

My Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you to all who worked so hard to make Summerfest 2022 a success. I really cannot thank you enough. Also, God certainly blessed us with wonderful weather and great attendance.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Of all the Christian mysteries of faith, the Trinity, three persons in one God, is the most difficult to understand. In last Sunday's homily, I said that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles as tongues of fire because fire symbolizes passion. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles became passionate about sharing the Good News of Jesus.

Trinity Sunday is also about passion. In trying to understand the Holy Spirit, we can say that the love of God the Father and God the Son for each other is so alive, so vital, so passionate, that it is its own person, the Holy Spirit. Although we can never understand the mystery of the Trinity, marriage and children provide two excellent analogies. When couples marry, an *I* and a *you* become a *we* without losing their individual identities. Likewise, children are the personification of their parents' love. In other words, the love of husbands and wives for each other is so alive, so vital, so passionate, that it is personified, i.e., becomes a distinct person, in their children.

If passion in some way explains the Trinity, passion also explains the relationship of each of the three Persons in God to us. Because God is passionate love, we can describe creation itself as the overflow of God's superabundant love. The love within the Trinity was so full, so complete, that it overflowed into creation. Because all of creation was born from the passionate love of God, the author of Genesis would write, "*God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good*" [1:31a].

God the Father's passionate love for creation, however, was even more evident in our salvation: "*For 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*" [Jn. 3:16]. Not only did he send his Son to live among us as one of us; he allowed his beloved Son to die for us. Paul wrote to the Romans, "*But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.*" [5:8].

By freely accepting death on the cross for us, Jesus demonstrated his passionate love for us. It is interesting that we refer to his sufferings as his Passion. The word *passion* comes from the Latin verb *pati*, which means *to suffer*. Although we tend to think of passionate love as very romantic, all true love is sacrificial and implies some measure of suffering. Jesus' passion and death are the proof of his passionate love for us.

Last week we saw the passionate love of the Holy Spirit coming down upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire and moving the Apostles to proclaim the Gospel fearlessly.

My brothers and sisters, if God's Trinitarian love is a passionate love and if God's love for all of creation and for us is passionate, it seems to me that we are called to have a passionate love for God and a passionate love for others. In other words, our love for God and for others should be more than an intellectual or spiritual love. There has to be some component of emotion and intimacy to be a fully human love. At the same time, we have to remember that true passionate love is always sacrificial and always contains some pain. For example, one of my favorite quotations comes from Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*: "...that secret from which one never quite recovers, that even in the most perfect love one person loves less profoundly than the other."¹

¹Thornton Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), p. 48.