

This weekend we celebrate what the Catechism calls “the central mystery of Christian faith and life”: the Most Holy Trinity. You know, in seminary we had an entire semester-long class on this great mystery of our faith. And our professor used to drill into us the importance of explaining the Trinity properly. He would tell us horror stories of some of the bad homilies he had heard on Trinity Sunday. So often, he said, preachers would want to bring the Trinity down to the level that we all can understand, so that all of us can wrap our minds around this mystery of our faith. Because of this desire, he would hear preachers use analogies to explain the Trinity, such as the three-leaf clover that St. Patrick supposedly used or the three modes of H<sub>2</sub>O: steam and water and ice. But the problem is that these analogies, and in fact almost any analogy will create more problems than it does solutions. That is to say they will lead more to heresy than to orthodoxy, more to wrong belief than to right belief. (This is why so many have taken to calling this not Trinity Sunday, but heresy Sunday!)

But if we can't use these old favorite analogies to help describe the Trinity, can we bring God down to our level? Can wrap our minds around him? Have we no hope fully to understand God as He reveals Himself to be: Three Persons in One God?

To put it simply, no. We cannot fully understand God in Himself. We cannot fully understand the Trinity and how God can be both One Divine Nature and yet Three truly distinct Persons - Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Why can't we fully understand? Because God and the mystery of God in Himself is infinite, but our human intellects are finite. And the infinite simply cannot be contained within the finite. St. Augustine recognized this when he said famously: "If I understand it, it is not God."

Yet, while it's true that we cannot bring God down to our human level, in reality, we don't need to. Sure, it's true that we will never fully grasp the mystery of God, but the truth remains that God has revealed Himself to us. God has demonstrated to us not only that He exists, that there is a God; but He has also shown us Who He Is. God has revealed to us that He is Father and Son and Holy Spirit - three persons in One God.

This self-revelation of God was clear to see even just in the last two great feasts we celebrated: Jesus, the eternal Son of God, returned to the Father in His Ascension, and the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost. This Trinitarian God is at the very heart of the Creed that we profess every Sunday: God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is the mystery that we profess when we sign ourselves with the cross - In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is the God whom we adore when we pray: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. This truly is the central mystery of our faith.

And today, the scriptures show us that there is something even more important than our ability to give a clear defense of the dogma of the Trinity - and that is important for us, we should be able to explain, at least on a basic level, what we believe about the Trinity. But even more important is what this mystery means for our life of faith. Our belief in the Most Holy Trinity makes us unique among all the other the other religions of the world. What is unique is that our faith, our relationship with God is not about our quest to attain God or our search to find Him. Rather, our relationship with God is about His burning desire to find us. As Christians, we are unique because we don't have to go searching for God. We have a God who comes searching for us; we have a God who is looking for us!

This is what Moses was saying to the people in the first reading. He asked them:

"Did anything so great ever happen before?

Was it ever heard of?

Did a people ever hear the voice of God

speaking from the midst of fire, as you did, and live?

Or did any god venture to go and take a nation for himself

from the midst of another nation...?

This is exactly what God did for the Hebrew people. He chose them to be a nation peculiarly His own. This is what we sang in the Psalm: “Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be His own.” God chose Israel to be His own people so that they could lead all the rest of the nations to Him. God went looking for His people and He revealed His love to them as a Father.

And what happens when God finds His people? St. Paul tells us He adopts us. God adopts His people so that we become children of God and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. We have all received a spirit of adoption through which we cry out: Abba, Father! The Lord searches for us, and when He finds us he adopts us. He becomes our Father and He makes us His children. And so we become heirs.

And if we are heirs to God, what is it that we are promised to inherit? In St. Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus tells us: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This ancient formula for baptism, which has been used for nearly two thousand years, tells us what we inherit from God. We inherit the very life of the Trinity. Because God searches for us and finds us and adopts us, we have life in God. Through Baptism we become sharers in the life of the Trinity.

God is love. The Holy Trinity is an eternal communion of love - the Father loving the Son, the Son receiving the love of the Father and loving Him in return. And the love between Them is so strong that Their Love is another Person, the Holy Spirit. Our inheritance as children of God is that we can share in this eternal Communion of Love.

And since God is searching for us, since God desires to be one with us even more than we desire to be one with Him, all we need to do is to be open to His love. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus says these beautiful words:

“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me. I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on His throne.”

The Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian faith and life. And eternal communion with the Holy Trinity is our inheritance as children of God. Everything else in our faith is God’s way of preparing us for this. His commandments teach us how to have hearts that can open when He knocks. The sacrament of reconciliation is His way of healing us when we fail to keep those commandments, when we fail to open the door of our hearts. And the Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of Charity that gives us a foretaste of the Love of the Holy Trinity. It is the food which strengthens us to remain faithful to the God who has found us.

Let us pray for the grace to enter fully into this mystery of God’s great love for us. The Lord has been searching for us, calling out to us, desiring to be one with us. May our hearts be open when the Lord knocks so that we may join that communion of love who is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.