



SAINT MARK'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Trinity Sunday, 6-11-17

St. Mark's, Little Rock,

Danny Schieffler

The dance as a metaphor for the Trinity
 is something I have been thinking about for a long time.
 Partly because
 that if people centuries ago
 were willing to die
 for their beliefs about the Trinity,
 the least I can do
 is to learn something about it.
 And I have tried to do that over the years
 through reading.
 More recently Michael and Patricia and I
 have been reading the same book
 The Divine Dance by Richard Rohr.
 It's pretty good stuff.
 But about a month
 in some ways even better than a book
 I stumbled across an episode of Great Performances on PBS.
 That night
 it was Gustavo Dudamel
 conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic
 as they performed music
 from Latin American
 especially that of Astor Piazzolla
 the Argentinean master of the Tango.

Previously I was not familiar with Piazzolla

But in the preconcert interview

I confess that he had me

when he said

In our country, Argentina

You can change almost anything

You can change Presidents

You can change religions

You can change ministers

But you are not allowed to change the Tango.

And as I listened to his music I could almost hear

that kind of steadfast devotion.

Pulsating, rhythmic

bursting with energy

It was electric .

But what made the music

come even more alive that night

were the dancers

performing on stage with orchestra.

I had never before watched the Tango so closely.

Dressed in black

sometimes they moved as one.

At others when one approached ,

the other would withdraw,

but always in unison.

One led for a moment

and then the other

And then the other followed.

There were differences to be sure,

but always unity

as each took turns yielding to the other.

Athletic, muscular

at once graceful, gentle

even tender.

And when I watched a second, even a third time
 I began to notice
 was how supportive one dancer was of the other.
 The first time, all I saw was the spectacular
 It was only during the second and third time
 that I could begin see
 what made the specular possible.
 It was the support
 that the dancers gave once another.
 In fact, many of the moves simply could not have been done
 without the other.
 Sometimes it was the man depending on the woman
 Sometimes it was the woman depending on the man
 But whichever it was,
 it was this relationship of support and mutuality
 that made what seemed to be impossible
 in fact, possible
 and also beautiful.

The Trinity as a kind of a dance
 first appeared in theological writings
 as far back as the three hundreds
 in eastern Turkey.
 The pioneer bishops and priests writing about the Trinity
 became known
 as the Cappadocian Fathers,
 and they began to depict the Trinity
 as a kind of a round dance
 or a circle dance.

One person wrote
 A circle dance in which “an infinite current of love
 streams without ceasing
 to and fro, to and fro, to and fro
 gliding from the Father, to the Son,
 and back to the Father.:

And this circular flow continues
 night and day.

Sometimes theologians refer this mutual
 self-giving

flow of love

using the Greek word perichoresis

which comes from the same root

As choreography.

Again the Trinity is a dance
 in which is a flow of love
 never ends.

And through the lens of the Trinity

You can see

the footprints of this divine flow
 all through the Scriptures.

In the beginning it was , a wind from God
 a ruach, a Spirit,
 a flow

from God

that began to hover over the face of the deep.

God's been creating

with Spirit

with flow of love ever since.

Whenever the prophets would speak in the Old Testament
 it was only because the Spirit of the LORD
 would come upon them.

And in the fullness of time

it was the Spirit who came upon Mary
 when she conceived her first son.

When Jesus was baptized

It was the Spirit which descended upon Him
 like a dove.

As he heard voice of the Father

This is my beloved Son

With whom I am well pleased.

And for the rest of his life

Jesus responded

Not my will

But thine be done

In the way that he lived

And when evil did it worst near the cross

It nothing less that the occasion

For the Trinity to do God's best.

Jesus dying for us

And the Father and the Spirit

refusing to abandon Jesus to power of death;

resurrection was on the way.

But what I've noticed about the Trinity more and more

through the years

is that as much as we may notice

the mutual love and support

the persons of the Trinity have for anothe

For God its never just about God

but always about God's love for others

God's love for the creation

God's love for the creature

Everywhere Jesus went

the love of the Trinity over flowed

First it was God's love for the lost sheep of the House of Israel

soon it over flowed to the Gentiles.

And to sinners and tax collectors

And people who had made a mess of their lives

And to the sick, the poor

The least, the lost and the lonely

The love of God always over flowed.

But here's the thing

its still happening.

in spite of all the hate in the world

God's love is still over flowing.

And what's going on at St. Mark's
 Is just a small example
 of what God is doing.

Did you know that in last week
 the Food Pantry fed more people than ever before
 and this month you get to be a part of it
 with the ingathering of needed items.

This summer once again
 we're partnering
 with other Episcopal churches
 other denominations and other faiths
 in the Friendship Camp for children.

Our youth are making plans along with other Episcopal youth
 To do some things with St. Mark's Baptist youth this year
 A nature trail is already under construction
 that will benefit not only us
 but our neighborhood and the community .

And on September 7
 Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindu, Bahia and Buddhists and more
 Will all be here at St. Mark's
 sharing faith, food
 and worship of the God who still lives
 the One we know as Father Son and Holy Spirit

More and more people are hungry to know to the living God
 The God who delights in taking down walls not building them.
 and they need only an invitation.
 You can be that invitation.

I want to close with one of my favorite images for God's love.
 And it too is a dance-
 a dance that happens every year at the Shrimp Boil.
 Its not exactly planned or choreographed
 at least not by us.

But I've noticed that once the children
 and the members of band
 have had their dinner.

Its not long

before the music takes over.

And the little children who are nearby

soon find it irresistible

and they begin to dance.

But apparently its never enough for two or three to dance

a dance is meant to be shared

And so within moments

any other children who are nearby

get invited.

With outstretched arms

children motion to children

to come on

and the dance get bigger and bigger.

For me this is the Good News of the Trinity

Its not enough merely for Father, Son and Spirit to dance

God wants us dancing too.

And invites us

to let go of our inhibitions,

let go of our worries

let go of our worries about appearances

our worries about the things of this world

and let go of our fears

and let go all of those things

that suppress the little child

that lives inside each of us.

Can you hear it?

The music is already playing.