



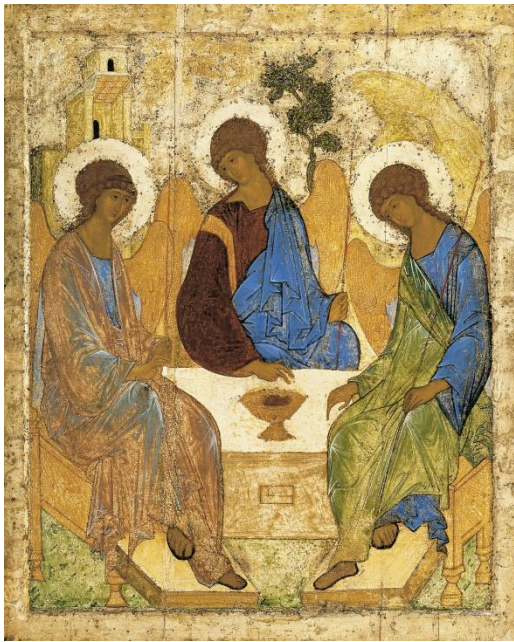
Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17
Reverend Giuseppe Mattei (May 26, 2024)

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”

Are you a born-again person?

The phrase “Born Again Christian” can be frequently misinterpreted. Looking at its primary reference, we see that its meaning is not about physical birth as Nicodemus has misunderstood but about experiencing a spiritual renewal. It is an expression a segment of Protestant Christians use to define the moment or process of fully accepting faith in Jesus Christ. It is an awakening experience when the teachings of Jesus become real, and the "born-again" Christian acquires a personal relationship with God. Remorse for the past and commitment to Christ follow.

- When did you realize you may have a relationship with God?
- What happened when you claimed God as your God, when you felt claimed by God?
- How did the image of God evolve for you?



Is God's Reality a family of four that involves all of creation, us included? God's *Threeness* yearns for the one who's not yet there, maybe like that shepherd leaving 99 sheep to seek out the one.

- Can you see God involved in the world? The Holy in the ordinary?

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:17)

Belief, for John, is way more than mental assent or repentance and feeling forgiven. It's following Jesus in God's Spirit, it's union with the living Christ, it's being part of the Body.

The “doctrine” of the Holy Trinity is more than a theological statement: it's how we relate to God, how we see God participating in our life, how God is present in the world.

It is actually more story than doctrine: we believe that from all eternity, the Father and the Son have been locked together in a relationship of creative love through the sharing of their mutual Spirit.

We might even say that God “is” relationship! And this mutual love between them is so powerful that it flows over into creating all things in the universe, including us! And since we are made in the image of God, we too are made for the experience of relationship.

Because Paul's letter to the Romans was written before any of our four Gospels, it gives us a glimpse of how Christian thinking was developing before Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote their testimonies.

Just before his famous explanation of the world's evolving toward fullness in God (Romans 8:19-29), Paul talked about how our relationship to Christ changes all our other relationships. By saying, "you received a spirit of adoption," Paul puts us on equal footing with Christ. We can call upon God as our Father in the same way as Jesus did because God considers us "joint heirs" with him.

And all this through the power of the Spirit working in us.

Today's Scriptures lead us toward the mystery we celebrate today with the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Jesus revealed that God's love, the only true, freeing, and life-giving

relationship God desires with creation, draws us into union with God and all that God loves.

Everything that God is and does points us to putting together and repairing things that are broken, uniting people that are at odds with themselves and others. The Spirit of the one God is God's gift to us to powerfully bring this about, and since God is one and we are one with God, we can bring God's gift of healing to the world – the small world around us, and the big world that seems so often to be in so much conflict.

Let us grow in intimacy with the Triune God and let us discover the love relationship that brings life and freedom to all who suffer. Amen.