

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

FIRST READING: EXODUS 34: 4-6, 8-9

PSALM: DEUT.3:52-55

SECOND READING: 2 CORINTH. 13:11-13

GOSPEL: JOHN 3:16-18

THEME: GOD IS A COMMUNITY OF THREE PERSONS:

A mystery is something true but cannot be understood and explained completely and accurately. The central mystery of the Christian faith is that there is only one God. In this One God, there are three persons, namely: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are equally wise, equally powerful, equally God, equally loving and yet distinct from one another. That the three Persons are not to be taken as three gods working together but rather, there is only One God. Three Persons sharing one divine nature. Although, the term Trinity does not appear in the Scriptures, the reality of the Triune God is unmistakably present in Christ references to the Father and the Holy Spirit and certain references in the Old Testament also suggest that the God of Israel is more than One Person. The following are few texts that demonstrate that the God we serve is more than one person;

In Genesis 1:1-2, it states that “In the beginning, when God created the Universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness and the Spirit of God was moving over the water.” Here, it seems to me that the Spirit of God complements the effort of the Creator God in creation.

In Genesis 1:26, “God said, and now we will make human beings, they will be like us and resemble us...” They will be like us and resemble us seems to indicate that more than one divine person is speaking to itself. It is more than one person communicating.

Again in Genesis 11:5-9 it states that “.....then the Lord came down to see the city.....let us go down and mix up their language so that they would not understand one another.....he scattered them all over the earth.” It is also clear that “let us go down and mix up their language” points to the fact that the speaker is not alone but more than one person.

However, in the New Testament, the doctrine of the three persons in One God seems to be clearer than in the Old Testament. The following texts in the New Testament point to this fact;

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus states “Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is the Trinitarian Formula for baptism. John 15:26- in this quotation, Jesus tells the Apostles “when the counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me.”

2Corinthians 13:13- Here Paul states that, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

1Peter 1:2- St. Peter, the first Vicar of Christ, also states “You were chosen according to the purpose of God the Father, and were made a Holy People by the Holy Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be purified by his blood. May grace and peace be yours in full measure.

Mark 14:36- Here, it is stated “Father, he prayed, my Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want.” This passage, in Mark’s Gospel, implies that there is a clear distinction between the will of Jesus and the will of God the Father. Jesus prays to God as the Second Person in the Trinity and distinguished his will from God the Father’s will.

A story is told about St. Augustine who wanted to find out the inner workings of the Trinity and how three persons could just be one person. It is said that one day as he was walking on the sea shore trying to figure out how the Holy Trinity functions as one God, St. Augustine came across a small boy with no other person with him. The small boy has made a hole in the sand and was fetching the sea water and pouring it into that small hole he has made. St. Augustine was surprised to see what the little boy was doing and he started questioning the boy. Small boy where are your parents? No answer from the boy. The boy was just moving up and down fetching the sea water to fill his hole. So Augustine asked the boy what he was doing. The boy answered St. Augustine that he wanted to empty the sea into the hole he has made. In other words, he wanted to bring the whole sea water into his small hole.

St. Augustine laughed and said to the boy how can that be possible? The little boy then said to St. Augustine that if what he was doing was not possible, how could St. Augustine, with his limited mind, understand the inner workings of the Holy Trinity which he was struggling to understand with his human mind. Just after the boy has said that, he disappeared from his sight. The experience of St. Augustine should guide us when it comes to doubting the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. We are called to embrace this mystery of the Trinity which Jesus has revealed to his Church. The beauty of our God is that God is a community, community of the Holy Three Persons. Since we

are created in the Image and likeness of this Holy Trinity, we should aspire to imitate the inner workings of the Holy Trinity by promoting virtues such as unity, truthfulness, oneness, openness, common vision, a lively and ready cooperation and team work with others who are different from us. They have a common plan for our salvation.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity shows that God does not exist in solitary individualism but in a community of love and sharing. That is, God is not a loner. This means that a Christian in search of Godliness (Matthew 5:48) must shun every tendency of isolationism. The ideal Christian Spirituality is involvement with people and society. There is a saying that “Two is company, three is a crowd.” True love requires three persons or partners. The Trinity shows us that three is community, three is love at its best. We are made in the image and likeness of the Three Divine Persons. Just as God lives only in a Trinitarian relationship, so we can be fully human only in relationship of three partners. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity challenges us to adopt an “I and God and Neighbour principle.” I am a Christian in so far as I live in a relationship of love with God and other people.

The doctrine of the Trinity is important because we are made in God’s image, and by coming to know God we come to know ourselves. The Trinity teaches us that we are made to be in relationship and that we can find ourselves only by giving ourselves in love. It is in the Trinity that we discover the true meaning of love as self-gift. By calling us to communion with him, God calls us to participate in this Trinitarian love. By making us in his image, God has made us “other selves” that he can give himself to. By becoming human he has become for us an “other self”- *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* - to whom we can make gifts of ourselves.

Today,s Gospel, (John 3:16-18), speaks to all of us. Each one of us has the choice to accept or reject Jesus. Yet Jesus encourages each of us to accept his free offer of eternal life. Jesus admonished Nicodemus that such an important decision as eternal life shouldn’t be taken lightly. He taught that life doesn’t end at physical death, but continues forever and forever. The big issue is whether we will spend eternity with God or apart from him. The free choice is ours to make.

As disciples of Jesus Christ and diverse members of his Body, each one of us is called upon to embody and enact the values that derive from a Trinitarian view of God. These values include mutual sharing, giving and receiving, cooperation, equality, interdependence, mutual respect and honour, unity of purpose and the pursuit of peace and harmony among the diverse peoples of the society. Again, as men and women made in God’s image, let us enter into

the deep mystery of the Trinity so that we may become icons of Divine Love in the world. As the hymn says, “They will know we are Christians by our love” (John 13:35).