

## Homily – Most Holy Trinity – (Year C) – June 16, 2019

PRV 8:22-31; PS 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9; ROM 5:1-5; JN 16:12-15

As **atheism increases** in a particular society, a corresponding **decline in religious practice** in that society should **not** surprise **anyone**. But what *might* surprise people is how quickly **anti-human initiatives and agendas** take hold and eventually **dominate** societies that deny the existence of God. Such *attacks on the human person* are as **predictable** to a **believer** as they are *puzzling* to a **non-believer**.

But *why* would a society's denial of God eventually turn that society against its own members? Better yet, why is the attack on the human person in a godless society **so predictable and even inevitable**—as history has proven it to be time and time again, **especially** from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century right up to today?

Part of the answer to **that** question...is **another question**...posed to **God** by the psalmist in today's responsorial **Psalm**:

*What is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?* (Ps 8:5)

For our reflection today, we can shorten that question to: *What is man?*

Let's first answer that question—“**What is man?**”—as a **society hostile to God** answers the question. After that, we'll answer that question from a **Christian perspective**.

In a society like ours, where atheism is on the **rise**, the question of what a human person **is** depends, in **many instances**, on *where* that person is....as silly as that sounds.

Allow me to illustrate...

If the human person is located in the **womb**, then that human person is considered a “**baby**” *as long as* the mom is **happy** about being pregnant. If the mom is *not* happy about being pregnant, then the little person gets “**demoted**” to the status of a **disposable “thing”**—a “**clump of cells**” or a “**product of conception**”. Notice

that the *variability* here is in the **emotion** of the **mom...not** the **nature** of the *baby boy or girl*.

**What is man**—what is the **human person**—then, while *still in the womb*?

In an atheistic society, the answer hinges on the **feelings** of the mom, and not *the tiny, helpless baby himself or herself*. In an atheistic society, **abortion** emerges, **quite predictably**—first as something that should be “**safe, legal and rare**”; then as a **difficult matter to be discussed** between a **woman** and her **doctor**; then as a **positive good**...and eventually a *human right*...for the **mom**, of course...but *not* for the **child** in her womb.

Once the Creator is kicked out of a culture, some humans **inevitably** get demoted to the status of **non-human thing**...based on the **fickle feelings** of those in **power**. History **proves** this. Atheism **fuels** this.

Then there’s the other end of the spectrum—**old age**. When we’re dealing with **end of life issues** in an atheistic society and ask the question “**What is man?**”—again, the answer is: *it depends*.

If grandma or grandpa is sick or disabled, for example, then **what** she or he *is*, **depends** on the **feelings of the family members**...or the **laws of the state**. If grandma’s or grandpa’s **health care costs** get too high—*even if grandma or grandpa is not dying!* — then decisions are to be made as to **whether or not they get to keep living**.

It is, of course, easier to **kill** grandma or grandpa if we can **convince ourselves**—or convince **grandma** and **grandpa**—that **their** value is measured by their **usefulness** and **productivity**—on what they can **do**...rather than on who or what they *are*.

If the old person can be classified as a “**vegetable**” rather than a **person**, for example, then **pulling the plug**...or **injecting the drug**...to *snuff out the life* of a **thing**...doesn’t seem like such a big deal.

In an atheistic society, then, **euthanasia** emerges, *quite predictably*—as a way to **cut costs**, to **free up hospital beds**, to **redirect scarce healthcare funds** to more

“**worthy**” recipients, and to eliminate the **inconvenience** caused by the *useless* person who no longer meets the **family’s or the state’s standards of *worthiness* to live**...especially when they cost the **state** or the **insurance company *too much money***...or cost the **family *too much love***.

**In between pregnancy and death**, we find *another* **utterly illogical answer** to the question, “**What is man?**” Since this **particular** phenomenon has not been around as long as **abortion** or **euthanasia**, it tends to be a bit more **puzzling** to people.

**What phenomenon?**

The *radically irrational* idea that our **sexual identity** is dependent on **fluctuating feelings** rather than on **biological reality**.

In an atheistic society—particularly one as **technologically advanced** as ours—when a **male *feels*** like he’s really a **female**...or a **female *feels*** like she’s really a **male**...there are no limits to the **combinations** of **clothing**, **hormone treatments** and **surgical interventions** that can be applied to **recreate the *self***...by **reconstructing the *body***.

Here’s the **bottom line**—and *proving it is as easy as opening the newspaper or turning on the news*:

If there is no creator, then the <b>false idea</b> quickly emerges that, “ <b>I am God...and I get to do what God <i>would</i> do—if God actually existed—which he <i>doesn’t</i>.”</b> ”
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Ironically, such a twisted belief **does not disprove** the existence of God, no matter how much the atheist **wants** it to. It merely **replaces** the **true God** with the **confused *self***. So, *the atheist can never actually get rid of God*. Rather, he or she just **takes God’s place**. And the results are **always** catastrophic.

All of this should look very familiar to anyone who **looks up** from his or her **smart phone** long enough to **look around** at the state of things today. In a **decaying society** like ours, the answer to the question, “**What is man?**” is: “***It depends***”.

Depends on **what**?

Feelings!

Well, if my **purpose, value, origin and destiny** is dependent on **my** feelings—or worse, **someone else’s** feelings—then my life is built on an **utterly unstable foundation**, and I can’t **help** but feel anxious...*all the time*.

When the **human person’s** value is a **function of feelings**—whether it’s feelings about the **self** or feelings about **someone else**—society becomes **radically unstable**, **people** become **utterly insecure** and the world becomes **increasingly dangerous**.

I don’t know **many**, if *any*, people who feel **more secure and happy** these days than they did, say, ten or twenty years ago. When I look around—when I talk to people—*and I talk to a lot of people*—I see and hear folks who are in a **constant state of anxiety** about the **state of the world**—an anxiety that is rooted, in large part, in their uncertainty about *their own purpose, value, origin and destiny*.

All this, of course, is just a **snapshot** of a **godless society**, and like any snapshot, it does not capture the **entire panorama**. There are **countless additional examples** of the **devaluation and destruction** of the human person that we could enumerate to expand the view. But who can deny that our brief survey here captures some of the more **significant realities** of our **degenerate culture** that have become the “**new normal**”?

The next question we must ask is: **How did we get here?**

Well, believe it or not, the doctrine of the **Most Holy Trinity**—celebrated at **Mass** in the **Catholic Church throughout the world** today—sheds important light on the state of our **society in general**, and on the question “**What is man?**”, in **particular**. Now that we’ve considered the question “**What is man?**” from the **perspective** of an **atheist society that plays God** instead of **worshipping** him, let’s tackle this question from the **Christian perspective**.

The best starting point is **actually** to ask **another** question: “**Who is God?**”

In fact, the answer to **that** question ultimately *answers* the question, “**What is man?**”

So, let’s dive in.

God is a **Trinity**—*one God in three Persons*. God the **Son**—**Jesus Christ**—revealed that God the Creator is a Father...**Our Father**. He also **revealed**—and eventually *sent*—God the **Holy Spirit**, to *remind us of everything he taught us* (cf. Jn 14:26) and to *guide us into all truth* (cf. Jn 16:13).

Now, because our **finite human minds** could never have arrived at the knowledge of God *as a Trinity* without this truth having been **revealed by God himself**; and because our limited minds can never **fully** grasp this truth *even if we can say the words*; we need help to even **begin** to understand the implications of the doctrine of the **Most Holy Trinity** for the question, “**What is man?**”

In the Gospels, how did **Jesus** help his followers understand the infinite ways of God? He illustrated the things of **God** through *parables*. What does a parable **do**? It takes the unfathomable ways of God and **translates them into human terms we can relate to**, in order to understand—**just a little bit more**—*who God is*, and—by extension—*who we are*—*in relation to God*.

In his loving providence, God has actually implanted in human society a **miniature version of his very nature as a community of life and love**—by placing a **real-world copy** of himself right in our midst. And because we can relate to this **icon** from **personal experience**, we **not only** begin to understand a little bit more about who **God** is, but we **also** begin to understand a little more about who **we** are. In other words, we discover the answer to the question, “**What is man?**” by answering the question, “**Who is God?**”

What *is* this **icon** God has placed in the midst of human society that sheds light on who **he** is...and who **we** are?

The *natural* family—**husband and wife...father and mother...joined by God in natural marriage**—and the children that are the *natural fruit* of the **bodily expression** of love between the man and the woman.

Let's see **why** how is so: [**Describe the icon**].

The **family**—the *icon of God's very nature as a community of life-giving love*—opens a window into **God's own inner life** to us on earth. We must understand, then, that any attempt to **close** this window by *destroying any aspect of the natural family and its natural relations*, is **not** just the work of **confused, godless human beings**.

It is the *master plan of the Devil* because **Satan** knows that if he succeeds in **blinding** us to *who God is*, then we will—just like **Adam** and **Eve**—begin to **take** things into our own hands—to **take the place** of God—to the point of **destroying everything we've received from him**—including **ourselves**. This isn't “conspiracy theory”. This is *American society in 2019!*

**God is a family**—*a community of life-giving love*. No religion besides Christianity makes such a claim. And knowing **God's nature** is key to answering the question, “**What is man?**” precisely because we are *created in God's image and likeness* (cf. Gen 1:27) as we read in the book of **Genesis**:

*...God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...”* (Gen 1:26-28)

We are in **God's image and likeness**, but **not** by *physical appearance*. If that were so, then God would be **bald** with a **white goatee** and **bad eyesight**. No, we are in God's image and likeness **above all** in our ability to enter—**consciously** and **deliberately**—into relationships of **life-giving self-sacrificial love**—precisely as **male and female**.

Every attack on the human family, then, is *much more* than an **ideological agenda** or a **political program**.

*It is the work of the Devil!* Its **human proponents** are just the Devil's **pawns**.

Unlike animals which merely **reproduce**, human beings *procreate*—actually **collaborating with God in the *pro-active creation*** of new little images of God—male and female—each with a **physical body** and an **immortal soul**.

**Man and woman, in the *natural physical act of love*, provide the *raw materials* for the new person's *body*. God provides the *soul*.**

So, **natural marriage**, lived in **obedience** to the law of God, is *already* a **participation in the very life of God**...here on earth!

Participation in the very life of God—**living in the heart of the Most Holy Trinity's life-giving love for eternity in heaven**—is the **destiny** of every human person—the **reason** we were created.

God has not only revealed himself to us, **gradually**, throughout the course of salvation history, in order to reveal the depth of his love for us. He has also given us a way—*in this life*—to **already taste** this love—to experience it in **family and natural marriage**—*as he designed family and natural marriage*—so that every step of our journey **back home to him** is **taken under his loving guidance**.

**Ignorance** of our connection to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, then, is *deadly* to **individuals** and to **human society**.

**Awareness** of our connection to the mystery of the *Most Holy Trinity*, on the other hand, is *essential* in order to know **who God is, and**...by extension...**who we are**.