

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

The Most Holy Trinity | For Sunday, June 12, 2022

## Slipping Through Mysteries

*Written by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman*

**Proverbs 8:22-31**

**Romans 5:1-5**

**John 16:12-15**



*"But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth." – John 16:13*

There is something immensely intimidating about mysteries of faith. Broaching a subject like the Holy Trinity without falling into heresy is as easy as walking across a just-mopped floor. We always think we can do it, don't we? But those wet floors will get you faster than quicksand. I learned that years ago as a waitress on the closing shift, rushing from my empty tables to the kitchen and back as I ticked items off my to-do list, trying to stay ahead of my tasks so we could lock the doors by 9 p.m. Invariably, my to-do list collided with the dishwasher's, whose job it was to mop before closing time. Each night I would find myself coming back from the carpeted dining area with an arm full of dishes only to find the tile floor glossy and wet, stretching out between me and the wait station like a demilitarized zone.

Rather than accepting defeat and waiting for five minutes until the floor had dried enough to be safely crossed, I often chose instead to tempt fate, timidly venturing a step on the slick tile, feeling certain that if I moved only by fractions of motion, I could keep my legs beneath me.

And that, dear reader, is how I broke my tailbone.

It's the same each time I find myself writing or talking about the Holy Trinity. Three persons, truly distinct and consubstantial. When I think of it, I feel exactly as I did all those years ago, dithering

on the precipice of the wet floor. *Can I make it? I wonder. Can I capture in words the truth of this doctrine without erring? Can I cross the steppe without slipping?*

When I do take a step onto that proverbial wet floor, I cling to the balustrades of scripture and tradition, relying on the words of others whose scholarship is so much greater than my own. There's nothing wrong with that, because you can't go wrong drawing from the wisdom of saints and theologians. But for a long time, it meant that I avoided reflecting too deeply within myself on the mystery of the Trinity, particularly that of the Third Person.

The Holy Spirit is the slipperiest of them all, isn't He? For years, I didn't quite know what to make of Him, and so I ignored Him. It was much easier for me to dwell on God the Father and God the Son, I can easily picture them in my mind as physical *persons*. The Holy Spirit, at every turn, defies such delineation, and He eluded my imagination. A dove, a flame — these are worthy artistic representations, but are they *enough*? I find myself staring at depictions of the Holy Spirit in art and feeling incomplete, as if I am being shown only a small part of a larger photograph or reading a paragraph with whole sentences redacted.

The Holy Spirit proceeds. He is poured out. He is brought forth. He is declared. He takes possession. How do I visualize that? How do I relate to it?

"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now," Christ told his disciples in the Gospel of John. And in the same way, there was a time I could not bear the fullness of the Spirit of Truth. I was not strong enough for it, and perhaps I still am not. Are any of us? The truth can be terrifying.

But God, in His mercy, has given to us the sacraments, and in them He communicates through word and matter but also through something else — something I can't describe and never could, but which I know intimately as truth. There was a profound sensation of familiarity — of warmth, of homecoming, of safety — that bloomed deep within me as the bishop sealed my forehead with his chrism-dipped thumb at my Confirmation all those years ago. I was shocked because I had done absolutely nothing special to encourage this feeling. There was so much I didn't know. There was so much I couldn't accept. There was so much I feared and resented. All I had done was show up and kneel.

But I would feel this way again at my wedding, and many times in the confessional. If I had any memory of my infant baptism, I think I would recall it from that moment, too. It was very much like the experience of slipping on a wet floor, and feeling your legs fly out from beneath you — only to land in a strong, steady embrace.

## PRAYER

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen.

And thus, my knowledge of the Trinity, in its mysterious entirety, grows not through scholarship or meditation but through grace.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman