



Holy Trinity

June 11, 2017

*“God so loved the world that he gave his only son.”*

*I want to turn the clock back --- way back --- to the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century. You bump into a friend and strike up a conversation. After the usual pleasantries he asks, “Have you heard the news?” You say you don’t know what he means, and he says, “There are some people starting to say that the sun **doesn’t move around the earth.**”*

*“Really?” you ask.*

*He continues, “In fact, some are saying that it’s the opposite --- that the **earth moves around the sun** --- and on top of that, it’s **spinning** while doing so.” “C’mon --- that’s impossible. Somebody must be trying to trick you or something. Everyone everywhere knows that **could never happen.**”*

*You are so gullible!”*

Sometimes, things **aren’t what they appear to be**. When the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus put these ideas in writing centuries ago, it was, to put it mildly, **revolutionary**. A few selected individuals in history had suggested similar things, but their ideas weren’t really thought through and written down in the convincing way in which Copernicus presented them. Galileo and Kepler expounded on these ideas, and well, let’s just say things got **more than a little heated over the matter**.

To many at that time (even Church leaders and some other scientists --- learned groups both) what these men were saying was **beyond what they could imagine**. As far back as anyone could remember, people had **always believed** that the earth was both stationary and the center of everything else. To suggest otherwise was either ignorance, fraud, faulty science, or maybe even **heresy**.

For many --- it wasn’t simply that they didn’t **want** to believe. It was almost as if they **couldn’t** believe, couldn’t wrap their minds around something they **had never even considered**.

Our understanding of God is no different. Sometimes we have our minds made up as to **who God is** and **who he is not**, what God is like and what God is not like.

And nothing can get us to see differently, **no one can convince us otherwise**.

I’m sure that was one of the huge stumbling blocks for those living in the time of Jesus who began hearing about him, began hearing some of the things their friends were saying about him.

He did what? He said what? He was resurrected **from the what?**

We shouldn't be too harsh or judgmental toward those who have (or had) difficulty with what the Christian community says and believes about God --- for our faith says some pretty incredible things, things which are way **beyond human experience** and way beyond our **limited language and categories**.

The Church (especially in those first few centuries) has always embraced the responsibility for helping **articulate** for the faithful some of the **deepest truths imaginable**. For example, some of the faithful could not accept the Incarnation. The Church said, "No, Jesus was fully human." Some of the faithful could not accept the divinity of Jesus.

The Church said, "No, He was (and is) God." And so on and so on.

What's so ironic is that, as science has provided more and more "answers" to complex questions, they have invariable **opened up huge new areas of inquiry** (whether that be in astronomy, quantum mechanics, medicine, genetics, or whatever). The incredible thing is that the **more "answers"** they have the **more "questions"** they have too.

It's funny how it works that way.

Put another way --- the more we (and the scientific community) know about the universe the more **in awe** of it we find ourselves, the **more amazed** we are at what we might someday be able to discover, the **more "full of wonder"** we become. It's like when explorers reach the end of a cave only to punch through a wall and uncover a huge cave system yet to be explored.

In science and in faith (and in many other things) there is always **so much more than we could ever imagine**. Today we gather to celebrate one of the most **profound mysteries** humankind has ever been invited to wrap its limited mind around. And the Christian God is one that is quite unlike that which any other community has put its faith in.

Most people throughout history have believed in a God that was either **unknowable or distant or disinterested or** (in some cases) **uncaring**. Our God is nothing like that. Our God created us out of **love**. Our God has **revealed** himself to us continually, from the very beginning. Our God **became one of us**, experiencing the very things we experience. Our God even **DIED** (imagine that) to heal a broken world. And our God **remains** with us and **dwells** within each of us.

Today's Gospel tells us that God does three things:  
God loves the world,  
God gives the Son,  
and God sent the Son into the world.

Just to be sure we make no mistake: The Gospel explains that God's purpose in sending

the Son was not to condemn but to save. Father, Son, and Spirit. What a God we have!

And so, today we are asked to **discard any pre-conceived notions we have about God**, and ask him to remove any **blind spots** we might have. Today's a day to not simply try to "**know**" more or "**understand**" more, but rather to **open our hearts and minds** to whatever it is that God wants to **reveal** to us or **say** to us or **invite us to become**.

Today's a day to allow what we believe about God open up a whole world of possibilities for each of us --- a world of incredible wonder and awe in which we **commune** with our God --- a God who is so far beyond whatever we can **think, say, or know about him**.

God said what? God did what? God loves whom?

Everyone knows that could never happen, God could **never be all those things**. Ah . . . **don't be so sure**. When it comes to God, there are no limits. No image will ever be adequate to describe God, but God will always be near, luring us toward greater union through and with and in Christ. If we're sure we know all there is to know, we can be sure that we really **don't know** much. There's a big, beautiful God out there (and in here).

Let's continue to **discover God** each and every day.