

Trinity Sunday

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40; Romans 8:14-17; and Matthew 28:16-20

Human lives are all about relationships. We were conceived out of our parents' relationship. We lived through our mothers' bodies for nine months and someone helped birth us into the world. People cared for us and taught us language, social codes, love and how to connect with the depth of life. As adults, we rely on others for everything. Our votes, worship, shopping preferences, all influenced by others. Our food, clothing, cars, all made by others. Oh, life in community is not easy. We want our own way. We look down on others. We bully. We are victims. We struggle to rise above the pack. We sing, "I Gotta Be Me," but we cannot escape the reality that we are thoroughly relational beings. We all seek a community of love, where we can trust each other so much that we can finally relax in that love.

Here we are on Trinity Sunday, in awe of God who is somehow three persons perfectly united in one being. God *is* what we long to become, a perfect community. While the Trinity may rightfully remind us of how utterly different God is from us, it is meant to draw us closer to God. Even as we stand agog at the mystery of the Trinity, God invites us into that intimate, exquisite relationship. At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed that we would be one as he and the Father are one. He expressed his love for us and promised us his Spirit, who is our direct connection to God and Jesus.

Our readings this Sunday may seem off topic until we recognize that God's being Trinity is not meant to push us away – "O God, you are so transcendent!" – but to draw us in. Romans explains that belief in Jesus changes our relationship with God. Paul said in vs 9 that if we accept Jesus, his Spirit fills us. That Spirit lets us relate to God in many of the same ways Jesus relates to God. E.g. we can call God, "Abba, Father" (cf. Mk 14:36). In fact, in Gal 4:6, Paul declared that when the Spirit prays in us, what comes out of our mouths is "Abba, Father!" God wants us to say this! We are not God's slaves, fearing, loathing or chafing against God. Instead Jesus "is the firstborn within a large family" with us as the other kids (Rom 8:29). So, the intimate tangle of Father loving Son, Son loving Father and Spirit belonging to them both includes arms extended to us, inviting us into that loving embrace.

Beyond our reading, Paul lays out a comforting result of this invitation: "Consequently, I reckon that the sufferings of the present do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us" (8:18). Romans 8 crescendos with the famous "Nothing can separate us from the love of God" speech. Nothing, not suffering, loneliness or our own rejection of God, can make God withdraw the invitation into the love of the Trinity. A perfect relationship by its nature has to include others.

If a healthy relationship means being inclusive, we can see why the Great Commissioning is our Trinity Sunday gospel. Our own baptism into the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – with all the love and redemption that implies – commits us to invite others to that same relationship. What's more, we must "keep God's statutes and commandments" as Moses declares in Dt 4. If God has done such fabulous deeds for us, viz. the Exodus and the gift of the Law, our lives must be chalk full of caring deeds as well.

The Holy Spirit helps us do this. Think of an older married couple. They pepper their day with tender care for each other. She tells him how handsome his haircut looks. He makes her coffee and sorts her pills. They were not always this way; daily sacrifices polished them into the gems they have become. Think of St. T  r  se of Lisieux in her cloistered convent, striving to love patiently the crabby elderly sister and the sister no one else talks to, because T  r  se wants to *be* Jesus' love. Think of Dorothy Day having coffee with a homeless man when a reporter arrived for an interview. Dorothy asked, "Which one of us did you want to speak to?" Think of the challenging ideas people are proposing as global warming wreaks havoc on the Earth and threatens most the poor. Say yes, as these people have, to the Trinity's invitation into the relationships that make us who we are.

- ❖ In what part of your life do you think of yourself as independent? Who else is actually involved? How can you strengthen these relationships?
- ❖ What quality of Trinitarian love do you most admire? Ask God to help you live it better.

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