

Trinity Sunday Cycle A, June 7, 2020

For most of us, our first trip to church was on the day of our Baptism. The Rite of Baptism has, as its first step, asking the parents of an infant, "What name do you give your child?" My parents answered that question saying, "Dennis Leo". The first time I asked that question was on the occasion of the baptism of one of my nephews. I asked my brother and his wife what name they were giving, and I heard the response, "Daniel Clark".

What is your favorite name for God? As human beings, we were given the authority to name things on earth in the Book of Genesis. We have taken that authority and used human terms to help us relate to God. And, God has revealed to us ways to know, love and serve Him. To know Him requires human thoughts and words. It requires a name. In our first reading today, Moses announces the name God gave for Moses to share with the people. LORD! It is an awesome name, but not the only name we use for God. So, my question remains, what is your favorite name for God?

Knowing who someone is helps us to relate. Having a name to use helps us to make it personal, intimate and gives us the ability to focus on who they are.

In the Baptism Rite, as Catholic Christians, we use a specific formula of words when administering the Sacrament. We call it the Trinitarian Formula. We say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is not considered a valid baptism unless these words are used. When people come to the Church to become Catholic, usually through RCIA, one of the first things we need to check is if the person has been baptized, and if so, where, and how. If these words were not part of the ritual, the Catholic Church does not recognize those baptisms. You see, the name of God is an integral part of being Catholic, and our God is the Trinity.

On this Trinity Sunday, if you want a reminder of how important the Trinity is, THAT is it. From the very beginning of our lives as Christians, we are sealed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Without it, it does NOT count. It signifies the extraordinary importance the Church places on this singular belief, this one great dogma: one God, in three persons.

After Jesus promise to send the Holy Spirit, revealing this third person of the Trinity, and after our celebration of Pentecost last weekend when the Holy Spirit first came, it is fitting that we celebrate this glorious feast of the great Three in One.

As Catholic Christians, we affirm our belief in the Trinity almost every time we pray. Did you notice that Father Kawalec used a different opening greeting today? Instead of the usual, "The Lord be with you" he used, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." This option is so fitting for today's feast. And we were able to use it early on in our prayer today. And, it is not the last time you heard these words at Mass today. They come directly from today's

second reading from Saint Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. And, it was not the first time we invoked the Trinity.

We began this highest form of prayer, the Mass, with the Sign of the Cross. Even then, that is not the first time most of us would have used the Sign of the Cross in church today. I saw many of us reaching for the Holy Water as we entered the church, forgetting that due to the COVID-19 crisis there was no water in the fonts. Still, we made the sign of the cross. Acknowledging the Trinity is virtually second nature. After the blessing at the end of Mass, when Father blesses us in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, many of us again will reach for the Holy Water as we leave, and many will still make the Sign of the Cross.

The beautiful Gospel passage today is probably one of the most quoted in all of Scripture. "For 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." Our Protestant Christian sisters and brothers repeat this verse more often than we do. It is an awesome recognition of God's saving love. We would do well to remember it and meditate on it. It is part of God's Word, Holy Scripture. It tells us of the Father and of the Son...

I propose to you, the Sign of the Cross is used millions of times more often by Catholic Christians, usually at the beginning and end of our prayers, and it reveals more about our God. It expands our awareness of God to the Trinity.

Just think of what this simple gesture means. We touch our heads for the Father – the one whose mere idea, whose smallest thought, created us. This is where we began, in the mind of God.

We touch our hearts for the Son – whose unceasing love took Him to the Cross, and the one who taught us, as well, how to love through His own Sacred Heart.

We touch our shoulders for the Holy Spirit – the one who gives us strength, and who carries us on His shoulders – on His wings if you will – and who enables us to be God's arms, working on earth.

In order to be God's arms, working on earth, we must consider how the Trinity sees and hears what is going on here on earth. The Trinity experiences humanity: some loving, others hating; some hugging, others hitting; some helping, others ignoring, hurting, and killing. What do you see and hear? We need only to look at all the events in our own cities in the past few weeks after the death of one man, and also at all the varied responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

How do you feel as you contemplate the world in this way? How do the three Divine Persons respond to the joys and sufferings of the world? How does the God, who is Love, respond to us, God's children, who are lost, aimless, suffering, sinning, confused, and hurting? Imagine, how God looks at the world, looks at each of us, and says, "I

love you. I love you. I love you.” God is love and keeps His covenant to love us always, forever, no matter what.

Whether we call God: LORD, or JESUS, or MASTER, or FATHER, or LOVE, or SPIRIT, or THE ADVOCATE, our faith calls us to know that, “For 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.” And we name our Trinitarian God when we pray, in the name of FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY SPIRIT. Amen! Amen!