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We are living in the digital era. Digital technologies are transforming our ways of living, communicating, and working in many areas, and digital innovation is a core driving force of our economy and growth. Many people are trying to invent something innovative for their businesses or nation.

But, invention isn't easy at all. We normally call Thomas Edison the father of modern invention. He created great innovations that have had a huge impact on human life such as the phonograph, the light bulb, and the motion picture. But, his amazing success was based on countless mistakes and failures.

For example, for inventing the light bulb he had failed more than 10,000 times. To find the best filament for light bulbs, he had to experiment with more than 2,000 materials. One day one of his assistants was very disappointed and said, “We did all that for nothing.”

Then, Edison told him, “No, we have gained a lot from those failures. At least we have learnt 2,000 materials that we cannot use for making a good light bulb.” Yes, there is no meaningless failure. We can learn many insights from mistakes, and use them as a solid foundation on which to base further progress.

So, nowadays, there are conferences celebrating the failures and frustrations in diverse research areas. Such conferences can be a great opportunity to listen to others' failures, silences, gaps, and missed steps to see a clearer picture. This morning I want to use this format, highlighting the failure to talk about the doctrine of the Trinity.

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Today is Trinity Sunday, the day for celebrating the mystery of the Triune God. Yes, the doctrine of the Trinity is mystery. New World Encyclopedia explains the doctrine as follows: “The doctrine, following Tertullian and the subsequent approval of his formulation by the Church, affirms that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not identical with one another nor separate from one another but simply three distinct persons of one substance.”

The essence of the Trinity doctrine is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God in three divine persons. But it is so hard to comprehend it by

reason, so there have been lots of debates over the belief for a long time in the Christian history and many teachings of it have been judged as heresies.

What’s interesting is that many explanations of the doctrine that we have learnt are based on incorrect theological understanding. I would like to share some wrong parables of the Trinity to highlight the exact meaning of the doctrine.

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First of all, you might hear the parable of one man. In this parable, the Triune God is described as one person with three roles. For example, a man can be the father of his children, the son of his parents, and the husband of his wife at the same time. Some people say that like the person with the three titles, God can be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – three different modes depending on the context.

However, this explanation is a form of Modalism, a “heretical view that denies the individual persons of the Trinity.” God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are three persons, not one person with three modes.

Another famous parable of the Trinity is the analogy of the sun. The people using this metaphor describe God the Father as the Sun, Jesus as the light of the Sun, and the Holy Spirit as the heat of the Sun. They explain Jesus as the sunlight, quoting his saying in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

They also argue that the Holy Spirit is like the solar heat enabling us to feel the hot Sun, taking the Day of Pentecost as an example. At that occasion, the Spirit came on the disciples like tongues of fire. They think that this is the way the Triune God works together, but this is a form of Subordinationism because the sunlight and the solar heat are just parts of the Sun, not the Sun itself.

Subordinationism claims “God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are subordinate to God the Father in nature and being.” In the doctrine of the Trinity, however, we believe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all are the divine God distinctively.

Finally, I want to present one more wrong explanation of the Trinity; that is the analogy of the tree. The people accepting this metaphor try to explain the Trinity by dividing the Triune God into God as the root, Jesus as the trunk, and

the Holy Spirit as the branch. They say that as the root, trunk and branches form one tree, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit form one God.

They maintain that as a tree photosynthesises, blooms, and bears fruit in cooperation with the roots, trunk, and branches, the Triune God saves us through that divine partnership. But, the analogy of the tree is a form of Partialism, the belief that “the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit together are components of the one God and become fully God when they come together.”

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We’ve taken a look at some examples of the Trinitarian heresies that have been used as popular analogies for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity. This brief examination highlighted the core meaning of the doctrine; yes, ‘Three in Unity.’ As you know, the term Trinity is composed of two words, Three and Unity.

The word *Unity* in the doctrine of the Trinity shows how the three persons of God cooperate; Tritheism means that there are three different Gods separately, while the Trinity claims that three different persons of God are in unity through the intimacy and interpenetration.

The doctrine of the Trinity is indispensable in understanding God’s characters and his salvation ministry; on top of that the dogma provides us the most important principle of how to live as a Christian. As the 120 disciples became the church as a witness through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we are all called to be the church.

A remarkable thing was that at that time those believers spoke in other tongues and those different languages proclaimed the same truth of God’s salvation; as a result a diverse group of people from all nations could believe in God sharing one God, one Hope, and one Mission, which means the unity of all Christians in diversity.

Yes, we Christians as the church should lead a life achieving unity in diversity, exactly the same way of living and working of the Trinity of God; this is the way God created us human beings in Genesis 1, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.”

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I would like to finalise today’s message by reading a part of Jürgen Moltmann’s writing on the Trinity. It is a bit long, but worth reading to understand what it means to believe and live in the Triune God.

The trinitarian unity of the Son and the Father through the Spirit is a model for the relationships of men and women in the Spirit of Christ. The unity of the Church resides neither in the monarchy of God, nor in God as a supreme, divine essence, but in the trinitarian communion of God. However, this trinitarian community is so wide and so open that the Church and the whole world can “live” within it. The prayer of Jesus that “you may be one in us” is a prayer that is answered. Whether we know it or not we not only believe in the triune God, but also “live” in the triune God.

This reciprocal, sometimes called mystical, “living in God” also belongs to the trinitarian life. . . . “We in God and God in us” is not meant merely as some sort of fleeting, mystical rapture, but is a daily relaxing, quiet and intimate “living.” I find this picture of a mutual indwelling ever more beautiful and convincing. The triune God is a “habitable” God: he allows us to become one within him. If the world becomes “inhabitable” for God, then the restless God of history comes to his rest. The Church is an icon of the trinity. Its community of freedom and equality illuminates the image of the triune God. (From <https://goo.gl/pWwZL9>)

Sisters and brothers,

Yes, to believe in the Triune God means living a trinitarian life following our social God who is rich in internal and external relationships. Amen.