

Guests to the Mystery

May 30, 2010

(Trinity Sunday – Year C)

John 16: 12-15

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas

Last Friday night, Susan and I attended the wedding of friends. Actually, it was rather interesting for me because it was the first wedding I have gone to in six years where I was not the officiant. Therefore, that also meant that it was the first wedding I had gone to in six years where I was able to sit next to my wife.

I was able, therefore, to see this wedding through different eyes, just as a participant, just as a guest.

During this wedding, I was able to ponder the relationship I have with my own wife, being able to hold her hand during particularly tender moments in the liturgy.

I was able to catch the eye of various family members of the bride and groom and think about my relationship with each of them.

I was able to focus differently on the words that were spoken, words about relationship and love and the mystery of the union of husband and wife.

During this wedding, I was able to think about God, the God of mystery who takes a man and a woman and makes them one.

I was able to think about all of my many relationships, relationships that God takes and then uses to make us one.

Last Friday night at this wedding, I was a guest, a guest who was able to simply gaze into the mystery of human relationships.

Today is Trinity Sunday, the day when we commemorate a belief that we hold in the Christian faith.

We celebrate today the belief that there is only one God of mystery. Yet this God is also a God of relationships, a mysterious relationship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

On Trinity Sunday, we gaze into the mystery of God's relationship and the unity of God.

On Trinity Sunday, we are a guest into the Mystery of God.

I have to tell you that the Scripture readings that we hear read on Trinity Sunday leave most preachers, and even scholars and theologians, scratching their heads trying to make heads or tails out of them.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is speaking to his followers, his guests at the Last Supper, on the night before his death.

Jesus says to them:

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”

Huh?

What things does Jesus still have to say to us that we cannot understand?

What things does Jesus still need to say to us that we cannot bear?

The fact that we even ask these questions shows that, as human beings, we want to figure everything out.

As human beings, we want all of our questions about God to be answered and tied up into a nice little bow.

As human beings, we do not want Jesus to say to us:

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”

As human beings, we really want to hear all of God’s answers, rather than be just guests to the Trinity Mystery.

Last Sunday night was the final episode of the TV series on ABC called “Lost.”

I must admit that I never really got into that show.

But I would watch an episode of Lost every now and then, just enough to know that the show had weird plot twists and time travel sequences and mysterious numerical codes that no one knew how to figure out.

Most of the die-hard fans of Lost could not wait for the final episode last Sunday night.

Most of the die-hard fans of Lost could not wait to have all of their questions about codes and time warps answered.

I watched the final episode last Sunday night and I can tell you that the series ended in a very spiritual way, with all the characters having died and now in some kind of after-life.

However, some of the die-hard fans of *Lost* felt cheated after the show, because all of the questions and riddles in the six-years of the series had not been answered and wrapped up.

Yet I was okay with how the series ended.

With that last episode, I felt that I had witnessed a Mystery, a mystery with a capital "M."

I felt that I had been invited as a guest to a Mystery.

Our worship here at St. Alban's has some of the same qualities.

We come here with many questions about God and about life.

We might come here thinking that this one God in three persons, this 3 in 1, is like some numerical code that must be cracked.

We come here with questions about sin and forgiveness and eternal life and suffering.

And yet, worship, true worship is not about figuring God out.

Worship is not about getting answers to our questions about God.

Worship is about being a guest at the feet of Mystery.

A constant temptation in worship, for me and for you, is to make our God too small.

A constant temptation is to make our God look just like us, creating a God that we make in *our* image.

A temptation is to try to figure God out and to put God into our own boxes and categories.

But Jesus says to us:

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

The truth that can be difficult for us to bear and to understand is that we have been invited to a wedding feast.

We have been invited to a wedding feast where we do not have to officiate or coordinate or figure out any codes.

The truth that is hard to bear is that we are simply a welcome guest at Jesus' mysterious Table, a Table where an abundant array of bread and wine has been spread before us.

The Trinity, the one God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, doesn't want to be figured out like some crossword puzzle.

The One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit wants to be loved, followed and worshiped.

For the Holy Trinity has invited us - as guests into the Mystery.

AMEN.

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