

Trinity Sunday A 2020

There are many things that a Christian can say about God that could also be said by a faithful Jew or Muslim, or a believer in one God. The answer to the question, “What distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God?” is given every time we make the sign of the cross and invoke the three divine persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We sign that God is one, one in unity, one in communion, one in love. God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son.

So where does the doctrine of the Trinity come from? As is always the case with Christian teaching, we have to go back to Our Blessed Lord. Jesus consistently referred to Himself as One who had been sent by the Father. In this regard, He would seem little different from, say, Abraham or Moses or Isaiah. But there is something that sets Jesus apart from those Old Testament greats, namely, that Jesus spoke and acted in the very person of God. Not only was Jesus sent by God. Jesus is God. The Father was clearly other than the Son He sent; nevertheless, the Son could say, “The Father and I are one.” (JN 10:30) And to make things even more complex, Jesus promised His disciples at the Last Supper that He and His

Father would send an “advocate,” the Holy Spirit who would lead the Church into the fullness of Truth. It was this “breath” that was breathed into the Church that Easter Sunday night when Our Risen Lord breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” His was the breath of peace, for when He breathed on them, He said, “Peace be with you.” It was “this” wind, His Breath that blew through the Church that first Pentecost into the house where Our Blessed Mother and the Apostles were, the Holy Spirit that has sustained the early Christian community, and has sustained the Church to this day!

Since the first believers were all Jews, there was a dilemma to overcome. The Jews were trained in the strict monotheism of Israel, that is, one God. There is only one God. Their all too familiar Shema summed up their belief in one God. “Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone!” So it was the early Church who unified the Father, Son and Holy Spirit into one God, and St. John did it better than the others in one line from his first letter. “God is love.” He didn’t say that God has love, or that love is one of God’s attributes, but that God is love, that love names the very essence of God. The Father is lover. The Son is beloved, and their shared love is

the Holy Spirit. God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son.

Later on greater minds further explained the three persons in one God. St. Augustine received his insight from man, who was created in the image and likeness of God, in that the Creator God, and the created, man, mirror each other. He took this insight a step further by adding introspection.

During this pandemic, in the aftermath of the wrongful death of George Floyd and the riots that ensued, many of us find ourselves talking to ourselves. Though it doesn't take a pandemic for me to talk to myself. For example, when we ask ourselves "What was I thinking?" or "What are they thinking?" we divide introspection into three:

1. The part that asks the question;
2. The part that answers the question;
3. and the part that is the question and the answer.

Yet, in the process, the mind is not divided into three, falling into schizophrenia. Well, it's the same with God. And you know, no matter how hard we try, none of us will be able to explain the Trinity to everyone's satisfaction, because the Trinity is a mystery.

During these tumultuous times, let's take from 1 John that "God is love." Let's take from Augustine's introspection that man is made in God's image, which is love, and let's pray that love ends hate. There is a lot of hate that surrounded the anger of a wrongful death and the rioters that took advantage of peaceful protesters. And since I am a believer in, and a follower of the Trinity and the Trinity is love, then I must be a lover not a hater.

There's a lot of hate that could fester from the anger toward the Communists who are responsible for this pandemic. By hating Communists, we advance communism, for communism grows in discord just as disease thrives in dirt. Pope Pius XII, in his 1940 Christmas message, declared that one of the first victories to be won is "victory over hate which is today dividing the nations." Communism is an ideology and as such is intrinsically evil, but Communists are person, made in the image and likeness of God and therefore, should be treated that way. It is precisely out of love for the sinner that the sin is hated. As St. Thomas Aquinas said so succinctly, "The very fact that we hate in our brother his fault and the absence of good is because of our love of our brother." The same can be applied to the rioters. Not even the violence of

communism, the violence of rioters abolishes, but rather renders more important, the Christian law to love. And since I am a believer in, and a follower of the Trinity and the Trinity is love, then I must be a lover not a hater.