

TRINITY SUNDAY – 2021
Deut 4:32-34:39-40
Rom 8:14-17
Mt 28:16-20

Today is Trinity Sunday, the day I do public penance which is to try to explain the inexplicable and attempt to unravel a mystery, which if I were successful, would no longer be a mystery. But I would be showered with honorary theological doctorates! Plough on!

Christians, Jews and Muslims believe that God is One but the Catholic Church believes that God has revealed himself to be a community of three persons in perfect unity. The understanding of the Trinity is that each member of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit possesses the same divine nature, while all of us here today possess the same human nature. As the Athanasian Creed says, “The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three Gods but one God. All members in our human families share the same human nature but there are differing relationships between us which lead to differing roles – male/female; husband/ wife; child/parent and child/child. In our families we should live as equals with differing roles.

So it is in the Holy Trinity. The relationships between the three persons lead to differing roles. Think of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan. The Father commissions the Son for his ministry who is then empowered for it by the Holy Spirit. Today’s gospel tells us that before Jesus ascended to the Father, he commissioned his disciples to baptise others in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Scripture tells us that the Father sent the Son to redeem the world. The Son came to do the Father’s will not his own human will, and both Father and Son sent to Spirit. The three persons of the Holy Trinity have differing roles because of the relationship between them. The Trinity is not one person appearing as three differing characters at differing times like one actor playing three different roles in one play. Each person of the Trinity has a different function but are equal and divine.

The unity between the Father, Son and Spirit has made it possible for us to be redeemed and reconciled to God. At creation the Father spoke the Word (Jesus) and the Spirit brought order out of chaos. The Father sent Gabriel to Mary who was overshadowed by the Spirit so the Son could become fully human. When Jesus the Son was crucified, the Father spoke in the thunder and the Spirit strengthened him through his suffering. The Father raised the Son from the dead and both Father and Son sent the Spirit to lead the Church into all truth.

The unity and singleness of purpose that exists between the persons of the Trinity is the model for the Church as God’s family and our own individual lives as Christians. Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one as he and the Father are one, so we must strive for real and genuine unity between all believers in whom the Spirit dwells. We must also strive for unity within the Church and with others outside of it.

The Church’s great sacrament of unity is the Mass for when we receive communion we are in common union with the Holy Trinity whose persons have enabled us to share in the unity that they share between themselves. God has reconciled us to himself. He is thinking of us

and loving us for ever. He has promised that he will never abandon us. How reassuring that is especially at times when our life is rough and tough.

We may be caught up in unity with God but we are not divine. Our common nature is human not divine, despite a tendency for some humans to try to usurp divinity and behave as if they are gods. It is no accident that in order to save the world the Divine Son humbled himself and took our human nature upon him at the very time that Caesar Augustus, a human ruler, declared himself to be divine. We are humans not God, and that is humbling. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves so much as thinking of ourselves less. Yet we are the adopted children of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit whose love we receive and must pass on to others.

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