



The Most Holy Trinity May 22, 2016 C

- ◆ **Catechism Lesson Two**
- ◆ **Bits & Pieces on the Central Mystery of our Christian Faith, the Holy Trinity**

Second Catechism Session

Last week, 80+ people attended the first session.

Next Wednesday's session: ***Creation of All that is Visible and Invisible.***

- ◆ Where did we come from and where are we going?
- ◆ Can Catholics believe in evolution?
- ◆ Where did angels and demons come from?
- ◆ What is special about the creation of human persons?
- ◆ Why does a loving God allow evil and suffering?
- ◆ What is original sin?
- ◆ Why does the Church believe in original sin when it is not mentioned in the Bible?
- ◆ What do we mean when we say we are born with original sin?

We will meet in the Parish Hall at 7:00pm.

Reflecting on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Fr. Denis McBride writes:

John and Josephine have just celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary. Since their four children have left home and married, they have spent seventeen years on their own, a time they describe as "a new growing towards each other." When they were asked why they still enjoyed each other's company, Josephine replied: "We've always had a healthy respect for each other's differences. And we're still growing to know each other better. I just wish that we could have communicated with each other years ago the way we do now. But perhaps our easiness with each other now could only come about because of all the struggles we went through."

The longer we are acquainted with people, the more we grow to realize how little we know them. Family and friends continue to surprise us, reminding us that they are always more than our understanding of them. We can all give instant impressions of people after knowing them only for a week, but if we're honest with ourselves we have to admit that our clarity is born of ignorance. We can have epic conversations about a new acquaintance, but the lengthy talk is mostly guesswork, makeshift images built from a few clues.

Unless we settle for stereotypes, understanding other people is a lifetime's task. It is hardly surprising, therefore,

that when it comes to understanding God we can become paralyzed by the sheer magnitude of the mystery.

The mystery of God

The more we discover about God, the greater becomes the mystery of his presence and love. The considerable knowledge of the Church can never dispel the mystery of ages. Mystery means that we can never say the final word about God; there is always more to discover, there is always more to share, there is always more to experience. In that sense the mystery of God invites us never to abandon the endless task of growing to understand the power behind the world we live in. And each year, Trinity Sunday calls us to reflect on the life of God.

As Christians our principal entrance into the mystery of God is the person of Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, the Word made flesh among us. As Jesus said to the apostle Philip: "He who has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus is God's adventure among us. To make our journey to God we begin with him. And the Good News tells us that Jesus has promised to accompany us until the journey to God is completed: "Know that I am with you always, to the end of time."

In the person of Jesus the mystery of God has a face, a voice, a language, a love, a life. In the pages of the Gospel we meet Jesus' friends and enemies, his enthusiasms and dislikes; we are caught up in his struggle for what is right; we are challenged to keep alive the values he cherished. In the three years of his public ministry the light from light shone among us. In Jesus we are still able to taste and see the goodness of God. God's particulars are revealed in him. "He who has seen me has seen the Father." To look on the Son of God is to begin to understand the mystery of God.

The feast of Pentecost that we celebrated last week reminded us that we cannot begin to understand the truth of God unless we are gifted with the power of the Spirit. Even the apostles could not recognize the full truth about the Jesus they knew and loved without the gift of the Spirit. The same is true for us: to understand Jesus we need the Spirit. To reach the Father we need to go via the Son. So it is the mystery of the Trinity that is at the heart of the Christian life of faith. Which is why we begin and end everything in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The mystery of ourselves

Scripture reminds us that we are not God's slaves living in fear: we are children of God, heirs as well. We have been granted the privilege of inheriting the glory of God, we have been given the right to belong. So, we can move around with

the easiness of sons and daughters who have to share in our Father's inheritance. And if God is a mystery, it is hardly surprising that his children are of similar strain.

If we are all made in the image and likeness of God, it should come as no shock to realize that it takes a lifetime to work out and understand each other. We know that we learn best about people when we really want to know them for ourselves, refusing to be satisfied with second-hand accounts. Our love for people prompts us to know them better; our love for God urges us to deepen our understanding of him.

Loving is the highest form of understanding. Our journey towards God and towards each other is made along the same road. And when we journey that road in love and respect, the way we travel assures us of our destination. That is the Gospel.

Reflection questions: What are some of your images of God? Where did you get them? Would you say that they are healthy images?

First Reading: Proverbs 8:22-31

"I was God's delight day by day, playing before him all the while."

*Our image of God is influenced by many factors, not the least of which is the art that surrounds us in churches and popular culture. Does God look like the old bearded man on a throne—or like George Burns or Morgan Freeman? Does God sound like James Earl Jones, or perhaps your mother? Perhaps the most unusual depiction of God is the one envisioned by the writer of Proverbs under the name Wisdom. As is typical for Wisdom literature as a whole, this attribute of God is described in feminine terms. Wisdom plays like a young girl before her father, delighting in creation just as God delights in her. **The interplay between God the father and "Sophia" the daughter imagines a joyful relationship within the Trinity rarely captured on canvas or in film—but real nonetheless.** [Alice Camille]*

The following two pieces are by Jay Cormier.

Fingers as an image of God

Take a look at one of your fingers. There are three distinct joints in each finger. Each joint enables that part of the finger to move. When all three joints of that finger move together, your hand can close and grasp and hold. With these wondrous mechanisms, you can work the hoe to plant and wield the staff to protect; you can hold the brush to groom and the cloth to wash; you can embrace your beloved close to your heart.

Three joints, one finger; several fingers, one hand; two hands, one grasp—to hold, to protect, to care for. Our hands that hold are God's hands; the heart to which we

hold those we love is the heart of God; the compassion with which we extend our hand is the compassion of God.

Today's Feast of the Holy Trinity celebrates the many ways in which we have seen the hand of God in our midst, the many ways we and our world are held in his loving embrace: God the Father, the maker of these hands; God the Son, Jesus, the human "hands" of God in our midst who shows us how to hold and grasp as God does; God the Spirit: the love and care we feel in God's embrace. May God, the Giver and Author of everything that is good, give us the wisdom to discover the goodness in all things and make faithful and hope-filled use of that goodness to transform our lives and world in the life and love of God.

Luke's faith—a moving story

For Dana and her husband, God plays no role in their lives. Like so many young people brought up in strict religious homes, they abandoned the faith of their families long ago. They assumed they had stranded their four-year old son Luke in the same spiritual wilderness.

But then Dana's husband was sent to Iraq for several months. While Dana was numb with anxiety, Luke was surprisingly calm. He missed his Daddy but he wasn't scared. One night, Dana and Luke were watching television. A story came on about a soldier on leave from the war for his wedding. The soldier began to talk about how dangerous it was in Iraq and how afraid he was to go back. Dana reached to switch the channel, but Luke wanted to watch. Out of the corner of her eye, Dana saw Luke steeple his fingers and bow his head for a split second. "Sweetheart, what are you doing?" Dana asked. But Luke wouldn't tell her. A few minutes later, he did it again. Dana said, "You don't have to tell me, but if you want to, I'm listening." Finally, Luke confessed, "I was saying a prayer for Daddy."

"That's wonderful, Luke," Dana murmured, surprised and abashed that somehow Luke would be embarrassed to pray for his father in his own home. Dana asked Luke when he first began to believe in God. "I don't know," he said. "I've always known he exists."

Luke's mother, Dana Tierney, writes in The New York Times:

"It was as if that mustard seed of faith had found its way into our son and now he was revealing that he could move mountains.... I was envious of him. Luke wasn't rattled, because he believed that God would bring his father home safely. I was the only one stranded.

"For Luke all things are possible.... His prayers can stretch to infinity and beyond, but I am limited to one: Help thou mine unbelief."

[From "Coveting Luke's Faith" by Dana Tierney, The New York Times Magazine, January 11, 2004.]

Luke possesses the openness of heart and spirit that enables him to realize God's presence in his life and in

the lives of those dearest to him; Luke is able to sense the Spirit of God loving him and protecting him and his Mom and Dad and family. That is faith at its most basic, at its most enduring. Today's Sunday of the Trinity celebrates God as we behold him in the simple every day; God the Father: The Giver of our lives; God the Son: Jesus, the human face of God; God the Spirit: the love that binds us to one another and back to God. May we possess the faith of four-year-old Luke: to be able to find God in the joys and sorrows, victories and hurt that are part of all our lives.

Have a blessed week,

Le Sarah