

The writing in the Gospel this morning is worthy of Paul at his most convoluted, his least clear. “I am in you and you are in me, we are in each other, and the other is in his cousin once removed, and they are all one..” It makes my head hurt.

But then I thought—how difficult it is to describe this concept of transcending wholeness, the interconnectedness of all life, the concept that God is All in all. How does one really describe how God is in us, and us in God, and Jesus in both?

I mean: try it. What would you say?

John gives it the old college try in concrete words, but I think that I for one, sometimes understand things better through imagery or metaphor.

I've been doing puzzles a lot lately. I think it's safe to say I have become somewhat fond of them. Some of my family might say obsessed.

I don't think it's that bad, but I do look forward to my puzzle time.

I couldn't always do puzzles because I had a cat who delighted in knocking pieces onto the floor, where they would disappear—either to some twilight zone under heavy furniture, or more likely, chewed to bits.

But my current cat can't do much jumping due to a gammy leg—and my puzzles are safe.

Puzzles keep offering me new insights into life. Particularly life in our spiritual journey.

For instance: many pieces ALMOST fit in a given place, but only one fits well enough so that the other pieces around it also fit.

Another thing: I find it helps to get up- physically move around the board and look at things from another angle. More often than not I suddenly find a

piece I've been looking for all over the table- I only see it because I'm looking at it from a different direction.

You know, with puzzles, you look at the box, you look at the colors, you think a certain piece you are looking for will be a certain color or have a particular distinguishing mark. I can't tell you how many times the correct piece didn't look anything like what I was looking for or expected, and yet—when you see it in place, it completely fits.

And-- there have been times I was sure I was missing some pieces of the puzzle-- nothing even looked close to what I was sure I needed. Sometimes I even berated the poor cat for somehow stealing a piece.... But in the end, all the pieces were there. I just couldn't see until the end where they fit.

That's one way of understanding the oneness of God and humanity. Interlocking puzzle pieces -- where it's hard to see the pattern from the perspective of the individual puzzle piece. Or even from the perspective of a half done puzzle.

"The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one..."

Ok-- my head still hurts. Yours?

I was riding into the city of Phoenix on the bus, kind of looking out the window at the hundreds of people walking around downtown. I remember thinking there were so many people, and I didn't know any of them. I thought about how all of them had their own stories, their own hopes, their own struggles. And I didn't know anything about them.

It was odd to sit there thinking about how each of us goes through our lives acting as if our lives, and our thoughts, and our issues take up our whole world.

But God—God knows each of those people—those hundreds of people I saw from the bus—and millions around the world, God knows them as intimately as God knows me. And their lives are just as important to God as mine is.

Each person's life is unique. Each person is important. As important as I think I am.

In a flash—on the bus, I had a sense that all of us were a part of a vast entity. All of us alone in our head, but somehow, on some level, all of us interconnected in this thing called the realm of God.

And then it was gone. And now-- when I try and share that experience with others-- it doesn't have the impact on them that it did on me-- that it still does on me. An unasked for moment of grace on a bus.

The more I think about this oneness thing-- the more I realize it's going to be impossible for us to break it down into one example that will resonate with all of us.

God's oneness with us will always by definition be mystery.

You could say that we are pieces in the puzzle of God. And as the puzzle is being put together, remember that sometimes the vital pieces may fool us, challenge us, look different than what we expect. Some of us are one color, some another, we are shaped differently. Some of us may not see where we fit in right away, but in time everybody fits.

I imagine that the oneness of God will finally astonish us when we see the completed picture. Amen.