

Feast of the Holy Trinity 2018

Outline:

- 1. (Refer to the Images of the Holy Trinity on the wall) Does the image call you to deeper faith?**
- 2. Battles being fought in the Church in the 3rd and 4th centuries over the understanding of the Holy Trinity.**
- 3. But today we do not seem to get that excited about this feast.**
- 4. Sometimes we need to step away from the Holy Trinity to get a new insight.**
 - a. National Geographic article – present issue Greed vs. the Common Good by Dylan Seiterman; Class experiment in an undergrad psychology class.**
 - b. (Conduct experiment with ten parishioners)**
 - i. Give the ten people two sheets with the numbers 2 & 6.**
 - ii. Each person is told that they are to imagine that they are in a classroom and the teacher tells them that they can increase their score in a test by two points if they choose the piece of paper with a “2” on it. They can raise their grade by six points if they choose the piece of paper with a “6” on it.**

- iii. However if more than 10% of the class chose 6, no one would get any extra points.
 - iv. Conduct the experiment and study the result.
- c. When this experiment was tried over many years, most classes lost out on all points. Here are some of the quotes of the people who were involved in the experiment.

(Quotes from students)

Devin Porter, 21: *I took the class to get something out of it, not necessarily for the grade. When we didn't get the extra credit, I felt bad for the people who really needed it, but I wasn't too surprised. People who chose two, made the obvious choice ---everyone eats. (He already had applied it to a world food shortage.) People who chose six thought they could get away with it.*

Robin Bachkosky, 19: *I thought I made a pretty beneficial choice for the class and myself, one that would not put the class to any disadvantage, but would give some extra credit. I was a little disappointed that I did not get the extra credit just because some of the other kids were selfish and weren't satisfied with two points.*

Gunleen Deol, 18: *I thought that the majority of people would choose two and felt that the rational decision for me to make would*

be one that maximizes my personal benefit, which would be 6. Considering how my choice affected the rest of the class made me wish that I had chosen 2 instead.

You may be asking a question:

Fr. Don, I see how this example shows us what greed can do to a society. I can also see how we need to share the goods of the earth with care. And as we celebrate this Memorial Day weekend honoring those who defend our country, is it not true that many wars are fought over greed and the shortage of the world's resources?

But what does this have to do with getting an insight into the Holy Trinity? Well, just wait a minute and you will see.

After conducting this exercise with the 6s and 2s many times, the instructor added another number as a possible choice for the students. The teacher added the number was 0. 0 stands for the self-sacrificial students willing to forgo any additional points for themselves to assist others in the class. The professor found that, when given the option, a few students in each class chose 0, and sometimes that is enough to balance out those who chose 6. It brings

down the to the 10% threshold. And those who chose 0s witnessed to others in the group who would occasionally change their 6 to a 2.

In his recent document on the environment, Laudate Si, Pope Francis encourages us to be 2s and maybe even 0s. Whether that be in recycling or saving the rain forests or converting to renewable energy, it takes a choice from being 6s to become a 2 and consider the common good.

But, as I said earlier, I want to make an application of our 6 and 2s and 0s our understanding of the Holy Trinity! And here it is.

God is a 0! There is no doubt about it. God is sacrificial love. Listen to the words from 3:17 of John's Gospel: "God so loved the world, that he gave us his only begotten Son, that all who believed in him might have eternal life. God is a 0! God is sacrificial love. We, who call ourselves his disciples, may not always be 0s (good in sacrificial loving), but our spiritual growth in following Jesus may lead us to move from 6 (greedy) to 2 (consider the common good).

The Trinity is a 0. The Father's love is totally poured out in the Son and the Son returns love to the Father. The bond between them is a Spirit of love, a life of 0s.

We are invited into that shared life. Do we not honor people like his mother, Mary and Mother Theresa and Gandhi because they reflect that 0 kind of love of the Trinity? They poured themselves out for others.

Can we not best honor those who have defended our country this weekend by moving away from our greed and find ways to serve the common good. Today's feast of the Trinity challenges us to sacrificial love and care for our neighbor. The invitation to live the life of the Trinity is indeed a blessing, a privilege and a process of conversion. That is why, on our journey from 6 to 0, from greed to sacrificial love, we continually remind ourselves of our goal: to live in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!