

The Most Holy Trinity
May 22, 2016

“May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

I'm sure all of us recognize these words. Because, of course, they are the very ones used at the beginning of every Mass.

But even before that, we Catholics begin every Mass we participate in, every prayer we say, every sacred gathering we attend, with these even more familiar words: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

We invoke the Holy Trinity so often that we probably don't give it much thought anymore. It's sort of like saying “Good morning” to someone. It's automatic.

But it's so important to remember that the Triune God is not some kind of brainy speculation by scholars in which we have no part. It *is* the way we experience God in this world. To “go to church and to love one another” is the Holy Trinity in action!

Long years ago, human beings learned that there is only one God, and that he “takes delight in the human race.” Think of the many, many stories in the Old Testament about God's pursuit of us, his laboring to make a loving and holy covenant with us: “I will be your God and you will be my people.” Very much like a marriage covenant.

Well, we also know that God became, by turns, angry, hurt, delighted, spurned, glorified, ignored, praised and rejected. Yet he kept coming back again and again to renew the covenant. God's love remained steadfast.

Then we found out that God's nature always had another component. God had not been

alone or lonely, like a solitary rock in the desert. His very nature has always been to relate to others, to “pour himself forth,” as our First Reading puts it, and to receive back. The “Second Person” of the Trinity has been at one with the “First Person” for all eternity. This Second Person, the Word, was made flesh and we saw him.

Jesus laughed and cried and preached and turned over tables and cured people, and was loyal to his friends even to the end. “Everything that the Father has is mine,” he said. That’s how we knew he was The Word and the Word was God.

Then came a third revelation about the Trinity. Jesus hints about it in today’s Gospel: “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.” In other words, our little human souls would burst with the greatness of God – unless part of God gently brought himself down and began to dwell within us, to guide our understanding. So Jesus promised to pour out the Holy Spirit into us.

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is God. “Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he [God the Spirit] will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”

We see the logic of it all. Everything the Father has belongs to the Word. Everything that Jesus the Word has belongs to the Spirit.

So, the Spirit is the third part of God, and that Spirit bestows us and the whole earth back on the Father, completing the circle.

We need to allow ourselves to marvel at the aliveness and movement there is in God: speaking, reaching out, flowing forth, receiving back. God is liquid motion, a dynamism in

which everything is always changing; yet remains always secure because it is rooted in love— because it is love. And we're constantly invited into that circle of love.

Still too theoretical? Let's put it more simply. Do you suffer? God invites you to meld that pain into the Trinity's unending love. Do you lack hope? Jesus Christ who rose from death is within you. Are you abandoned? Remember that the one God in three persons embraces you with tender affection and asks you to melt into his arms.

God is calling us as a church community, a family of faith, to be like him — to be like the Family that is the Holy Trinity.