*God is fundamentally social. We, who are made in His likeness, are fundamentally social like Him*

Today is Trinity Sunday. I have been preaching about God the Holy Trinity on Trinity Sunday for at least twenty-five years, and I just realized that I have been doing it all wrong. For the past twenty-five years I have either defined the doctrine, discussed the concept, or dealt out clever analogies that say what the Trinity is like. The problem is that these three approaches are intellectual, not social. Since God is fundamentally social, and since we are made in His image, we are fundamentally social like Him: we are born to know God not through intellectual concepts but through a loving, interactive, social relationship. Do not get me wrong; human intellect is good and God-given. But a merely intellectual discussion about God leads to a merely intellectual understanding about God. Let’s try this differently.

**[Arrange three chairs in the aisle. Taped on them, from left to right: “S,” “F,” and “HS.”**

When we talk about the Holy Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Three Divine Persons Who are One—we tend to think of them as looking down on us from Heaven on three outward-looking thrones, or chairs. Of course, because the Three Persons are One, the chairs have to be really close to each other. And of course, because the Three Persons are equally involved in our lives and in the world, the chairs have to face the same direction. Let’s adjust this.

 **[Move HS from right to middle.]**

First, let’s move God the Holy Spirit between the Father and the Son; He is their relationship of love in the form of a Person. In the 5th century, St. Augustine taught that since God is love, and since love requires at least two persons—the Lover and the Beloved---God the Father is the Lover, the Source and Giver of all Love Who delights in what He loves; God the Son is the Beloved, the One in Whom the Father delights, Who receives the Father’s love and reflects it in perfect gratitude and joyful obedience; and God the Holy Spirit is the relationship of love between the Father and the Son which is so perfect and total that it is a Person co-eternal and co-equal with them. In a manner of speaking, He has been around as long as they and He shares their glory, authority, wisdom, power, and joy. That’s why God the Holy Spirit’s chair is between the Father and the Son. Now, one more adjustment.

 **[Turn F and S to face each other.]**

Because they are One in Love, the Father and the Son face one another. Even before Time, which God created, the Father and the Son beheld and delighted in each other; they infinitely enjoy their exchange of love in the Holy Spirit. This mutual love is total, complete, and ever active; it is above all height and beneath all depth; it has no beginning and will never end. Their relationship of love is so clear and so perfect that it would be an insult to call that union anything but One. We tend to think that the most important relationship in the universe is between God and us; in fact, the most important relationship in the universe and in eternity is between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was only out of the sheer exuberance of that love that God decided to create us—creatures of dust who would one day be capable of and competent in loving like God. That exuberant love created us. That exuberant love become one of us in the Person of Jesus to mend the relationship between God and us, the relationship we broke by constantly choosing self-centeredness. That exuberant love, after Jesus lived, died, rose again, and ascended into Heaven, descended within and among us to unite us with God in a bond more intimate that marriage and to adopt us as His beloved children, sharing His glory, authority, wisdom, power, and joy. In the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, God is fundamentally social. We, who are made in His likeness, are fundamentally social like Him.

 In His farewell address on the night before He died, Jesus told His disciples, “If you know me, you will know my Father also (John 14:7).” He told them, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9).” And He told them, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (John 14:23).”Then He prayed to His Father and said, “As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us […] The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one: I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one (John 17:21-23).” Jesus, the Son of God, embraces us so dearly that we are One. The Father embraces the Son so dearly that they are One. Therefore, in Christ, we share the eternally loving embrace between the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, Who are One in love. Love is the origin of our being. Love is our reason for living. Love is our destiny in God the Holy Trinity with all of the saints who have ever lived and who have been made One in Him in Christ with us.

 The Holy Trinity, therefore, is not a dry doctrine, an abstract concept, or a clever analogy. God the Holy Trinity is a perfect society of love in Whom we live, and move, and have our being. We come to Church, this social environment that spans and connects Heaven and Earth, so that for one hour of one day in one week we can get out of our heads, get over ourselves, get off of our high-horses, and get away from flat screens, fake news, false fears that afflict us and find again our place in the society of Love into which God has placed us in which He shapes and molds us more and more into His likeness, resembling the One who always loves all.

The God who is Love made us for His sheer delight. The God who is Love saved us because that’s what Love does for its beloved. The God who is Love entered into us and moves within and among us: He is in us as we are in Him. The God who is Love has placed us on His Throne so that we can finally see Him; and in seeing Him, we can finally love Him; and in loving Him we can finally come alive and live forever in His sheer delight. Fundamentally, God is love. Because we are made in His likeness, fundamentally, we are beloved.