

If you read all the way to the bottom of the Benediction Weekly this week you will have seen the quote that Stef shared from Meister Eckhart, the 13th century German mystic. In case you missed it, here it is:

*Do you want to know what goes on in the core of the Trinity?  
I will tell you.*

*In the core of the Trinity  
the Father laughs  
and gives birth to the Son.  
The Son laughs back at the Father  
and gives birth to the Spirit.  
The whole Trinity laughs  
and gives birth to us.*

The Trinity laughs and the result is Creation. Dare we add that Creation laughs and the result is humanity?

I'm not sure, but here is something else that came into my inbox this week from Jeanette, a Facebook friend:

*God stood in the silence of the abyss. His Heart was lonely. He was all alone in a black hole of space. Emptiness surrounded Him. He wanted to share His Magnificence with someone or something so He opened His Heart of Love to the emptiness, and His Glory began pouring forth from His Heart of Love and the nothingness of darkest space began to vanish.*

What do you think? God laughed, or God was lonely?

I think perhaps there's some truth in both. It has been said that Creation is the pillow-talk of the Trinity – in other words, out of their joy and creativity and, yes, laughter, creation is born. God is so full of God's goodness which is music, movement, peace and abundant love it has to be shared – it has to be shared in such a way that Creation is almost

inevitable. Perhaps we can say that God was lonely, in that Creation seems to have come from the urge to share God's life and laughter.

The great gift that we get as Trinitarian Christians is the understanding that God lives in community. The Trinity is three persons not just one person playing three roles. It's as difficult for us to understand as it is for a one celled amoeba to understand the cellular complexity of a human being.

But when we stop trying to understand how these three people form one God, we can relax and enjoy the community that is the Godhead. And we realize that if we were formed in the image of God we were created for community with one another and with the divine. Yes, we are created to live in relationship with God but we are also created to live in relationship with one another. And if we are formed in the image of God we are made to laugh and to create out of our fullness.

But something gets in the way. It is our own pride, ego, call it what you will – sin, even.

Perhaps this is what Jesus is talking about with Nicodemus, the man of privilege. He is a religious leader with political power. Presumably he has what we might consider white privilege. The Romans allowed the Jews the privilege of continuing with their own religion and way of life, provided that they kept their people under control and in line. We know that Nicodemus was powerful within the system because he spoke up in the Sanhedrin, and he was wealthy enough to provide one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for Jesus' burial.

But Jesus is apparently unimpressed. All Nicodemus' learning, all his privilege, is not actually doing him much good. What is needed, Jesus says, is a new birth – renewal of the mind and spirit. And Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so Jesus must be lifted up so the whole world will have eternal life.

Let's look at the backstory here - what were the Hebrews doing in the desert with a bronze serpent on a pole?<sup>1</sup>

They had gotten tired of eating manna. The bread from heaven was no longer satisfying. They wanted more and they grumbled. They felt that God's provision was not enough. And, as the story goes, God punished the people by sending serpents among them, whose bite was venomous. And they cry out to Moses, confessing their sin, and begging Moses to implore God to take the serpents away. God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole for them to look at, and when they looked at it they were healed.

The bronze serpent was a symbol of their dissatisfaction with God, their complaining and thinking they knew better than God did. Notice that it was after they confessed their sin that the bronze serpent was any use. This was not some magical statue with supernatural powers. No, the bronze serpent was a symbol of the way they had imagined themselves somehow superior to the situation they were in. They had confessed their sin, but it was only when they faced up to it that they were healed.

Jesus on the cross makes humanity face up to our tendency to vilify people, our tendency to gang up against the weakest and the different. Theologian Kelly Brown Douglas argues that in the time of Jesus there was a particular section of society which was most likely to get crucified, she calls them the crucified class. They were the ones who were picked on, the ones who were likely to be accused of sedition, the ones who were most likely to be hung in a tree as an example. This would not be Nicodemus. No, Nicodemus was in the upper class of 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews.

But Jesus identified with the crucified class. He became one of them. He allowed himself to be counted with the underclass and in the manner of his death, he made humanity face what it was doing – face the way we

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Mark Davis [leftbehindandlovingit.blogspot.com](http://leftbehindandlovingit.blogspot.com)

blame the innocent and we create societies in which some people flourish and others don't.

Let's head back now to the main plot – the community of the Trinity. The Trinity is not a triangle with God the Creator at the top and the Word and the Spirit at the bottom. Because that creates a hierarchy. The Trinity is a community not a hierarchy. It has been described as a dance – a circle dance where all the dancers are looking at each other equally. There is no social hierarchy in the Trinity.

And that is how we are called to live – dancing together on one planet – where there is no privileged class, no crucified class, just people loving God, loving each other, laughing and creating.

We my friends are people of privilege and for us to create the beloved community of humans living in harmony with one another, Creation, and God – the community that is envisioned in the Great Commandments – loving God and one's neighbor as oneself – for us to create that community of equality we have to face up to the ways in which we are privileged. We have to look at our own sin – symbolized in the bronze serpent or in the broken body of Christ on the cross and ask to be born again.

Because we are not going to think ourselves into right relationship, we are not going to laugh with the Trinity as a result of our privilege but because we are born again, made anew by the grace of God and the blowing of the wind of the Spirit.

May God grant us all the humility to confess our sin, the grace to be reborn and the laughter of the Trinity.