

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity C
Prov 8:22-31; Rom 5:1-8; Jn 16:12-15
June 12, 2022

A seminary professor once gave a two-hour lecture in Latin about the theology of the Holy Trinity. At the conclusion of his presentation, he summed up his entire lesson by saying: “*Mysterium est*” –it is a mystery. He needed his students to understand that the Trinity is a mystery of our faith that is beyond full explanation or our ability to fully comprehend. However, just because we cannot fully explain something does not mean that it does not really exist. That is the difference between mystery and mythology.

Today’s feast of the Most Holy Trinity celebrates the wonders of the love of God, who has revealed himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Each year, this feast comes one week after the end of the Easter Season and one week before the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.) Last week, we celebrated Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and a feast often referred to as the birthday of the Church. Next week, we celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, which highlights the Eucharist as the center of the life of the Church and in the lives of those who follow Jesus (followers.) Between these feasts, which focus on the Holy Spirit and on Jesus, we celebrate the One God in three Persons, the Most Holy Trinity.

Perhaps the best way for us to understand the Trinity is to use a comparison. The Trinity has been described by making reference to our experience of sunlight. God the Father is like the sun, shining upon us. God the Son is the ray of light that comes to us from the sun, and God the Spirit is the warmth and heat given off both by the sun and the rays, giving life and light to the world. The Most Holy Trinity is all about relationships, how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit relate to one another and to us.

Today’s readings help us to see something unique about that relationship. The reading from Proverbs explains that wisdom was present before the creation of the world. Wisdom is a characteristic of the Holy Spirit, and this reading tells us that God was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, long before Jesus took flesh or the Spirit was sent forth. God was and always will be, a Trinity of persons united in a oneness of love.

The love of the Trinity was so strong in the soul of St. Paul that he told the Romans that he can even boast of his afflictions. According to Paul, the sufferings he endured helped him to build up endurance, to grow in virtue, and to increase in hope. In St. Paul’s belief, hope in Christ never leads to disappointment, but only to fulfillment of the promise of salvation. The love of

God, poured out for us by Jesus – through the Holy Spirit – enabled Paul to endure his suffering. That same Spirit has seen the Church through persecutions and difficulties since those early days. It is the love of God for us, shown through Jesus, and poured out upon each of us through the Holy Spirit, that enables us to carry our crosses and to help others to bear their burdens.

Our Gospel reading today is taken from John's account of the Last Supper. Having predicted his arrest, his Passion, death and departure from this world, Jesus reassures his disciples that one is coming after him who will preserve their faith, strengthen it, and guide them in truth.

The Father has given everything he has to Jesus, who, in turn, gave his all for us on the Cross. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon us to continue the gift of God's love through all generations, until Jesus the Christ comes again in glory.

There is another phrase that has been passed down through the Church over the centuries, "*Deus semper major*" – "*God is always greater*" Today's feast of the Holy Trinity reminds us of this essential truth about God: He is wholly other; he is always more than we can imagine.

God is beyond our description, understanding, or explanation – but God is far from being beyond belief. God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is a mystery that draws us deeper and deeper into the mysteries of divine love and eternal life.

- Fr. Stephen Lattner, O.S.B.