

Trinity Sunday 2015

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 (Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire?)

Responsorial Psalm 33 "Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own"

Second Reading: Romans 8:14-17 (You received a spirit of adoption...we are children of God)

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20 (Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father & of the Son and of the Holy Spirit)

*♪ 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 His 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. ♪*

That hymn sums up the message of this feast, the feast of the Holy Trinity. We begin our prayers in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. I greeted you with the words, "*The grace and beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal love of God the Father and the joy of the Holy Spirit be with you.*" The Liturgy is full of the Trinity, listen to the prayers of the Mass today - the Gloria, the creed, the Eucharistic Prayer.

The mystery of 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, a theologian and a professor at Fordham, puts it this way: "*God lives as the mystery of love. Human beings are created in the image of this God.*" The Taize chant for Holy Thursday sings this truth:

♪ Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, Deus ibi est ♪ (Where charity and love are, God is there.)

The Trinity is foreshadowed in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament. The first verses of Genesis are: "In the beginning, God **created** the heavens and the earth, ... a mighty **wind** swept over the waters. Then God **said**, "Let there be light," and there was light." In the 1st 3 verses of Genesis God is "Creator" in verse 1, "Spirit" in verse 2, (*The Hebrew word for wind also means spirit & breath*) and the "Word" that God said in verse 3. The Trinity is even in today's responsorial Psalm, Psalm 33,

"By the **word** of **God** the heavens were made; by the **breath** of his mouth all that is"

You might ask, "What does that have to do with our lives?"

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

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. 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; 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.

My friend the otter understands the Trinity this way:

God the Father is as far above him as I am to my furry friend (he thinks I'm God).

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. So 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, and on the Feast of Mary's Visitation to her cousin, 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 that is all she was, she would only have been a dependant child. If God is **only** Father or Parent, we are always only dependant children.

Mary is a daughter of God, and so are we children of God, as St. Paul writes in the 2nd reading, 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. 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 hero, as Peter did in his denial and Judas in his betrayal. We cannot cling to Jesus alone, any more than Mary of Magdala could at the tomb.

If we do we risk seeing only "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and become a part of the "Jesus fan club". We can become exclusive in our spirituality, condemning anyone who is not a "Christian". We can forget that God wills all men and women to be saved and that God is revealed partially through all the world's religions.

We need to remember that our relationship with Christ, reveals our true identity as daughters and Sons of his Father. We cannot forget that the whole human family can call God their divine parent, even as we do the work of the Son.

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 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.

As Augustine, Leo the Great and Pius XII said in different ways, when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we become what we receive.

But if focus only on the Spirit within us, we risk becoming little gods rather than images of God, we risk taking God's place rather than doing God's work.

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 Good News revealed by this feast and these readings is that our family extends beyond spouse, parents, children and relatives. Our family is larger 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 that Paul speaks of in the 2nd reading 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, asks us three wonderful and terrible questions at this Mass today:

1. Will you and I accept the freedom of the children of God by caring for the earth, all its creatures and each other 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?