

TRINITY SUNDAY, YEAR A, JUNE 4, 2023

How many of you have ever taken a DNA test? I took one over a year ago and for the most part the results were what I expected but there were a few surprises. On my mother's side it was predictable as my maternal grandparents came to the US from Italy in the 1890's and my DNA showed that Southern Italy influence with a touch of Northern Italy, Greece, Albania and the Aegean Islands. On my father's side I grew up believing that our ancestry was predominately German with a touch of French. My DNA showed that the dominate DNA was English and Northwestern Europe, than German, with a touch of Scotland, Sweden and Denmark. That was surprising as it didn't correspond with the family story we were told.

Now if you're registered with Ancestry.com they will tell you how many other people, who are also registered with Ancestry.com, share your DNA. There are over 13,000 people that I share even 1% DNA with on Ancestry.com. If you think that's unrealistic to go as low as 1% just think of your nieces and nephews and cousins or other close family members. Nieces and nephews share roughly about 30% and their children about 15%. Cousins share about about 14% and their children roughly 5%. It doesn't take long to see that 1% DNA matches are within your own familial circle. But there's obviously so many more that I have no knowledge of. The reality is I can possibly share the same DNA with someone here this morning. All this is to show how closely related we all are to one another and also how relationship are a big part of who we are.

Now why all this talk about DNA on Trinity Sunday. DNA is all about how we are related to each other and the Trinity is all about a relational God and how God relates to us and how we discover that relationship. Contrary to popular belief the Trinity is not about two men and a bird and is not a dry technical doctrine but a living breathing revelation about believing Christians telling their experiences, their ideas, their beliefs about God. In fact the Greek word used to describe the Trinity is perichoresis. Peri means around and choresis means dancing as in choreography. The image of God, Son and Holy Spirit is three dancers holding hands and dancing together. There's nothing dull and stuffy about that image. It's very lively and mystical.

In his book, *"The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation"* Father Richard Rohr, a Franciscan Friar, writes "In our attempts to explain the Trinitarian Mystery we overemphasized the individual qualities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but not so much the relationships between them. That is where all the power is! That is where all the meaning is!"

In her book, *The Mind of the Maker*, Dorothy Sayers explains the Trinity as something that begins with the *Idea* which finds its reality in *Energy*, and is disseminated through *Power*. In theological language, God is the Idea, Christ is the Energy or Activity, and the Holy Spirit is Power. This is also the way human beings think and create. She equates it to writing a book where the writer has an *idea* for a novel and in the process of writing the idea becomes form which is now the activity; and then when the book is read by others, it has *power*.

Trinity is a celebration that God is a relationship. It's all about relationships. Our God is one but also three. Three in one and one in three and this is the great mystery and paradox of the divine nature of God as we Christians understand it.

Again, Father Richard Rohr says that “when you think about the trinity don’t start with one god and try to explain it as three instead start with three and understand this as the deepest nature of the one God.” Central to our Christian faith is this belief that God is a relationship – a relationship of God, Son, and Holy spirit or Creator, redeemer, sanctifier or as St. Augustine said, the lover, the beloved and love.

God is perfect communion between three - a circle dance of love. This means God’s self is fluid. God moves. Or to use Rohr’s language again: God flows, and God is flow. God dances, and God is dance. We worship a God who is always on the move, always spilling over, always organic, always a surprise.

Why does this matter for us? I think it matters because we are prone to rigidity and continuity. We don’t like change, and we are often reluctant to embrace what is new, what is unfamiliar, what is uncomfortable. But if God’s nature is flow and movement and dance, then we need to find the courage to enter into that same flow, movement, and dance. We must be willing to evolve.

The Trinity also shows us that God is communal. It’s one thing to say that God values community. Or that God thinks community is good for us. It’s altogether another to say that God *is* communal. God *is* relationship, intimacy, connection, and communion. It is in relationship — with God, ourselves, each other, and the world — that we experience and embody God’s nature.

Now, the word Trinity is not found in scripture, but the idea is alluded to in our lessons today. In the creation story, God the creator fashions the world out of nothing and commands everything into being. God as Spirit, the Sustainer moves as the divine wind and sweeps over the creation to give it shape and form. God’s word brings everything into existence. God said is God’s word. In Jesus, the son, the redeemer is God’s word. That’s what John’s gospel starts out with when he writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The creation story tells us that this three fold nature of God is present from the very beginnings of the universe.

So the importance and centrality of relationships is built into the fabric of creation. That is why our encounters with each other is life giving even in the simplest of conversations because we are doing the divine dance and are doing what we are created to do which is to create and be in relationship with each other. We all know that humans don’t do well when left alone. We are made to love and be loved, to know and to be known, have deep and abiding friendships, to be challenged by one another so we can stretch and grow.

Remember we were made in the image of God and notice it says let us make humans in our image. It doesn’t say my image – it’s about we from the very beginning. We share in the very DNA of God. When we attempt to reduce each other to simplistic stereotypes relationships get lost. When we are quick to label each other it is easy to dismiss each other. When we attempt to shame each other or fail to take each other seriously or to listen, or stop trying to understand each other we are acting counter to our truest ourselves because we are acting counter to our God who by very definition is a relationship of love.

The Trinity at its heart is an expression of deep, unfaltering, and life-giving love between God, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a relationship of unselfish, sacrificial love. Which begs the question: if God’s very being is grounded in love, and we are created in

God's image, then who and what are we? Are we, like the Triune God motivated first and foremost by love? Is love what we are known for? If not, then what are we doing with our lives? What does our faith amount to?

We are the children of a mysterious, fluid, diverse, communal, hospitable, and loving God who wants to guide us into the whole truth of who God is and who we are. The truth about the Trinity it's all about relationships and we are made for each other because we are made in the image of God, and we are made to take part in the divine dance of love. After all, it's all in our DNA. Amen.