

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity: We Have Been Given the Life of the Trinity

The most profound mystery of our faith is the mystery we call upon before and after every prayer. We begin and conclude our prayers saying, "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Rationalists say that something either has an explanation or it does not exist. Faith tells us that there is so much more to reality than what we can see and hear and feel.

Throughout my priesthood I have shared with you three mini meditations that help us unite our physical lives to the spiritual reality of God's presence. Today I would like to relate these three meditations to the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

The first meditation is the God loves us. God loves me, and God loves you. He loves us for who we are, his children. This meditation particularly relates to the action of God the Father. It is the love of God that created us, as humankind and as individuals. He created us out of love to love him. The love of the Father is unconditional. He does not love us only if we fulfill certain conditions. He loves us because we are His children. Good parents do not love their children for what they do, that is an added bonus. Good parents love their children for whom they are, their children. A good parent does not love the child who does well in school more or less than the child who struggles with his or her lessons. The good parent loves their child because he or she is his child.

The love of the Father is deeper, more profound, than our greatest imagination. The Father created us out of his love. Back in the Baltimore Catechism days we had to learn the answer to "Why did God create us?" The answer was "To know, love and serve Him in this life and be with him eternally in the next life." The Father loves us so much that He did not reject us when we rejected Him. Think of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It is more fittingly called the Parable of the Forgiving Father. The Father's love for the Prodigal was greater than any hurt he experienced when the Prodigal rejected Him and ran off to squander His gifts. He rejoiced when the Prodigal returned to His Presence, even if the Prodigal's motivation was less out of love and more to fill his own stomach. The Elder Brother of that parable refuses to recognize the Father's love and excludes himself from the banquet the Father throws for the Prodigal, the Banquet of the Lord's love.

The Loving Father, the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father, sent his Son to free us from the bond of evil. The Father loves us so much that Jesus became one of us. When we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate not just the birth of our Lord, but the profound love of God that brought about the Lord's birth. St. John puts it so beautifully in the Preface to his Gospel, "those who believe in Jesus were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God."

If I were to ask you what image you see in your mind when you hear the word *God*, you might say the image of Jesus, or that of the power of the Holy Spirit, but most

likely you would say the image that draws you when you consider God, is that of the Father, creating the universe, like Michelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Just consider this: this powerful God, the Creator of the universe, the One who knows how many stars there are and how many planets that orbit the stars, this magnificent awesome God, loves you and me. Psalm 136 puts it so beautifully as it attributes creation to the love of God:

*who by his understanding made the heavens,
His love endures forever.
who spread out the earth upon the waters,
His love endures forever.
who made the great lights—
His love endures forever.
the sun to govern the day,
His love endures forever.
the moon and stars to govern the night;
His love endures forever.*

The second meditation is that God forgives me. This is particularly the Work of the Son. He came for the forgiveness of sins, the sins of mankind in general and the sins each of us in particular. In 1 Corinthians St. Paul wrote: *For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures;* Jesus looked at the woman who was caught in adultery and felt profound sympathy for what sin had done to her. He spoke to that woman at the well who was living an immoral life and saw how much she hurt. His love forgave her. His love forgives us. He forgives us on the cross. He forgives us in the sacrament of penance.

Because Jesus has forgiven us, we need to forgive ourselves. None of us are greater than God. None of us are more powerful than God; yet somehow we think that we cannot forgive ourselves for the idiocies of our sins. We get older and come to a deeper realization of the extent of our sins, the results of our actions. We feel a deep disgust within ourselves when we consider how our actions have effected another person's life, or many people's lives. But Jesus has forgiven us. He has forgiven even those results of our sins that we were not fully aware of when we sought His Mercy perhaps many years ago.

The Work of the Son frees us from the torments of our guilt. He prevents us from living in our muddled past. Indeed, if we live in the past, we will miss the present and have no future. But if we realize that we have been forgiven, then our focus is on serving God now and our joy is knowing that we can serve Him tomorrow.

The third person of the Trinity is the New Advocate, the Holy Spirit. Jesus was very clear that He needed to return to the Father so that the Father and Son could send the Holy Spirit. Last week, on Pentecost Sunday, I was struck with the realization that it is our possession of the Holy Spirit that allows us to remain in the presence of

God. "Know that I am with you always," Jesus says in *Matthew 28:20*. God's continual presence in our lives is the Work of the Holy Spirit.

We are not alone. We will never be alone. The Spirit of the Father and the Son has been given to us. Whatever we do, we do with meaning and purpose when we do it with the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing that we cannot do when we do it in union with the Spirit of God. When St. Paul wrote in *Philippians 7:14*, "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me," he was referring to the spiritual life.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He who loves us, He who forgives us, and He who empowers us. We are baptized into the Trinity, into the intimate Life of God.