

Let's be clear - the Trinity is our idea. In the many, many ways to describe the God whom we worship, Trinity happens to be a concept that is most easily represented - even if it is next to impossible to understand. But...

Neither of today's texts suggest 'God in three persons; blessed Trinity.' You'll find no mention of Trinity in Scripture – only hints and allusions. Our salvation doesn't depend on this doctrine - your church membership will not be revoked if you can't explain it. You will not be denied communion if you deny the Trinity (not by me, at least.) In the early age of Christian development, the conversation around how to define God was vigorous and (some thought) necessary; the argument being that you can't worship what you don't understand.

Well, let's think about that for a minute...

Understanding doesn't need to be the goal of EVERY human activity. Especially a pursuit of a life of service to God - or a life devoted to following Jesus. There are simply too many variables. What's wrong with mystery? Who could possibly know it all? In all of Scripture, we sometimes accuse Paul of trying to offer an answer for everything – we're wrong - ...and he fails.

Scripture is the admission by countless authors over many generations that something unknowable is always

happening - that the mystery of God is close to us - all the time - and that only makes it more mysterious.

Isaiah's trembling temple - his vision of heavenly beings at worship - this brings heaven close to him, and he trembles. But neither the prophet nor the text offers any explanations. This is God's glory - the fantastical nature of it should leave you trembling. Now; who will take up the task of telling the world about this glory? The only possible answer is "Here I am; send me!"

There is no suggestion that this experience must be replicated down the line. No requirement that everyone Isaiah meets must have the same vision (or understand their visions in the same way!) The glory of God compels Isaiah to witness - to speak out against injustice; to assure people of the hope that God offers. Trinity gets wrecked on visions and missions like Isaiah's. The only clear definition here is that God is God, and God is fantastically, majestically present, and Isaiah agrees to serve as God's messenger. The glory of God refuses to be quantified.

Likewise, Jesus doesn't say a word about Trinity. Though Jesus talks endlessly about relationships - especially his relationship with (and to) God. There is a connection that Jesus needs us to make - a relationship that will foster hope for us. 'Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in the one who sent me...' The relationship is current

and present and lively. And we are part of that relationship by our relationship with Jesus.

Just that statement would seem to make the idea of Trinity simple by comparison, but as we try to make sense of the faith that Jesus offers - when we apply ourselves to the task of 'following Jesus' - we enter into a relationship just as complex and just as important as the relationship we try to describe between/among God.

Jesus' call to follow; Jesus' invitation to be imitators of him, are invitations into this complex and glorious relationship that God maintains with all creation.

In truth, the Trinity is the SIMPLEST rendering of the idea that God is primarily about relationship.

God's word is recorded as starting the cosmic clock (Genesis 1.) God's holy voice calls citizens from the comfort of their homeland and turns them into wandering witnesses to the Divine. God's spirit frees those who have been frozen in time (by habit or, as in the dry bones encountered by Ezekiel, by the absence of life) to reach out in new directions.

We proclaim (in our creeds and hymns) this triune God – not as the last word in how to describe God's relationships, but as the starting point for the way that God relates. Three that are one – separate yet intimately linked

– God’s capacity for creative connection actually knows no bounds, and the Trinity is where we first imagine that.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.

When we name that mysterious relationship, we aren’t limiting God to a manageable size, we’re acknowledging that we have to start somewhere. To give ourselves the chance to relate to God, we crave the gift of the Son. To wrap our heads around the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, we rely on the Spirit’s gentle touch. To open our imaginations to the working of the Spirit, we turn to the biblical accounts of God at work – of Jesus being Jesus.

Three examples – among many – of God’s desire to make connection with humanity. Three ways to imagine glory; three ways to encounter grace.

Trinity is not the last word, but it is a very good place to start.