

May 30, 2010
Holy Trinity Sunday
Pr. Craig M. Mueller

FINDING THE WORDS

Have you ever had trouble finding the words?

Finding the words to say how much someone means to you. How much you love them. How grateful you are that they are in your life.

Finding the words to ask someone out, or to break up with them. Finding the words to tell your parents or your children some bad news.

Finding the words to express your anger. How upset you are. Or how hurt something has made you. How hard it is to get beyond the feeling deep inside.

Finding the words to tell what God means to you. The peace you feel when you are in church or receive communion. How you could have never come through a dark time without your faith. Without the support you found through the church.

Maybe you've seen the movie *Billy Elliott* from 2001 or the musical *Billy Elliott*, now playing in Chicago. With music by Elton John. The story takes place in England during a coal miner's strike. Billy Elliott lost his mother when he was young. By accident Billy happens to fall into a ballet class and gradually becomes attracted to the grace of dance. Billy's father and brother are completely undone when they find that he has been attending ballet class instead of boxing class. But after the strong prodding of Billy's teacher, his father finally comes around. They agree that Billy is talented enough to audition for the Royal Ballet School in London.

At the end of the impersonal audition, the judges mention to Billy that his teacher had written him a very strong letter of recommendation. They then ask him: *Billy, what does it feel like when you dance?*

Billy answers, in this moving song:

*I can't really explain it,
I haven't got the words
It's a feeling that you can't control
I suppose it's like forgetting, losing who you are
And at the same time something makes you whole...
It's like when you've been crying
And you're empty and you're full...
And then I feel a change
Like a fire deep inside
Something bursting me wide open, impossible to hide
And suddenly I'm fling, flying like a bird
Like electricity, electricity
Sparks inside of me
And I'm free, I'm free.*

Sometimes when we experience God the creator, or Jesus the Lord, or the power of the Holy Spirit, it's hard to find the words. It can be like electricity.

After Jesus' resurrection, his disciples knew his presence--his spirit--so strongly that they sensed it was indeed God who was with them. In remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection, there was a kind of newness, freedom, grace. A kind of electricity that set them on fire.

The word "trinity" isn't in the Bible. Often the word is used to *explain* God, with words, ideas, concepts, graphs, and doctrines. It can be hard to wrap our minds around. But before theologians tried to explain what the trinity meant, there was an experience of God, hard to put in words.

The author of Proverbs uses the metaphor of Lady Wisdom to speak of God. God isn't just a concept but is experienced in a deep, personal way. One Lutheran biblical scholar writes that this mysterious Woman Wisdom figure is associated with creation, life, goodness, justice, and love, and speaks like a prophet, a sage, a lover and even like a goddess.

In Proverbs God has the face of Sophia, Wisdom. For Christians we know, we experience that same face of God through Jesus Christ. It is the Spirit of truth that guides us into all truth, as Jesus says in today's gospel. The Spirit connects us to Jesus and makes him come alive for us today.

It can seem like we are going in circles. God is one. God is three. No wonder! God is beyond words. God is mystery. But in worship we use words to express praise and thanksgiving. Perhaps worship is at the heart of our faith in the holy trinity. We praise the God we experience as Father, Son and Spirit. As creation, redeemer and sanctifier. As source, word, and power of the Most High.

When you do something you love, you sometimes lose track of the time. You lose yourself. You can get lost in what you're doing. Singing, dancing, running, playing sports, cooking, painting, and so much more!

That is what we hope for Catherine and Mary, baptized today. For the high school choir, Cantate, from Kenosha. For all of us, really. That we fully become ourselves, that we are filled with such joy in life that we feel like a bird, flying in the sky.

In worship we lose ourselves in wonder, love and praise. And yet we are whole. Sometimes the peace is so profound that we know that God is indeed here, among us. Sometimes we can't find the words. We may be stirred by music. Or silence, color, movement, incense, water, bread and wine, the community itself.

Yet our liturgy also gives us words. *Glory to God in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. We praise, we bless you, we thank you, O God.*

What a gift on this Holy Trinity Sunday. We are free. With all our senses and with silence. And of course, with words. We are free, free for praise and thanksgiving.