Today’s Gospel from John is just four verses – a few sentences – drawn out of the great well of our Lord’s last extended conversation with his disciples. They are gathered in an upper room; a five-minute walk from Herod’s Temple. They are in that room for what we have come to know as the Last Supper; that pregnant moment when Jesus takes bread and wine and tells us that his body will be broken and his blood shed.

John’s telling of that night, however, is unlike Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John has no bread and wine, or Eucharistic words defining what they are and how they will sustain our lives. For John, Jesus is the “Bread of Life” and a wedding’s wine. John knows every detail of the last supper. He knows it well because he dined at that table sitting right beside our Lord. John seems to need to tell about these last hours in another way. It is that other way we hear this Trinity Sunday.
What does our Lord say? In a word, he looks at the people in that room, their faces shadowed by oil lamps, (perhaps with a fire burning in a hearth), and tells them that it will be impossible for him to tell them all he needs them to know. His life, if you please, will come to that brutal moment when he says with finality “It is finished” but his word, his instruction, will still need more time to unfold in new ways with unimagined meanings.

How will that happen? He tells the disciples and us that “the Spirit of truth” will come to interpret to their hearts and through their lives the ongoing, unfolding, yet-to-be-revealed wonder of the good news that is Jesus Christ. In time and over time, the Spirit will show them how to be God’s community of love just as the Father showed our Lord how to become the Lamb of God. Here, in just four tiny verses, we glimpse the mystery of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – that is for us and within us and even beyond us …our faithful guide to follow the risen Lord.
We first see the blessed Trinity at work in being a faithful guiding presence. As believers, we make a mistake in trying too hard to bear witness to God’s presence in our world. At times we pray asking God to be present as we gather around the table of remembrance, (all the while forgetting …God has never been absent). In times of tragedy and misfortune, we ask God to come and help us, (unaware that God has never left us). Of all the words we could summon to define the being of God, we must put the word “presence” at the very top!

This “presence” may be no better illustrated than in marriage. For a man and a woman to live together for 10, 20, 40 or more years is to imagine more than a few times that they have known unspeakable wonder. Love is a powerful, creative, energizing emotion in the human spirit that so stirs our souls that our bodies respond in love to the other. But a marriage also knows times of great sorrow. Death claims a parent or, God forbid, a child. There may be the loss of a job, the abandonment of friends, and eventually the loss of one’s beloved. But through every chapter of a healthy, growing marriage is the awareness of the other. So
it is at an even more intimate level with God. God is revealed as
gracious Father, giving Son, and guiding Holy Spirit.

Second, the Holy Trinity is at work in being **a faithful guiding**
teacher. The Spirit of truth is the divine teacher, instructing, defining,
and shaping who we are as persons and what we are to be as God’s
Church. The most used title for our Lord during his earthly ministry was
rabbī or teacher. We hear Jesus addressed by the rich young ruler as
“Good teacher” and by Mary Magdalene in the garden as “Rabboni” or
“My Teacher!” That role of being the guiding, faithful teacher has and
will always be the work of God in our midst.

The recent election of Pope Francis reminds the Catholic Church
that God appoints some to be the identified teacher in our midst. As
Pontiff, Pope Francis has the responsibility to be a faithful teacher to the
Roman Catholic Church and, in a larger sense, to all Christians who
acknowledge the Church as one reality in God’s world expressed in
many different ways. I believe if Pope Francis were among us today, he
would quickly say that he believes his teaching comes to him from the Holy Spirit. Likewise, we who follow Jesus Christ are to be guided by God’s presence among us as faithful teacher.

Something else is astir in this text we would be wise to embrace. The Trinity is faithful presence and guiding teacher, but Spirit of truth is also a faithful guiding listener. Notice the conversation our Lord imagines taking place between himself as only Son and the Spirit: “He will speak whatever he hears and will declare to you the things that are to come.” We who claim the risen Lord, view the life of faith through his life, his death, and his resurrection. He is the perfect revelation of God, the presence of God in human flesh crucified and raised in glory. So Jesus becomes for us the interpreter of who God is just as the Spirit now interprets to us ways we are to follow Jesus in our day.

Listening is such an important human ability we often neglect and at times abuse. My grandmother said long ago: “God gave us two ears and one mouth to remind us we ought to listen twice as much as we
speak.” Too often, we of faith open our proverbial mouth and insert our dirty, awkward foot and in so doing misrepresent the faith and our Lord. Our lesson reminds us that the Trinity revealed through the Spirit listens to Jesus and then speaks to us what Jesus says and how Jesus would have us live and what Jesus expectations are for us. Trinity Sunday is a good day for all of us to re-commit our lives to being good listeners.

Finally, the mystery of God revealed in the Trinity shows us the Spirit of truth is a faithful guiding advocate. Though not in today’s Gospel, we find in the previous chapter of John’s Gospel our Lord defining the Spirit of truth as “the Advocate.” Jesus said “When the Advocate comes, he will testify on my behalf.” In other words, the Spirit not only reveals the full nature of Jesus to us, but the Spirit becomes our Advocate saying to others that we belong to Jesus. The Spirit, if you please, vouches for us, claims us as belonging to Christ, and helps us define who we are as followers of Jesus Christ.
Trinity Sunday only comes once a year, but as Christian believers, everyday is a day to celebrate the Holy Trinity in our midst as faithful guide as we follow the risen Lord.