

The Most Holy and Blessed Trinity

Trinity Sunday. May 22, 2016. The Episcopal Shared Ministry of Our Saviour, Salem, and Trinity, Alliance, in the Diocese of Ohio.
The Rev'd Jerome H. (Kip) Colegrove

The people who put together the wonderful riot of readings from Scripture that we have heard this morning meant these readings to tell us something about the Holy Trinity, which we honor today. I guess I should say *whom* we honor, but the whole notion of a Godhead that is one and yet three is a real strain for the human intellect. The Trinity is so abstract that it is hard to use personal pronouns for it. Break it down into its three persons, however, and the Trinity immediately becomes personal.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We just got finished celebrating the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost, last Sunday. Scripture presents the Holy Spirit as God coming along side us, an intimate counselor and encourager, as close as the breath we are just now taking. But Scripture also presents the Spirit as a mighty wind, a source of vast power and a harbinger of the unexpected, the Spirit that blows where it will.

I also like the image of the Holy Spirit that was presented long ago in one of the most

memorable sermons I've ever heard. The preacher compared the Holy Spirit to a football player running interference for the ball carrier—out in front but aware of the emerging pattern of the game, of the obstacles and the opportunities. In theological talk we call this prevenient grace: the grace of God anticipating the flow of things in space and time, the God whose love and support are always leaping and dancing out ahead of us, breaking our path through the universe.

In the same sermon the preacher compared Jesus to a friend and companion walking at our side, the one who is within arm's reach, utterly reliable, always there. We and our Lord Jesus Christ are shoulder to shoulder on our path through the universe, as when he walked with his disciples along the roads of Galilee.

And where in this picture is God the Father? Standing behind us, of course, backing us up yet letting us stand forward on our own—like a good parent. The Master of the Universe, who made it and loves it, stands behind us to guarantee the value and the purpose of our path through life. He is also the one who stands ready receive us, his bruised yet joyful children, at the great homecoming.

God the Father backing us up. God the Son at our side. God the Holy Spirit out ahead of us running interference. What on earth are we worried about?

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

❖ This sermon is a light revision of the sermon preached at the Shared Ministry on trinity Sunday in 2010, and elsewhere once or twice before that.