

CREATE: THE CLEARING

Lent, 2024 with Icons Through Western Eyes with Russell Hart

3/10/24 - The Old Testament Trinity



Our first encounter with the Triune God of Scripture is found in the first creation narrative of Genesis 1:26, where the Father says, “Let us make humankind in our own image, after the likeness of ourselves.” The second appears in the eighteenth chapter where three heavenly visitors appear to Abraham and Sarah at the Oak of Mamre, with news concerning the birth of their son Isaac. For the Eastern Church, this is the first manifestation of the Trinity and the beginning of a process that will find fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost. In the icon, the heavenly visitors appear as winged beings, which identifies them as messengers from the heavenly realm.

Any discussion of the Trinity must be preceded by encounter, and the realization that we cannot know *what* God is, only *that* God is, because we cannot grasp with our minds that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are essentially one God. When we pray “our Father” we cannot separate the three Persons of the Trinity, for as Jesus told his disciples, “I and the Father are one.” The mystery of the Trinity must be Revelation before it can be speculation.

The doctrine of the Trinity tells us that in God there is something analogous to “community.” Just as human life becomes authentic and personal when it is shared, so God is not a single Person dwelling alone, but three Persons who share each others’ life in perfect love. This tells us that there may be no other way to be saved except through our neighbor. In truth, where there is no “social holiness”, there is no Christianity at all.

Eternal Triune God,
Let all the hosts above,
Let all on earth below record
And dwell upon thy love.
When heaven and earth are fled
Before thy glorious face,
Sing all the saints thy love hath made
Thine everlasting praise.
~ Charles Wesley