

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Though it was half a lifetime ago, I remember graduating from high school. Looking back, I can confidently say that at that juncture of my life I felt the greatest sense of certainty I've ever experienced. I had been an excellent student, and thought I had a solid grasp on how life and the world worked. Furthermore, I was confident that my knowledge and mastery would only increase in this regard. It was a marvelous time.

Admittedly, I was pretty self-assured. It's not that I thought I knew everything; I plainly didn't. It's simply that I thought everything was knowable, and that further education would definitely improve the depth and grasp of knowing everything.

There's a certain irony for me that we're honoring and recognizing you graduates on Holy Trinity Sunday. On the one hand, a diploma certifies that you have mastered a certain body of knowledge or information, an admirable accomplishment to be sure. On the other hand, we do this on Holy Trinity Sunday, which recognizes the complete otherness of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and cannot but remain a mystery to those mortal born like us. We may catch glimpses of God's being, but like the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, we will never in this life be able to grasp the triune identity. We can acknowledge that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but we simply don't, nor will we ever, have the capacity to understand the mystery of God.

I recall another of my graduations – 30 years ago from seminary, another time when I felt a certain confidence of understanding. If I'm completely honest with you, I must admit that I thought I had a grasp on

the Triune nature of God. However, while I could certainly critique everyone else's descriptions of the Holy Trinity – tell you why your view contained some theological flaw, I could not, then or now, adequately describe God. Because the truth is that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity – the three natures, yet single nature of God – evolved to explain that very same inconsistency; God who must be acknowledged as being one, is named in the New Testament and appears in all of Scripture to act in 3 quite distinct natures. **Summary: *the image of God remains muddled in mystery, but the Holy Trinity is the best model we have.*** Put more simply, sometimes we may identify God's presence, but we will never be able to comprehend of God fully.

The best parallel I can draw for the inadequacy of our models for the image of God remains that of the atom. The Greeks and others – credited to Democritus – pictured it as the smallest unit of matter, a dot if you will. But the 20th century revealed an ever changing image of the atom: the plum pudding model (Thompson) – a spherical glob with undifferentiated stuff in it; the classic Rutherford or planetary model – a nucleus at the center with orbiting electrons; the Bohr model – a planetary model with electrons orbiting at increasing distance; and neutron surrounded by three circle indicating energy levels; the cloud or quantum mechanics model: based on the probability of electron location; and finally, the current model, which I can neither fathom nor describe. The point being that the more information we have, the greater the uncertainty of the models; that's why the plum pudding model works for me in general, but different models apply based on what you're doing.

In the end it comes back to what we can and can't know about God.

Here's what our faith tells us; I stress the word faith because what we believe is not a matter of certainty, but rather trust. We know that the Bible presents God's activity in time. We know that God is One – an indivisible union; this is the great innovation of the Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We, Christians, believe that Jesus reveals the heart and passion of God – God holds creation and us in a loving embrace for which suffering and even death cannot separate us from. Jesus tells us that:

1. He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him;
2. That, after His departure, the Holy Spirit will come to us to guide us into all truth;
3. That, all that the Father has is His, all that He has the Holy Spirit has, and will declare it to us.
4. Jesus tells us many things about the Holy Spirit, but the more He says the more confusing it gets.

Perhaps that's the point. Maybe understanding the nature of God is not what God wants from us at all, but rather being guided by God's true nature – revealed by the Holy Spirit in the life and person of Jesus – is what God wants for and from us. At the most basic level what this requires has always been the same from the very beginning, humility – acknowledging that God is God, and we are not. That God's will for humanity and creation – made known in and through Jesus – is not for each of us individually to decide each moment; God does not give us a line item veto as it were. God gives us the opportunity to know and follow the path that leads to life. We can allow the Holy Spirit to guide us unto that path, or not.

Humility – acknowledging that our judgment is astronomically

inferior to God's – is the quality that allows us to walk the path of life or get side tracked. You don't have to know everything to follow on that path, you simply need to keep the leader in sight because He knows the way.

Truth is, no matter how long ago we may have graduated from whatever, much remains to be learned, and the most important things the Holy Spirit waits to teach us. She – the Spirit, it's feminine is Greek – will take what is God's and declare it to you. We don't need to forge our own path, Jesus has already shown us the path to life, we need only follow where the Spirit leads us, but follow we must.

Amen !!!