

## Reflection for Sunday, June 12, 2022

### Reimagining the Divine

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

*Let us pray: O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Let your majesty fill our senses, and pervade our actions, that we may become better stewards of creation. Call us, in every infant's cry, to care for one another so that all your people flourish. Triune God, within you own life there is mutuality, equality, and unity in diversity. Restore in us, and in our life together, the divine image you intend. Make us tender in mutuality. Make us generous in equality. Make us grateful in diversity. We pray to be one with you and one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Carlo Rovelli, the brilliant theoretical physicist, was asked why he doesn't believe in God. This is his answer:

*"Personally, I don't like people who behave well because they fear that otherwise they might end up in hell. I prefer those who behave well because they value good behaviour. I don't trust those who are good for the sake of pleasing God. I prefer those who are good because they actually are good. I don't like having to respect my fellow men and women because they are children of God. I prefer to respect people because they are beings who feel and suffer. I don't like those who devote themselves to others, and to justice, thinking that in this way they will please God. I like those who instead devote themselves to others because they feel love and compassion. I've never liked feeling in communion with a group of people standing in silence inside a church listening to a service. I like to feel in communion with a group of friends; talking with them, looking into their eyes and their smiles. I don't like emotion produced by nature because God has made it so beautiful. I like*

*to feel moved by it because it **is** beautiful. I don't like to feel consolation in the idea I will be welcomed by God after my death. I like to look directly at the limited length of our lives, to learn to look at our sister, death, with serenity. I don't like shutting myself away in silence to pray to God. I like silence in order to listen to the infinite profundity of silence. I don't like to thank God: I like to wake in the morning, look at the sea and thank the wind, the waves, the sky, the fragrance of plants, the life that allows me to exist, the sun that rises."*

During the church year, only on the first Sunday after Pentecost do we focus liturgically on a theological concept. The Trinity is indeed worthy of earnest contemplative study, whether we say *Father, Son, Spirit*; or *Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer*; or *Source, Saviour, Sanctifier*; or *Lover, Beloved, Love* (St. Augustine); or *Holy Parent, Divine Child, Breath of God*.

Believers throughout the centuries have tried to describe God, but very few have been satisfied with their descriptions. As Barbara Brown Taylor humorously observes: *"We cannot paint a true portrait of God, because creatures cannot capture their Creator any better than a bed of oysters can dance Swan Lake."* The best any of us has ever been able to do is to describe what the experience of God is like—how it sounds, how it feels, what it reminds us of. Whether the experience originates in the pages of scripture or in the events of our own lives, the best any of us has ever been able to do is simply to confess what it is like when we are in the presence of God. Catherine Maclean writes: *"The Trinity is not a mathematical puzzle to be solved or a formula to be memorized. This pattern, the elegant simplicity, the ragged complexity, the fresh gendered and non-gendered names, and the ongoing dance: these are attempts over generations to understand our experience of God in Three persons, Blessed Trinity."* Our joyful, lifelong journey is getting to know the love of that God.

What is at stake here is the claim that God's own presence and reality are actually found in time and history. This triune God is not imprisoned "in heaven", but also lives and strives with us on earth. The Latin American theologian, Maria Clara Bingemer, writes: *"The God of Christianity is not a solitary and dominating patriarch, definitively and perennially installed in his distant heaven. God is the community of love between persons where the differences and plurality are integrated without being suppressed, where the strength of the masculine is enriched and complemented by the delicacy and tenderness of the feminine. The human community finds its image in this divine community."*

This earth and our human history are crucial to the future of God. What we do with the earth and the environment, what we do in our social and political relationships and systems, has ultimate, eternal significance, not only for humanity, but also for God.

*God is Holy Mystery, beyond complete knowledge, above perfect description. Yet, in love, the one eternal God seeks relationship, the One on whom our hearts rely, the fully shared life at the heart of the universe.*

*Bill Cantelon*