

Trinity Sunday
June 19, 2011
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Today the Church celebrates God's revelation of Himself to us. This is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. The Trinity feast goes back to the 12th century in England and St. Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. Historians say Thomas Becket celebrated a liturgy in honor of the Trinity in his cathedral in England. So was born the observance of the Most Holy Trinity. In the 14th century, the feast came to be observed by the universal Church.

A very short story; once at Confirmation, the bishop asked the children for a definition of the Holy Trinity. A girl answered very softly, "The Holy Trinity is three Persons in one God." The bishop, who was almost deaf, replied, "I didn't understand what you said." And the pastor whispered to him, "You are not supposed to understand bishop, the Trinity is a mystery."

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was not revealed to confuse us, to test us or to challenge our faith. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is for our reassurance and consolation. The Gospel today echoes this theme: it depicts Jesus telling his disciples that there is nothing to fear, even if he is about to leave them. He and the Father and the Spirit will continue to be with them and protect them. Jesus did not guarantee that there would not be trouble or suffering in their lives or in our lives but he did promise that there will be victory and eternal life.

Someone once cleverly noted that, unlike other Christian doctrines, the Trinity is not a truth that leads to action, but rather, it points us to prayer or admiration.

We bring the Trinity into our lives with the Sign of the Cross; we trace the Trinity on ourselves and we bring the Trinity into our minds, then we bring the Trinity down to our hearts and, with our hearts filled with compassion, we move the Trinity across our bodies to our shoulders and arms and bring God into our daily lives.

We call on the Trinity when we open each Liturgy. We close each Liturgy by calling upon those same three persons to bless us and help us to spread the good news of the Gospel.

But, God is a Mystery with a capital "M".

This doesn't mean that we can never understand some things about God. But rather that our understanding of God will never come to an end, it will grow forever. And that's good news, for who'd be interested in a god small enough to fit snugly into our limited human minds?

So we speak of three persons in one God. And it is right to speak of them as persons because – like us – Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct from each other, and yet related to each other. That means that God doesn't live in solitary splendor: God is and intimate circle of total love and understanding. And that limitless love has brimmed over onto this world, first, in the sense that it has brought the world into existence; and, second, in the sense that it has brought Jesus into the world as one of us and made it possible for us to be brought into intimate friendship with God the Father.

Today's second reading ends with a well-known Trinitarian prayer: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." We have all heard this blessing many times from priests and deacons in many different circumstances. It was originally addressed to a group of very ordinary people, many of them slaves or ex-slaves. In begging them to love one another and remain united, Paul appeals to the mystery of the Trinity, for that mighty mystery is not some vague, bewildering truth without relevance to daily living. On the contrary, Paul insists that the loving union between the three divine persons should inspire us to live together in unity and love.

Our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, dwells within us – in the words of the first reading, dwells within us as "a God of tenderness and compassion". And we in our turn are called to reflect some of that God-like love in our dealings with others.

We belong to this awesome God, this awesome love, this awesome presence. We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's life dwells with us. God dwells within us. We carry God in the fragile vessel of our humanity. We seek his presence and love and power and pray to him within us and all around us. He is ours and we are his. This is the gift of the Almighty to each one of us, a gift that should not be trivialized with thoughts of force, but a gift that should be treasured with reverence and respect.

How beautiful it is to be alive to God! How sad it is when we forget His presence.

Here at Mass, the Blessed Trinity is at the heart of all we do; here – in, with and through Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit – we tiny creatures are empowered to give all honor and glory to the Father. That's why the Mass, the most Trinitarian of prayers, is the summit and source of all our undertakings. It is the visible and effective sign, of that three-personed love, revealed to us in the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recognizing that the Triune God is all around us and in our being, let us this morning approach the Eucharist in joyful celebration of the Trinity that actively lives within us and around us and defines who we are.

As we consume the Eucharist this morning, may we be consumed as well.

