

Holy Trinity Sunday – Cycle B
June 7, 2009

I can't tell you how many times I've been by the Baptismal font before or after Mass & I've watched as one of our precious children – usually around 3 or 4 yrs old – dips her little hand in the water, takes it out & attempts to make the Sign of the Cross, looking something like this... Not quite the right technique, but she has this big smile on her face that seems to say, "I did it, Mommy & Daddy, I did it!"... Now I'm pretty sure the little one has no idea of the profound significance of what she did... I often wonder if we bigger folks give much thought to it when we make the Sign of the Cross, ...or do we do it more or less out of habit... Do we ever think about what it means?... That the sign we trace and the words we say point to one of the great mysteries of our faith: the Holy Trinity, ...God existing for all time as Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, ...Three distinct persons, yet one & the same God?... That's why I think it's good that the Church gives us Holy Trinity Sun every year as a time to reflect on & celebrate this great mystery.

Notice I didn't say it's a time to EXPLAIN the Holy Trinity... Theologians have tried to do that for centuries with little success... so you'll never see me up here trying to explain how there can be three persons in one God... But, you know, there are times when you can't avoid the question. ... Like when you are teaching a religion class... or if you're a parent... Let me show you what I mean. Here's a conversation between a boy named Jake, and his father... **JAKE:** Hey Dad, I got a question... **DAD:** What is it, Jake.

JAKE: Well, today in religion class, we talked about God... **DAD:** God, huh... Maybe you should go talk to your mother... **JAKE:** Come on, Dad. **DAD:** Ok, Ok, what's your question? ... **JAKE:** Well, our teacher was trying to explain the Trinity, you know, three persons in one God? **DAD:** Jake, I REALLY think this is a Mom question, don't you? **JAKE:** Daaaaaad....

DAD: All right, go ahead. Ask your question? **JAKE:** Well, I guess it's just confusing. I mean, how can God be one God but three persons?... **DAD:** That's a good question... hmmm. **JAKE:** (pause) Well... **DAD:** Well, what? **JAKE:** Don't you have some wonderful parental wisdom to help me out, here?

DAD: Oh, yah. Right... Well, let me think... Here we go... Think about water- H₂O - you know, liquid, ice and steam, ... they're all water, ... all H₂O... but THREE different forms of water...

JAKE: So you're saying God is like water?... **DAD:** Well, not exactly... Ok... Let's try this... Take your Mother, for instance... She is one person, but she is a mother, a wife and a daughter. ... THREE IN ONE!... **JAKE:** So Mom is God? **DAD:** Uh, let's not go there, Jake... Let me think.

JAKE: Dad, what about the beauty of a flower, or the stars in the sky, or a baby being born?

Dad: Whaddya mean, Jake? How is that like the Trinity? **JAKE:** I don't know, but when I see something like that, I know that God must have had a hand in it. **Dad:** Yah, I agree with you there ... **JAKE:** But, which one, Dad?... **Dad:** Which one what?... **JAKE:** Well, if God is three persons, which person makes the flowers bloom? Which one put the stars in the sky? Which person helps make babies to be born?... **Dad:** Hold on, Jake, Mom answers all questions about having babies, ok?

JAKE: It's not just babies, Dad, everything. Which person paints the colors of the sunset? Which person listens to me when no one else will? Which one helps me to do the right thing?

DAD: Those are good questions, Jake... **JAKE:** Which one is it? And how do we know? And who decides? And do they live in the same place? ... **DAD:** (long pause) Jake, the Trinity is like an apple, it has a core, the meat of the apple and the skin... **JAKE:** Come on Dad...

DAD: Or maybe, it's like a three-leafed clover?... Or three interlocking circles...

JAKE: Dad,...You really don't know do you? **DAD:** ...Uh, No. I guess I really don't.

JAKE:... You know Dad, if God is so powerful...& can do anything,.. why doesn't He make Himself easier for us to understand?... **DAD:** I don't know, Jake. I'm sure God has good reasons.But, maybe we shouldn't worry about trying to understand the Trinity. Let's just be thankful that God has made Himself known to us & is here with us, even if we can't quite figure Him out.

Aren't a lot of us like Jake?...We want an explanation ... But believe me there isn't any. ...The Trinity isn't a mystery to be explained; the Trinity is a gift to be celebrated. ...So, I'm with Jake's Dad....We should get down on our knees every day & give thanks that our God is not a distant, hands off kind of God, somewhere in outer space, leaving us to stumble along on our own. ...Instead we have a God who can't stay away from us...Because our lives matter to God. ...What happens to us matters to God...We see that throughout Scripture, ..God the Father sending prophet after prophet to enlighten His people...Jesus Christ the Son coming to live as one of us & to die for all of us...the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost....And, our God is no solitary God...Our God is a family, a community of three persons bound together by their LOVE for one another.... A love so great, so perfect, so powerful, that God wants to share it with His creation – with us....And this immense love of Father, Son & Holy Spirit for one another overflows to each of us,...drawing us into the inner circle of God's family,...calling us to share in the life of the Holy Trinity...That's what God wants – to share His life with us...God wants a relationship with us....Moses told his people that way back in the beginning....Jesus preached it over and over....God wants to be in our life...as Father, as Son,..& as Holy Spirit...right here in the nitty-gritty, down here in the trenches with us,...in every suffering, in every crisis & cross, & in every joy & triumph & victory.

My friends, here's the main thing: we have a God who just won't leave us alone...So often we're busy, rushing from one activity to the next,...so loaded down with obligations & responsibilities – our work, our family, school, sports – that we might not give God a 2nd thought as we move through our day...But whether we're aware of it or not, God is right there in the center of everything that's going on in our life...God is there... as God the Father, or as God the Son, or as God the Holy Spirit...God is there.

If you are anything like me, you can go hours, days, weeks...totally unaware of how God is involved in what is going on...For example, not a day goes by that I don't marvel at some miracle of creation: a gorgeous flower,.. a star-filled sky,... a baby's tiny fingers,... the face of one I love...but do I ever stop to realize that those are all the work of God the Father, Creator of the Universe & everything in it.? ...And all those times I give & receive love in the course of each day,.. whether it's my wife, my children or grandchildren, or a friend...do I realize that it's because God the Father created us in the image of God – a God who loves - so that like Father, Son & Holy Spirit, we too could experience the joy of loving relationships?

And what about God the Son – Jesus Christ – who we heard say in our Gospel, “I am with you always.”? ...Well remember when that person you really can't stand - the one who gives you all kinds of trouble – was diagnosed with cancer,...and you sent a card and prayed for their complete recovery?...That was because Jesus' voice echoed in your ears, “Love your enemies, ...Pray for those who persecute you.” ...And how about that time you laid in that hospital bed, hurting, discouraged, afraid,...”God, why is this happening?...Why aren't you helping me?”...& you thought about Jesus & how He hung on that cross in agonizing pain,..& you realized that Jesus knew what you were going thru,...& He was there suffering with you...And this gave you strength to keep on going...God the Son, always present, always challenging us, strengthening us to live as He showed us how to live.

Then there is God the Holy Spirit, who came on that first Pentecost and who is with us today, the Spirit dwelling within every believer, animating our faith and our worship, guiding us, leading us, ...turning on the lights for us when our paths are unclear, uncertain...The Holy Spirit who keeps the words and deeds of Jesus alive in our minds and hearts so that we always know what Jesus wants us to do....and who gives us the courage to then go & do it. ...God the Holy Spirit, ever leading us to holiness.

And so, as we continue our celebration of Eucharist – our celebration of thanksgiving – let this be our prayer: Lord, thank you for loving me so much that you never leave me alone...that in every moment of my life, you are with me as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit...ever here for me...with me. AMEN!