

The Most Holy Trinity

May 30, 2021

Down through the ages, the rosary has been the most popular prayer for many Christians. Not only does it deepen our relationship with our Blessed Mother, but it also helps us to contemplate the mysteries of Jesus' life. When we pray the rosary, those mysteries take on new meaning for us. We begin to see our own lives in the light of the life of Christ. In times of happiness, we see the joyful mysteries of Jesus' life playing themselves out. Our difficulties and suffering are transformed into opportunities to draw closer to Christ in his suffering as we contemplate the sorrowful mysteries. The glorious mysteries invite us to see the victory of Jesus at work in our world. Through the rosary, we learn that mysteries are not just realities we ponder in our minds with wonder, but realities that we are invited to enter into and to live.

Today, we ponder the great mystery of the Blessed Trinity. We reflect on the nature of our one God who is three persons - Father, Son and Spirit. There have been many attempts to try to explain this reality. Saint Patrick used the example of the shamrock which has three leaves but is still one flower. Sometimes the triangle which has three sides but is one shape is used as a symbol of the Blessed Trinity. One of the best examples is that of a family. A mother, a father and a child - though distinct persons - come together in love to form one family, one household. So God is a family, a community of persons marked by self-giving love. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity, in its simplest terms, is another way of describing our God as a God of love.

Like the mysteries of the rosary, our belief in the Blessed Trinity is not just meant to be pondered but to be entered into and lived. In today's second reading, St Paul explains how. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, lives in our hearts and testifies to us that we are the sons and daughters of God the Father. God has invited and empowered us to join the family of love that He is. We have been adopted by God so that we can share in the unconditional, self-giving love which the Father offers to the Son and the Son offers to the Father through the Holy Spirit. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is not just about the nature of God, but about how we are chosen to become part of the family that God is.

As we grasp this truth more fully, we begin to change. We start to act like members of the family of God. If we were adopted by a king or a wealthy person it would completely change our lives. With our new found wealth and power, we would no longer be happy going back to the life we lived before. The same thing is true when the reality of our adoption in Christ takes root in our hearts. We no longer settle for the fleeting pleasures this world offers. We no longer live and act like people who have no faith and no hope. Rather the knowledge that we are loved by God and are members of his family causes us to act with dignity and new purpose.

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The Jewish people understand this truth very well. They understand that they have been chosen out of all the nations on the earth to be a people special to God, as we hear in today's first reading. They look at their history through the lens of God's saving power beginning with the covenant with Abraham, through their delivery from slavery in Egypt, and into their entry into the Promised Land. As a chosen people, they understand that they cannot live the way other peoples do. Rather they must live according to the Law which God revealed to them. The God of Abraham is just and merciful, and so they understand that they must care for those whom society casts aside and must avoid doing harm. Our Jewish brothers and sisters teach us that we who have been called out of the slavery of sin and given the Spirit of adoption must live according to the gospel of love so that our dignity as sons and daughters of God can be clear to the whole world.

Mysteries are impossible to fully explain or understand. Because of that, ritual is at the heart of what we do as a believing people. Jesus and the apostles understood that if we were to participate fully in the saving mystery of the One God who is Three Persons, we would need something more than words. That is why Jesus left us not only his teaching but the sacraments as well. In today's gospel Jesus commissions the disciples not only to preach the good news but to baptize the nations "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Through baptism, which is the first of the sacraments, we are adopted as sons and daughters of God. The other sacraments build on this reality. The Sacrament of Confession repairs our relationship with God and brings us back into the loving family of the Trinity. In the Eucharist, we enter into deeper communion with Jesus and are drawn into His relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Through Marriage and Holy Orders, we live out our calling to serve others as sons and daughters of God. And through the Anointing of the Sick, our health is restored so that we may serve others or we are made ready to see God and enter into that relationship with the Holy Trinity in Heaven. And so participating in the sacraments whenever possible is vitally important if the mystery of God's life is to become real in our own lives.

We bless ourselves "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We offer the Mass to the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Though we cannot fully explain or understand it, the mystery of the Trinity is woven into our lives as believers. It is nothing more or less than the nature of God whose love is so abundant that he welcomes us to share in his very life. It is an invitation which we first received at our baptism. We strive, with God's help, to respond to that invitation daily by living our lives according to the dignity that is ours as sons and daughters of God. Through the sacraments and prayer, we enter more fully into that mystery which is beyond words. And we live with an active hope that one day we will see God as he is -

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One God in Three Persons - and praise him forever.