



Contributed by Fr. James M. Donohue, C.R.

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THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY
May 30, 2021

GATHERING TIME (10-15 Minutes)

Introduction to the Word:

As I write this reflection, the COVID-19 virus continues to wreck havoc in our world. While there are signs of progress, people's normal routines are still abnormal. In the midst of some progress, people in North America are still waiting for vaccinations, are still having to shelter in place, and are still wondering what the future will hold. While the news is sprinkled with the progress of vaccines and their distribution, we continue to see people isolated from one another. A particularly difficult image that we have seen too often is a person dying in isolation from their family and friends, often only accompanied by a health worker or two. If we ever needed a reminder, COVID-19 has impressed upon us about how much we need one another, how important relationships are, and how "inhuman" it is to struggle and die in isolation from others. We are made for each other...it is in our DNA of being human!

So, what has this to do with Trinity Sunday? The important 20th century theologian, Karl Rahner, S.J, once wrote that speaking about the Trinity is almost unintelligible to Christians today, and if Christians were to wake up one morning and find that there really is no Trinitarian God, it would hardly matter to most. Because of this state of affairs, Rahner worked tirelessly in his writings to explain why it does make a difference to believe in a Trinitarian God. One place to start to understand that it DOES make a difference that we have a Trinitarian God is Genesis 1, where man and woman are made in the image and likeness of God. If God is a community of persons in a relationship of self-giving love—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—then it makes sense to imagine that we as human beings, made in God's image and likeness, are "hard-wired" to be in relationship—with God, with each other, and with the entire cosmos—and that we will be most fulfilled as creatures when we participate in relationships of self-giving love. Our very yearning for relationships—and our disappointment and despair when they are not possible—are signs that we are made in the image and likeness of God, a community of persons.

Warm-up Activity

- 1) What are some of the ways that the COVID-19 virus has affected the relationships of your life? Think of both negative and positive outcomes.
- 2) When many people think of the Trinity, they often think in terms of abstract concepts to try to “explain” the Trinity. How might thinking of relationships help us to experience the Trinity differently?
- 3) Jesus, who gave His life for us, revealed the Father as love, and the Spirit as our helper or advocate. How does our experience of coming to know the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit help us to think about our relationships with each other?

The Table of the Word

Too Good to Be True?

You might remember the answer in the Baltimore Catechism to the question: “Why did God make me?” The answer: “God made me to know, love and serve God in this life so that I can live in happiness with God forever.” In other words, God has made us so that we can be with God. Our goal is to share in the very life of the Trinity. It almost sounds too good to be true. We actually have a reminder of this truth at the Eucharist every time the priest pours a little water into the chalice of wine, when he says, “By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” Yes, Jesus became human so that we can become divine! Indeed, the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven is an anticipation of our destiny to be with God so that we can share in the self-giving love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Penitential Rite:

Let us turn to our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

Lord Jesus, you came to unite us to the Father and to do His holy will,

Lord have mercy

Christ Jesus, you have shared in our humanity, and called us to share in your divinity,

Christ have mercy

Lord Jesus, you sent the Holy Spirit to unite us to yourself and the Father,

Lord have mercy.

Let us pray:

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you call us into life with you.

You reveal yourselves to us so that we may enter into your life.

Help us to see you, to know, love, and serve you.

Help us to respond to your invitation to loving friendship
so that we may share your life with others. Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME

*(As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering Word, and that God is present in the Word proclaimed. This is the Word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the Small Christian Community, namely, reflecting on our life-story within the context of this Word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God's Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering and life-giving.)*

FIRST READING: (Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40)

Moses spoke to the people saying, "Ask now about former ages, long before your own, ever since the day that God created man on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other; 'Has anything so great as this ever happened or has its like ever been heard of?'"

"Has any people ever heard the voice of a god speaking out of a fire, as you have heard, and lived? Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by terrifying displays of power, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?"

"So acknowledge today and take to heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. Keep his statutes and his commandments, which I am commanding you today for your own well-being and that of your descendants after you, so that you may long remain in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: (Romans 8:14-17)

Brothers and sisters: All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption to sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: (Matthew 28:16-20)

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had directed them. When they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted.

And Jesus came up and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Pause for a brief reflection on the scripture readings.

COMMENTARY:

First Reading: In Deuteronomy 4, Moses is urging the people of Israel to be faithful to God, urging them not to act corruptly by fashioning idols which will lead them astray, instead of worshiping and following the LORD. Moses foresees that such behavior will have consequences where the people of Israel will be scattered among the nations. He urges the people of Israel to marvel at the wonders that God has done for them: leading them out of the slavery of Egypt by the power of the LORD's outstretched arm, and continuing to guide them with a cloud by day and with fire by night. Moses is clear that the LORD has done this for one reason: out of love for their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses urges the people of Israel to respond to this love with fidelity and generosity. Interestingly, this text was edited during the Babylonian captivity when these forewarnings had indeed already happened. Israel did abandon the LORD and consequently found itself once again in captivity. However, the LORD never forgets His love for us and, while in Babylon, the LORD sends prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel to promise that the covenant will be renewed, not on tablets of stone, but on their very hearts. The LORD's love endures forever.

Second Reading: The first act of Jesus is to gather disciples into a "new family," a family that is not constituted by blood but by conformity to Jesus and His cause. This family has one Father and rejects the patriarchal relationship of dominance and authority. Instead, all are brothers and sisters in Christ, and sons and daughters of the Father. Paul recognizes that these new relationships are enabled and sustained by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to call God "Abba! Father!" and it is the Holy Spirit who helps us to conform ourselves to the paschal mystery of dying and rising with Christ.

Gospel Reading: Many biblical scholars have provided explanations for the sentence: "When they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted." It does not seem that the disciples doubted that it was Jesus or that they doubted that he had risen. The Greek work that is translated into English as "doubt" is more like "hesitation" rather than "unbelief." No wonder the disciples hesitated. What are they called to do after receiving this revelation of the Risen Lord on the mountain? Jesus directs them in His words to go out to all the nations, baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The new family of Jesus is to embrace all people: Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. The disciples are to share the good news of salvation with all people, helping them to fall in love with God and God's ways. And they do not do this on their own or alone. The Risen Lord has promised to be with the disciples until the end of time.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. "*The Lord is God indeed*" (Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40)

I think we would find very few people who do not believe in God. Even President Dwight Eisenhower said on February 7, 1954, that "there are no atheists in foxholes". However, our beliefs and images of God are very unique. Some of them are not scriptural, and create confusion. On the Feast of the Holy Trinity, we proclaim that we are involved in an intimate personal relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

- a) Are there any images of God which trouble you, and you would consider not true according to revelation?
- b) How do you show that “the Lord is God indeed”?
- c) What are the benefits and burdens of believing in God?

2. *“The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God”*
(Romans 8:14-17)

A sense of belonging is important to each one of us, in particular in our family.

- a) How do you identify yourself as a child of God?
- b) Can you relate to feeling a “co-heir with Christ”, as “moved by the Spirit”, and able to call God “Abba”?

3. *“Know that I am with you always’ yes, to the end of time.”* (Matthew 28:20)

Many people today have issues of ‘abandonment’ – from their family, friends, their workplace, etc. – even in relation to their life with God.

- a) How have you experienced God “with you always”?
- b) Have you felt abandoned by God in your life? What was the cause? The solution?
- c) How have you gone out and “baptized” and “taught”?

CARING - PRAYING TIME

1. **Word for the Week:** *“I am with you always”*

2. **Suggestions for the Week:**

As humans, we are social animals. Sometimes being alone is even a form of torture (solitary confinement). The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have been engaged in our lives since our Baptism, and we in theirs. During this week, be particularly attentive to the presence of God. Each day, direct a prayer to each member of the Trinity – perhaps to the Father to thank Him for the beauty of the day, to Jesus to ask for a listening ear and heart to be a better disciple, and to the Holy Spirit to ask for the grace of patience with someone. Try, for this week, to not to pray to ‘God’ (as if He were some unidentifiable blob somewhere out there), but to engage each member of the Trinity in your prayer. Remember, THEY are with us always!

3. **Intercessions:**

As we approach this Trinity Sunday, let us turn to this God who loves us, who created us, who saved us, and who is our guide:

That the celebration of the Holy Trinity may unite us more closely to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray ... **I am with you always**

That we may be more respectful of the Father by respecting His creation, and His creatures, we pray ... **I am with you always**

That we may more faithfully follow the Son, and desire to do the Father's will, as He did, we pray ... **I am with you always**

That we may be more open to the Holy Spirit, and use well the gifts and charisms He blesses us with, we pray ... **I am with you always**

That our words and actions may fulfill the mandate that the Lord Jesus has given us, we pray ... **I am with you always**

That we may be instruments of God in the life of others, helping them to know and experience that we are never alone ... **I am with you always**

And how can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray:

Almighty God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we praise you and thank you for your sharing in our lives,
and your constant invitation to share in your life.
Bless us with wisdom that we may recognize you
in our daily lives,
and respond to the graces you grant us.
We pray this with devotion and gratitude
trusting in your love and mercy.
Amen.

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God's favours on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we say as one, **OUR FATHER ...**

Celebrating the Word: A Ministry of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. ([Celebrating the Word](#) was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R., deceased 2012). The Scripture version used in this commentary is the [New Revised Standard Version](#) (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA). For information: Website: www.resurrectionists.ca E-mail: provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca