

Holy Trinity Sunday A/2011

Anytime we start praying, we always begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Far from being a simple recitation of a formula, it is, however, a confession on the nature of God as he has revealed himself in human history as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

That revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is what we call Trinity. Literally, Trinity means the unity of nature of the three divine persons who interact in such a way that they are just one God.

If we could refer to an analogy of a human family in which there is a father, a mother and the children, but still forms one family, we would say that the Trinity is the family of God where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit form one God.

At the heart of the triune God there is one important and unifying attribute that encompasses all others, namely compassion, mercy, love and forgiveness. This attribute is highlighted in a special way in the first reading of the book of Exodus.

In order to better understand what is at stake in this reading, it is good to refer to the context of this episode. In fact, this reading recalls the story of Israel in the desert after the exit from Egypt. As Moses went up the mountain to talk with God, the people who stayed down in the field sinned by fabricating a golden calf and adorned it as a god. When Moses came down, he was taken by such anger that he broke the tablets of the law received from God.

Once more, God asked Moses to go up the mountain and meet with him. However, instead of punishing the Israelites, God proclaimed his name as the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity. Touched by the compassion of God, Moses bowed down in worship as he interceded for the people.

This episode teaches us that the triune God is a loving and a merciful God. Whatever might be our past, whatever might be our sin; God is always merciful toward us and ready to forgive us. He will never abandon us because of our sin. On the contrary, he wants that we change and come back to him. Even if we might be condemned by society and, perhaps, judged unforgivable, we have to always remember that with God, there is a second chance. That is why we should never despair about our sins. Rather, we have to take advantage of any grace God gives us in order to make amends and change our life.

Another thing we learn is that with the triune God, there is never a lost case. Even the worst case can be recovered. That is why God forgives us so that we may live. However, we have to remember that when God forgives us, he wants us to change and not to stay in our sinful situation. We have to become better than we have been before. That is the challenge we all have to take up.

With all that in mind, we understand, then, why St Paul encourages us in the second reading to mend our ways and to live in peace with one another. The more we force ourselves to do so, the more the God of love and peace will be with us.

Once again, we are brought to the heart of the triune God who is full of love and mercy. As St John says in the Gospel, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life”.

As we can see, God is not only merciful and forgiving; he is also capable of loving to such a degree that he has become a human being. The fact of the incarnation of God in the world is for us a proof that he cares for us. He is never satisfied until he finds us. He is not afraid of being involved in our human history and in what we do in this world. The fact of the incarnation of God in the world shows also that our world is important to God and that he wants it to be saved. Then, we can understand why St John says that “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him”.

Even if it is true that God loves us and is merciful with us, we should not forget, however, that we are responsible for our salvation and for our perdition. For that specific reason, we are accountable before God for our acts, good or bad. It is for the same reason that we condemn ourselves when we refuse to believe in Jesus and convert from our sinful situations.

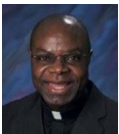
After all, it is not condemnation that is the last word of God, but forgiveness. As a matter of fact, God’s love is bigger than our sin. It is that love that has attained its climax in the sending of Jesus into the world to be our savior. Jesus, in turn, has shown his love for us by dying on the cross for our salvation. And that is not all, because in order to be always with us, Jesus has left us the Holy Spirit to be our advocate and a reminder of all that he has taught, until the end of the world.

In that perspective, we all understand that the Holy Trinity means that God, who is love, is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Trinity is a mystery of communion and unity that exists in the Godhead. Although there are three persons, they are but one God, sharing the same nature, and different actions. They are equal, interdependent, and interact with one another in their actions in the world.

The intimate relationship that exists between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is what God wants to share with us when he calls us to faith. But, how can we have access to such a relationship if we do not open our own heart and welcome one another? If there is no relationship between us as members of a same family or as members of the body of Christ, which is the Church, how can we share in the life of the Holy Trinity?

The Holy Trinity challenges us to live sincere relationships with one another. May God bless us on this feast of the Holy Trinity and lead us to love him by loving our fellows at the example of the triune God.

Exodus 34, 4b-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13, 11-13; John 3, 16-18



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