

Holy Trinity Sunday (A)
(Exodus 34:4-6. 8-9 / John 3:16-18)
04.06.2023

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Most Holy Trinity – one God in three persons – is a mystery. It is the mystery of life within the godhead, and it is the mystery of the relationship between God and the world. It is also the mystery of our life with God. Once again this year, on this Holy Trinity Sunday, let us try to understand a little more of this mystery.

Jesus was a pious Jew. Like all pious Jews, he would have prayed three times a day the “Shema Israel...”: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is one...” (Dt 6:4). This Jewish prayer, which is still recited by Jews today, was an unambiguous affirmation of the monotheistic faith of Israel. The other religions which surrounded Israel at the time of Jesus were polytheistic. While Israel believed in one God, her neighbours believed in a multiplicity of gods... What is certain is that Jesus never denied his Jewish faith in one unique God: For the Jews, there was one God and this God was one.

Before the time of Jesus, nobody would have thought that there was more than one person in the unique God of Israel. It is only when Jesus revealed himself as the Son of the Father that people began to think that there was perhaps more than one person in the unique God

When Jesus sought to explain who He was to others, He spoke of His Father and He presented Himself as his Father’s Son. In today’s gospel passage, we heard Jesus say to Nicodemus: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost”. “God the Father sent his Son Jesus” (Jn 20:21)! The Father and his Son: are they not two persons?

Jesus explained that he was completely dependent upon the Father. He said that He could do nothing of himself; He could only do what he saw the Father doing: “In all truth I tell you, by himself the Son can do nothing; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too” (Jn 5:19).

Jesus did not live for personal success or for his own glory, but for the Father: “I seek to do not my own will but the will of Him who sent me” (Jn 5:30).

Jesus made clear that there was an unfathomable bond of love between the Father and Himself: “The Father loves the Son” (Jn 5:20).

The Father and the Son: Two different persons but deeply united in love and with one will, that is to say two persons who are one. “You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (Jn 14:11). The relationship between Jesus the Son and his heavenly Father is much deeper than the relationship between a human father and his son. Most of us have experienced the presence of a father in our lives; but sooner or later, for one reason or the other, we separated from this human father and finally his life was or will be taken from us through death. The relationship of Jesus with his heavenly father is quite different. Jesus is, He always has been, and He always will be the Son of the Father. Jesus’ relationship to his Father is eternal. The Father is forever generating Jesus as his Son, giving all of himself in and through His son,

and the Son is forever returning all of his love to the Father. It is for this reason that we can say that while there are two persons there is but one God.

The love, the communion between the Father and the Son is presented like a third person, the Holy Spirit, who is sent upon us, and who lives within us in order to allow us to understand the teaching of Jesus, the Father's only begotten Son. "The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you" (Jn 14:26). Saint Paul does not hesitate to declare that the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of the living God, is Lord, as the Father and the Son are Lord. (2 Cor 3:17-18)

It becomes clear then, on the basis of what Jesus taught, that there is more than one person in the one God. Believers began to realize this. This led the Church to declare that there were three persons in the one God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three different persons fully united, three different persons who form but one God.

Martin Buber, a well known Jewish philosopher, wrote: "In the beginning is relation".

This is true about God. In God there is life, there is relation; a relationship between three persons who are one; a relationship between the Father, the Son and their communion of love, the Holy Spirit.

As a consequence, our own relationship with the Lord in prayer is also enriched by the fact that we are in relationship not only with the Lord but with the Lord in three persons, with the Holy Trinity. The Spirit introduces us into the intimacy which unites the Father and the Son. The Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of Jesus does not cease to pray within us to the Father, saying: 'Abba-Father', following the rhythm of our breathing. In other words, prayer flows freely within us. This is the case whether we are aware of it or not. It is up to us to become aware... to make the Spirit's prayer within us our own. It is our vocation and our duty to do so. The Son Jesus reveals to us who our heavenly Father is: both a reference, a landmark for us and a merciful Father. The Son also reveals to us how to become adoptive son or daughter of the Father; "In the beginning is relation". This is true about each one of us who were created in the image and likeness of God and who are called to live in relationship with one another, respecting, serving and loving not only our Christian neighbours but every human being, all our brothers and sisters in humanity without exception. Our communion with one another is essential if we want to reveal to the world that the Father and the Son are one, one Lord and God, as we are one people of God.

As Christians we are called to reflect the relationship between the three persons of the Holy Trinity in our lives. In our family or community life, in the Church, at work, in politics, in leisure, we are called to relate with one another, respectful of our legitimate differences. Let us be realistic: our differences are legion: our age, our social milieu, our education, our nationality, our culture, the colour of our skin, our political affiliation, our religious denomination, our sexual identity. All these differences are good and form the beauty of the mosaic of life. We are called to respect, serve and love one another, we are called to give to one another and to receive from one another. We are called to work together for the common good. In so doing, we reflect the mystery of the Blessed Trinity in our daily lives.

May our contemplation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity transform our existence: May we learn how to be one so that the world may believe that Jesus and the Father are one, and in the Spirit may we proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

Amen.