{Pic 1}

Grace to you and peace from the Holy Trinity who together creates, reconciles and governs all of Creation with God’s generous gift of Life. Amen

Today, as the Montana and N. Wyoming Synod Assembly gathers for worship, we are commemorating the Holy Trinity, that deeply buried mystery of the three in one and one in three that we as human beings can barely talk about without committing some form of heresy much less understand.

No doubt, if you’ve ever heard a pastor TRY to preach about the Trinity, you’ve heard various metaphors attempting to help us comprehend what or who the Trinity is exactly. Consider the Egg: Yolk, White, Shell. Or the Sun: Sun, Light, Heat. Or the Scandinavian-Lutheran Potluck Salad: Jello, Fruit Cocktail, and Marshmallows. {pic 2}

And then there are the more traditional metaphors: like the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in whose name we are baptized. {pic 3} Or more contemporary yet complicated metaphors like: Creator, Redeemer, Reconciler OR Giver, Savior, Loving Wisdom. {pic 4} One of my former professors offered one metaphor as a partial joke: two men and a bird. And then there’s Ted the Sheep in the cartoon {pic 5} who thinks the Trinity is any entertainment group that comes in three’s: Larry, Curly and Moe?! I mean Really!

Perhaps it would be best if today I followed the wise Facebook teachers’s proverb who advised preachers that if we wanted to avoid committing heresy when preaching about the Trinity, we ought to just say nothing and show pictures of kittens instead. {pic 6}

Earlier we read the first creation story from Genesis 1. Believe it or not, this is the assigned Hebrew reading for Holy Trinity Sunday, as is the Colossians text and the Psalm 8. All three talk about creation. Why do you think that is? Why lift up God’s creating work to proclaim the Holy Trinity? I think there are many reasons but here are at least two.

First, if you were paying attention, you’ll have noticed that all three members of the Trinity play a crucial role in the creation of the universe. God, the Father, does not create alone. God, the Parent, Son, Spirit, creates everything out of the Trinity’s relationship within God’s self.

Second, the Trinity’s creating of the universe reveals God’s amazing generosity and love! And this is a loving generosity that we as humans can only begin to comprehend. In fact, love and generosity is at the heart and soul of the Trinity’s creating and recreating work because that is who the Trinity is. One metaphor that can help visualize the Trinity’s creative generosity, at least for me, is through dancing {pic 7}…not that rather chaotic hopping up and down to a loud beat by individuals who only peripherally know there are others around them also hopping up and down on the dance floor. Rather we can see generosity come to life in a choreographed group dance, in intertwined movement that requires generosity from all the dancers as each person weaves in and out and between other persona in order to make the dance happen without crashing into each other or stomping on another’s toes.

This image of the three persons of the Trinity dancing as one while remaining three helps me better visualize God the Trinity in action because it through the dance of the Trinity that all things are created, saved, reconciled, loved, and energized with the fullness of God’s life.

For example, when we look at Genesis 1, we hear God, Creator announce “Let there be” as the Holy Spirit’s wind blows over the chaos of the waters. Together they call all things into being, blessing creation with God’s own life into a living, fluid harmonious new life and all that it needs to flourish. In the text from Colossians, we hear that Jesus Christ was at the creation party too, dancing with the Creator and the Spirit in the beginning by holding all things together in a never-ending relationship with God – “all things have been created through Christ and for Christ. Christ himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” And in Luke’s gospel we see Jesus taming the wild and windy Holy Spirit’s energy as she tries to move the disciples faster than their faith is able to go. They aren’t ready yet to trust and commit to the new life the Trinity is leading them to follow.

In this way, the Trinity dances, creating, reconciling, en-livening the whole cosmos with a light and dark that complement each other, with an atmosphere of atomic matter and energy that interact to produce the elements of stars and planets. Together they separate land and water, build mountains and oceans, create seas and continents teaming with innumerable diversity of living creatures – bugs and bats, frogs and cats, birds and lizards, mice and bears, and yes spiders and snakes. Ooo, ick! Oh yeah, and bacteria, fungus, weeds and viruses too. In this dance of creation, the Trinity constructs time as humans know it – anybody know on which day? The 4th for we measure time by the sun, moon, stars and planets. And in this dance of creation, the Trinity animates Sophia, the Spirit-filled wisdom that guides and orders all of creation (see Proverbs 8). And then God names it all good! All of it!

And as if this dance of creation is not enough, the Trinity goes above and beyond to create humanity in beautiful multiplicity and wonderful similarity, humans who are enlivened and empowered by the gifts, skills and bodies we need to care for the physical creation that God, the Holy Trinity continues to dance into fullness. “Let *us* create humankind in *our* image,” the Trinity announces, naming the 1 in 3, 3 in 1 right there in the act of creating us into and for life-centered relationship with God and all things.

Now, lest we forget, we humans are part of God’s generous creation, and are created creatures like the rest of creation. Yet we humans also made to be co-creators and participants with God in the stewarding of the creation that finally belongs only, only, only to God. And in the action of creating us, the Trinity gives us human beings a calling – our steps in the Trinity’s dance if you will. We are to called to “govern” all that has been created. But what does that call to govern look like in action?

In Psalm 72, we are given the Trinity’s understanding of what governing looks like. Listen to just a few lines:

Give those who govern your justice, O God,
   and your right relationship to all who govern with them.
May they judge your people according to right relationship,
   and your poor with justice.
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
   and the hills, yield right relationship.
May those called to govern defend the cause of the poor of the people,
   give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

May they be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
   like showers that water the earth.
In their days, may right relationship flourish
   and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

We who have been called to govern creation are called to generously rain God’s peace, justice, love and the fullness of abundant life onto whole earth so all may flourish. We are called to seek and serve right relationship and prosperity for all the people, especially the poor and needy.

 This is the dance into which all humans are called. We have been made stewards, set apart to love God, the Trinity, as Creator, and to love all that God has created as we love ourselves. We are called to be generous care-givers to everything and everyone that the Trinity creates, serving their well-being even above our own.

But what happens when we who have been called to care for God’s creation instead destroy the very thing we have been commanded to steward? Well, that’s sin and it comes in individual and communal forms. That’s humanity turning in on ourselves to the point of our own devastation. It’s freedom run amok without restraint or limits until, in our biting and devouring of one another, we consume each other. It’s abusing and emptying God’s creation for our own self-indulgence. It’s claiming power over everything God creates and thus claiming god-ship for ourselves. It’s destroying everyone and everything in our path until there is nothing and nobody left but our godless selves. Sadly, since our fall into bondage of sin we have missed the mark widely in our call to govern, namely, care for creation. We’ve corrupted God’s understanding of dominion and replaced it with our own destructive version.

That’s why the Trinity has given creation has its own freedom to dance -- to live, die and live again in the ways God created things, no matter how hard we try to tame it. That’s why we humans, like the rest of creation need limits: commands, rules, an order of things to guide us and keep us humble so we never forget we are not God. Here’s another creation story, not in the Bible, that illustrates this need for humility:

One day, after God sent Adam and Eve from the garden, they cried out, “God, when we were in the garden, you walked with us and talked with us every day. Now we don’t see you anymore. We are lonesome and it is difficult for us to remember how much you love us.”

And God said, “I will create a companion for you, who will be with you forever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so that you will always know I love you, even when you cannot see me. Regardless of how selfish and childish and unlovable you may act at times, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of your behavior.”

And God created a new animal to be a companion for the humans. And it was a good animal. And God was pleased. And the new animal was pleased to be with the humans and wagged its tail. And God said, “See how this animal reflects my love for you. Therefore its name will be a reflection of what you call me – you will call it Dog.”

And Dog lived with the humans and became a companion to them and loved them no matter what. And the humans were comforted. And God was pleased. And Dog was content and wagged its tail.

But one day an angel approached God. “God, it’s Adam and Eve, those humans you created. They’ve become filled with pride, and strut about believing they are worthy of adoration. They are beginning to think they are gods and don’t need you anymore. Dog has indeed taught them that they are loved but no one has taught them humility.”

And God said, “I will create a companion for them, who will be with them forever and who will see them as they truly are. The companion will remind them of their limitations so they will remember that they are not God.”

So God created a new animal to be another companion for the humans. And God named it CAT. {pic 8}CAT was a good animal. It would not obey the humans. And when the humans looked into CAT’s eyes, they were reminded they were not God. And the humans learned humility. And God was pleased. And CAT did not care one way or another.

In Psalm 8 we read: “You, God, have made them torule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.”But never does this mean that we are to become gods or that we should corrupt the calling given to us by stamping out and consuming everything and everyone like locusts in a field.

{pic 9} Governing God’s creation means dancing the Trinity’s dance. It means producing the fruit of the same Holy Spirit who was present at the beginning of creation and living the way of life lived by Jesus Christ himself – “For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to God’s self all things” –

Ultimately, governing creation means a life of generosity, a life of serving and caring for the well-being of all of creation. In the same way that the Trinity’s generosity shines forth in the creation of all things, through the salvation of all things, by the reconciliation of all things and the empowerment of all things, we are called, and even get to, participate generously in the Trinity’s dance as well.

So really the Trinity’s dance is more of a square dance{pic 10}than just the three members of the Trinity dancing by themselves over there apart from us. In your creation, you all are invited and welcomed into the Trinity’s Holy Dance as co-creators who together with the triune God are actively seeking and doing the well-being of creation together. You who have been created, saved and in-spirited by the God of generosity beyond your wildest imaginings are now called to use your freedom to live out the responsibility of love and care for all of creation and everything and everyone in it for the sake of their well-being. Now there are times when we may disagree on exactly how to best care for creation and how resources need to be shared so that all may be blessed with the abundance that God gives. But we can and should work out those disagreements generously, through respecting the humanity of each person and delighting in all that the Trinity has given us.

{pic 11}So let us dance in the generosity of the Trinity and live God’s generosity into the world. You are a child of God, heir to the new life of Christ, danced and woven together by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ. You are forgiven, you are renewed, you are reconciled to God by God’s love for you in Christ and you are bound to God’s love by the Holy Spirit who energizes, equips and empowers you to dance the Trinity’s dance. Nothing can take that away from you, not even you. So hold onto that promise as you follow the call of the Trinity, for it is in joining in the Trinity’s dance that new life in Christ will indeed abound. Amen.