – specifically our faith in Jesus – amid a moral crisis.

I sat in the overflow church watching all of this on the live stream. We clapped and sang and shouted Amen at the screens just as if we were in the other church. Separate yet all together. We were all colors, all denominations, all genders, all sexual preferences, all abilities, we were all God's image. All the flavors of God's love bound up together by the Spirit making Jesus' presence known. If I had any reservations about the Holy Spirit being there, the bird flying around the roof of the church and landing on streamers of red fabric confirmed her presence.

This morning, we experience the same – probably without the bird, but anything's possible! Here we are, the image of God incarnated in each other about to ask the Spirit to infuse ordinary stuff of life in a way that makes Jesus tangibly present to us. In our Triune God, salvation has come to all. Getting into "heaven" is not the issue. Doing what Jesus asked us to do to make earth like heaven is our charge.

Jesus was mighty clear about that:

Love God. Love your neighbor. Love yourself.

Presiding Bishop Curry didn't make that up when he composed his sermon for the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan. Those were Jesus' words. They were Jesus' actions, too. He loved God; he had a relationship with the Father. He loved his neighbors, even though he had to be embarrassed into doing that by a few women. He loved himself, took time for himself, surrounded himself with friends. That love changed the world of the 1st century of the Common Era. That love can change the world of our time as well.

Are we willing to do that? Embrace the love of God so much that we will allow the love of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit to change us completely? Will we embrace this love so that we are no longer afraid to act in the face of whatever empire threatens the Word of the Lord? Will we allow this love to comfort us in sorrow and strengthen us to face hardship? Will we give ourselves up to this love and become as one with the people who have been marginalized by society?

One of the speakers at Reclaiming Jesus reminded us that if we truly want to see Jesus, if we want to look into his eyes, we need to stand face-to-face with the poor, the hungry, the sick, the homeless, those in prison, or anyone who has been told by the prevailing culture that they are less than human. Seek and serve the Christ who is in them. And, the scary part, let them seek and serve the Christ in you.

The question is do we really want to see Jesus? Or do we prefer leaning back and having our cerebral conversations about an unsolvable mystery. Do we want to honor the Father? Or do we prefer believing that we make our own world. Do we want to feel the Spirit? Or do we prefer to keep our hearts and souls closed to the emotions that are linked to those feelings?

I bind unto myself today, the strong name of the Trinity. I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead, his eye to watch, his might to stay, his ear to hearken to my need. Christ beneath me, above me, in quiet and in danger. Christ in hearts of all who love me. Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. I bind unto myself the strong Name of the Trinity, of whom all nature hath creation, eternal Father, Spirit, Word.