

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**How We Relate to the Relational Trinity**      Sts. Philip and James, apostles      Tuesday,  
May 3, 2016      8:15 AM      1 Cor 15:1-8;      **Jn 14:6-14**      (Keeping these two dimensions of  
reality together is the task of the believer.)

We are reading from the Gospel of John, which is of course the most theological of the four gospels, the deepest in penetrating into the mystery of God and the unity between Jesus and the Father—this is the topic of today’s gospel reading. This is **the mystery we call the Trinity: that there is one God, one ground of all being, everything created belongs together and is sustained together by this one God.**

But **this one God is also relational**, just as we are in a way relational within ourselves. **We are able to relate to others because we are internally relational.** We are capable of being aware of who we are. We are capable of expressing who we are and who we want to become. We are able to love others and ourselves. **This is itself an image of the Triune God. The Word is God’s way of expressing who God is. God’s loving of himself and all of his creation is the Spirit**, the energy, the life force of everything. Even things that don’t seem alive to us are energized by the Spirit.

And the great revelation of the New Testament is that **this very God wants to incorporate us into his own being and to know God as God knows himself.** This is really astonishing. The Jews thought it was ridiculous, and in a way rightly so. But it is the very essence of the gospel that God wants to share God’s own intimate relationships with his creation and of course we **human beings are the only part of creation we know of that is capable of responding.** At least we are the only part that can respond in a sort of progressive way. Angels may be able to respond in some way, but not quite as we do. And ultimately they don’t have the same glory we do because God did not become an angel; **God became human and therefore humanity is now the crown.** Maybe it wasn’t when humanity first came to this earth, but in Christ it has become

the crown of creation and **capable of doing everything Jesus did**. That's why he says, **"Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father."** This is more astonishing, claims, revelations. How could this be?

Now the real tension is **believing this and living it and still living in the world**. This is quite difficult because the world's idea of what is real and what is reasonable and what is true doesn't correspond with this at all. In a way if we are going to live on this planet, in this world, we have to learn how to live according to what the world sees as real and true and so on. We have to be able to handle that, but also this, as it were, **incorporating two different levels of reality into one person**. That's our role as believers. Not everyone can do it. Even quite a few of the saints were believed by their contemporaries to be crazy. And of course that can be good or bad—crazy. There's crazy good and crazy bad. But **keeping these two dimensions of reality together is the task of the believer**. And Jesus is very confident we can do it. He did it. What is he but the coming together of everything: creation and Creator, spirit and matter, body and soul, divinity and humanity? Everything is all together in him. And he says now, **speaking in this unity, he says, "I am the way and the truth and the life."** Who is speaking there is this complete integration of everything. There is nothing outside of this integration of everything. So that is our destiny; it is to **let God envelope us into the divine**. And our role is to will that ourselves, to permit that ourselves, to encourage that ourselves, and to help others in this process, which can be very messy, very painful, and, sadly, very slow.