

Living What We Profess  
June 7, 2020

Today we profess our faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In some ways, it is easy to profess that we believe in the Holy Trinity. God the Father is the Creator of the universe. The only begotten Son of God became man to redeem us. The Holy Spirit communicates their love and sanctifies us. They live in perfect unity as one God.

*Professing* the Trinity is one thing, but *living* that truth is a whole different matter. It means to revere the Trinity not only in itself, but also to revere the Trinity in me, in you, and in every single human being. The Trinity is the source of human dignity. Each person is made in the image and likeness of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every person is the living image of God. We are different than any creature.

Do you live with gratitude and wonder of being made in God's likeness? How well do you and I revere this mystery in the people around us?

Sometimes we are blind to our human dignity. It might help to begin by realizing that we can be blind to the beauty of all creation. In his book *The Golden String*, the Benedictine monk Bede Griffiths describes a time when he suddenly became more aware of God's presence in creation. As a young boy, Bede was walking outside one summer evening at sunset. He became aware of the beauty of the birds singing and wondered why he had not heard them singing like that before. A little farther along, he came to some hawthorn trees blooming with the sweetest fragrance. Again, he realized that he had never noticed their sweetness before. As dusk approached, he came to some playing fields with no one there, and everything was so quiet as the sun faded in the west. As a boy, he dropped to his knees in wonder of God's presence. In the book he describes this as "one of the decisive events of my life." (pp. 9-10, *The Golden String* as quoted by Gregory Cleveland in *Awakening Love*, p. 260)

There are times when we wake up to the presence of God in creation. The recent events in our nation have been a wake-up call to God's presence in the human person. God is dwelling in all things, but especially in human beings. God's indwelling gives every person an inviolable dignity. No one can take it away; even a wicked man cannot relinquish it.

Even if a criminal says to God, *"I have committed such horrendous crimes. I have ruined my dignity. I have wasted the precious gifts which you have given to me, Father. I no longer deserve to be called your son."* Yet, his dignity of being God's son remains. God affirms that dignity and restores it by saying, ***"Quickly, bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found."*** (Lk. 15:22-24)

To believe in the Holy Trinity is to accept this mercy. It is to believe that we are not the sum of our weakness and sin. Rather we are the sum of the Father's love for us and of our real capacity to become like his Son. Those are words from St. John Paul II.

Mr. George Floyd had served five stints in prison; yet, he was still a beloved son of the Father. Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck for almost nine minutes; yet, he is still a beloved son of the Father. Human dignity is inviolable; you cannot destroy the image of God. In all of creation, the incarnation is

the peak of God's indwelling. When the Son of God was incarnated, he assumed our own human nature. As beautiful as nature is this time of year, the unique beauty of humanity far surpasses it.

Do you see in each person the living image of the Holy Trinity? Do you see that beauty in saints and sinners alike, or are you blind to it? Sometimes we get a wake-up call to this beauty because it has been violated so horribly. In part, the horrific death of George Floyd has been a wake-up call.

St. Paul said to the Corinthians, ***“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?”*** (1 Cor. 3:16) In the Greek language there is a word for 'you' singular and a word for 'you' plural. In this statement, all of them are plural. This sentence could be translated like this: ***“Do yawl all not know that yawl are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in yawl?”*** (1 Cor. 3:16) Paul did not say that you singular are the temple of God. Nor did he say that you plural are temples of God. Rather, he said, ***“you (plural) are the temple (singular) of God.”*** Together the Spirit makes us into God's temple. One temple. This is another way of saying that we are all brothers and sisters of one family, God's family.

The temple of God is violated if any person is mistreated. The People of God cries out for justice when people are killed in the womb, or separated from their families as immigrant children, or violently treated while being arrested, or are subject to racism because of their skin color, or if their businesses are burned during violent protests, or even if they are executed with capital punishment. This is official Church teaching; it is based on our human dignity.

We must cry out for justice whenever a person is not treated in accord with his or her God-given dignity. We must cry out in our Churches and in our streets for any person – born or unborn. In the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (#105), it states: *“The Church invites all people to recognize in everyone – near and far, known and unknown, and above all in the poor and suffering – a brother or sister for whom Christ died.”* This is Catholic doctrine. It flows from the doctrine of the Trinity. As we look out at our broken world, obviously we have so far to go to live that truth.

How well do I live with gratitude and wonder of being made in God's likeness? Do I revere this same dignity in saints and sinners alike? If not, then I don't fully believe in the Holy Trinity. Then I am not truly living as a Christian.

Don't give up. God never does. When the Lord looks upon our violent world, he sees our deepest identity as sons and daughters of a merciful Father. God sees our dignity and all that we are capable of becoming – our real capacity to become the image of his Son. And he gives us the Holy Spirit to work tirelessly at forming one family of God. By the grace of the Holy Trinity we can live as sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters for whom Christ died