

Homily June 7, 2020

Today we continue to celebrate the gift of the Spirit's faithful presence in our midst. The Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian faith and life. It is the most fundamental, most essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith," because on Trinity Sunday we try to answer the question, "Who is this God we worship?"

All of us, at some point in our lives, have reached the limits of our brain's ability to fully understand how something works. Whether it's algebra, the digital display on our car, or, as Father Ed used to say, how airline tickets are priced.

Somehow, we reach a limit, but then we go on to live our lives. For most of us, who God is and how God is at work in our lives remains beyond the limits of our brain's ability to fully understand. How this God thing works continues to nag at us throughout our lives. I hope that we know that God is not just a thing or the biggest being in the universe, but a being that is not a part of the matter and energy of this universe. God is beyond our ability to comprehend as just a huge arrangement of matter and energy of this universe.

So the approaches that we use to understand stuff in our universe don't work when trying to understand God. People of faith are frequently mocked because we don't approach our connections to God the same way the geniuses of science approach the study of natural phenomena. But people of faith know that God is beyond the natural world - and we call that supernatural. And the tools of science do not work beyond the natural world.

So what does work?

One of the things I value about my Catholic faith, is that it's the best collection of human experience with God - over the past 4000 years, our ancestors in faith have been trying

to figure out how to know the God who created the universe, who brought us into his world, and who has planned for us - from the beginning - to live with him in this life, and to live with him in the life to come. The reason we exist is to enter into the life and love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for all eternity

Over the past 4000 years, our ancestors in faith have been given glimpses of God. And we have found that this supernatural being is, in our way of seeing things - a family of persons. God has become known to us as a family - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Throughout this and every Mass, we praise the God who has revealed himself as a family of persons. Throughout human history, God has been trying to bring us humans into his family.

The ancient near eastern approach to bring someone into a family was called a covenant. A covenant allowed the head of the household to bring a person into the family. Covenants with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and us - as made by Jesus at his Last Supper and Crucifixion - were all attempts to bring us into God's family. Adam and Eve - a married couple, Noah's whole family, Abraham's whole tribe, Moses and the nation of Israel, and even David and all the members of his kingdom - did not fully keep the covenant. Now it is up to us, as worldwide disciples of Jesus, to keep the covenant. We are called by our baptism to become a son or daughter of God. We renew this covenant every time we gather for Mass.

In our first reading, we can see some clues and some signs of the Trinity. That cloud is a sign of the Holy Spirit. Reference to the Lord is an image for the Son, the word of God who would come to be fully revealed in the incarnation. Guided by this first reading from Exodus we say, "Our God is the one who "comes along in our company" throughout our

lives, but especially during these pandemic days, when we feel like we're on a perilous journey and we don't know when or where it will end.

In today's response from the Book of Daniel, we hear the words of the three young men who were thrown into a fiery furnace for not betraying their God. Their poetic words describe the God we worship here at Mass.

Throughout our lives, we get reminders of God's presence, even though our God is beyond our full comprehension. Our God is always reaching out to bring us into his family. The Scriptures proclaim this consistently and quite plainly. Even at Mass, we sometimes receive the blessing Paul gives us today, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (the second person of the Trinity) and the love of God (the first person) and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (the third person) be with all of you."

The beginning of our life as a Christian is when we are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We regularly make this sign... we call it the sign of the cross, but it is the sign of the Trinity.

Despite the awful scandals our Church has endured, despite the disruption of the coronavirus, despite chaos in the streets, despite our brain's ability to fully understand, we have reassurance in the scriptures, in the Eucharist and in our gathered community that our God keeps calling us to be in his family.

We come to Mass to be united, not just with the angels and the saints, but to be united as family with the three persons of the Holy Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is who our God is. Our God is faithful. Our God never leaves us.

Amen?

- Deacon Jack Schaefer