

**Trinity Sunday – Year A – June 19, 2011**  
**Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28: 16-20**  
**Susan E. Wilmot**

I've been fascinated with other worlds ever since I discovered the *Land of the Giants* on TV as a child, Mary Norton's book, *The Borrowers*, and Jonathan Swift's classic satire, *Gulliver's Travels*. In each of these works of imagination, the protagonists find themselves in the alien surroundings of giant friends or foes. In the case of Gulliver, he's both a giant in a world of Lilliputians, and a Lilliputian equivalent in a land of giants. Each work offers apparent paradoxes and strange familiarities. There are struggles and joys as the characters build relationships and form new communities. There are lessons on the human condition, and how to live a good life. You and I are also fellow travelers in a strange yet strangely familiar world.

Today is Trinity Sunday. Our exploration of the revealed nature of God as three in one, begins in faraway lands and timeless realms that are as close and familiar as our heartbeat. This is not a work of fiction, but it **is** the work of a master author. Creation, the world in which we live, is not a satire of reality, but serves the purposes of *the* ultimate reality, without Whom there is no life, no earth, no universe, nothing. God has graciously shared God's self with us through creation, and most especially through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Lord. It's the nature of God to overflow with abundant love and grace. It's the nature of God to give life, to redeem the whole of creation, and to sustain all life. As we'll discover, God's power is not self-possessive, self-absorbed, or self-preserving. The unity that is the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is grounded in perfect love, mutuality, and self-giving. As our readings tell us, our role in God's creation is that of steward. We are stewards of the earth, environment, all God's creatures, and ourselves, as well as stewards of God's Word, the Good News of Jesus Christ. As we embark on this journey together, hear and accept with thanks all God's blessings and gifts, and consider how we respond in deep gratitude by sharing all that we have in Him.

Genesis opens with these words, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said..." And so the story begins. It's not just any story, but the story of God's self-revelation, and God's endless love and grace. The plot is full of fascinating twists and turns. Today, we're going to experience it from Gulliver's giant perspective as if he is striding across the land of Lilliput. The big pieces of this story go like this. Before anything else, God simply IS. In an amazing outpouring of love, God creates everything that we know as the cosmos, this world, and all living creatures. As Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann puts it; the story of creation in Genesis is "neither history nor myth. Rather... [it] is a proclamation of God's decisive dealing with creation.... [T]he verb "create" is ... without analogy. [Always linked to God as subject] it refers to the special action by God and to the special relation which binds these two parties together. Creator creates creation.... This affirms that the creator is not disinterested and the creation is not autonomous... [This] is a proclamation of covenanting as the shape of reality." Our God is in relationship, and extends that relationship through creation and covenant with His children.

Our next giant stride plants us firmly in the Garden of Eden, where human pride and disobedience, lead us into sin and temptation. This is how humanity exercises free will to turn away from God. Turning away from living in the fullness of God's love, we become fractured, allowing a huge gap to open up in our being. Since nature abhors a vacuum, we look for stuff to fill the hole. It's a cruel deception, like putting saccharin water in a hummingbird feeder instead of sugar water. The hummingbirds are attracted to the sweetness, but because it's not real sugar, they feed and feed, but eventually starve to death. We too can easily become spiritually starved by filling our lives with the world, or by neglecting the spiritual disciplines that help us to stay close to God. Even when we turn away from God, God never stops revealing the true nature of love to us, or desiring our return. However, authentic love is never coerced, it is always freely given.

Even as we're compelled to leave the Garden, God walks with us. He calls the Israelites to form a covenant community, and provides the Law as a way to live a life pleasing to God. Israel is charged as a light bearer to the world, pointing to God as the source of all light and life. When Israel loses her way, God speaks through the prophets to re-call His people to faithfulness and justice. In the constant struggle for human power, the Law is abused and manipulated. God's response is to become incarnate as a human being. Jesus' teaching challenges the corruption inherent in human power structures, and corrects the misrepresentations of the Law. Jesus reveals the true nature of God as perfect love. Remember that love is only possible in relationship. Our travels do not stop with Jesus' life and teachings. Even in the face of certain death, Jesus does not misuse His power to save His own life. He freely gives His life into the hands of the Father, knowing that only God has the power to give life, knowing that the power to redeem the whole world lies in His resurrection, and knowing that all life is sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As you'd expect there are more than giant footprints to follow. There are smaller steppingstones, passageways and bridges that help us to see the reality of God more clearly. There are clues all over God's beautiful and incredibly intricate creation, and in the details of God's word in Scripture. After the resurrection of Jesus, the earliest Christian communities wrote about their experiences and their changing perception of the one God. The Gospel of John, captures the new thing that God has done in creation through the person of Jesus Christ in these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Gospel writer provides us with an intimate look at the development of a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the nature of God. The words of Genesis, "Then God said," become the divine Word creating all things, before becoming the Word made flesh. Genesis tells of the wind or Spirit of God sweeping over the face of the waters. The Gospel of John reveals this Spirit as the same Spirit witnessed by John the Baptist descending on Jesus like a dove at His baptism; and the same Spirit promised by Jesus to His disciples. The Holy Spirit fills the disciples on the day of Pentecost. From the earliest days of the Christian tradition, just like Jesus, you and I receive the Holy Spirit at our Baptism.

Our part in this glorious story is in a different space, and a different time, yet it also fits into the mosaic of giant narrative leaps and the smaller stepping-stones. We have made Our Saviour our spiritual home, and community of faith. Our parts of this unfinished story interweave with the stories of millions of God's children. Our unity as members of Christ's Body is found in relationship. God's unity is also found in the relationship between each person of the Holy Trinity: the lover, the beloved, and the love that flows between them. You won't find the word 'Trinity' in the Bible. The doctrine was born from experiencing the reality of the Living God, living as Jesus taught, and feeling compelled to share God's love generously with others. I've already heard quite a lot about this community's tremendous response to those displaced by the wildfires. Our outpouring of love and support, of generosity and self-giving, is living proof of our faith in action. Thank you all. I'm so proud to be a part of this community. Our freedom in Christ is the freedom to love others by sharing all that sustains us.

Whether our faith is as big as Gulliver is to the Lilliputians, or as small as the Lilliputians are in relation to Gulliver's vast size, God loves us equally and unconditionally. Created in God's image, when we love God with our whole heart and soul, mind and strength, you and I reflect the love that is the essence of God in the *relationship* of the Trinity. Created in the image of God, when we love one another, and our neighbors as ourselves, you and I mirror the beauty of God's selfless love in the *community* of the Trinity. The story continues to unfold as God's love flows in, through, and beyond time and space, drawing all of creation back to His perfect goodness, and constantly creating a world made new in the perfect love of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.