

Trinity Sunday
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There was a bishop who went to visit a school for handicapped children. He asked the children to define Trinity. A youngster with a rather severe speech impediment responded that Trinity was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Because of the youngster's impediment, the Bishop did not understand what was said and responded, "I'm sorry, but I don't understand!" The youngster shot back, "You're not supposed to, Bishop. It's a mystery!" Thus the wisdom of the innocence confounds the sophistication of the intellectual.

The mystery of the Trinity makes us realize how small we are no matter how smart we think we are, no matter how smug we are. It helps us to laugh at ourselves in the face of such intellectual smugness. It also teaches us that we don't have to know everything.

The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is a mystery of Faith. The principal mysteries of our faith are: Incarnation, Redemption, and Trinity. It is natural for us to concentrate our attention on the first two for they are truths that directly involve us. They show God's love for us in very obvious ways. We contemplate the birth of Jesus and we contemplate the death of Jesus. In the mystery of the Trinity, however, we tend to miss this human element; and yet it is not the Incarnation or the Redemption that is the central truth of our faith. It is precisely the mystery of the Trinity that is the central core of our faith. Trinity is the first in importance of all the truths of faith; it deals with God's life as He is. A perfection that boggles our minds. It shows to what extent He is perfect; His knowledge and His love. This life of the Trinity in our souls becomes a reality through our Baptism.

The feast of the Holy Trinity reminds us that we know only something of God the Father; something of God the Son; something of God the Holy Spirit. Not everything and certainly not enough. However, we identify ourselves with the Trinity every time we make

the sign of the cross! Tragically and all too often, making the sign of the cross becomes a mechanical motion; hastily done without much thought. Other times we do it slowly, carefully and reverently as if the sign of the cross was a matter of life and death: which of course it is! But most of the time we make the sign of the cross in a semiconscious manner. After all, we have been doing it since we were little kids. Now that we are grown up, blessing ourselves should signify that we live our lives in the name of the Trinity. But in the knowledge of God we never grow up for we are like little children in the presence of God.

Think of the last time you were aware that you signed yourself in the name of the Trinity! When was it? When you entered the Church? The last time you prayed? Or maybe when you were in a state of panic or danger? Do you ever think in terms of the TRINITY, the triune God as one God; or do we break God up into three parts; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all as separate entities with separate responsibilities. Sometimes it becomes easier to think in terms of three Gods, rather than ONE inseparable God. But the three persons are bound together so perfectly in love, that they are ONE. There is no distinction of personalities or distinction of responsibilities.

We started our journey of faith by having our parents sign us with the sign of the cross at our Baptism, indicating that we were claimed for Christ forever; for we now have the power of the cross in our lives. When we make the sign of the cross we are actually giving ourselves a name. A name that means "Children of God"; for through Baptism we bear God's name; a name that makes us one. This is what a Christian community is; we are many under one name.

In blessing ourselves in the name of the Trinity, it becomes a simple but powerful prayer. It may seem a small, perfunctory, seemingly trite ritual; but it signifies that we live our lives in the name of the Trinity; and there is no more powerful sign in the whole world which unites us together in the life of God's grace; in the life of the Blessed Trinity.

There have been mighty deeds performed in the name of the Trinity; the sign of the cross also gives the capacity for unprecedented boldness and courage. It encourages transformation from weakness to strength; from pride to humility; from selfishness to generosity; from fear to trust. Signing the cross is invoking the protection of the power of God against the power of evil. The Trinity defies explanation. It is an experience rather than a doctrine to be understood.

There were a group of 10-year-olds sitting around a camp fire one dark summer evening. The topic gradually got around to religion. One of the children said to the person in charge, "I don't understand how God can be one thing, but three things too? Father, Son and Holy Spirit all at one time! There was a great deal of silence for the person in charge was at a loss to explain. Then suddenly out of the dark a voice from one of the children said, "My mom says it's like an egg. You have the shell, the white part, and the yoke. They are all different parts, but one egg. It was like a light bulb went off in all of them at once, and they all agreed that the Trinity was an egg. But for them the mystery still remained for they couldn't decide which came first, the chicken or the egg! Their big Mystery and ours as well!

If it were possible to explain the Trinity, it would rob us of our vision of God, not enhance it; for Christianity would become nothing more than ethics with a halo. The mystery of God would be gone. The wonder and power of God would be diminished. As long as there is mystery, there is inspiration which is demonstrated in our art, music and architecture, all of which enrich our lives.

I often thought that a wonderful attempt to express the Trinity in an art form was a wooden carving that was located over a doorway at the Cloisters; a museum in upper Manhattan overlooking the Hudson River. It was a three-figured carving. One of the figures was larger than the others and depicted an older man; the second was a younger man wearing a crown; the third was a woman. It is somewhat surprising to learn that this set of three figures was an

artist's attempt to represent the Trinity. The tall central figure represented God the Father; the second man with a crown represented the kingship of the Son; and the woman represented the spirit of warm tender love and concern of the Spirit. So we see that the Trinity of God is parenthood; son-ship; and friendship. All in one, they are unity. What are our unifying qualities as a community? First we must realize that love is a decision not a feeling. Secondly, we must be sensitive to others feelings. Thirdly, we must try to like each other. If we fail then we succumb to FIGHT, FRIGHT and FLIGHT. Such attitudes of fight, fright and flight do not appear in the community life of the Trinity. The three persons do not fight, they do not run away from each other, they do not fear one another. They are so deeply in love that they could not exist apart from one another.

Perhaps this might be more recognizable from a negative perspective. We do not ACCEPT the Trinity when we refuse to allow our Christian beliefs to influence our daily decisions. We IGNORE the Trinity, when we allow ourselves to constantly worry about the future. We DENY the Trinity when we make plans that do not account for God's will for us. We REFUTE the Trinity if we settle down to live with our sins as if nothing can be done about them. We DISPUTE the Trinity if we decide there is nothing we can do about world starvation and world peace. We SILENCE the Trinity when we think we can tuck God away in a private corner of our lives labeled 'RELIGION'. It is not easy to fit the TRINITY into our lives with meaning. It is the Trinity that makes us HOLY; and it is the sign of the Trinity that protects us and unites us as a community. So let us now, reverently and with meaning, together give recognition to the Trinity by MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. AMEN.