

Blessed be those whose feet walk in the way of Wisdom*!

May her thoughts be our thoughts; her voice our voice!

Trinity Sunday is a complicated liturgical day. My spiritual director, a monastic, shared that he was assigned to preach on Trinity Sunday three years in a row.... he was not sure if it was a cruel joke, or some retribution. Preaching on the Trinity is akin to a Zen Koan, the sound of one hand clapping.

I question the doctrines implemented by the western church, why were they necessary? I don't believe they are wrong necessarily, but I suspect that they are ecclesial gate keeping, the silencing of rogue voices. Remember that people died at the council of Nicea, and many Holy Scriptures were censored. I believe there are inherit historical challenges to the creedal perquisites of the church for the sake of exclusiveness, gated community, and identity. I recoil when a doctrine stifles our imagination of God or when we try too hard to fit doctrine into a biblical text.

We are learning that the Way of Love does not necessarily flow through the Roman Empire.

We understand that Creator God is neither male nor female.....yet most of our liturgical language reads otherwise. The male 'lord' is used nearly 7,000 times in scripture. Clearly, this has had historical social and psychological impact of giving men privilege over women when these texts are used. Consider that some of us whisper 'she has spoken through the prophets' as an example.

Further, as Heidi has preached, the introduction of the 2nd and 3rd person of the Trinity are not linear... using a baseball analogy, God is not the starting pitcher, Jesus the relief pitcher, and the Holy Spirit the closer.

I believe that The Creator reveals themselves to us through this trinitarian belief, Creator, Word and Spirit together from before the beginning of time. Or as a theologian friend of mine states, lover, beloved, and love.

Proverbs

The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth,
Before the mountains had been shaped,
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
When he established the heavens, I was there,

when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight

There is significant story and language in scriptures that nurture an understanding of God's cosmic character. This was the figure of Wisdom, chochmah in Hebrew, Sophia in Greek. Behind every line about the Word (logos in Greek) in John's prologue lies the story of Wisdom. to understand the meaning of the vital line "and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," we need to know about holy Sophia.

Sophia is not a name that many, other than biblical scholars, recognize. They sense her presence even if unnamed. She's the Divine Feminine who has been a part of creation from before its very beginning. She's more significant and inclusive than any of the names people have called her over time. We might recognize Sophia as The Great Mother, the Provider, Gaia Earth. Our Matrix. Early people called her Cybele. Some Jews still call her Shekinah ; pre - Islamic Arabians called her Al - Lat. Abraham's mother and his wives baked her moon - cakes and climbed up mountains to visit her sacred groves .

Father - figure - gods dominated all the major religions around the world. As a result, the hierarchies of pyramids (man at the top followed by women, children, animals, plants, minerals) prop up the framework of our churches, families, workplaces, government, military, and education .

We might imagine that Our Mother seemed to have left us orphaned.

Sophia has reasons to be frustrated. For several centuries, Sophia has been repressed, banished, outlawed, and forbidden. Her name has been scrubbed off scriptural parchments and deleted from computer screens.

Cynthia Bourgeault, priest, author, and spiritual director writes in Wisdom Jesus that our western understanding of Jesus spread like a compass from the Holy Land in 360 degrees, like dropping a rock in the middle of a pond. Our path of course came directly to Rome, and forward to Europe. We understand that the Roman Church, Constantine and Empire, was focused on management and control.

We were not included in the compass distribution that went north, east, and south. She suggests that it is likely that the first stories of Jesus told in the British Isles

came from Egypt and bypassed Rome. When we search we find influence from the Jesus story around the world, There is much we lost of the first centuries of the People of the Way from Persia, China, India, and Africa.

Cynthia and many other modern theologians and historians likewise engage the scriptures found in Egypt in a café at the end of WWII which included the Gospels of Thomas, Mary, Mary Magdalen, Peter which were not included in our canon codified at the Council of Nicaea. Thankfully these scrolls were hidden by desert fathers in clay pots in a cave, wary of the Church of the Roman Empire.

The Old Testament uses poetic figures picturing divine outreach into the world. God's spirit breathes the world into being, dwells in all things, quickens love into flame, inspires the prophets, and renews the face of the earth. God's word is powerfully creative. It blesses, commands, judges, promises, reveals, and saves; like the rain that makes things grow, it "will not return to me empty, but will accomplish my purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa 55:11).

Scripture reveals to us divine glory that shines in the fields and makes radiant the faces of the just; power that liberates; wings that shelter; angels and dreams that convey messages from heaven.

The most highly developed of these poetic symbols of divine immanence is the Jewish personification of Wisdom. Standing for divine outreach in creating and saving the world, she bears a more distinctive face and has a more developed character than either spirit or word. Rabbis prior to Jesus taught that holy Wisdom who moved throughout all creation as a pure emanation of the glory of God had come to earth and dwelt among the people of Israel in the specific form of Torah.

WISDOM 9 Solomon

I knew that there was no way I could possess Wisdom unless God gave her to me (and to know this was also a mark of intelligence!). So I came before the Lord and pleaded with him. I said with all my heart:

⁹You have Wisdom with you. She knows all your works. She was present with you when you were making the world. ¹⁰Send her out to me from your holy heavens. Send her from your glorious throne so that she may labor with me here and that I

may learn what is pleasing to you. ¹¹ She knows and understands everything. She'll guide me wisely in all that I do.

The identification of Jesus with Wisdom flowered in the later part of the first century. The hymns of Colossians (1:15–20) and Hebrews (1:2–3) and the gospel of John just about take it for granted.

We can embrace Jesus, the crucified prophet from Nazareth, in Wisdom's universal role creating, saving, and making holy the world. The Wisdom tradition is a significant way the early church embraced the belief that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the Creator God's own personal outreach and saving presence to the world.

Lady Wisdom - Do you see her? She's stands at the front of our protests, testifying on Gun Violence, weeping with Rachel.

Lady Wisdom is sculpted of flesh that feels the warm breeze. Lady Wisdom doesn't stand at the doorway welcoming others - she has a voice. She calls out with invitation. Lady Wisdom sees, she watches, "I have insight" she says.

Wisdom comes with scars. Wisdom comes from having lived through and in and with and despite. Wisdom goes deeper and forages for understanding.

Lady Wisdom sees the boundaries that separate us. She sees the young, the old, the sick, the well, the poor, the wealthy, the strong, the weak, the tired, the rested, the secure, the frightened.

Lady Wisdom is always available within our story.

We imagine her voice: You are my face. You are my hands. You are my heart. I stand ready and waiting to be of assistance.

When people “wake up” they then know that I have always been here. From the very beginning. When you are more ready to notice, then you sense me, feel me, for I am of experience. Mystical for many. I am the cushioning hen - like image Christ painted. The one who births and keeps on birthing. The one who creates and continues to create. I am continuously singing and dancing and playing. I am courage, justice, renewal, healing, comfort, rejoicing.

Creator God, with Lady Wisdom's voice you call us from the streets to a table she has set since the foundation of the world. We incline our ears and hearts to her, whose voice is clear and irresistible, more precious than gold, and brighter than the sun. We desire to walk in the ways of wisdom, and live. Amen.