

Trinity Sunday
Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40;
Romans 8:14-17;
Matthew 28:16-20
Little Flower - 5/27/18

My Brothers and Sisters,

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

The heart of Old Testament Revelation is that God is one and personal. The Book of Deuteronomy affirms, *"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."* Likewise God's relationship with Israel reveals God as personal: *"Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as you did, and live? Or did any god venture to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation...?"*

The heart of New Testament Revelation is that there are three Persons in one God. Both today's Gospel and today's reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans speak of all three Persons in God. Jesus told his disciples to baptize *"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* Paul references the Father, Christ, and the Spirit.

When God reveals Himself to us, he reveals us to ourselves. Our faith in three Persons in one God offers us several insights into ourselves since we were created in the image and likeness of God. First, the Church has always taught that the Trinity is the greatest mystery. How can there be three Persons but only one God? If God is mystery, so are we. Therefore, we can never fully understand ourselves or another person, not even the person to whom we are closest. This is both good and bad. The good is that it helps keep us interested in each other and in our relationships. The bad is that it causes a lot of misunderstandings.

In the first story of creation, God said, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ... God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them"* [Gen. 1:26-27]. The second insight is that because God is a Trinity of Persons in one God, relationships are critically important in our lives. In fact, the image and likeness of God is not found, first of all, in us as individuals but in human community, of which marriage is the prototype. Marriage, however, is only one kind of community. We are all part of multiple communities. Wherever human beings live in communities built upon knowledge and love, the image and likeness of God is revealed and embodied.

In the Trinity, there is perfect unity yet distinction of persons. As human beings, we will never achieve perfect unity because each of us is a separate person with our own thoughts and our own choices. The third insight is that as human beings, our goal is to find balance in all our relationships. Someone once wrote that we know we are in a healthy intimate relationship when I can be me, you can be you, and we can be us, and I can grow, you can grow, and we can grow together. To establish, maintain, and develop balance in our relationships requires respect, i.e., cherishing each other's otherness.

My brothers and sisters, today's Gospel is often called the Great Commission. In his book *Divine Renovation*, which I mentioned last week, Fr. James Malon analyzes the text of today's Gospel. According to Fr. Malon, Jesus gave his disciples four tasks: go, make, baptize, and teach. In the Greek text, only one is a verb; the other three are participles. The verb reveals the core of Jesus' Great Commission. The verb is *make*. In other words, our core task as Jesus' disciples is not going, baptizing, or teaching. Our core task is to *"make disciples of all nations."*