

HOMILY-MOST HOLY TRINITY (09)

Introduction

This morning we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. There are two questions which help us to get to the underlying meaning of the Feast. The first of the questions is, "Who is God?"

THE IMMANANT TRINITY

The Trinity tells us that God is *agape*. *Agape* is the Greek word for unconditional love. The First Letter of John tells us that God is love. For God to be and to love are synonymous. God is three distinct and equal persons which exist and have existed for all time as a community of love. Therefore we can say that God is not only love but God is pure self-gift. From eternity God is a relationship of love.

THE ECONOMIC TRINITY

Not only do we believe that God is a relationship of love or in the words in St. Augustine, Lover, Beloved and the Love that they share but that in God's love God created the universe and humanity included. God is the name of a relationship of perfect self-gift. The Father totally gives Himself to the Son; the Son totally gives Himself to the Father and the Holy Spirit is the gift they share between themselves and with creation. It was not necessary that God create humanity in order to share love as God already was a relationship of love. In God's love God decided to create humanity in order to share God's love with humanity. God as three persons poured forth His love by creating the universe and within it humanity, sustaining humanity, saving humanity and desiring to bring humanity to unity with God at the end of time. God as Trinity is a relationship of love and a God of creation and salvation.

It is impossible to intellectually understand or figure out the Trinity. The best way that we can come to have an understanding of the Trinity is to reflect on the times that we have experienced God in our life.

THE FATHER, SON AND SPIRIT REVEALED IN SACRED SCRIPTURE

Today's readings help us to reflect on the place of the Trinity in the life of God's people. The first reading is taken for the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy was written about six hundred years before the birth of Jesus and about 1,000 years after the conquest of the Promised Land.

The author of Deuteronomy reflects on the saving deeds of God in the lives of His People. The first reading is a speech given by Moses shortly before the people enter the Promised Land. Moses asks the people whether from the beginning of creation to their day had anything so great ever happened as people hearing the voice of the Lord speaking from the midst of fire or had a god ever taken a people for himself and saved them from another nation as their God had done. For this reason Moses tells the people that they must know that their God is the only God and that they must keep his statutes and commandments. This first reading speaks of the place of God the Father in the lives of His People.

The second reading is taken from the reading of St. Paul to the Romans. In this reading Paul writes, "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:14)." According to Paul those who are led by the Spirit are incorporated into God's family. Paul goes on to say that those who are led by the Spirit are not only adopted children of God but they are also heirs of God. By which Paul means that if we suffer with Christ we will rise to glory with Christ. Christ is saying that if the Spirit leads us we will inherit eternal life.

Finally the Gospel is taken from the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew. In this reading the risen Christ meets the disciples in Galilee. Christ begins by stating that "Full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:18-20)." Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus has made it clear that his mission and the mission of the disciples were only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Now the risen Christ says that the disciples are being sent out to all nations.

The risen Christ sends the disciples out to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This verse shows that when the Gospel of Matthew was written, in about the year 85 AD the church has a growing sense that God was Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is believed that this formula was taken from an ancient baptism rite of the first century.

At the end of the Gospel the risen Christ states, "And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20)." The risen Christ states to the eleven disciples that He is with them and will continue to be with them until the end of time. This continues to be true for us as well.

The three readings speak to us of the how the Trinity has been a part of God's People and they remind us that the Trinity will continue to be a part of our lives. The first reading speaks to us of the liberating power and presence of God among His people Israel. The second reading speaks about the place of the Holy Spirit and that those led by the Spirit are sons and daughters of God. The third Gospel indicates that the risen Christ will be with his people for all time. The readings of this morning's point to the fact that the three persons of the Trinity are a part of our lives and are with us to unite us to God and protect us as we journey through life.

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

This Feast leads us to ask a second question, “Who is God calling us to become?”

The early Church grappled with the question, How are followers of Christ made in the image and likeness of God? What does the meaning of God as a Trinity of persons say about who we are called to be?

The Brazilian theologian, Leonardo Boff answered this question in the following way. Boff indicated that our lives are to reflect the Trinity. When we find the mystery in human life we encounter the presence of God the Father. When we encounter Wisdom and understanding in human life we encounter the presence of the risen Christ and when we encounter love and communion in human life we encounter the Holy Spirit.

The clearest way that we act in the image and likeness of God is through the ways that we love others. Within our families and friendships we live out the love that characterizes God. When we go out of our way to sacrifice for others we encounter the love of God alive within us.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity let us be a people who strive to imitate God in our lives. Let us be a people who recognize the mystery of human life, who seek wisdom and who love. Let us most especially be a people who love as God is a relationship of love.