

# How To Understand The Trinity

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In the Name of the Father and of The Son+ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A little boy—we shall call him Albert—worked very hard to make a sailboat. One day, after Albert made it, he took it out to sail in a lake near his house. And, as it was kind of windy that day, the boat got away from Albert and was blown all the way across the lake to the other side. So, Albert ran as hard as his little legs would carry him to the other side of the lake to recapture his boat. It completely disappeared from him. When he got to the other side he couldn't find the boat, no matter how hard he looked up and down the shores of the lake. So, he was very brokenhearted. With his head hanging down, he decided to go home.

Several days later when Albert and his mother were downtown shopping, he passed by a pawn shop. And there in the window of this pawn shop was his little boat. Evidently someone had found it at the end of the lake and had played with it awhile, broken it, and had taken it to the pawn shop to sell it. So, there it was in the window of the pawn shop. Albert was so excited to see his boat! He immediately went home, broke open his piggy bank and got the money necessary to buy it back. When he got the boat home from the pawn shop, Albert was saddened because the boat had been bent and broken. Evidently whoever had found it had used it. The little rudder was twisted. The sail had a hole in it. So, overcoming his sadness, Albert set to work to repair his little boat. He worked and worked and worked 'til finally the boat was as good as it was before and was even better now than it was at the beginning!

After a while, Albert held the boat up in his hand, looked at it lovingly, and said, "Little boat, now you're mine 3 times. First when I made you. Second when I bought and paid for you. Third now when I've taken you after you'd been wrecked, repaired you and made you all brand new and better than before."

Remember this teaching. God is our Creator. He brought us into being. Made us. God is Our Savior, who has bought and paid for us on the Cross. And God is Holy Spirit, who comes into our lives, reshapes us and makes us new and even better than we had been before. This is the faith we all share and have in common, no matter life's circumstance. This is the faith which binds us together and which we shall always remember. And live.

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It is held up for us in today's three scripture readings. "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old." (Proverbs 8:22) "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to his grace in which we stand ...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." (Romans 5:1-5) "When the Spirit ... comes ... he will guide you ... and ... will declare to you the things that are to come." (John 16:12-15)

Who knows what "the things that are to come" will be? When I graduated from high school 54 years ago I knew what I hoped would come, but I really did not know what would in fact come. I suspect I know what kinds of things you are feeling about the future. Lots of hope. And dreams. And expectation. And uncertainty. And anxiety. All that is normal and ok. God will always be with you, watching over you. You are his. He made you. He bought you. He always works to make you better than before. As he is ready and you are ready, "... he will declare to you the things that are to come."

One of the things that is to come—which we try to avoid thinking about—is that someday, probably many years yet to come, God will invite us to come Home. We will have to die. Now that might seem out-of-place on a day we're celebrating and seeking to understand the Trinity. I think not. Let me tell you why.

We belong to God. He made us. He bought us. He is working to make us better than ever before. Somewhere ahead of us, at the end of our earthly journey, we believe, as Christians, is the best that will ever come, which we will share with God forever. You could call it the final graduation. Everyone will have a 4.0. Everyone will be on a full scholarship. We call it heaven. Today's Gospel puts it this way: "I have yet many things to say to you ... the Spirit will take what is mine and declare it to you." (Here "declare" means "to deed over.")

Knowing heaven is at the end of our journey, I believe, is the only thing which can sustain us on the way and make our journey of life and faith here now joyful and full of love. The Apostle Paul says it in today's second reading: "... we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God."

The story of John Todd captures it better.

John Todd was born in Rutledge, Vermont into a family of seven children. They later moved to the village of Killingsworth. This was way back in the early 1800's. And there, at a very early age, John had both his mother and father die.

The relatives wondered what they would do with the number of children, how they could parcel them out to other friends and relatives. One dear and loving aunt said she would take little John. The aunt sent a horse and a slave to get John who was only six at the time. The

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slave, named Caesar, came and put the little boy on the back of the horse. On the way back, an endearing conversation took place:

John: Will she be there?

Caesar: Oh, yes, she'll be there waiting for you.

John: Will I like living with her?

Caesar: My son, you fall into good hands.

John: Will she love me?

Caesar: Ah, she has a big heart.

John: Will I have my own room? Will she let me have a puppy?

Caesar: She's got everything all set, son. I think she has some surprises, John.

John: Do you think she'll go to bed before we get there?

Caesar: Oh no! She'll be sure to wait for you. You'll see when we get out of these woods. You'll see her candle shining in the window.

When they got to the clearing, sure enough, there she was standing in the doorway with a candle in the window. She reached down, kissed him and said, "Welcome home!" She fed him supper, took him to his room and waited until he fell asleep.

John Todd grew up to be a great minister of the Gospel. But it was there at his aunt's that his life was shaped and that he grew up. It was always a place of enchantment because of his aunt. It awed him that such a place of replacement existed. She had given him a second home and filled his life with love and happiness.

Years later, long after he had moved away, his aunt wrote to tell him her own death was near. Her health was failing, and she wondered what was to become of her. This is what John Todd wrote her:

"My dear aunt, years ago I left a house of death not knowing where I was to go, whether anyone cared, whether it was the end of me. The ride was long, but the slave encouraged me. Finally, he pointed out your candle to me and there we were in the yard and there you stood embracing me and taking me by the hand into my own room that you had made up. After all these years I can't believe it, how you did all that for me. I was expected. I felt safe in that room, so welcomed. It was my room.

"Now it's your turn to go and as one who has tried it out, I'm writing to let you know, someone is waiting up, your room is all ready, the light is on, the door is open. I once saw God standing in your doorway – long ago!"

Amen.

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