

Sunday, June 7, 2020

The Most Holy Trinity (Solemnity)

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Responsorial: (Psalm) Daniel 3:52-56

Gospel: John 3:16-18

Knowing and Experiencing the Love, Mercy, and Kindness of the Holy Trinity

The Lord . . . proclaimed his name. (Exodus 34:5)

Have you ever wondered why the Church chooses some readings for its special feast days? Take today's feast, for example. It's dedicated to the Holy Trinity, but nowhere in these readings do we have a clear spelling out of this crucial doctrine of our faith.

In the first reading, for instance, Moses actually gets to see God and hear him proclaim his name: *Yahweh*. He also learns who this God is: "a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness" (Exodus 34:6). Beautiful truths, but nothing about the Trinity.

Granted, the three Persons of the Trinity do appear in the second reading, but only in the form of a final blessing from the apostle Paul. And the focus seems to be on grace, love, and fellowship more than on the truths of three divine Persons in one God.

Then in today's Gospel, the apostle John tells us about *the way* God loves his people—through humility, sacrifice, and self-giving. He tells us of a God who "did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17).

So why do we have these readings for this feast? Because at the heart of today's feast is not a solution to a mathematical puzzle of how God could be three in one. Rather, it's a divine mystery, that our God, who is a Trinity of divine Persons, loves us and longs to reveal himself to us. It's the promise that his revelation has the power to melt our hearts and heal our souls.

A God of mercy and kindness. A God of constant blessing. A God who saves and doesn't condemn. These are the Trinitarian truths he wants to reveal to you on this marvelous feast day. These are truths that can become the foundation for every aspect of your life. Let him proclaim his name to you.

"Lord, help me to live every day in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. The first reading begins with these words: *Early in the morning Moses went up Mount Sinai as the Lord had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.* It continues with these words: *Having come down in a cloud, the Lord stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, "Lord." Thus the Lord passed before him and cried out, "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship. Then he said, "If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."*
 - Why do you think Moses' reaction to the Lord's appearance was to bow to the ground in worship?
 - God describes himself as *merciful, gracious, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.* In what ways does he want you to treat others in a similar manner? With whom specifically?
 - What is your reaction to Moses asking the Lord to forgive the Israelite people, even though they rebelled and turned away from him and created an idol to worship? In what ways is the Lord calling you to do the same?
2. In the responsorial psalm from the book of Daniel, we hear these words from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego after they are thrown into a furnace: *Blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne upon the cherubim, Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers; Blessed is your holy and glorious name, Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom.* Each of blessing end with these words: *praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.*
 - Why do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were able to sing words of praise in the hot furnace?
 - What are the things that God has done in your life so that you are able to bless and praise him, even under the most difficult situations or sufferings?
3. In the second reading, Paul encourages the Corinthians with these words: *Brothers and sisters, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the holy ones greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.*
 - How would you rate yourself as an "encourager" and a "greeter"?
 - How can you better reach out to others as an "encourager" to provide deeper support and friendship – including within your parish, in your neighborhood, or at work?
 - What are some of the things that make it difficult for you to *agree with* and *live in peace* with certain people? What steps can you take to overcome them?
4. The Gospel reading begins with the very familiar words from John 3:16: *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.* It goes on to say that *God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*
 - What do these words mean to you? What impact have they had on your life?
 - How might God be calling you to be an instrument in bringing these words to people in your life who need to understand their meaning for their lives?
5. The meditation ends with these words: "So why do we have these readings for this feast? Because at the heart of today's feast is not a solution to a mathematical puzzle of how God could be three in one. Rather, it's a divine mystery, that our God, who is a Trinity of divine Persons, loves us and longs to reveal himself to us. ... A God of mercy and kindness. A God of constant blessing. A God who saves and doesn't condemn. These are the Trinitarian truths he wants to reveal to you on this marvelous feast day. These are truths that can become the foundation for every aspect of your life. Let him proclaim his name to you."
 - How would you answer the question: "So why do we have these readings for this feast?"
 - What impact on your life does the fact "that our God, who is a Trinity of divine Persons, loves us and longs to reveal himself to us" -- and he is "A God of mercy and kindness;" "A God of constant blessing;" and "A God who saves and doesn't condemn"? What steps can you take so that these words have an even greater impact?

Take some time now to pray and ask for a deeper knowledge of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- and for a deeper experience of his love, mercy, and kindness. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

"Lord, help me to live every day in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."