

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY “C”
JUNE 15/16, 2019

A few weeks ago I was interviewed by an ISU graduate student in architecture. His assignment was to research what elements are central in the design of a church worship space. Not being a Christian our conversation veered into Christian theology, specifically theology of God: the nature of God, God’s relationship with us, and how this relationship impacts church rituals and symbols and objects employed. Inevitably, the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity came up. I pointed out that in the decoration of church worship space one might encounter an equilateral triangle, three interlocking rings, or (especially if a parish has Irish history connected with it) a three-leaf clover and its single stem, all visually trying to express the doctrine of one single divine being (God) comprised of three distinct, but interrelated persons, each unique, but also interdependent. I tried my best, without getting too technical. Finally I told him that when it comes to God and the doctrine of the Trinity, our belief rests on faith, God’s self-communication revealed through the Scriptures, and ultimately, through Jesus who we believe and proclaim to be God’s eternal equally divine Son who at a certain point in human history united his divine nature to our human nature, and in that union of divine and human life was born, lived, preached, ministered, suffered, died and rose from the dead freeing us from alienation from God caused by our sin and in that one great act of salvation united us in his divine love of the Father the Father’s reciprocal love for him bringing us into the intimacy of their relationship, this love itself which is dynamic and personal, revealed by Jesus as the Holy Spirit, the third person of this Holy Trinity. All my interview could say was, “Oh.”

When it comes to today’s celebration of Trinity Sunday I suspect most of us perhaps also scratch our head and say, “Oh.” So, what is it we celebrate about God today, how to begin to understand it, and how make it a part of our lives?

First, the essence of the Holy Trinity is relationship—Father, Son, Holy Spirit. We human beings, as the creation accounts in the book of Genesis tell us, are created in the “*image and likeness of God*” (Gn. 1:26). Like God, we are “hard-wired” for relationship, community, “*it is not good for the man to be alone*” (Gn.2:18). Today’s Scriptures reveal how God as one whose essence and activity is relationship. In the first reading from Proverbs, Wisdom is

personified. Later writers and commentators identify Wisdom with both Jesus and the Holy Spirit— who in either instance--brings joy to God (the Father) the creator. The second reading specifically tells the Holy Spirit is the bond of the love between the Father and the Son. Lastly, the Gospel proclaims that this same Spirit gives us the grace of truth opening for us access into this divine community.

Second. I recently read an ancient (fourth century) analogy proposed by three Eastern Church saints known as the Cappadocian Fathers—Sts. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nanzianus describing the inner dynamic of life between the three persons of the Holy Trinity. They describe this dynamic divine inner life relationship by analogy with a group dance--a circle dance to be exact. In a circle dance each person contributes to part of the dance in the specific role in the choreography that is theirs alone, but simultaneously as part of the entire group together. This union in diversity makes up the dance. The partners pull and push against one another, not in resistance or by force but in support and unity. The dance is in constant motion, with the dancers always focused on the other persons and not themselves. Moreover, the circle is never closed: the joy and unity of the dance and the dancers draw others into the circle to become part of the dance too.

Third. The celebration of Trinity Sunday gives us a moment to look at how we embody the open intimate dynamic relationship of the Trinity in our relationships with one another. Could this combination of joy, love, and truth serve as a blueprint for our own relationships individually and a parish? Do people feel connected with us and us with them? Or are there physical, psychological, or spiritual “border walls” we erect or encounter that keep us separated, by status, distance, politics, lifestyle, or disability? Do outsiders feel drawn in, finding a space of welcome ready and waiting for them making them feel at ‘home and be part of the dance of the Trinity?

Today we are invited to: **Come join in the dance of God!**

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Father Jim Secora*