

To me, Trinity Sunday is about having a fuller picture of our relationship with God. The relationship is a mystery. Understanding the Trinity is like trying to take a drink of water on a hot summer day from a giant fire hose. It is a lot. The potential for heresy is great. The Trinity seems such an abstract concept. The Trinity is One God. Never divided in substance; revealed in different manners.

God's revelation is complicated and simple at the same time: God the Father is our Creator. The Source.

Jesus seems fairly straightforward. He is the Son of God, our Lord, Savior and Redeemer. Then there is the Holy Spirit. The scriptures tell us the Holy Spirit is our advocate and guide, which is rather abstract.

In his translation of the Bible, Eugene Peterson translates the word Holy Spirit as Friend. Listen closely to the Gospel verse at hand, "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't handle them now. But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is."¹

When The Friend comes. What a beautiful image.

I think it particularly fits.

The Holy Spirit guides us along the pathway to God's love and grace.

Think of the characteristics of a good friend. A good friend is loyal, listens well, and one you can be yourself around, and count on in happy times and sad times alike.

We often think of Jesus as a friend, and he is. In fact, he called his disciples friends.

It can be a challenge for me, a 21st century woman, to relate to Jesus, a first century Jewish rabbi. When I sit in silence and pray, allowing the Spirit to move me, I think of him as a companion, that helps a great deal.

As any good friend does, the Spirit gives us the energy to be our best and true self. If we feel inhibited by the ways of the world, the Friend, the Spirit of Truth, can give us courage.²

The Holy Spirit makes us better versions of ourselves, just like a good friend. God is not interested in part of us, God wants all of us.

If you have a good friend, they become a guide when we are lost. Friends can help us better understand.

I recently read some studies by the Pew Research Center, in America, 15% of adults mentioned their faith when describing what brought them satisfaction. This is excellent news for our church and for Fr. Roman and I. 49% of adults mentioned family. 20% mentioned friendship.³

Another study found that if people mentioned health, partner, career, and friendship when discussing their well being they displayed greater life satisfaction.⁴ I like to study less because it leaves out faith. And still it demonstrates how important friendship is; and I believe we have the strongest friendship with our God.

The Holy Spirit is the best friend who points us back to the love and teachings of Jesus and the Father.

The Spirit continues Jesus' instruction to us.

¹ Peterson, E.H. John 16:12-15. Colorado Springs: NavPress.

² Wright, N.T. (2001). *Luke for Everyone*. London: SPCK.

³ Pew Research. Life Satisfaction.

https://www.pewresearch.org/global/interactives/meaning-in-life/data/family_children

⁴ Pew Research. Americans Who Find **meaning in these four areas have higher life satisfaction**

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/20/americans-who-find-meaning-in-these-four-areas-have-higher-life-satisfaction/>

The Spirit wants us to be close to God as the disciples were close to Jesus, and Moses was close to God on Mount Sinai.⁵ Sometimes, we need to hear the truth in bite size proportions.

Our Friend the Spirit will give us the message in those small bites so that we can understand God's love for us.

A good friend can tell us a hard truth about ourselves. They will tell us when we spinach between our teeth. A great friend will tell us the truth about whether we are on the correct path or if we need to change directions. It is this Holy friendship that helps us become better reflections of God's love in the world.

The Trinity is about love and experiencing God's love in creation. It is about our holy relationship with God. The Gospel Writer, John, wishes for us to see that the Trinity is a way of finding out who God is at the core.

This chapter takes place in the center of the closing dialogue between Jesus and his friends. John references Jesus' love for his disciples as a commandment in John 13, as a way to grow in Christ, and a way that we are drawn into Christ.

Trinity Sunday invites us to draw all the love.⁶ The Holy Spirit is what allows us to follow the command of love fully. When I see someone at their best, I see the Spirit working in them. I see them connected to the Creator. It is when they are following that commandment to love that the disciples fully shine the light on who Christ is in their surroundings.⁷

The Holy Spirit will come and wait with us while we seek to understand Christ, as none of us fully understands God.

We need a Friend to complete our relationship with God. God desires a relationship with us. The Holy Spirit is our helper, our guide, and, yes, our Friend. We are to feel more comfortable going to our Holy Friend, and engaging them so that our relationship with God can be deeper.⁸

We are living in a new way of understanding God. The Trinity has always been with us, after Pentecost we have a better understanding of this fact. Before, the relationship with God could easily become stale and stiff. Now, we look toward a new, closer, relationship with our divine God in all three revelations.⁹

This is the Spirit at Work. As a friend, the Spirit helps us center around God in ways that we never would have imagined. As Jesus says, The Spirit "will take what is mine and declare it to you."¹⁰

A good friendship enhances who we are as a person, as a child of God. This relationship between the members of the Trinity - because we believe in one God is enhanced by the Holy Spirit.

⁵ O'Day, G.R. (2006). *Westminster Bible Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

⁶ Stamper, M. (2022).

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/the-holy-trinity-3/commentary-on-john-1612-15-5>

⁷ Stamper, M. (2022).

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/the-holy-trinity-3/commentary-on-john-1612-15-5>

⁸ Our friends are our advocates. I remember seeing this in youth ministry a great deal. Lewis, K.M. (2014). *Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentary: John*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

⁹ Wright, N.T. (2001). *Luke for Everyone*. London: SPCK.

¹⁰ John 16:14

The creative, life-giving, Spirit, amplifies the teachings of Christ and that foundational relationship with The Creator. The Trinity always was present, yet on this Sunday, we celebrate it, because our understanding of God's triune nature brings us peace.

The best part of the Trinity is the everlasting nature. It is the creator God who made us who we are, it is the savior God who forgives our sins (and this can be a tough battle), and it is the Friend that guides us. You have heard it said, "what a friend we have in Jesus." I think we should also proclaim, because it is all the same God, "what a friend we have in The Spirit." We should never be discouraged. Lift all our cares through the Spirit.¹¹ What a Friend we have in The Holy Spirit. Amen.

¹¹ This comes from two sources. Lift Every Voice and Sing II "What A Friend we Have in Jesus) #109. Also Stamper, M. (2022). <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/the-holy-trinity-3/commentary-on-john-1612-15-5>