

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH

HOMILY FOR TRINITY SUNDAY (A)

11TH JUNE 2017

Father Stephen said last week that the Holy Spirit is the least clear of the persons of the Trinity. From discussions I've had in the hall (come in by the way to make friends) this is clearly true. My message today links a little with a fortnight ago when I asked you all, and you said you would, to pray daily for the Holy Spirit to come into your lives, or even take control!

You see, the Trinity is a mystery; however clever a theologian you are, none of us can realistically explain God! (1 John 5.9-11; Jean-Luc Marion on the Eucharist; only God can speak well of God). Indeed a lovely monk, Sebastien Moore from Downside highlights that the early Christians simply lived the mystery rather than trying to explain it, and if we neglect the Holy Spirit we aren't entering into the fullness of God available to us

Father also said the Holy Spirit is the life giver; it was the Holy Spirit who came at Pentecost and gave birth to the Church. Now, here's a thought for us all. Consider a husband and wife who have been called to the vocation of marriage. In the act of making love, they may be gifted with the miracle of a baby. In this particular instance, they are co-creators with God! It's through an act of love between persons that new life is created. And indeed, many people think of the Holy Spirit as the love between the Father and Son. Now that's OK as far as it goes, but it's much more than that; the whole Trinity is a relational way of living. We can think of it being a movement of dance between Father, Son and Spirit.....and we, you and I, are invited INTO this dance. And you know, when you dance with somebody, it becomes more than the sum of the individuals involved – it generates its own kind of energy. When we enter into the Trinity, new dimensions of energy are generated.

This happens right at the start of our Christian life, many translations quote Jesus at the end of Matthew's Gospel as "Baptise everyone INTO the Father, Son and Holy Spirit"

Now, the basic doctrine can seem confusing. God is both one and three! In god there is a profound and perfect unity, whilst within that unity a distinction of Father Son and Holy Spirit! It hence opens the idea of being relational, with completeness found by all three being present. (A little like us as the body of Christ, only really being complete when we draw, through love, everyone in)

So, Jesus comes to man with the Good News of the Trinity; he reveals the mystery of life in the Trinity. A useful place for us to explore this is when the disciples ask Jesus how to pray; he says say “OUR Father....”

Listen.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus speaks to his Father, and it’s a relationship of great intimacy and trust. It’s a real conversation, NOT Jesus talking to himself. So, we already see a distinction between Father and Son; two persons. Jesus invites us to call his Father, our Father; therefore we have a relationship with the Father. He is not just Jesus’ Father, but ours. So, in some way, we are like Jesus himself! (2 Peter 1.4 – through Jesus’ glory and goodness you may participate in the divine nature). When we address the Father as our Father in the full sense, it’s not simply that we share the same humanity as Christ, but that we are raised to the level of the divine! (In this way, God the father of Jesus, is truly our Father too)

Before anyone thinks I’ve taken this too far – CCC260;1024: Jesus reveals that by accepting the Grace of Faith in the Trinity, woman and man is transformed by Love, saved from death, and given eternal life IN UNITY with the Trinity!

This is one way we see the role of the Holy Spirit. He brings us into relationship. We are like Christ because the Spirit is working in us. By the power of the Spirit we are raised to the level of Christ and can address the Father as Our Father. We are not only brothers and sisters of Jesus in his humanity; we are brothers and sisters of Jesus in his divinity! Wow!

For a moment, let’s look at this fidget spinner. When stationary, we can see three separate arms. Once spinning, if I could do it properly, it becomes one unit of flow. And, if you hold it, you can feel the additional energy (bit like a gyroscope).

Rather than try to explain the Trinity, let’s imitate St Paul – who notably doesn’t define and limit the Spirit by calling it the love between Father and Son - Paul simply and repeatedly says “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you”. Let’s accept the mystery but enter into it. Join in the Trinitarian dance.

Finally, next time we say the Our Father, consciously recall how it reveals to us a wonderful truth about ourselves and our relationship with God. As we recite it we are participating in the Life of the Trinity. Ask the Holy Spirit to take you deeper into the mystery of the Trinity; join in the dance; let that extra energy change you and the world.

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