

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. Amen.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Holy Trinity. *[10:30 only: add words in brackets] [In just a little while, we'll baptize Blake Elizabeth Dalecky in the name of the Trinity, father, son and Holy Spirit: a most appropriate way to celebrate this day we call Trinity Sunday]*

The Trinity can be seen in symbols and images throughout our church building. There is a woman who is a member of our church and she just loves to come in here, sometimes even when she's the only one in this sanctuary, to sit and stare and pray or just be before the stained glass window in the side chapel. That window contains all the elements of trying to describe God. Take a good look at it someday and you'll see symbols that invite you into a deeper experience of God and your faith journey. That's what I think this woman has figured out: she doesn't just enjoy the window in all of its varying colors and shades of light during different times of the day: she has learned to enter into the mystery of the window by accepting the invitation it offers to enter into the diversity of God. It is prayer to do so. The stained glass window in the side chapel reflects each and every scripture lesson we heard read today and shows us a portrait of God as creator, as spirit and as our Lord.

Russian art did the same thing in using icons as a spiritual journey. The icon, or "image" in Greek is central to Orthodox spirituality. It finds its place in liturgy and in personal devotion. An icon is two dimensional and despite being an image of someone it is not a physical portrait. Icons seek to provide immediate access to the spiritual and the divine unmediated by the human, historical imagination and unlimited by words.

Andrei Rublev is one of the most famous creators of icon art. For him writing an icon was a spiritual exercise. It involved the ritual of preparing the surface, applying the painted and precious metal background and then creating the image, first outlining it in red. Throughout he would repeatedly say the "Jesus Prayer" ("Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me"). He was creating a window into the Divine which he knew was always before him but which was invisible to the human eye. He knew he was able to create such an image of God because he himself was made in the image of God. *[Blake, that is what we celebrate about you today too. You are made in the image of God, you are a miracle to this world, an icon to our days, and today we mark and seal you as Christ's own forever. That is the truth Rublev knew in his deepest soul, that he and all of us are constantly receiving God's love and are called to love in return.]* His object was to be totally focused on receiving God's love and loving in return. He was a member of the monastery of the Holy Trinity and was asked to develop an icon of the Holy Trinity, not as a piece of artwork, but as a constant invitation to explore and enter into the mystery of the sacred three where in their unity, there is much diversity.

His icon of the Trinity has a home here in our side chapel and I've moved it to here before the main altar today. It is written that the most important thought Rublev wanted to convey when he painted this great icon was the thought about the necessity and goodness of love, a bond based on the trust between individuals. The scripture texts about Trinity as three manifestations of God all talk about love which fills the Trinity: "Trinity is love," "The Son loves His Father, the Father loves His Son," "The Love of the Heavenly Father Is Given to the World through His Son and comforted by the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is about relationship to each other and with God." You'll see that in the posture and relationship of the three holy figures in our Trinity Icon. You'll see also that you are

invited to sit at their table, to become the fourth figure in this icon, and to be in relationship with the divine also. [*Blake Elizabeth, I hope you'll know that there is always a place with God for you.*]

Theologian Henri Nouwen says that "Andrew Rublev painted this icon not only to share the fruits of his own meditation on the mystery of the Holy Trinity but also to offer his fellow monks a way to keep their hearts centered in God while living in the midst of political unrest. The more we look at this holy image with the eyes of faith, the more we come to realize that it is painted not as a lovely decoration for a monastery church, nor as a helpful explanation of a difficult doctrine of the Trinity, but as a holy place to enter and stay within. As we place ourselves in front of the icon in prayer, we come to experience a gentle invitation to participate in the intimate conversation that is taking place among the three divine angels and to join them around the table. The movement from the Father toward the Son and the movement of both Son and Spirit toward the Father become a movement in which the one who prays is lifted up and held secure as part of the divine mystery itself.

And in that mystery, as part of that mystery, we can be involved in struggles for justice and in actions for peace. We can be part of the ambiguities of family and community life. We can study, teach, write and hold a regular job. We can do all of this without ever having to leave the house of love. . . . Rublev's icon gives us a glimpse of the house of perfect love"

And that is the best definition for the unity-that-is-diversity God, the God we call the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity God, three in one, is the perfect house of love. The perfect house of love which holds a place for us to enter in and take rest. God, father, son and holy spirit; creator, redeemer, sustainer, claims us and holds us secure. [*And we claim that truth for you today, Blake. For all of us.*] We believe and love a God that is creator of all, that is redeemer of all, that is with us sustaining us until the end of the age. With that hope, with that faith and courage the Trinity speaks to us today. Herbert O'Driscoll says that we are a wounded, incomplete, damaged fellowship. Sometimes we appear to be poor material indeed for the carrying out of the divine purpose. As on that long-age day, when the gospel reading today from Matthew tells us, the incomplete group of the followers of Christ worshipped and some doubted, we too are a mixed lot in motivation and behavior. Yet neither the privilege nor the responsibility of being in relationship with God is taken from us. [*You, too, in baptism are marked as Christ's own forever.*] Grace continues to be given. The Holy Spirit strengthens. The Word gives guidance and inspiration. Sacrament nourishes. And we are invited in over and over again.

So pull up a chair and spend some time: whether in front of our beautiful stained glass window, or with the icon who calls you in to complete the circle, or with God however you meet God. Pull up a chair and have a divine visit and maybe, just maybe, you'll hear the words echo inside you: "Holy, Holy, Holy" We say it three times. That is no accident. We say it three times in the name of the Holy Trinity—the creator, the redeemer, the sustainer; Father, Son and Holy Spirit *Amen.*