



Homily for 6/7/2020

Trinity Sunday, Extraordinary Form

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The devil is the great divider. The Latin word for devil is *Diabolus*, and it a transliteration of a Greek word meaning “The Accuser” or “The Slanderer”. But when you break down the word to its constituent parts, *diabolus* means “to throw through”, that is, to divide in two. The devil is the great divider; to divide people is literally diabolical. We are living in an age of great division. We are divided on political things, that is, how best to order and rule a society of human beings. We are divided on racial things, that is, many people are treated unjustly because of the color of their skin. We are divided on religious things, that is, how best to love God above all and to love neighbor as self. The ultimate division is our death when body and soul are separated. Division is the very definition of death. The devil has had his hand in dividing humanity from one another and from God since the beginning. If you have participated in this division, fanned it into flames with rhetoric or action, if you have fallen into the vices instead of practicing the virtues, if you have harbored anger or allowed hate or animosity to dwell in you, you are a cooperater in this division, a cooperater in the diabolical. We all stand accused of this in one way or another, mostly in venial ways but perhaps even in mortal ways; and we must plead guilty. The Accuser has made his accusation and we stand condemned. Already in the Garden of Eden the devil slandered God by calling him a liar: “Surely you will not die.” But the reality is that the devil is the only liar, and his lie prompted Eve to separate herself from God by disobedience. Then the devil’s fruit of division continued in the blame cast between Adam and Eve and spilling over into the envy of Cain towards Abel. Humanity has suffered from this division ever since.

But light has come into the world. In the Gradual the church sings from the Book of Daniel and declares God “Blessed”. What is the cause of this Blessedness of God? He is blessed who looks into the depths from his throne upon the cherubim. He is blessed in the firmament, that is in the heavens above. This means he sees all, and nothing escapes his notice. No division, no separation goes unnoticed by Him. He sees all, and so He is to be adored as the omniscient God; and so we name Him blessed. We further sing God’s praise in the Introit, Offertory, and Communion antiphons: We will give glory to God; blessed be God; and we will praise him, **because he has shown his mercy to us**. He who sees all has looked with compassion. He has seen our division and has come in to bring us healing in His unity. His mercy is made manifest in that from our division, He has made us One in Him. And this is the light of faith. The accuser of our brothers has been cast out. We read in the Book of Revelation:

“The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

Now have salvation and power come,
and the kingdom of our God

and the authority of his Anointed.

For the accuser of our brothers is cast out,
who accuses them before our God day and night.

They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;

love for life did not deter them from death.”

Notice how the conquering is done not by our own power but by the Lamb of God who lays down His life to unite man once again to God: “They conquered him by the blood of the lamb.” To profess the Catholic Faith is to acknowledge that the blood of Christ ends the separation from God that our sins create. We invoke the unifying blood of the God-man against the attacks of the evil one. We must embrace this faith even as the devil tries to tempt us to continue the division. But notice that they conquer also by the word of their testimony: They testify to the truth that has been revealed. This victory of reunification comes through the fullness of the revelation of who God really is. With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we can now celebrate the truth of who God really is.



That is why the Church has us celebrate The Most Holy Trinity on the Sunday after Pentecost. God is now fully revealed to us: God is three in one. This is a dogma, that is, a sure truth to be believed with Divine and Catholic Faith. We believe in One God, in Three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From the Athanasian Creed we profess: “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith unless everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.”

This is a mystery that is not explainable in its entirety but rather is a mystery wrapped in mystery. There is the great story of St. Augustine’s attempt to explain the Trinity as he worked on his great work *De Trinitate*: The scene is the seashore, where there is a small pool, a little boy with a seashell, and a sandy beach on which St. Augustine, clad in his episcopal robes, is walking, pondering with difficulty the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. “Father, Son, Holy Spirit; three in one!” he muttered, shaking his head. As he approached the little boy who was running back and forth between the sea and the pool with a seashell of water, Augustine asked him: “Son, what are you doing?” “Can’t you see?” said the boy, “I’m emptying the sea into this pool!” “Son, you can’t do that!” Augustine countered. But the boy retorted, “I will sooner empty the sea into this pool than you will manage to get the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity into your head!” Upon saying that, the boy, who was an angel according to legend, quickly disappeared, leaving Augustine alone with the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

We will explain it no better than he was able, but the one thing that we can take from this mystery is that God as Three in One, is the source of our unity also. God’s very essence is the remedy for the devil’s poison of division. In knowing God as He is, we can recover an authentic understanding of who we are, made in His image and likeness, and then act accordingly. As St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, “Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!” This is our great patrimony as Christians. We are the inheritors of a great richness, the very life of God, and it is the reason we come today to worship this One True God who reveals Himself as a Trinity of persons. This Trinity is made manifest to us as Love itself. God is Love. We come to worship Love as the great unifier. Not love as the world knows it but Love as only God can live it. A love manifested as sacrifice. The embrace of suffering for the good of the other. By His stripes we have been healed. By the long-suffering of the body of Christ, the bearing of one another’s burdens, the binding up of the wounds of our brothers and sisters the world can be healed too. We are called to be cooperators in Unity. We who have been baptized are brought into the heart of this mystery of communion with God and confirmed by the Spirit of Divine Love. In this communion we stand as His beloved. Our lives should therefore be a witness, a testimony, to unity. When we know who we are, children of God, we know that we are made for unity with Him and with one another, and we can overcome the temptations of the devil and cast out all divisions.

In the Gospel we hear the risen Christ say, “Go and make disciples of all the nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” That is, go out into the world and bring people into the life-giving unity of God. This is the healing we have been waiting for. This is the balm, the salve, the anointment that will cure our world’s great divisions. Only in the Blood of the Lamb of God and testimony to the unity we have in Him will we overcome the divisions of racism, police brutality, political strife, doctrinal divisions, wounds against the unity of the Church, self-righteousness, accusations and slanders. The only lasting solution is for the Catholic Christian Faith to reign in every heart. In Baptism we were plunged into the inner life of God, who is a communion of love. To truly conquer, we must act like we are what we are – communicators with the Triune God who is Love. Approaching our worldly life with the understanding that we are in an intimate communion with the Triune God who is Love is the only way to end the divisions that keep us separated.



In the Collect prayer we acknowledge that we are granted, in confessing this true Faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and to adore the Unity of God. Remaining steadfast in this Faith will be our defense against all adversity. It is for us, then, to be agents of unity in the world to counteract the devil's diabolical tactics of division. Remain steadfast in your commitment to adore the Unity of the Triune God and remain faithful to the Divine Command to love one another as He has loved us.

May Jesus Christ be praised!