

Trinity Sunday, June 12, 2022, Year C

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector Scripture: John 16:12-15, Isaiah 6:1-7, Revelation 4:1-11

"The Character of The Trinity"

Today's readings give us a glimpse of the character of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We read and learn that God's holiness has no equal; He is holy to the power of three – Holy, Holy, Holy. The importance of three throughout Holy Scripture - gives us insight to how God has given us reminders of the three person of our One Holy God.

The evidence is in our Old Testament reading from Isaiah 6:3 with the angels, *"And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'*" Just like we sing during our Eucharist service, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory," the angels in heaven are proclaiming His ultimate holiness. Last week at the end of the service, our closing Hymn was "Holy, Holy, Holy," When you say "holy. Holy, holy" – there is nothing more holy. The power of three! The visible display of that holiness is the majesty that fills the earth as God shines out in blessing for the whole world.

The Apostle John had a similar vision of the throne room of the Lord – and I want you to hear these words from today's second reading from the Book of Revelation: 4:8-11: *"Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.' Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.'"* So they are constantly in awe of the presence of God Himself, and want to give Him the honor and glory that He deserves. All of creation is called to worship the one true God as its Creator – who was, and is and is to come – the Great I Am.

The Creator must act assertively to restore what has been done to His creation, because His creation is good but the Creator is angry with the forces that have corrupted and defaced it, right from the Garden of Eden to today – those forces threaten to destroy it.

Isaiah is aware that like the world he lives in, he also is impure. He knows that because of his sins, he cannot join in with the angels' praise. Maybe up until this vision, Isaiah has not realized just how polluted the world around him is and how contaminated he is. But God cleanses his lips through the action of an angel that will now allow his lips to become a means of serving God – as a spokesperson, a Prophet of God. In Isaiah 6:7 he describes this action, as the angel takes a hot coal with tongs from the altar and, *"with it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'*" This was Isaiah's conviction, his cleansing, and his call! From this time forward, he would be speaking for the Lord God.

Both John's vision of God's throne in heaven and the vision of the throne by Isaiah paint a picture of an incredible glory. John, being given his view by the Holy Spirit sees the One on the throne with an incredible hue of colors beyond comprehension. He does the best he can, as first century fisherman, not an artist, to describe the colorful sight by writing in Revelation 4:3, "*And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.*" The colors blended with a translucent jasper and ruby red carnelian – and then the rainbow of colors surrounded the throne. When you hear the word 'rainbow' what do you think of? I think of promise – the promise that God made to Noah – He gave him a rainbow. It wasn't just that God would not destroy the earth by water, by flood. It was the promise that God is as good as His promises. Here is the promise of Almighty God surrounding His throne!

Remember – John did his best, using the knowledge that he possessed in the first century, to describe a sight that he could hardly believe. If I asked each one of you to describe something that happened in your life, and maybe several of you were at that same event, you might describe it similarly, or you might have a different description, based on the baggage that you bring in. It is not only baggage that we bring in, but baggage that we take out, that helps us to be who we are.

Just like John, Isaiah describes the immenseness of God's glory, in His throne room, the Temple. "*I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.*" (Isaiah 6:1) When Isaiah wrote this - the length of the train, or hem of a person's garment or robe was a symbol of that person's status. So to say that the train of the robe was so big that it filled the temple, it establishes that the status of God as enormous. This figure of speech signifies the majesty of our God. I want to suggest to you to consider the strength needed to wear and carry such a robe. The train of the King's robe filling the temple shows His greatness, majesty and strength! Think for a second - it's the train of the robe that fills the temple. The train is the very edge of God's garment, the humblest, least noble part of His clothing. This edge itself was so glorious that it fills the temple. So I ask you - how much more glorious is the Lord our King? I believe He is more than we can possibly comprehend. To put it simply – He is huge! I think it helps us to better understand why God is surrounded by song that He is "*holy, holy, holy.*" Nothing is or could be more holy.

Jesus constantly refers to His Heavenly Father, and the love that He has for all of His children; a love so great that He calls on His Son, Jesus, to give His very life, to enable those who believe in Him to receive eternal life with God Himself, in His heavenly temple. All we need to do is read the word of Jesus when He describes God the Father, and we can see the perfect Father, and realize that no one, not one of us, can achieve that perfection. Through faith in Jesus and repentance, we can be the best that we can, realizing all the time that the Father is the perfect example of a father's love. The Apostle Paul explains it this way: "*This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" (Romans 3:22-23) That realization should serve as a role model for us to try our best. For men and women, this is a very high bar to attain, but through the love of God we can share our best efforts with the ones that we love. We can never be perfect, but if we let God, He will bless our efforts, and our families. That is so important for us to hold on to.

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In today's Holy Gospel from John, Jesus tells His Apostles that He and the Father will be sending the Holy Spirit – who as we know, will not only come on Pentecost, but He will live in our hearts. When the Temple veil was torn in two, when Jesus took His last breath, the Holy Spirit – from the Holy of Holies, now became available to all believers. It didn't have to be a priest who would go in on the Day of Atonement to ask for forgiveness, but He would be here in our hearts, so we could ask for forgiveness and be 'at one ment' with Almighty God. Jesus said in John 16:13, *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."* The Holy Spirit will inspire us with the Truth that God the Father Himself wants us to understand and to live by. It is hard for us to understand these mysteries, and so we need to ask for wisdom and clarity, and the Holy Spirit will speak to our hearts and guide us. Jesus continued, *"He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."* (John 16:14-15)

There are some people who will say that the Holy Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible, but I beg to differ. Jesus is showing us the relationship that is like no other – the union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the Holy Trinity, who we celebrate today. Sometimes people have trouble seeing God as three separate beings in One God. The best my little mind can wraparound is – water. Water is water, but it can appear to you as liquid, as solid, and as gas. Anyone of those three things is still water (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) and never stops being water; and never stops being God. Jesus shows us that relationship in His Word. Jesus is quite clear in whose name we have been baptized, as He said in Matthew 28:19-20, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* There is the Holy Trinity right there – Jesus' words, not mine!