

Trinity Sunday
Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40;
Romans 8:14-17;
Matthew 28:16-20
Little Flower - 5/31/15

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Most Holy Trinity: we celebrate our faith in three Persons in one God.

Last Christmas one of my friends gave me a book entitled *Oh, For the Love of God*. It is a collection of her former pastor's homilies. It includes a homily for Trinity Sunday. In his homily, he explained why we have three readings every Sunday. According to Fr. Anthony,

The early Church Fathers, especially Gregory Nazianzen, saw the whole history of salvation — from creation to Christ's return — divided up into three great epochs or periods, each period highlighting the work of One of the Persons of the Trinity. So, the Old Testament speaks of the work of God the Father. The four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are obviously about Jesus, the Son. And the rest of the New Testament — from Acts of the Apostles to the last book, Revelation — chronicle the work of the Spirit in the Church. In other words, the entire Bible is the life story of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity...¹

The heart of Old Testament revelation is that God is one and personal. In today's reading, from Deuteronomy, Moses explicitly states that God is one: "*This is why you must now know, and fix in your heart, that the LORD is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other.*" He reminds us that God is personal by pointing out that God is relational, namely, that God chose the Israelites, did wonderful deeds on their behalf, formed them into a nation, gave them the Promised Land, but also gave them statutes and commandments to be kept so that they might prosper and have a long life on the land.

The heart of New Testament revelation is that there are three Persons in one God. Throughout the Gospels, there are references to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. However, Jesus revealed the mystery of the Trinity, three Persons in one God, when as part of the Great Commission, he sent his apostles out to baptize "*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*" Also, throughout the Gospels he revealed Himself Son of God and Savior.

Finally, St. Paul tells us that when we received the Holy Spirit in baptism, we received a Spirit of adoption. In other words, because the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, lives within us, we have become sons and daughters of God by adoption and can call God "Abba," a term of intimacy, almost the equivalent of Daddy. Using legal language, Paul states that because we are sons and daughters in the one Son of God, we are God's heirs, joint heirs with Christ, if we die with him in order to be glorified with him.

My brothers and sisters, the Trinity is the greatest mystery of our faith. We can never fully understand it. However, God's self-revelation as one God in three Persons gives us insight into what it means when we say that we are persons. A good definition of *person* is "a living being capable of relating consciously in knowledge and love." This suggests that we will find true happiness and fulfillment as persons only in our relationships with God, others, the world, and ourselves. It also suggests that our four greatest personal needs are to know and to be known, to love and to be loved. In one word, our greatest personal need is intimacy.

¹John K. Anthony, "The Rest of the Story," *Oh, For the Love of God*, July 29, 2014, 218-222, p. 220.