

Hide and Seek

How can the number One be the number Three? Or vice versa how can the number Three be simply the number One? How can each person of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) be divine yet together amount to only One Divinity and no more?

Right away there is something about us human beings that wants to solve that riddle. Emily Dickinson shied away from using the word God but she did believe in something as when she wrote: *This World is not conclusion. / A Species stands beyond - / Invisible, as Music - / But positive as Sound - / It beckons and it baffles - / Philosophy don't know - / And through a Riddle, at the last - / Sagacity must go - . . .*

We tend to look for something logical behind the world, behind the phenomena around us. Illogical things, mysteries make us uncomfortable. And yet they also entice us, test the reach of our minds, our wish to control our environment. They obsess us the way the Holy Grail obsessed the Knights of the Round Table or the top of Mt. Everest seduces climbers, so many of whom die trying to reach its summit in air so thin (at 29,000 feet) it can take a climber twelve hours to cover the mere distance of one mile.

One of our favorite games as kids on the street was “hide and seek”. The searcher (the boy who was *It*) had to place his eyes against his forearm raised against a wall or a tree and count to ten – and then “Ready or not, here I come!” And his playmates could be anywhere in the dark. Excitement had begun. That’s how we are: always looking to catch someone, something, capture the mystery of things – making of life in general a game, making life interesting, to escape the boredom we expect if we have nothing left to discover. For theologians a God who is three divine persons but somehow only One Divinity, a Holy Trinity, meets that need, maintains that challenge.

But, writes Emily Dickinson, what if such a game proves too hard to play, what if there is no solution because there is no God at all? *But should the play / Prove piercing earnest - / Should the glee – glaze - / In Death's – stiff – stare - // Would not the jest - / Have crawled too far!* (Why not relax and smell the daisies?)

Still Emily in that same poem can't let go of her conviction that there is something more in no uncertain terms: *I know that He exists. / Somewhere – in silence – / He has hid his rare life / From our gross eyes. // 'Tis an instant's play - / 'Tis a fond Ambush - / Just to make Bliss / Earn her own surprise!*

As when in response to Philip's request: *Master, show us the Father and that will be enough for us*, Jesus complains: *Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me [in the flesh] has seen the Father.* And we might add the Holy Spirit as well!