

Reflecting on the Sunday Readings

The Most Holy Trinity!

16 June 2019

PRV 8:22-31, ROM 5:1-5, JN 16:12-15

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. That is perhaps the first prayer we learned as little children. Our parents and even our older brothers and sisters may have taught us and helped us to make the Sign of the Cross. As time went on they probably explained how these were some of the first words we heard in Church. We still pray that prayer often. Every time we make the sign of the cross we must remember that we are professing our faith. When we make the sign of the cross, we should always remember our very own Baptism.

Today, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. The fundamental and most important of all of the mysteries of our Catholic Christian faith. Throughout the Church year we celebrate lots of feasts for Jesus and Mary and the different saints, and great events such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. However, today is the only day of the Church year in which we celebrate the feast day of God. This celebration is, in essence, the “feast day” of God, the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is a profound mystery that is difficult to comprehend. The mystery of three persons in one God. A mystery is a hidden truth so if we expected today’s readings to give us a clear and elaborate presentation or explanation of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, we find that they simply do not. Our Church building could be filled to the ceiling beams with books and articles written about the Trinity yet all of them will fail to explain it. The doctrine of three persons in one God, equal in divinity yet distinct in personality, is not clearly spelt out in the Bible. In fact the very word “**Trinity**” is not found in the Bible. Rather early Christians arrived at the doctrine of the Trinity when they applied their God-given reason to the revelation which they had received in faith.

Jesus spoke about the **Father** who sent him (the **Son**) and about the **Holy Spirit** whom **he** was going to send. He said that the Father had given him all that he has and that he in turn has given to the Holy Spirit all that he has received from the Father. In this we see the unity of purpose among the three persons of the Trinity. In the story of salvation we usually attribute **creation** to the Father, **salvation** and **redemption** to the Son and **sanctification** to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, though they are distinct as persons, neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Spirit ever exists or acts in isolation from the other two persons of the Godhead.

The love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father needed to **bear fruit**. After the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, we find the disciples locked in a room out of fear. God the Father knew they'd need plenty of courage and strength in order to be **faithful to their mission as followers of His Son**. The love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father resulted in the outpouring of the **Holy Spirit** which we celebrated just a week ago, on **Pentecost**.

We can only begin to study this mystery if we have faith. Without faith it is practically impossible to do so. We invoke the Most Holy Trinity, the central mystery of the Church, continuously throughout the Eucharistic celebrations. From the beginning of Mass, when we make the Sign of the Cross in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, until the final Trinitarian blessing, the Holy Trinity listens to our prayers and petitions and blesses us. Our prayers during Mass are continually directed to God the Father, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. During the Holy Mass, the priest offers to the Father the bread and wine that will be transformed, through the action of the Holy Spirit, into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior. The invocation of the Holy Spirit during the Eucharistic Prayers assures us that the holy and pure sacrifice of Our Lord will be acceptable to God the Father. In one constant movement our prayers and petitions ascend to the one Trinitarian God from whom divine grace descends upon us. And it is in the Holy Mass that we Christians begin to understand, a little more clearly the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. In reality, the presence of the Holy Trinity in all of the sacraments is what guarantees that these will be fonts of divine grace.

In a few moments, as we continue with our celebration, we will come to this table to receive and be one with Christ the Son. Let us ask God the Father, to pour out his blessings upon us and God the Holy Spirit to give us the wisdom and the courage to faithfully carry out our Christian Mission. As always, let us ask the Lord to guide our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions.

Still confused about the Trinity? You are not alone. As I was preparing this homily trying my best to fully understand I recalled a story once told of Saint Augustine of Hippo, the great theologian and philosopher. One day, as Augustine was strolling along the beach, he became lost in thought while trying to understand, and comprehend the mystery of the Holy Trinity. He walked aimlessly until he came

upon a young child who had dug a little hole in the sand. With his toy bucket, the young child had begun making trips back and forth to the sea, pouring the pails of water into the hole. After watching for a while, Augustine asked the child tenderly, "Dear child, what are you trying to do?" "I am pouring that ocean into this hole," came the reply. As kindly as he could manage, Augustine explained, "But that is totally impossible. You can never do that." Whereupon the child looked up at Augustine and responded, "And neither can you Augustine, ever fully comprehend the mystery of the Holy Trinity." And as they spoke, the child disappeared from sight and Augustine realized then that he had just spoken to an angel.

This week we'll be presented with opportunities to reach out with faith to those around us. They might live in our own home, we might work or play with them, or they might be perfect strangers that we have never met or will ever meet again. We need to be ready to accept those opportunities and challenges. During this week, may the grace of the **Holy Trinity** help us to banish all traces of self-centeredness in our lives and to live in love of God and neighbor. May the grace of the **Holy Trinity** help us to be **faithful to our God given mission**.

This weekend we celebrate Father's Day, it would not be out of place for us to remind ourselves that in spite of all the changes in society, the **father** remains a very essential figure in the **ideal Christian family**. This is not a global condemnation of single motherhood since we know that many women are forced into single motherhood by circumstances beyond their control. But we would like to remind ourselves today that the ideal Christian family remains that of father, mother and child. So, who needs fathers these days? Children do. Recent studies show that the father is the least acknowledged and appreciated figure in all of society. So, to all of you fathers and those serving in a role of a father, from one father to another, thank you very much and a Very Happy and Blessed Fathers' Day to you all.

The Lord is on watch. He is always near. The Lord is my shepherd. I walk with no fear.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."

