

Most Holy Trinity - 2020

Ex 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18

Today we hear a bible passage that can be considered a central statement of the Gospel message. So central is this phrase that many believe that if you have only one chance to flash a biblical reference to millions of people watching a sporting event on TV - this is the passage to pick. We have all seen “John 3:16” written on a piece of cardboard and being waved by a fan in the stands - and if you never got the chance to check it out, we heard it in the Gospel reading today: ***God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but might have eternal life.*** This passage does express what is perhaps the central and essential element of the “Good News” or “Gospel,” God sent his Son, by God becoming one of us, so that through his death and resurrection we may be able to enter eternal life in heaven.

However, to understand how God the Father sends God the Son, and through this gives us God the Holy Spirit (an event we just celebrated at Pentecost) - we need to tackle another difficult reality. The fact that God is one eternal God who does not have any parts, yet God has within this one being three “persons.” How can God be three and still be one and undivided? - it doesn’t make sense to us. But this is the reality that God has been conveying since God began to reveal Godself to Abraham, and as God continued to reveal in events such as we heard in our first reading today, finally reaching the height of revelation in Jesus Christ.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that: “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in Himself ... it is the most fundamental and essential teaching.” It is through the reality of a God who can be three persons while still remaining one God that it is possible for God to take on human nature and flesh as Jesus, yet still remain God. It is through this mystery that it is possible for that Jesus to offer Himself to the Father and be the priest, the sacrifice, and the one to whom the sacrifice is being offered all at the same time. It is through this mystery that the central statement of the Gospel found in John 3:16 is possible - that God could send his only Son that we might have eternal life. The central message of the Gospel expressed in John 3:16 calls upon us to believe in the mystery of this God who is a Trinity of persons.

In our modern time we have been brought up to think that if we cannot understand a thing with our human minds or measure it, then it can't be true. In the past, humans were more comfortable with mystery - they thought that there must be *some* things that we simply have not discovered or explained yet. In the last few hundred years, however, we have become *so* advanced in what we know, that we have begun to forget that there still are things out there that we *can't* explain or measure with instruments. There are still things that we must place in the category of "mystery" rather than say that the only two categories are: (a) what we have proven with our current technology, and (b) a bunch of other stuff that is not true. This "either A or B" mentality can't be right - unless we have found everything, and know everything, and have no more scientific discoveries to ever make in the future. God is like many other things throughout history (and even in the present) that humans know to be true, and simply believe are true, *despite* an inability to fully explain it. Any time scientist say that we don't understand how something works - it is a mystery, and so it is with God who is at least as likely to be true as the speculative theories that we so easily believe without proof.

We learn a lot about our mysterious God today. We learn that God is mysteriously not like us in mercy and kindness - the first reading tells God's name: *The LORD, the LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity* - and we also learn that God is a being like no other who exists as one being in a community of persons, a model of love so powerful it unifies and breaks down division. In our second reading when St Paul tells the Corinthians to *live in peace* and speaks of the *fellowship of the Spirit* we should hear ourselves really being called to live together in a community of love. St. Paul is calling us to live as close as possible to the reality of God *in whose image we have been created*. God is a community of persons with so much love, and so little division, that these persons, though distinct, are one Being. We can't achieve this perfection of unity in this life, but the closer we work within our families, within the Church, and within society to live as a community of love - we will experience more and more the peace that is found when one is united in faith to the God of undivided love. The mystery of the Trinity is not just the central mystery of our Christian faith, it is a model of unity by which we should pattern our Christian life so that we may one day be fully united to God.