

The Most Holy Trinity

Exodus 34.4-9, 2 Cor. 13. 11-13 John 3.16-18

Today we celebrate the Most Holy Trinity. If we are going to discuss who God is, we must know the Trinity. If we look at the creed it unfolds in a Trinitarian pattern (a belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), but the entire creed has one subject **God!** “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in Himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them” (CCC 234). A mystery according to the catholic dictionary is defined as “A divinely revealed truth whose very possibility cannot be rationally conceived before it is revealed and, after revelation, whose inner essence cannot be fully understood by the finite mind. The incomprehensibility of revealed mysteries derives from the fact that they are manifestations of God, who is infinite and therefore beyond the complete grasp of a created intellect. Nevertheless, though incomprehensible, mysteries are intelligible. One of the primary duties of a believer is, through prayer, study, and experience, to grow in faith, i.e., to develop an understanding of what God has revealed. (Greek *mysterion*, something closed, a secret.)”

The Trinity is a difficult concept to explain, teach and understand as many Saints and philosophers have tried. Frank Sheed (1897-1981) writes that the implications of the oneness of God can otherwise be stated, God is simple. Perhaps we are used to thinking of God as complicated, but it is we who are complicated, and it is our complexity which causes barriers in understanding. God is infinite, not bound by anything, including time and space. It was man who created time to rationalize what a day was. Again, time and space does NOT apply to God. We as humans wish to structure things into time and/or a calendar day.

Nowhere in the Bible does the word Trinity appear. The question then is how do we explain the Trinity, or who God is. To try to understand the Trinity we need to first understand that God reveals to man what He wants us to know. So let's look at the creation story; “God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light” (Gn. 1.1-3). The Trinity is right there! At the beginning-at creation! We also know God is personal-He has a name and an identity. God is “He who is” (existence itself) CCC 214, and so Truth (CCC 215), God is LOVE (1 Jn. 4.8, 16).

Today's Gospel reading from John 3.16-18 is often recognized as the verse used by athletes, for example Tim Tebow is one who always had Jn. 3.16 under his eyes. This verse describes how much God loves us! God loved us so much that he sent His only begotten son to pay our debt. John reveals that if we believe in Jesus

we will have eternal life. We are called to have faith in God, we are called to love God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. If we accept that we are made in the image/ likeness of God than we can conclude we are called to Love as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit do.

Origen (225) writes “Christ Jesus, He who came to earth, was begotten of the Father before every created thing... the apostles delivered this doctrine, that the Holy Spirit is united in honor and dignity with the Father and His Son. St. Athanasius writes: “In the Church, one God is preached, one God who is above all things and through all things and in all things. God is above all things as Father, for He is principle and source; He is through all things through the Word; and He is in all things in the Holy Spirit” (First letter to Serpion).

It took St. Augustine 16 years to write “On the Trinity” (completed about 380). St. Augustine recognizes that it is in love that we are bound to the Trinity. since “God is Love, you see the Trinity if you see love” (On the Trinity XIII.8.12). We may say “The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one principle of love. Here the Holy Spirit may be understood as the self-gift or bond of charity of Father and Son” (Sheed p 107). Love is an action, a relationship term. the Church teaches us that: “The divine persons are relative to one another...the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another...because of that unity, the Father is wholly in the Son, and wholly in the Holy Spirit...” (CCC255).

By God sending His only begotten Son to redeem us and give us eternal life demonstrates the supreme act of God’s love for us. In love you have the Trinity this is an internal relationship. The Trinity is the mystery of Christian faith and life; it is a mystery of love. We can not see love to measure it, but we can see love through actions. Through faith in God, in the most Holy Trinity we see LOVE. Faith involves an intimate relationship with Christ expressed in fidelity to the teaching of the Gospel, a deep life of prayer, and a passionate love for others. So let us recognize the Trinity through faith, let us demonstrate our understanding of the Trinity through our love of neighbor and through our works of charity. In doing so we can grow in knowledge, friendship and love of God, the Most Holy Trinity.