



Trinity: The Basic Model for All Relationships

BY PATRICIA K. THOMPSON

I write this on the first anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks in New York. My subject is what the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit tells us about our own relationships.

How strange this focus as I recall my trip on the local trolley line out of Pittsburgh last year, sandwiched between all the other evacuees from downtown. Cell phones abounded, all of us attempting to reach loved ones near and far. The tangible web of relationship amazed me.

My most profound prayer always has been that, as I live out what I see as a very blessed life here and now, I can be faithful to the relationship mirrored to me by the mystery of the Trinity.

If Trinity tells us of God's inner relationship, then how much more does it tell us about our own bonds with others – within families, in workplaces and the places where we worship?

Energy flows profoundly as our hearts, connected in their very essence by these bonds, propel us into relationship. This is not just a "feel-good" concept. Rather, it is our sustaining force as we go about our daily tasks, bolstered by the knowledge that we truly are supported in everything by a deep connection with others.



New York Fire Department Lt. Tom Cunneen plays the bagpipes outside St. Peter Church following a Mother's Day Mass for mothers of fallen U.S. military men and women May 8 in New York. Cunneen stands next to the cross made of steel beams recovered from the rubble of the World Trade Center towers after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Husbands, wives, children, single people, celibates: We all know the potential to which Trinity beckons us. We trust in the depth of each other's goodness. And though in times of events such as the 2001 atrocities this is quite hidden to many eyes, we rise from hatred's ashes with a profound belief that these bonds still exist. We continue to reach out, to be vulnerable to one another, to strengthen one another.

I moved recently from being an adjunct health care ethics teacher to being the director of adult faith formation and initiation at a local parish. My experience as a musician, Hospice professional and teacher is being mobilized in ways I never expected.

The challenge, nurturing relationships in faith, is daunting, but fueled by my belief that the Holy Spirit is profoundly present in this place, at this particular time. It is our faith tradition that Jesus, upon returning to the Father, gave us the Spirit to guide us. And this belief fosters our courage in relationship, even when things seem darkest and most menacing.

Mystery or not, the reality of the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit models our ideal bonds – those of trust, openness, strength and inspiration in the face of sometimes discouraging forces. May we live them courageously!

At the time this was published by the Catholic News Service, Thompson served as director of Adult Faith Formation and Initiation at a parish near Pittsburgh.