

One love that looks like two

By [Susan Palo Cherwien](#)

May 3, 2015

*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page, which includes Cherwien's current Living by the Word column as well as past magazine and blog content. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

Did you ever make a Möbius strip in grade school or high school? You may have seen one [in the woodcuts of M.C. Escher](#). They are made by taking a strip of paper, say, eight inches long and an inch wide. You hold the two ends, give one a half-twist, then tape the two ends together to form a loop.

You look at the resulting shape and your mind says, "This shape has two sides and two edges." But if you take a pen and start to draw a line on only one side of the strip, you eventually, without lifting the pen, meet the starting point of your line. It is one continuous side, not two.

As the psalmist sings, God spoke one and I heard two (62:11). "As the Father has loved me," says Jesus in this week's Gospel reading, "so I have loved you; abide in my love." There is one love, one divine love that flows from God to Christ to the community and from the community to Christ and God and back again. There is one loving presence in the universe, in Christ, in us—and that is God. What seems to be two is in fact one.

The Möbius strip is just one way of trying to imagine the intimacy and relationship of God to Christ, and Christ to us, and us to God. Where does the vine stop and the branches begin? Where does the ocean stop and the wave begin? Where does each side of the Möbius strip begin? Saint Paul said to the Athenians, "In [God] we live and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

In one of Hildegard von Bingen's visions, described in *De Operatione Dei (On the Work of God)*, she sees a spherical universe, with a human at the center, clasped to

the chest of a fiery figure in whom the universe resides. Who is this?

Love appearing in human form, the Love of our heavenly Father... Love—in the power of the everlasting Godhead, full of exquisite beauty, marvelous in its mysterious gifts.

For Hildegard, Divine Love is the basic energy underlying, holding, shaping, molding, embracing the universe, all its creatures, and, thus, us.

"God is love," says 1 John. "In [God] we live and move and have our being," says Paul. "Abide in my love... Love one another," says Christ.

In this season of Easter, it is good to reflect on the love of God that creates the world, the love of God made flesh in Christ, the love of God going to the cross, the love of God making us new through such intimate connection. It is good to reflect on "I in them and you in me" (John 17:23).

Our brother Saint Augustine preaches to us from the past in his Easter sermon "The New Chant":

Sing with the voice, sing with the heart, sing with the mouth, but sing with your whole life: *Sing to the Lord a new song...* Doubtless it is what you love that you wish to sing of. You would like to know his glory to sing of it. You want to know what is his glory? His glory is the assembly of saints. The glory of him who is sung about is nothing other than the one who sings about it. *Become yourself the glory you sing of.*

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." We are not separate from God, from Christ. Let us sing with our lives the underlying oneness of God's love in the universe and in Christ—and become the glory we sing of.