



May 23, 2021 John 15:26-27, 16: 4b-15_ Acts 2:1-21
www.theark1.com Zoom Connection.
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 Additional [Beck](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

We revisit this part of John’s gospel in order to reflect on the mystery of the Trinity. Like the Möbius strip in this drawing, the Father, Son and Spirit are all part of one reality, like an endless ribbon. The early church struggled mightily as people tried to put in words their lived experience of God. Even today, theologians stumble as they attempt to explain this experiential mystery. How do you make sense of this essential element of your faith?

Jn 15: 26-27

26 “When the **Advocate** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Jn. 16:12-15

12 I have much more to say to you, **more than you can now bear**. 13 But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will **guide** you into **all truth**. He will **not speak on his own**; he will **speak only what he hears**, and he will **tell you what is yet to come**. 14 He will **bring glory to me** by taking from what is **mine** and **making it known** to you. 15 All that belongs to the **Father is mine**. That is why I said the **Spirit** will take from what is **mine** and **make it known to you**.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit make known to you the will of the Father given to you by Jesus?

PRAYER: Holy Trinity, I come to you full of wonder at the profound mystery that I experience in and through your presence. At times your creative power is most obvious to me. At other times your essence is revealed most clearly in the words and deeds of Jesus. Yet all the time I rely on your wisdom to help me live into what God’s will is for me to become. Help me as I stumble along, hoping that all will be perfectly clear when I encounter you face to face. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

ADVOCATE: Jesus mentions the Holy Spirit as part of His encouragement in the face of persecution. The term Advocate means “helper,” “counselor,” and “comforter.” *Can you think of a time when the Advocate was present to you in a time of trouble?*

MORE THAN YOU CAN NOW BEAR: At any given time, we can only bear to experience so much because of our inherent limits. Jesus knew very well that the disciples were not able at this time to take in all that he was giving them, but also knew that the Spirit would enable them to hear what they could bear to hear in the time to come. *Has anyone ever recognized that you were not able to hear something now? How did you know that? Were you eventually able to hear it? What made that possible? Did that person’s waiting help? How*

SPIRIT OF TRUTH: The spirit of truth is that which enables us to know that something is authentic and warns us when something is not authentic.

How do you know when something is true? Untrue? Have you ever connected the Trinity and the Holy Spirit with this process?

COUNSELOR / GUIDE: A guide is a reality that enables us to move in a desired direction toward our goal.

Does scripture study function as a guide for you in your effort to “hear” more from God? How?

ALL TRUTH: In space and time we are necessarily limited in our ability to see the “big picture”. We needed to go into space to even see the wholeness of our earth and realize that this is only a small part of reality.

Are you conscious of your limits when it comes to knowing the whole truth? If so, how does that help you to be compassionate like Jesus? Patient like Jesus?

NOT SPEAK ON HIS OWN: No part of the Trinity speaks only on their own. They cannot be separated.

How would your understanding of God be affected if there were only the Father? The Son? The Spirit? How does this triune expression of God enlarge your experience/ knowledge?

TESTIFY / SPEAK ONLY WHAT HE HEARS: Jesus only spoke that which the Father revealed to him. Now he tells us that the Spirit will only speak that which is given through him from the Father. All the members of the Trinity express what is given to them through their relationship.

Which ‘voice’ of the Trinity do you relate to the best? Why? What might that reveal about your ability to ‘hear’?

TELL YOU WHAT IS YET TO COME: Jesus realizes that the disciples are only at the beginning of the beginning in their effort to understand what he is sharing with them.

When was the last time you recognized that you were only at the beginning of the beginning in your faith life? What caused this realization? Was it helpful?

BRING GLORY TO ME: Realizing the truth of his being the beloved is the source of Jesus’ glory. When the Spirit enables humanity to realize this wondrous truth, Jesus’ glory will be revealed.

Can you imagine Jesus saying YES when that moment comes for you? Can you see him glowing with joy as he sees his truth dawning in you?

MINE: Jesus made God’s revelation his when he accepted being totally loved by God. He has made God’s reality his own in such a way that he can not distinguish between them.

What will it take for you to do the same? Will you then be ‘one’ with the Trinity?

MAKING IT KNOWN: Revelation is the process of God making known the truth of what is. Jesus is laying it all out there for us to see.

Is there anything preventing you from seeing at this time? What would help you to get beyond this barrier?

FATHER / SPIRIT / SON: The Trinity is the original relationship. Jesus is telling us that we exist within this relationship, and have done so since the beginning of creation.

Has this study time helped you to go deeper into this mystery? Do you trust that the Holy Spirit will reveal more to you as you are able to bear it?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Jn. 16: 12 // Jn. 14:26; Jn. 16:13 // Jn. 14:26; Jn. 16:16 // Jn. 7:33; 14:19;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Prov. 8: 22-31; Ps. 8: 4-9; Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15;

Revised Common Lectionary: Prov. 8: 1-4, 22-31; Ps. 8; Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

It’s hard to see the whole picture if you are inside the frame. Fr. Ralph Powell, O.P.

This Holy Spirit is the divine life itself by which we become not only brothers and sisters of Christ but also sons and daughters of the Father. This is why Jesus could say: “It is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Advocate (the Spirit) will not come to you... But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth... all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine: (Jn. 16: 7-15). Thus, receiving the Holy Spirit is receiving the life of the Father and the Son. This Spirit makes true discipleship possible, a discipleship that involves not only following in the path of Christ but also participating with Christ in his most intimate life with the Father. Pg. 105.

Spiritual life is life in the Spirit, or more accurately, the life of the Spirit in us. It is this spiritual life that enables us to live with a new mind in a new time. Pg 106.

Nouwen, Henri, et al. [Compassion](#). NY. Image Books. 1983.

The church becomes the body of Christ, the presence of God here and now, only in the absence of the body of Jesus, who rose and then ascended to be with God. For Christians, the incarnation is like a rainbow: it makes God unmistakably present, and yet also inherently elusive and utterly transcendent.

Ochs, Peter, et al Ed. [Christianity in Jewish Terms](#). Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2000. Pg. 267.

It was only in Jesus' absence that his friends discovered the full meaning of his presence. It was only in his absence that they completely understood his words and experienced full communion with him; and it was only in his absence that they could gather in a community of faith, hope, and love. When we claim for ourselves that we come to our friends in the Name of Jesus – that through us Jesus becomes present to them – we can trust that our leaving will also bring them the Spirit of Jesus. Thus, not only our presence but also our absence becomes a gift to others.

Nouwen, Henri. [Bread For the Journey](#). NY. HarperSanFrancisco. 1977. March 14.

Information gives order, prompts growth, and defines what is alive. At every level of the universal web of relationships there is a constant exchange of information with life. The sharing of information is the underlying dynamic process that ensues the life of a

ny organization.

Wessels, Cletus. [The Holy Web](#). Maryknoll NY. Orbis Books. 2000. Pg. 146

Bringing the Spirit Through Leaving

It is often on our absence that the Spirit of God manifests itself. When Jesus left his disciples he said, "It is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you. . . . However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth". It was only in Jesus' absence that his friends discovered the full meaning of his presence. It was only in his absence that they completely understood his words and experienced full communion with him; and it was only in his absence that they could gather in a community of faith, hope, and love. When we claim for ourselves that we come to our friends in the Name of Jesus – that through us Jesus becomes present to them – we can trust that our leaving will also bring them the Spirit of Jesus. Thus, not only our presence but also our absence becomes a gift to others. (March 14th reading)

Nouwen, Henri. [Bread For the Journey](#). NY. HarperSanFrancisco. 1977.

In a sense, just as John advances the joy and exaltation of resurrection into the crucifixion, so he brings the grief and loneliness and waiting of Easter Saturday forward into the Upper Room.

Lewis, Alan E. [Between Cross and Resurrection](#). Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 2001. Page 35.

Parakletos, or the "Spirit of Jesus that judges us" could best be translated as "our defense attorney you justified us" (Jn. 15:26). Linn, Dennis, et al. [Good Goats](#). Mahwah, NY. Paulist Press. 1994. Page 21.

If Jesus had remained among the disciples, they would have "clung" to him (Jn. 20:17) and thus would have stood in the way of his universal presence to the whole world. Ten days after Jesus' ascension, the Spirit of God came upon the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-4), and with that, the church was born, a birth made possible, oddly enough, by the absence of Jesus (Jn. 16:7). The church becomes the body of Christ, the presence of God here and now, only in the absence of the body of Jesus, who rose and then ascended to be with God. For Christians, the incarnation is like a rainbow: it makes God unmistakably present, and yet also inherently elusive and utterly transcendent.

Frymer-Kensky, Tikva et al Ed. [Christianity in Jewish Terms](#). Boulder, CO. Westview Press. 2000. Page 267.

The Holy Spirit

Consideration: The Spirit is the breath of creation, making all things in the image of the father's love, Jesus. Jesus hesitated to tell us of the Spirit, to tell us that his own presence was only temporary (Jn. 16: 4-7, 12-14). What was begun in love must be fulfilled in love. And love is a feeling.

Reflection: At Pentecost the Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, was freed to be shared by all believers, making us "other Christs." That is why Jesus had to leave us. If we let the spirit of Jesus, he illuminates our imperfections, burns away our scales of blindness, and warms our way in a cold world.

He is our consolation, while remaining our challenge. He comes to build bridges with others, not to comfort us before our own fireplaces.

Closing Prayer: (Feel the presence of the Spirit in imageless "blindness." Be silent and a peace.)

I am within the Trinity, in the love between Father and Son that is the spirit. I am patient and kind, never jealous, never boastful, never conceited, delighted by truth, always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, to endure whatever comes. (See 1 Cor. 13: 4-8).

Father, with the spirit and in the name of Jesus, I beg you, let me act as I am.

Kelsey, Morton. [The Other Side of Silence](#). NY. Paulist Press. 1976. Pages 140-140.

I believe in humility as a way of descent to self-truth, and as an ascent to the Truth that is God. Page 419.

Olivera, Bernardo, O.C.S. O. [The Search for God: Conference, letters, and homilies](#). Kalamazoo, MI. Cistercian Pub. 2002.

"Truth is not flat like a sheet of paper. It has a body, a third dimension. It has gradations, is hierarchical. What is true at one level is not necessarily true at another.....The higher a level lies, the more a knowledge of it presupposes the moral preparation of the soul. This structure of truth makes blockheads think that truth is subjective." Hans Urs von Balthasar

As waters raining from the skies / All return to the self-same sea / So prostrations to different gods / Reach the same divinity. (Daily Hindu prayer)

This is the truth. As from a blazing fire, sparks of like form issue forth by the thousands, even so, O beloved, many kinds of beings issue forth from the immutable and they return thither too." The Mundaka Upanishad (II.1.4)

When we put ourselves fully before another, it makes love possible, the way the stubborn land goes soft before the sea. Mark Nepo.

Neither Tertullian nor Hippolytus approached the questions of the nature of Christ as God and man and of the relationship of the divine members of the Godhead with the erudition, nuance, and acumen of Origen. But in some ways, their less daring approaches became more useful to orthodox thinkers of later times. Their opposition to patripassianist understandings (the belief that "the Father suffered") forced them to think in trinitarian terms, of God being distinctively three in expression though one in essence. As Hippolytus puts it, "With respect to the power, God is one; but with respect to the economy [i.e., to how this power expresses itself], the manifestation is triple" (*Refutation* 8:2). In Tertullian's formulation, God is three in degree, not condition; in form, not substance; in aspect, not power (*Against Praxeas*, 2). Tertullian was the first Latin theologian to use the term *Trinity*.

Within the broad contours of proto-orthodoxy, then, one can see development and variety. As time progressed, theologians became more entranced with the mystery of the Trinity and developed a more highly refined vocabulary for dealing with it. But that was long after the major issues had been resolved, of whether Christ was man but not God (Ebionites; Theodotians), God but not man (Marcionites, some Gnostics), or two beings, one man and one God (most Gnostics). The proto-orthodox opted for none of the above. Christ was God and man, yet he was one being, not two.

Once that was acknowledged, the details still had to be worked out. And they were worked out for centuries. If it were easy, it would not be a mystery. Theologians began to be obsessed with the question of how and in what way Christ could be both human and divine, completely both. Did he have a human soul but a divine spirit? Did he have a divine soul instead of a human soul? Was his body really like everyone else's body? How could God have a body? Was he subordinate to the Father, as in Origen? If he was not subordinate to the Father, why was *he* the one sent, rather than the other way around? And so on, almost ad infinitum.

In this earlier period, however, the debates were both more basic and more fundamental. As a result, the alternatives *within* the proto-orthodox tradition - as opposed to the alternatives that separated the proto-orthodox from everyone else-were less clear and less obvious. All that was to change when the protoorthodox found themselves to be the last ones standing and were forced then to move forward into the orthodox forms of Christianity of the fourth and fifth centuries. Pgs. 156-7.

Ehrman, Bart D. [Lost Christianities](#). NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 2003

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Janice Grana .Ed. [Images](#). Winona MN. St. Mary's College Press, 1976. PENTECOST: Page 29.

The wedding ceremony was over. The guests were celebrating is poignant concoction of the bitter and the sweet. The bride wore white and an almost natural wig to cover what was left of hair after chemotherapy. The groom swallowed hard as they danced "The Anniversary Waltz." Something in their resilient spirit said that making this commitment was "the right thing to They knew the future was both unknown and certain. In the eye of the swirling storm, they found a quiet space.

Then the wedding party gathered arm in arm for the video photographer. Sensing that movement was essential to memory, she coached, "Wave!" So they lifted their arms and the comers of their lips and hailed the future. I glanced up at the drama. The ride's face and hand and motion jumped off the flat page of the -soon coming future and into the foreground of the moment. .

She's not waving at the camera or the celebrants, I thought, and she's not waving "Hello" from Now. She's waving "Good-bye," and she's looking from Tomorrow. She's giving her bequest. She knows they can't hear the wisdom she could share about life is brevity-and eternity. So she silently gives them herself. And she looks at them with longing and comfort and promise and peace. Was it like this for Jesus and his disciples in their last celebration? Could he speak of Comfort coming into their midst despite the indescribable pain and loss just before them? Was the essence of it the same as for the bride and groom-that in the face of the worst that life brings, the commitment not to abandon is way of claiming us, now and always?

Prayer: God of the Now, and the Then and the Always, help us to see your face in the faces of all who stand like the bride on the edge time and eternity. Give us again the gift of your eternal seeing, that you may claim us and that we may claim one another love's sake. Amen.