

**FROLICKING**  
**TRINITY SUNDAY - JUNE 16, 2019**  
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Bishops have expectations of the priests that serve the parishes in a diocese.

One of the expectations is that we will take time away  
to go on retreat, re-grounding ourselves in our faith;  
the other is that we will continue learning stuff,  
get continuing education like any other professional.

Earlier this year, I looked at my choices for meeting these expectations.

Being someone who likes to be efficient with the funds all y'all pay me,  
I decided to combine my retreat with a continuing education conference.

I went up to Massachusetts to a retreat center an hour northeast of Boston.

They are having a late spring in New England.

On the one hand, that meant that the flowers were glorious!  
Peonies, irises and the mountain laurels were in full bloom.  
So were the dandelions.

There was one gorgeous, cloudless day in the high 70s  
that just made one glad to be alive.

On the other hand, there was one day that got down into the low 50s  
with that all-day rain that made the peonies' heads drag in the mud  
and made me wonder if I'd ever be warm again.

After 20 years in Florida, my blood has gotten pretty thin,  
and I am a wimp when it comes to chilly weather.

My first two days were spent pretty much alone, doing the retreat thing.

I read, I journaled, I considered the spring flowers,  
and how there are only three things I miss about living in Ohio:  
having a basement, peonies in the spring, and fireflies in the summer.  
Mostly, I'll admit, I rested.

On Monday, the conference began, and I met a couple dozen interesting folks  
and began 5 days of continuing education – here's the certificate to prove it.

One of the days, we did a bunch of stuff on the theological concept  
of Wisdom, and we focused on that first reading we had today from Proverbs.

Wisdom – what is that?

There's a joke: knowledge is learning that tomatoes are a fruit;  
wisdom is understanding why you don't put them in a fruit salad.

But, really, what IS wisdom?

Trinity Sunday is a really great day to consider this question,  
because this Sunday our lessons are about the nature of God,  
who God is, what God does, and why.

(However, I did come across this one suggestion on a preaching site).

I'm going to risk heresy, however.

Wisdom, according to the Book of Proverbs,  
is one of the very first attributes of our Creating God.

everything God creates was, is and will forever be done in, with and through divine Wisdom.

What is divine Wisdom doing as Creation happens? What are the verbs?

In the first sentence it says that Wisdom cries out and shouts to us –  
Wisdom invites us into the divine life from the very beginning.





The Puritanical religion so prevalent in this country is especially adept at sucking the joy and frolicking out of faith.

(You know H.L. Mencken's definition of Puritanism:

*The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.*

Now, I know that many of us – including me – have had horrible things happen to us. We have suffered.

You may be in the midst of anxiety and suffering right now.

This talk of Divine Wisdom being full of smiles and delight and frolicking may seem to be childish and even ridiculous.

Our friend St. Paul has something to say about that, doesn't he?

Paul's life wasn't all scones and dandelion wine;

when he wrote the letter to the Romans he had already been imprisoned a few times, whipped with 39 lashes 5 times, as well as beaten, stoned and shipwrecked.

He had a painful, chronic disease all his life.

But what does he write about these sufferings?

That they produce endurance and character that lead to hope and love – hope and love lead to joy, which, for Paul, is the ultimate prize of faith.

Jesus, Divine Wisdom lived out in a human life, also knew something about suffering, didn't he?

The passage we read today is from Jesus' last night on earth,

when he is preparing his disciples for his death, praying for them.

The reason the disciples "can't handle" what Jesus has to say yet is because they are about to enter the valley of the shadow of death and they will not be able to understand Jesus' Divine Wisdom until the other side of that valley, after they see their Lord Resurrected.

Not until then will they be able to handle the Wisdom

that joy and hope and love are magnificently more powerful than anger, suffering and death.

Just a few verses after our reading, Jesus promises them,

"your sorrow will turn to joy" after they see him again.

On Trinity Sunday we dare to talk about the nature of God,

and the nature of our Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit begins with Wisdom, and the Divine Wisdom is that origin and destiny of God's entire Creation is delight, joy, hope and frolicking.

When is the last time you can say you did anything that looked like frolicking?

It doesn't have to be profound – it has to be fun. For you.

That woman had fun making dandelion wine. She was frolicking.

At my conference, the leader asked us to frolic, and a group of us regaled the others with a lively rendition of *I'm a Believer* by The Monkees.

One of the guys did a backflip. He is 62 years old, and he did a back flip.

How could he do that? Because he never stopped doing it from the time he was a little kid. Sometimes frolicking takes practice.

Can you even imagine yourself frolicking? Take a moment . . . what would it look like for you to frolic?

The fact that most adults don't have a clue what to do is pretty telling,

and what's worse is that our religion – a religion that worships a God who has divine Wisdom – doesn't have much to say about delight, joy or frolicking.

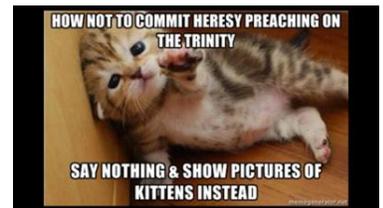
That may be our biggest heresy as a religion.

Well, you can always dance. Dance like no one's watching.

In fact, as I've said before, dancing may be the best metaphor there is for God.

Brian McLaren reminds us that the from the earliest days the early church leaders described the Trinity

using the term perichoresis – a circle dance (from *peri*—circle, *choresis*—dance, like choreography):



The movement, the dancer, the choreography, all become one action;  
 when one is taken away, there is no more dancing – just pieces and parts.  
 The Trinity is an eternal dance of God's being where the Wisdom of God is for God to share,  
 in himself and with all Creation, *mutual love, honor, happiness, joy, and respect.*

*Against this backdrop, God's act of loving creation into being means  
 that God creates by calling [or singing, if you will] into existence  
 more and more stars, planets and people into the eternal dance of joy.<sup>1</sup>*

Most of all, it's a dance of joy that we're already all part of whether we realize it or not,  
 whether we can hear the music right now or not.

Our origin and our destiny are to be in the presence of our Creator  
 who lives in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever, amen.  
 So, get up! Frolic! Come Join the Dance of Trinity.

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#### **COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

#### **PROVERBS 8:1–4, 22–31**

Doesn't Wisdom cry out and Understanding shout? Atop the heights along the path, at the crossroads she takes her stand. By the gate before the city, at the entrances she shouts: I cry out to you, people; my voice goes out to all of humanity.

The Lord created me at the beginning of his way, before his deeds long in the past. I was formed in ancient times, at the beginning, before the earth was. When there were no watery depths, I was brought forth, when there were no springs flowing with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth; before God made the earth and the fields or the first of the dry land.

I was there when he established the heavens, when he marked out the horizon on the deep sea, when he thickened the clouds above, when he secured the fountains of the deep, when he set a limit for the sea, so the water couldn't go beyond his command, when he marked out the earth's foundations.

I was beside him as a master of crafts. I was having fun, smiling before him all the time, frolicking with his inhabited earth and delighting in the human race.

#### **PSALM 8**

O Lord our Governor, how exalted is your Name in all the world!

**Out of the mouths of infants and children your majesty is praised above the heavens.**

You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, to quell the enemy and the avenger.

**When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
 the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,**

What is man that you should be mindful of him? the son of man that you should seek him out?

**You have made him but little lower than the angels; you adorn him with glory and honor;**

You give him mastery over the works of your hands; you put all things under his feet:

**All sheep and oxen, even the wild beasts of the field,**

The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.

**O Lord our Governor, how exalted is your Name in all the world**

#### **ROMANS 5:1–5**

Therefore, since we have been made righteous through his faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory. But not only that! We even take pride in our problems, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. This hope doesn't put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us

<sup>1</sup> Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy*. Zondervan, 2004. pp. 62-63

**JOHN 16:12–15**

“I have much more to say to you, but you can’t handle it now. However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you in all truth. He won’t speak on his own, but will say whatever he hears and will proclaim to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and proclaim it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine. That’s why I said that the Spirit takes what is mine and will proclaim it to you.”

**SERMON HYMN:** *Come Join the Dance of Trinity*

**BLESSING:** Live without fear: your Creator has made you holy, has always protected you, and loves you unconditionally. Go in peace to follow the Way of Jesus, and as you journey, the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always.