

## PENTECOST: SHARING NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

**The Feast of the Holy Trinity/First Sunday after Pentecost  
May 30, 2010**

**Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31**

**Psalm 8**

**Romans 5:1-15**

**John 16:12-15**

### THE MYSTERY OF GOD IN THREE PERSONS

Trinity Sunday is the only festival in the Christian calendar that celebrates a church doctrine. This year on Trinity Sunday the Lectionary leads us to a reading from the sixteenth chapter of John's Gospel. Granted, in this passage the suggestion of a Triune God is more evident than specifically taught. Jesus speaks of his Father and the Spirit. We interpret this and similar passages to say that the Spirit comes from God to communicate Christ to believers. The Spirit is the medium through which Jesus continues to mediate God to us.

One warning smart preachers heed on this festival day is to avoid trying to explain the mystery of "God in three Persons, blessed Trinity."

So I won't.

But I'll let Kathleen Norris do it. In her book *Amazing Grace* she writes of the metaphor used in the early third century by Tertullian. "It's an image of the Trinity as a plant, with the Father as a deep root, the Son as the shoot that breaks forth into the world, [and] the Spirit as that which spreads beauty and fragrance" (p. 291). A caution, though: this is not simply one God with three names; or one God who has appeared chronologically in three forms, first the Creator, then the Savior, then the continuing spiritual Presence.

Frederick Buechner expresses it this way in *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (p. 93): "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit mean the mystery beyond us, the mystery among us, and the mystery within us are *all the same mystery*."

Yes, mystery. But mystery with down-to-earth work to do among us.

In the next six months, someone will need to be comforted. Another will be hungry. Someone else will be overcome by the light in a child's eye. Someone will need to say goodbye. And a stranger will deliver a sign of grace. Perhaps many among us will discover a gift of the Spirit new to us. During the *ordinary days* to come, maybe someone will understand for the very first time the unconditional love of God. While one person is startled by the extraordinary, another learns to appreciate the routine.

During this long church season of Pentecost the *ordinary days*, as we call them, may come quietly, without fanfare or special hymns or banners. However, this is not necessarily a time to kick back and relax, for the Spirit is still at work, guiding us into the full truth, and no doubt into the way and life of Jesus.

This week's Reflection was prepared by the Rev. Jeff Kellam who enjoys retirement in Owego, NY. A Presbyterian, he now writes, mentors, promotes the Presbybop Jazz Quartet, and enjoys playing with his grandsons. Jeff's blog, "Peace, Grace and Jazz" may be found at [www.jeffkellam.wordpress.com](http://www.jeffkellam.wordpress.com)

**This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Cameroon** – with thanks to God for the dedication of the interconfessional Bulu Bible and for the commitment of board members; and with prayers for greater church participation in Bible work, translation work, literacy and audio Scripture programs, volunteers and local committees, and for the work in **Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe** that the Cameroon Bible Society oversees; **Gabon** – with thanks to God for the Nzebi translation project and the revision of the Fang Bible, the impact of the Gospel of Luke that was distributed in schools and prisons, and for the Good Samaritan program; and with prayers for new board members, greater involvement of Christian communities, the Bible Marathon, improved fundraising, and for new depots in the interior of the country; **Cote d'Ivoire** – with thanks to God for political and social stability, HIV/AIDS work, Radio Bible, FCBH, children's work and improved fund raising; and with prayers for continued political reconciliation that will allow for the resumption of Bible work everywhere in the country, God's blessing on translation and revision projects, and funding for necessary construction.

**Activity Corner:** "Messages of Blessing"

Supplies needed: Bible; 8-1/2 x 11 construction paper (assorted colors); old magazines; scissors; glue or paste; markers or pens.

Read 2 Corinthians 13:13 and encourage each one to share how they have experienced God's grace and love and unity in the Spirit. Invite members of your household to prepare cards for the residents of a local nursing home or rehabilitation center. Fold a sheet of construction paper in half; on the front affix a picture chosen from a magazine that would tie in with a message of hope and encouragement. On the inside of the card, compose a short message, concluding with 2 Corinthians 13:13. Throughout the week, during devotional time, pray for those who receive the "messages of blessing."