

Three's Company

Trinity Sunday 2009

Matthew 28:16-20

Many of you are probably struck by the one detail which sounds an odd note in this encounter.

Everything is going so well.

This is Jesus' only encounter with the disciples in the gospel of Matthew.

It is the last thing we read in this gospel, and it is big.

It is often called the "great commission".

Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene

(*of course*: Jesus goes where there is great desire in the heart...).

Jesus then appears to a group of unnamed women

whom he asks to tell the eleven Apostles

to meet him on an unspecified mountain in Galilee

—the mountain, of course, symbolizing closeness to God.

The Apostles do as commanded, and go to the mountain.

Jesus appears.

The Apostles worship.

Jesus comes close, and communicates divine power, sending them forth as vessels of it, and to teach.

Jesus closes with a promise, and everyone lives happily ever after.

Oh, oops: "but they doubted".

Hmm: the strange, initially unsettling detail.

Wait a minute: they *doubted*?!?

They are in the presence of Christ risen from the dead, and they *doubt*?!?

How can this be?

What: they had not had their morning coffee and everything was a blur?

Aah: perhaps it is because they too lived in faith.

Sure, they were seeing the body of Jesus, but to know He is God, faith is needed,

and faith is such that there can be moments of doubt.

Faith is a gift which gives us a mysterious knowledge

and consequent certitude deep inside about Someone we do not see.

Because we do not see, there can be moments of doubt

—like when we have not had our morning coffee,

i.e. when we are not awake, when our hearts are not awake.

The strange, initially unsettling detail is actually an *awesome* detail.
You will notice that the doubt does not slow Jesus.

He sends them forth nonetheless, in pressing fashion: “Go, go!”

He sends them forth,

He to whom *all power* in heaven and on earth has been given.
Jesus makes the faith journey possible.

- He gives the gift of faith.
- He keeps our hearts awake.

All we must do is ask Him, beseech Him every day.

Jesus makes the faith journey possible,
and the faith journey entails being sent forth.

Each of us is sent forth—as we are, with our doubts.

We are sent forth as vessels of the Trinity,
as vessels of divine love and light.

This great commission is not just for the Eleven.

We are sent forth.

“Oh, no, not me, I mean really. I can barely get my butt to church.”

Each of us is sent forth—as we are, with our doubts.

We are sent forth as vessels of the Trinity,

Who inhabit us, carry us, and work through us.

Who is this Trinity? Who *are* the Trinity?

Those struggling with the existence of God,
the Trinity surely pushes over the edge.

Three Divine Persons?

God with multiple personality disorder?

The Trinity is *un*-imaginable.

One luminous, loving Being in whom there is a procession of Persons

- One forever coming forth from anOther
- A Third forever coming forth from these Two

and all Three are perfectly one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Try imagining that!

We are not to imagine but to experience in faith
and to let ourselves be loved.

We are to let ourselves be *embraced*: Trinity means a *lot* of embracing!

The Trinity is our life.

The whole purpose of church is the Trinity:

mysterious God closer to us than we are to ourselves.

If so, then we must ask ourselves,
“Do I go to church to fall more in love with ‘the Three’?”
“Do I go to church to fall more in love
with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit?”
If not, I guarantee you, church will get old.
Church is too repetitive, and repetition gets real old real fast.
Variety is the spice of life, right?
Well, at Mass, it is not variety that is the spice, it is the Trinity.
Divine play with the Three, with the Trine-unity...
But I must come to Mass seeking, hungry, or I will miss it, I will miss *Them*.
The Trinity is very subtle
—occasionally thunderous, but more often subtle because deep inside.

Allow me to close with a prayer, a prayer by an intriguing young woman.
She was a Carmelite nun in Dijon, France (yes the mustard).
She died in 1906 of Addison’s, at the age of 26.
Her last audible words on her deathbed were:
“I am going to Light, to Love, to Life.”
She was beatified by John Paul II in 1984.
This is the first and last part of a long prayer she composed.
Why not close your eyes, and pray with me...

**"O my God, Trinity Whom I adore,
help me to become utterly forgetful of self,
that I may establish myself in You, as changeless and as calm
as though my soul were already in eternity.
May nothing disturb my peace nor draw me forth from You,
O my immutable Lord,
may I penetrate more deeply every moment
into the depths of Your Mystery.
Give peace to my soul: make it Your heaven,
Your cherished dwelling place, Your home of rest.
Let me never leave You there alone,
but keep me there absorbed in You in living faith, adoring You.**

**O my Three, my All, my Beatitude, infinite Solitude,
Immensity in which I lose myself, I yield myself to You as Your child.
Immerse Yourself in me, that I may be immersed in You
until I depart to contemplate in Your light the abyss of Your greatness.
Amen."**