

HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY (Mt 28:20-26)

God is mystery, and to try to talk about the mystery of God is difficult because God is beyond words. As Fr. Richard Rohr said, "The deepest things of life we can't talk about because there are no words to describe them." And yet we have to try to talk about them because they are omnipresent in our lives and at the core of life. Today we celebrate one of those aspects of the mystery of God which is most profound, yet derived from the very words of Jesus himself, the mystery of God as the Holy Trinity. Now Jesus did not use that name to describe God, but he said, "The Father and I are one (Jn 10:30)." And in another place "...the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will instruct you in everything and remind you of all that I told you (Jn 14:26)." Jesus talked about God in ways in which his listeners could relate to, as Father or even more intimately as Daddy --- "Abba." To Jesus God the Father was not someone who was far off or some stranger, but rather someone who was as near to him as his very heart and soul, someone whom he could pray to, converse with as though he were standing right next to him, someone whom he could tell his most inmost thoughts without any reservations or fears whatsoever. Jesus knew that he was Son in every way, loved beyond measure, prized as the most valuable person ever, yet also one of us, a human in every way. The love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father manifests itself as the Holy Spirit, who goes forth from them to inspire, to encourage, to give strength, and to give words of praise and prayer to the heart and the lips of the individual to whom the Spirit is given. And, so, the three are one and the one are three --- a mystery, not to be understood but to be accepted and believed. And it will make a difference in our lives.

Whatever our experience with our earthly father may be, it does not have to determine our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Our earthly father is human, prone to many faults and failings, maybe not even being the one whom we would wish to be our father. My younger brother will tell you that for much of his life he resented the father which he had. Whereas, other boys had dads who took them hunting and fishing, our father didn't do either of those things. That wasn't who he was. In fact he wasn't much active at all in our lives; in those days the raising of the children was left to the wives. And because children get a sense of God from their relationship with their parents, my brother struggled with knowing God, especially God the Father. Instead he came to know God intimately through the Holy Spirit on a Cursillo weekend to which he had been invited by a friend. The outpouring of love which he received changed his life and opened his heart to knowing God. My brother is a recovering alcoholic, sober for over 20 years now, but fully aware that he is just one drink away from a life of misery and pain which he once lived. And Russ is a "people person." He loves to make friends and to talk --- oh, how he can talk!

By experiencing the Holy Spirit, though, he came into a relationship with Jesus Christ in the people whom he befriended --- they were not just people now, they were brothers and sisters. And, yes, he made his peace with our father, finally seeing him as the man who had been given to him by God the Father. And as our dad was dying, Russ was there to hold him in his arms in peace and love and give him back to God his Father.

In our times, a father-figure is often absent in the lives of the family. And it can have a significant impact on a person's coming into relationship with God. It can be difficult to relate to God the Father when your only concept of father is someone who was never there. Yet in the Holy Trinity God also comes as God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God the Son is the Word who comes forth from the mouth of God the Father, and that Word is recorded for us in the words of Holy Scripture. So, in reading the Bible, maybe something which Jesus says or does becomes our path to a relationship with God. Jesus reflects to us the heart and the mind of God in practical ways for living out our lives. He doesn't use words only, but he uses the very actions of his life to show us how to live in love. So forgiveness of enemies is not just words which Jesus tells **us** to do, but it was how **he** lived, right up to the moment of his death. Caring for one another was not just words from his mouth telling us what **we** were supposed to do, but it was the way **he** lived, healing the sick, comforting those who were grieving, feeding the hungry, calming the storms in peoples' lives. In doing those things Jesus recognized and told us that his power came from the love of his Father, the love that is the Holy Spirit.

God is mystery --- and we recall the mystery of the Trinity every time we make the Sign of the Cross and say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is the most basic and common of the symbols of our faith. We are made in the image of this mystery which we call God. As science learns more and more about the human body, we become more and more in awe of the complexity and the wonder in which we have been made. Our daughter, Yvette, went to a conference recently, and one of the speakers talked about a protein within the human body which binds all of the cells together. There are between 10 to 60,000 proteins in our body, scientists aren't sure exactly how many, but each of the proteins has a unique shape. This one particular molecular cell protein which binds all cells together is called *laminin*, and its shape is the shape of a cross, 3 short arms and one long arm. Think about that for a moment --- the glue that holds us together is in the shape of a cross. Recall the words of St. Paul to the Colossians, "He (meaning Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, things visible and invisible, ... He is before all else that is. In him everything holds together. (Col 1:15-17)" We knew that Jesus Christ holds us together spiritually; now we know that he holds us together physically, literally by his cross. He holds us together as individual persons and he holds us together as community, the Body of Christ.

So when things get rough and we are having a difficult time seeing God's presence in the midst of the chaos and turmoil, just make the Sign of the Cross and remember that God is holding you together in body and in spirit. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!"

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