

The Feast of Holy Trinity A/2005

For many years, as Christians, we have professed that we believe in God. But who is this God in whom we believe? What representation do we have of him? How do we see him? What is his true identity?

The feast of the Trinity that we celebrate today is in fact the feast of God's identity, which is love. It is because God is love that he has created the world and everything in it. It is because God is love that he sent his son Jesus Christ to bring salvation to the world. It is because God is love that he is still sustaining his people by the power of his Holy Spirit.

Trinity means in fact the perfect communion of life and love that characterizes the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It refers to the inner life of the Godhead and to the strong relationship that exists between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This relationship means that all three are not only close to each other, but they share a same nature. The formula St Paul uses in the second reading by evoking the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the communion of the Holy spirit summarizes clearly the understanding that although all the persons of Trinity are distinct, they are equal and one. In this sense, the Trinity is but the celebration of the one God who is love through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. To use an ordinary image, we can say that the Trinity is a divine family in which a deep relationship circulates between its members, but in which each has his own place and his own role.

St. Paul reminds us also that it is the Father who has taken the initiative for the salvation of humankind; he is the one who reserves for us an eternal inheritance in his own family. The Son is the one who accomplished this salvation through his coming into the world, his obedience and his faithfulness up to his death. The Spirit, the love that binds together the Father and the Son, is the one who has been breathed into the heart of every Christian at baptism. From the moment we get this gift we become members of the community of God, the Trinity.

Such an understanding of Godhead has consequences for our Christian life. As a matter of fact, before the revelation, humans believed God to be a powerful and terrible ruler, quick to get annoyed with them and punish them with disease and misfortune. Still today many Christians link God with fear: he is the one who knows all, sees all, spies on us to discover our wrongdoings and waits for us at the end to punish us. Could anyone love such a God?

In today's first reading, God reveals to Moses a completely different face: He is not one who threatens or frightens people, he is not a demanding Supreme Being full of whims that makes us tremble in fear and anxiety. He is a Father who looks at his children with tenderness, understands their mistakes and faults and loves them even when they sin. God never gives up when confronted by the sin of people. It is not that he doesn't care about sin or that he pretends not to see it.

He hates sin because it destroys the life of his children. What he wants is that they stop sinning so that they can enjoy true happiness.

This is a strong statement: it means that God who is love and merciful Father is also respectful of human freedom; he does not force anyone to believe in him. In other words, God is willing to save us, but he cannot do it without our collaboration. From here we see the role of Jesus and his place in the plan of salvation. He has come to fulfill God's plan by offering salvation to all. However, there is salvation only for those who accept his word and believe in him. That is the reason why the Gospel of John presents Jesus, not like a judge who is there to condemn or to give sentence, but like an advocate who pleads in order to save, who is looking for extenuating circumstances in order to give a new chance of life. Such a grace of forgiveness and reconciliation is operated by the power of the Holy Spirit who is our advocate before the Father.

In this context, it becomes understandable that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are hailed equal and share a community of life and action. They live in a mutual relationship, they are interdependent and their actions are reciprocal.

Because the Trinity in itself is relational, the triune God calls us to practice the values of "inclusivism" and tolerance. "Inclusivism" means the acceptance of each individual as he is, because of our same and common human nature.

If the Trinity is a community of divine persons where all are interdependent, it shows us that interdependence, reciprocity and mutuality are the values that built up a strong human community in which all can count on one another.

The Trinity, as a divine family where the Trinitarian persons are equal, is an invitation that our own families may develop strong relationship and an open communication between its members and those around them. This is the grace we have to ask through this celebration. May God come to help of all those who live very difficult relationships with those around them. May God bless us all and strengthen our relationship with one another.



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