



ICON: THE RUBLEV TRINITY

RESOURCE 3.1



Egg tempera on carved wood, Athens, Greece, 2001 after the original icon of Rublev

This famous icon was originally written by Andrai Rublev in the 15th century. The icon depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. It may also be interpreted as depicting the walk to Emmaus. This icon is often used to depict invitation and hospitality and therefore it is an appropriate image for evangelism. This is one of the icons we use for the Come and See Membership Growth campaign.

Too often, we simply hope that our churches will grow. We hope new members, with new pledges, with new eyes, new hands, and new hearts will arrive to keep our churches and dioceses strong and growing. However, very little happens without some effort. Pledges come because we ask for them, even sometimes aggressively and with clear, measurable outcomes that indicate effectiveness in leadership and effort.

Raising people is as important to a church or diocese as raising money. The two are intertwined. In these stories, an action was taken to offer invitation. The invitation was spoken out loud and spoken in the midst of encounter and relationship. In both stories, the host(s) took initiative, and in conversation, made an invitation. It was clear. It was measurable and it resulted in arrivals and a deepening encounter. This, we believe, is a powerful way to grow a church. And we believe that just as a church can raise money with measurable objectives like pledges and “asks,” so too a membership campaign can raise people with measurable objectives like conversation-pledges and invitation/welcome training.

Genesis 18:1-5

or -

Luke 24: 28-35

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!”³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Prayer:

Blessed are you, Lord God, who so longed to unite us to you that you came to be among us as Jesus, the Christ who called his friends and those he met along the Way to “come and see” what He was doing to change lives and unveil the Kingdom of God. You spoke the world into existence, and you sent Jesus as the Word made flesh. Incline us to live into having been made in your image by helping us to reach out and speak. Turn our hearts and minds outward, to the community around our churches and our lives, and give us courage to identify those we will invite into the joy which we have in this church. Give us strength to pledge our word that we will have those invitatory conversations, and then be present in those conversations through your Holy Spirit. And so inspire joy in our congregation that those who come and see might be led to join us. You, blessed Holy Trinity, sit in welcome of us. So bless us that we welcome others. *Amen.*