

TRINITY SUNDAY MAY 22, 2016

1st Reading: Proverbs 8:22-31 [When God established the heavens, I was there]

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 8 ["O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!"]

2nd Reading: Romans 5:1-5 [In Christ, the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit]

Gospel: John 16:12-15 [Everything the Father has belongs to Christ; the Spirit will take from what is theirs & give it to you]

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.

When the Spirit of truth comes, **he** will guide you to all truth.

She will not speak on **her** own, but will speak what **she** hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming.

He will glorify me,

because **he** will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

Everything that the Father has is mine;

That is why I told you that the Spirit

will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

(John 16:12-15)

In the first reading, we read about Wisdom - an image of the Holy Spirit. A few verses later, we read "*Wisdom has built herself a house ...she has laid her table.*" In Hebrew, the word for Spirit is feminine - that is why I used 3 feminine pronouns to balance the 3 masculine ones in the English translation of the Gospel I just read. In Greek, the word for spirit is neuter, neither masculine nor feminine. If we refer to the Holy Spirit as only he or she, we can miss the truth that the Scripture and the Church teach: that our God is neither male nor female, and that God can be imaged as both.

The mystery of the Trinity that we celebrate today is not only about who **God** is, it also shows us who **we** are - since we are women and men created in the image & likeness of God. But there is even more this mystery can teach us about who we are!

Because God is Father, we are *all* children of one God, and the whole human race is one family.

Because Jesus came as a human being, we are sisters and brothers to him and to each other, and whatever is human can lead us to God. Pope John Paul II used to say over and over that Christ is the model and ideal of what it means to be human.

Because the Holy Spirit is the living flame of God's love within us, we have the power to hear God's voice in our hearts and to follow it, no matter where it leads.

As I was praying over the Mystery of the Trinity, I heard a song in my heart.

♪ *I Fall on my knees to the Father of Jesus,
the Lord who has shown us the glory of God.
May he in His love give us strength for our living,
The strength of the Spirit, the glory of God.
May Christ find a dwelling place of faith in our hearts,
May our lives be rooted in love, rooted in love.* ♪

If our lives are rooted in love, they are in a living relationship with the true God, and they reveal the inner nature of God - as Creator, Word, and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity reveals our God as a **Holy Relationship of life-giving love**. The simplest way to describe the Holy Trinity is to say, "**God is Love!**" Elizabeth Johnson puts it this way: "God lives as the mystery of love. Human beings are created in the image of this God."

To help us understand what the Trinity has to do with us, I have a story & a puppet:

Some years ago, I was in New Orleans, visiting a former student. My friend invited me to go to an open AA meeting which he was chairing that night in the French quarter.

They were discussing the 3rd step of AA,

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God."

A man stood up and spoke about how he had first met God as his **higher power**, the one who had pulled him out of the gutter of his addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

Then he talked about how he had met God in the **people** who surrounded him at meetings, in the group ("in the rooms").

Finally, he spoke of the God who lived **within** him.

I marveled at his description of what we celebrate today, the God whom we call on when we pray in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

If we let God in by admitting that we are not in control of everything, we are pulled out of the pit by a Father whose love is as tender as a mother's love; we are joined to the Christ whom we meet through each other; and we meet the God who is Spirit within and between us,

making us one body, one spirit in Christ.

This otter puppet is my friend. He understands the Trinity this way:

God the Father is as far above him as I am to my furry friend.

But Jesus, the Son, walks with him and is his friend, as this creature is my friend.

And the Holy Spirit is like my hand inside him - without my hand, he is not much better than *road kill*. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is **God's** life within us,

the hand of God to guide us and strengthen us.

As we come to the end of the month of May, I invite you to look at how Mary is in relationship to the Trinity. She can help us understand the relationships we can have with God.

She invites us to worship God as the one who created us, the one who gave us birth and sustains us in life. The one who is both **Father** and **Mother** to the whole human race. But if God is only Father, Mary would have remained only a **dependant** child.

Mary is a daughter of God, and so are we children of God, but she is also a **disciple** of Christ. Jesus helped her grow in her relationship with his Father & hers. Mary invites us to walk with **Jesus** as sisters and brothers, as disciples who hear the Word of God and keep it as she did.

She invites us into relationship with the **Son** of God.

But if Jesus is the **only** way she is in relationship with God, she could not have let go of him as a child of 12 or as a man condemned to death. If Jesus is our **only** way to God we risk holding on to him as a human hero & being disappointed when he does not fulfill **our** expectations, as Peter was when he denied Christ.

We cannot cling to Jesus *alone*, any more than Mary of Magdala could at the tomb.

And what about the Holy Spirit? Mary invites us to let the same Holy Spirit who lived within her to live in us. She invites us to be ADULT children of God and mature disciples of Christ, people who not only see Christ in others but who are empowered to BE Christ for others.

It was this Spirit who made her the mother of Christ and gives us the grace
to bring Christ to birth in our lives.

The Good News revealed by the Mystery of the Trinity is that we are always children of God, partners with Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, even if we sometimes need to focus more on one part of that relationship or another.

The message revealed by this feast and these readings is that our family extends beyond spouse, parents, children and relatives. Our family is larger than the charismatic movement - or any other movement, bigger than our parish, the Roman Catholic Church and even Christianity. Our family calls to us from beyond our national borders, in languages we cannot speak, from cultures & lifestyles different from our own. We say we believe that Good News when we pray OUR Father, We affirm that truth when we say, "I believe in ONE God.

We can live in the freedom of the Gospel only by remembering our identity as children of one God, by choosing to live the command of Jesus in our own daily circumstances and by receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, given to each of us in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

The mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of a God who is Love, and the Eucharist itself ask us three wonderful and terrible questions at this Mass today:

1. Will you and I reflect the image of God by caring for each other, the earth & all its creatures as a father or mother cares for their child?
2. Will you and I see Christ in each other and be Christ for each other?
3. Will you and I let the Spirit of love guide our lives and give us the power to respect all life and face even death itself?

*♪ May Christ find a dwelling place of faith in our hearts,
May our lives be rooted in love, rooted in love. ♪*

