

The Most Holy Trinity is one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest mystery of our faith. God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Neither of them are the Holy Spirit. Yet somehow these three distinct persons all share the one nature of God. One God but three persons. The analogies we use to try to understand the Trinity; sunshine, water, three leaf clover, always fail us, and often lead us into a heresy of one form or another. It is easy to see why so many people throughout our history have simply labeled it a mystery and moved on to other things.

But a mystery is not something we have no hope of understanding. A mystery is something that we can understand to the extent that God reveals it to us. And a Trinity is how God has chosen to reveal Himself to the world. The Father loves the Son with His entire being, and that love is returned by the Son. The love between them is so strong it becomes a third person, the Holy Spirit. It is that spirit, the Spirit of God, the love of God, that is imparted to us at baptism. St. Paul told us; “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

This is how we know God. Through His Spirit that dwells within us. He is with us, unto the ending of the age. We feel His presence in our lives at every moment.

Through baptism we are adopted into God's family. We become children of God; we share in His inner life of love. We become co-heirs of

all the wisdom and knowledge that is hidden in Christ. These are the imperishable treasures that we all long for.

There are some who maintain that the loving God of the New Testament is not the same the vengeful God of the Old Testament. But clearly our loving God is there in the Old as well. The people of Israel could not show enough astonishment at the love God bestowed on them. They knew there was nothing in the entire world or among any of the other religions that could compare with this love.

We are challenged to prove this to ourselves. Ask throughout all the land, from where the sun rises to where the sun sets if anything comparable to this love may be found.

This is all the more true for us who have seen the fulfillment of the covenant promises God made to Israel. Those promises are fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. God is love, and God is a communion of three persons.

Too often we ask, what does the Trinity tell us about God? But I think that is the wrong question. A better question would be, what does the Trinitarian God tell us about ourselves, for we are made in His image and likeness?

One of my favorite movies is “The Quiet Man.” In the movie an American, who was born in Ireland, returns to the place of his birth hoping to live out the rest of his life in peace. There is a pivotal scene after the American, named Sean Thornton, has succeeded in purchasing

the cottage he was born in. To celebrate, He goes to the local pub. He enters the bar and wishes everyone a pleasant evening. And is met with stony silence from the locals gathered there. He orders a drink and offers to buy a drink for everyone in the house but again, they don't even acknowledge his presence. Finally an old gentleman gets up and says;

“I don't believe I heard your name,”

“Thornton,” says Sean, “Sean Thornton.”

“And your father?”

“Mike Thornton, he used to live around here.”

“Then your grandfather would be,”

“Old Sean Thornton.”

“So it's himself you're named after. In that case it is a pleasant evening, and we will have a drink with you.”

And all of a sudden everyone is up, clapping him on the back and shaking his hand. He found his people.

There is another story, a true one this time, of a woman from Tennessee who was in Wisconsin giving a talk. Before supper on the first night a man came up to her with a southern accent and asked her where she was from. “I'm from Nashville,” she responded. “I thought so” he said, “who are your people?” Now that may sound like an odd

question to us but the woman knew exactly what he meant. He wanted to know to whom she belonged. It is a question of identification, a claiming of ties.

“My father is Tim Barr,” she said. And the man’s face lit up with recognition and he told everyone around him, “Hey everyone, this is Tim Barr’s daughter.” And they all gathered around her and led her to the table, talking about people they knew twenty five years ago in Nashville. She had found her people.

As baptized Christians, to whom do we belong? Whose example do we follow? It is a question that can open doors or shut them in our face.

This is what it means to be children of a God who is Himself community. We are a people of community. We are only entirely whole with other people. Think about the most satisfying moments in your life. They probably involved another person; moments when you sat on your mother’s lap, when you were hugged, when you were held. Think of the moments you felt most loved and affirmed, when you were complete in the silent presence of someone who loved you, when you had someone in your life.

By contrast now think of the darkest times in your life. Were you alone? Was it a time when you desperately needed to connect with someone but there was no one around. Think of those times when you were rejected, and separated from your friends. We don’t even like to go to the movies or a restaurant by ourselves. Did you ever wonder why solitary confinement is such a cruel punishment?

We need to be with our people, we need to be part of a community, it is how we were made to be. We need to belong.

And that need to belong, that search for love, is so strong it can lead us into situations we know are wrong, gangs, bars, clubs, inappropriate relationships, all because of the promise of love. Our hearts are made for one another. Rejection is so intolerable, so hurtful, because we desperately need to be connected. It is one of the ways in which we image God.

The image of God, God as a community, is written into our very natures, and burned into our hearts. The feast of the Holy Trinity says that God is relationship and therefore, so are we. God's own inner nature is to be family, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What makes God, God, is love. And we find that love in our relationships with others, we have to, we cannot help it. We have no choice. That is why the apostle says that God is love and we are most like Him when we are in love, give love, and receive love.

Every time we reach out for companionship, every time we need to connect with another person, to feel that human contact, every urge for a hug or an embrace gives indirect testimony to the Trinity.

So that is what we are celebrating today. We celebrate our adoption as God's children. We are brought into a relationship so close that God becomes "Abba," "Father." It is a word that speaks not only of the relationship between two persons, but also of intimacy. God is not only "the Father," He is also "our Father," in the paternal, loving sense of a

“dad.” Today, Father's Day, we celebrate the love God has for us, as it is reflected in the love of our fathers.

Our Lord left us with a great commission. We are sent out into the world to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In the name of God we are sent out to do nothing less than enlarge His family.

While we acknowledge and celebrate our community of brothers and sisters that brings us closer to God, we also celebrate our charge from God to increase our family until it encompasses the whole world.

And when at last we have finished the race and run the course, when we have kept the faith, completed our work, and are brought into the joy of our Father's house, our people will be there as well, waiting for us.