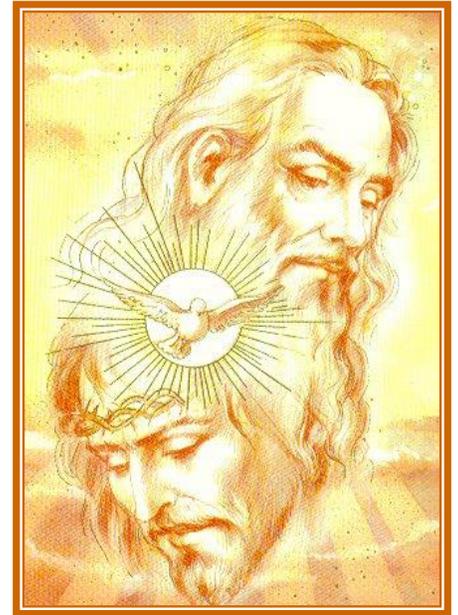


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**My Sermon from Sunday May 30, 2021, 'Trinity Sunday' ~**

***"Relationships"***

*I speak to you in the name of the Trinity ~  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*



While walking to the church from home last week, I noticed some of the street signs ~ **Finlayson, Dease, Cameron, Brodie** ~ and I started to wonder about the stories behind the street names. I am sure that these streets and many others in Thunder Bay are named after real people with real stories. I do not know the people or the stories and so when I hear the name 'Rupert' Street, I think of an address and not about the person named Rupert. Was it a first name or a last name?

There are many schools named after people in this community and I do not know their stories either. The Kraft children attended *Ecole Gron Morgan* and I have no idea who **Gron Morgan** was. Jouni did a google search for me and found out that Gron Morgan was a Baptist pastor. I am sure his descendants think about the person when they hear the name of the school. Similarly with the retirement community of *Sister Leila Greco*. I know that **Sr. Leila** was a Roman Catholic nun and capable administrator but I never met her so when I hear the name, I think about the retirement community and not about her. What about the 8 storey *Whalen Building* that was built in 1913? Who was **Mr. Whalen**?

This is the same as the Trinity. When I started at **Trinity College** at the *University of Toronto* in the 1970's, I never associated the Trinity with the doctrine. I associated the Trinity with a fabulous undergraduate experience, one for which I am forever grateful!

**Trinity. Trinity Sunday.** An annual day in the life of the church when we celebrate the doctrine of the Trinity. There are references to the Trinity in the Bible but the word 'Trinity' is not used. Matthew ends his gospel with Jesus commissioning the disciples and telling them to *"go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* (Matthew 28:19). Paul ends his second letter to the Corinthians with a Trinitarian benediction ~ *"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."* (2 Corinthians 13:13)

The word "Trinity" was first used in Greek by **Theophilus of Antioch** in 180 AD. As Christians, we believe in one God and that the one God is revealed to us through 3 distinct persons ~ the Father or the Creator, the Son or the Redeemer, and the Spirit or the Sanctifier. **All are God. All are one God. All are distinct.** One God in three persons and one substance. All are unique. This doctrine was finalized at a church council nearly 300 years after the Crucifixion. The **Council of Nicea** in 325 AD.



There were other opinions being discussed at this time. One of them was by a man named **Arius**. Arius was a priest at the time who believed that Jesus **came** from God and was made by God. He believed that Jesus had divine qualities but he was most certainly not on the same level as God. Arius and his followers believed that Jesus was subordinate to God the Father. This became a famous heresy and one of the reasons for the calling of the Council meeting. The Council ended with the development of the **Nicene Creed** and this key affirmation that Jesus Christ was most definitely God. We say in the Nicene Creed that Christ is:



*“Eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made,”*

**OF ONE BEING WITH THE FATHER.  
“HOMOIOUSIOS.” THE SAME**

*“Of one being with the Father, through him all things were made.”*

Not “similar being” but **the same**. The word in Greek is: **Homoousios**.

If we, like Arius, believe that Jesus came from God and was lesser than fully divine then the Greek word is: **“HOMOIIOUSIOS.” SIMILAR**

**Homoiousios**. That **‘i’** is known as an **‘iota’** in Greek. That one little letter completely changes Christian beliefs. Just one little letter threatened to challenge all Christian beliefs. Even today, we still speak about the iota and say things like this: *“She didn’t get one iota of thanks.”* Which means she got nothing, not even the smallest amount.



## **homoousios vs. homoiousios**

**“Christ is of one substance with the Father” or**

**“Christ is homoousios with the Father”**

**homoousios is from the Greek compound word composed of the following:**

**homo – same**

**ousia – substance**

**(what a difference one letter makes!)**

**“Christ is of a similar substance with the Father” or**

**“Christ is homoiousios with the Father”**

**homoiousios is from the Greek compound composed of the following:**

**homoi – similar**

**ousia – substance**

As Christians, we know that we have received our salvation from Jesus redeeming the whole world through dying on the cross for us. If we say that Jesus was not God, we then need to go on to ask the following questions:

*“If Jesus was solely a human or even with some divine properties then how could Jesus be our Saviour?”*

*“How could we receive salvation from him?”*

Theologians have struggled with explaining the mystery of the Trinity. **St. Augustine of Hippo**

wrote 14 books on the Trinity. How do you put into words something that is an eternal truth? Over the centuries, people have used metaphors to explain the Trinity. **St. Patrick** used the shamrock. ‘**Dr. Science**’ at our Children’s Talk this morning will be using the 3 forms of water’ ~ solid, liquid, and gas.

Another metaphor is through music. In the book *Resounding Truth; Christian Wisdom In The World Of Music*, **Jeremy Begbie** uses a 3 note chord to understand the Trinity. Dr. Begbie is a professor of theology at *Duke Divinity School*. He believes that music can help us do theology better. We can hear the world.

In a 3-note chord, we hear 3 distinct notes and yet it is one chord. We can hear different things at the same time. Each note completely fills the space.

As the Trinitarian hymn, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*, expresses, we sing to God, we praise God and we worship God:

*“Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee”* (from verse 1)

*“All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea”* (verse 4)

Over the centuries, the Trinity of three has resulted in the importance of the number 3. ‘Good things come in threes,’ and there is also an old superstition that bad things come in threes. This, too, is derived from the power of three.

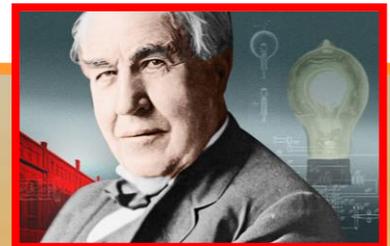
The Trinity takes on meaning and importance through our personal relationship with God. Some people don’t like to use automatic checkouts at *Shoppers* or *Metro* or *Walmart* or the bank. They prefer the personal touch. It might be a cashier they know very well who asks them about their arthritis or how their 7 year old is doing in virtual school. That’s part of the wisdom of Christ’s coming to our earth to live among us as described in today’s Gospel (John 3: 16-18). He can relate to us in all of our daily needs.

We don’t need to understand the Trinity or to articulate it in order to live it and to let God be in charge of our lives.

**Thomas Edison**, the inventor of the light bulb once remarked: *“We don’t know what water is. We don’t know what light is. We don’t know what electricity is. We don’t know what heat is. We have a lot of hypotheses about these things, but that is all. But we don’t let our ignorance about these things deprive us of their use.”*

The truth of that statement is real. Most of us do not know how an LED light bulb saves money, or how our ‘smart phone’ sends info to ‘the cloud’ or how our ‘smart TV’ works to enable us to watch this service on *YouTube*. That reality does not prevent us from using them and enjoying them and finding meaning in them.

We apply the same common sense to our Faith in the doctrine of the Trinity. When we thank our Creator God for the magnificent rainbow, when we thank our Redeemer God for showing us the face of God, when we thank our Sanctifier God for living in us, we are acknowledging the 3 persons of God. We are showing gratitude for the 3 persons of God. We are building relationship with the 3 persons of



ITS OBVIOUS THAT WE DON'T KNOW ONE  
MILLIONTH OF ONE PERCENT ABOUT  
ANYTHING.

THOMAS EDISON

God. We move from saying 'in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit' to truly knowing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and we are blessed.

*Three folds of the cloth yet only  
one napkin is there.  
Three joints in the finger, but still only  
one finger fair,  
Three leaves of the shamrock yet  
no more than one shamrock to wear,  
Frost, snow flakes and ice all in water  
their origin share.  
Three persons in God, to one God alone  
we make prayer.*

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

*Amen.*

*Archdeacon Deborah+*

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