

A Trinity Sunday June 14-15, 2014 (Father's Day)

First Reading: Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9 (a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity)

Responsorial Canticle (Daniel 3) "Glory and praise forever!"

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 (live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you)

Gospel: John 3:16-18 (God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so we might have eternal life)

While praying over today's readings and 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 Christ 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.* ♪

Today we celebrate the Feast of Trinity Sunday - and that hymn includes the mystery of One God who interacts with us and the world as **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**.

So far we have celebrated the *Trinity* in at least 8 ways:

1. You blessed yourselves as you came in the church in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit;
2. The opening hymn sang about it;
3. then we made the sign of the cross together
4. I said the liturgical greeting, "*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you;*"
5. You heard the 2nd reading which is the source of that greeting;
6. I sang at the ending of the opening prayer, "*Father, ... Complete within us the work of your love, that we who have communion in Christ may come to share fully the undying life Christ lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever*";
7. We prayed the Gloria together;
8. We heard the verse for the Alleluia before the Gospel.

And that is similar to what happens at every Sunday Mass, even if there are not so many references. So the *Trinity* must be important!

Still, on this feast, sometimes people ask themselves, "So what?"

What does this abstract idea, this doctrine of the church have to do with my everyday life?"

As I was wrestling with how I could connect the *Trinity* to our lives, the words of the end of another hymn began to sing themselves in my mind, (from "Christians, Let us Love One Another")

♪ *Everyone who loves is born of God. Jesus is our life, God is love.* ♪

The deep meaning of the *Trinity* can be stated in the words "God is love." I often use those 3 words as a way of doing centering prayer. I repeat them in silence in my mind, along with my breathing - "God" as I breathe in, "Love" as I breathe out and "Is" in the moment between breathing in and out. I now use them when I count the repetitions of my stretching exercises. Though the *Trinity* is always a part of my prayer, now it has also become part of my physical exercises as well.

The Trinity reveals our God as a **Holy Relationship of life-giving love**. Have you ever seen a sign at a football or baseball game that reads, "John 3:16"? The words of that verse are the ones at the beginning of today's Gospel passage. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

As Pope Benedict once put it, "God does not live in splendid solitude but rather is an inexhaustible source of life that is ceaselessly given and communicated."

But God is not just a lover, God is love. As Robert Baron writes in his book, *Catholicism*, "Love names the very essence of God." He continues, reflecting the thought of St. Augustine "this means that God must be, in God's own life, an interplay of lover (the Father), beloved (the Son), and shared love (the Holy Spirit)."

St. Bonaventure - the great Franciscan theologian of the 13th century - sees the Trinity as revealing the structure of reality itself and even science confirms this truth.

There are many examples, some of them are from quantum physics and I can barely understand them, but the one I thought of is the reality of water. Is water a liquid, a solid or a gas? And the answer is clearly- all three - we drink it and bless ourselves with it, we slip on it in the winter when it freezes and we see it in the sky as clouds of water vapor - but it is still water.

But the mystery of the Trinity is not only about who God is, it also shows us who we are -

Because God is **Father**, we are **all** children of God, and the whole human race is one family. A family that calls to us from beyond our national borders, in languages we cannot speak, from cultures different from our own.

Because **Jesus** came as a human being, we are sisters and brothers to him and to each other, and whatever is truly human can lead us to God because Jesus represents all that is fully 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.

The reality of the God who is relationship helps me make sense out of the end of today's Gospel, "Whoever refuses to believe has already been condemned, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God." I have struggled with that verse, especially because of the people I have met who are Jews or Muslims or atheists who, nevertheless, have lived lives of love and service that contributed to justice and peace.

The truth that John Paul II so often spoke - that Jesus is the icon of all that is truly human - along with our faith that God is Father of the whole human race and that the Spirit of God is present in all that is good and true and loving - helps me to understand that even when the name of Jesus is not pronounced explicitly, anyone who lives and acts in a way that is fully human and loving is making him and his Father present. Faith in Jesus is about actions more than words.

Today is Father's Day. The word "**Father**" is a statement of relationship. In a way, when we celebrate Father's Day we evoke the God who is loving Parent, beloved child and the love that

makes that relationship real and fruitful. To call God "trinity" is to say that God is relationship - a relationship of love.

The mystery of the **Trinity** is not a puzzle we can figure out, it is a deep well of life giving grace that can give meaning to our lives in relationship to God & to one another.

This has some very practical consequences in showing us how to act towards others. For example, the children who are crossing our borders from Central America to escape being killed or enslaved, as well as those who are children of immigrants who were born here and are being deported. The God who is love might have something to say to those who ignore or even cause their suffering.

In our day to day lives - When we act for the good of the poor, the Church, or the world, we reveal the God who calls us to live in peace, as St. Paul writes in the 2nd reading.

When we care for one another at school or at work; when we work in partnership with each other, in families, in a parish or in the community we are reflecting the reality of the God who made us in the divine image & likeness.

If God is a relationship of love, and we are made in God's image, then we are called and empowered to be in relationship with others, and to love as God loves. This way of living goes against the parts of our culture which tell us that we have to do it ourselves, go it alone, or make it by our own individual efforts. We can so easily make a god of our own ego.

The mystery of the **Trinity** tells us that we are all connected and have responsibility for one another and for the earth which is our home; the earth which was created out of the love which is God and reflects the reality of God.

But it is important to reflect that I am in relationship with all the persons in the Trinity.

-If God is **ONLY** my **Father**, I will remain only a dependent child.

-If God is **ONLY** revealed in **Jesus**, I can be tempted to exclude those who are not members of Christian or even Catholic communities, forgetting that God loves the whole human family and wills all people to be saved.

-If God is **ONLY** the **Holy Spirit** within me, I can be tempted to make a god of myself, forgetting that I remain a child of the **Father**, and a brother or sister to **Christ** even while I am empowered by the **Spirit of God** within me.

The Good News revealed by the **Trinity** is that we are always children of God,
partners with **Christ** and filled with the **Holy Spirit**.

The song I began with ends with the prayer, *"May our lives be rooted in love."*
The question that **Trinity Sunday** asks us is simple and profound:

Are our lives rooted in love?