

Homily for Trinity Sunday

June 7, 2020

If you watched my Mass last week for Pentecost you may have noticed a liturgical faux-pas. While every other priest in the world was wearing red vestments for Pentecost, I was wearing white! Maybe I was just trying to be different? Express my individuality. Or maybe my brain doesn't always work right, liturgically speaking. I will leave the judgement to you. Well for the next two Sundays the vestments are white again, so no problem!

The Feast of Corpus Christi is coming up next weekend. I was thinking of having Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for it. We can't open the church so instead I will be having Exposition in the back area (south end) of the parking lot. That will be next Sunday, June 14th, from 9:00am till 11:00am. I will place the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament on an altar set up against my rectory wall. If you want to come and adore our Lord just park your car facing toward the rectory and the altar. Don't get out of your car! Just pray from the safety of your vehicle. And to maintain social distancing park only in every other parking spot – leaving one empty parking space between cars. I will have volunteers to help guide you. Stay for a while but if you see the parking lot is getting backed up (who knows!), please consider leaving to give someone else a chance. So, barring rain, I hope you can make it next Sunday, June 14th, from 9am till 11am.

Today is Holy Trinity Sunday: the day Christians celebrate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the three Persons in the one God.

Many see this feast as focused on a doctrine, and there is a certain truth in that understanding. But this feast is more focused on a person, more accurately, focused on *the Persons* of God.

Other feasts of the Church celebrate *what* God has done in time through Jesus Christ (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost) but the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity celebrates *who* God is in eternity.

From all eternity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have been in relationship – in communion – with each other. Not as three gods but as one God. Each Person in God is distinct from the others but never acts independently. For they are one in nature and purpose: a tri-unity.

We believe in the Trinity because we believe in Jesus Christ. And Jesus is the one who revealed the trinitarian life of God. Jesus called God His “Father” and spoke of their unity: “*The Father and I are one*” (Jn 10:30); “*I am in the Father and the Father is in Me*” (Jn 14:11).

Jesus also spoke of another like Himself: “*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him*” (Jn 14:16-17).

God desires to make Himself known to us. Without God revealing Himself we could not really know Him. The Hebrew people were His special chosen vehicle for this revelation. God first revealed Himself in Old Testament times: giving emphasis in a polytheistic world to the fact

that there is only one true God. But even then, one can find hints at some kind of plurality within His being. The example I like best is the great Jewish profession of faith from Deuteronomy: “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord*” (Deut. 6:4).

The Hebrew word used here for “one” is *‘ehad*, which signifies a *composite* unity, as opposed to the word *yahidh*, which is used for a *singular* unity. *‘Ehad* is the same word used in the Old Testament to denote man and woman united as *one* flesh (Gen. 2:24) and the people of Israel united as *one* people (Gen. 11:6). And now we hear that the Lord our God is *‘ehad*.

However, the world had to wait till New Testament times for this mysterious truth to be fully revealed. The reason for this gradual revelation is found in God’s very being. St John tells us in his First Letter, “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8). And real love goes out of oneself to another, but with the intention that the other will reciprocate it. Love is meant to be given and received. It involves relationship.

It requires the lover, the beloved, and the reciprocal love between them. In God the lover is the Father, the beloved is the Son, and the reciprocal love between them is the Holy Spirit. God is a relationship within Himself.

As the Catechism explains it: “God’s very being is love. By sending His only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed His innermost secret: God Himself is an eternal exchange of love,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and He has destined us to share in that exchange” (CCC 221).

For love’s aim is always greater intimacy, deeper union, with the beloved. And God loves us. So, the stages of God’s self-revelation in the Old and New Testament are stages of God’s increasing intimacy with humanity: going from God “outside” us in the Father, to God “beside” us in the Incarnate Son, to God “inside” us in the Holy Spirit.

What difference does this teaching on the Trinity make to us? All the difference! As Peter Kreeft puts it: “Because God is a Trinity, God is love. Because God is love, love is the supreme value. Because love is the supreme value, it is the meaning of our lives, for we are created in God’s image.”

Perhaps nobody has stated this awesome truth more simply and profoundly than Pope Saint John Paul II: “God in His deepest mystery is not a solitude but a family, since He has in himself fatherhood, sonship, and the essence of the family, which is love” (Puebla de Los Angeles, Mexico, 1979).

The doctrine of the Trinity means that the human family is not merely some sociological or biological fact, but has its very origin, nature, and destiny in God Himself. The human family is meant to reflect God’s self-giving and life-giving love.

The same is true of the Church where diverse peoples of every race and nation are made one Body, one family in Christ by the power of Holy Spirit, and called to love God and one another.

So, let me end this homily with the benediction found in our Second Reading with which St. Paul closes his letter to the Corinthians and affirms his own faith in the Blessed Trinity.

I use this same phrase to greet you at nearly every Mass: *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”* (2 Cor 13:14).

Amen.