

This year we marked the passing of the most celebrated cosmologist of our time: Stephen Hawking. This professor at Cambridge University was probably best known for his little book entitled A Brief History of Time. In the book he put into layman's terms how the universe works. Even after he was diagnosed with ALS Hawking kept writing and lecturing on the unending quest to formulate a theory of everything: How and why the cosmos works the way it does and what it means for us.

In many ways our celebration of the Trinity this week end is the Church's attempt to cobble together a sacred theory of everything. Simply stated the doctrine of the Trinity affirms that there is one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons are coequal and coeternal.

This doctrine is the result of a lot of prayer, worship, and discussion. It was not solidified until the third and fourth century with much debate between prominent theologians like Tertullian and Augustine. But if one looks closely at the scripture they can see bits and pieces from the prayer and religious experience of the early believers which would eventually shape the church's official formulation of the Trinity doctrine.

Our readings today carry some of the pieces I just alluded to. In our first reading from Deuteronomy Moses is reflecting with the people on the reality of the God they have just experienced in their journey through the desert. This God is unique and clearly this God is powerful. This God is Lord of all. While the author of Deuteronomy did not have the Trinity in mind when he composed this book he certainly presented an understanding of God as a dynamic unique being who is all powerful and creative.

In St. Paul's letter to the Romans, our second reading, He is reflecting on the new relationship believers have with their God due to the Holy Spirit that is within them. Believers are now understood to be the adopted sons and daughters of God and coheirs with Jesus Christ.

Finally in the conclusion of Matthew's gospel, we witness the great commissioning; that point when Jesus calls his disciples together for the last time and commissions them to go out and make disciples of all nations. This introduces a much broader scope to the Christian mission. This mission now includes all people and nations. The church has now been instructed to go global. What is significant is Jesus' mandate to go out and make disciples, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is one of the clearest expression of the belief in the Trinity. This prayer most likely from an early Christian

baptismal rite indicates how the church first expressed its belief in the Trinity through prayer and worship.

Like a giant jigsaw puzzle, all these pieces have come together to create a unified picture of this mystery we call the Trinity.