

Homily for Holy Trinity Sunday
June 7, 2020
St. Teresa Church, Lincoln, NE
Fr. Christopher P. Goodwin

The Trinity as Source and Goal of Human Unity

Scriptural Readings:

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Daniel 3:52-56

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

Today we celebrate the central mystery of our Christian faith: the Holy Trinity. We have feasts of saints, feasts of the Blessed Mother, feasts honoring the saving events of our Lord's life. But in this feast, we celebrate the mystery of God's own inner life: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Sometimes we think of the Trinity as something too far beyond our understanding to have relevance: a kind of a puzzle for theologians. To be sure, our human minds will never encompass fully the mystery of one God in three divine Persons. But the more we understand about God as Trinity, the more we understand ourselves as human beings, because we are created in the image and likeness of that triune God and destined to live in him forever. So the Trinity is always relevant. In this precise historical moment in the United States, a particular aspect of the Trinity has special relevance: the Trinity is the source and goal of all human unity.

As reflections of the Trinity, we as human beings are meant to have unity: unity within ourselves as individuals, and unity among one another. Each of us as an individual has different parts: a mind that is designed to know the truth, a will to choose the good, a body to express love, and emotions that move us toward our end. We must labor daily to grow in inner unity of mind, will, body, and emotions. It's hard work because of the effects of original sin, but it's well worth the effort. The more each of us is united, or *integrated*, within himself or herself as an individual, the better we can establish unity with our fellow human beings. Such unity is an extremely important vocation. It's a call to human solidarity based on the fact that we are all creatures of the same God. We are from him, and we are destined to return to him, and to enjoy eternal communion with him and with one another. Yes: human unity is a deeply important Gospel value, for which we must work.

To achieve greater unity, each of us must begin by examining our *own* personal prejudices (not the prejudices of the *other* person), then make a concrete effort to *listen* to those whose opinions challenge our own presumptions—to those whose experiences are different from our own—and to *understand* the call for justice that they are making. This applies to all of us, no matter what side of the argument, what side of the debate, what side of the barrier we are on.

There is at least one thing that all of us should be able to agree upon: that whenever there is violence and conflict, there is not yet the complete unity that God calls us to. And for Christians, this is not a reason to be afraid. It is reason for us to summon the hope that is ours, and to *be* what the grace of Jesus has empowered us to be: instruments of reconciliation and unity in the world.

What should also be clear to us is that growth toward unity is not something that is only the responsibility of the *other* party. We cannot say, for instance, that as soon as *they* come to accept *my* position, then we will have unity. No. I need to leave the comfort zone of my own way of understanding things, and make the effort to understand the perspective of the other: to think differently, to see the problem from a different perspective, and to speak and act differently as a result. This is an example of what it means to put on the mind of Christ (cf. *1 Cor* 2:16, *Rom* 12:2, *Phil* 2:5-11, *2 Tim* 1:7, *Phil* 4:8, *etc.*) and to become a new creation in Christ (cf. *2 Cor* 5:17).

How welcome at this present moment, then, is the promise that St. Paul first made to the Corinthians and which we just heard at this Mass:

*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. (2 Cor 13:11)*

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Catechism and Church Teachings:

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), ¶¶1928-1948 (Part Three, Chapter Two, Article 3: Social Justice)

Sollicitudo rei socialis (On Social Concern), John Paul II, n. 47 (as cited in *CCC* ¶1929)

Pacem in terris (Peace on Earth), John XXIII, n. 65 (as cited in *CCC* ¶1930)

Gaudium et spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Vatican II, nn. 27, 29 (as cited in *CCC* ¶¶1935, 1936, 1938)

Message of Pope Francis:

General Audience; June 3, 2020 (Special Greetings to the people of the United States)

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200603_udienza-generale.html

Statements by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB):

Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love (A Pastoral Letter Against Racism), 2018

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>

Statement of U.S. Bishop Chairmen in Wake of Death of George Floyd and National Protests;

May 29, 2020 <http://www.usccb.org/news/2020/20-83.cfm>

Statement of U.S. Bishops' President on George Floyd and the Protests in American Cities; May

31, 2020 <http://www.usccb.org/news/2020/20-84.cfm>