



The Most Holy Trinity B

May 27, 2018

◆ Ordinary Time — Part 2

◆ Reflections on Trinity Sunday

The term Ordinary Time refers to the 34 Sundays of the Liturgical Year that are not a part of the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter Season. Wrapped around those two major seasons of the year are 34 Sundays. There are two periods in Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Year.

- ◆ The first period begins on the day after the Baptism of the Lord (which ends the Advent/Christmas Season) and continues until Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday.
- ◆ The second period begins on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday and continues until the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent. The first two Sundays of Ordinary Time in this period are always replaced by two Solemnities: The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity and the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. The last Sunday of Ordinary Time in this period is always replaced by the Solemnity of Christ the King.

The term Ordinary Time refers to ordinal or counted time: first, second, third, etc. The term is not intended to mean unimportant. Every day and every Sunday in our Liturgical Year are important because every day is a day that the Lord has made and every Sunday is a celebration of the Lord's Resurrection. Yet in another sense, Ordinary Time is ordinary in that it does not focus primarily on the major events in Christ's life that we celebrate during the two major seasons of our Church year. We might say that Ordinary Time developed not so much for what it is, but for what it is not – it is not Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter Time. In his excellent little book, *The Liturgical Year*, Dan Connors writes:

We should have a special feeling for Ordinary Time, because most of our lives are spent doing very ordinary things: working, eating, paying bills, worrying, shopping, and driving. These are not very exciting, but they make up the rhythms of our lives much more than do birthdays and special occasions. We are called to listen to God's voice, not just during the special seasons of the year, but always. We are to carry out our

Christian mission, not just on the holy days, but always. We are to help the poor and work for justice, not just at Thanksgiving and Christmas, but always. Ordinary Time is an opportunity to be the Body of Christ in the midst of everyday life. It is an opportunity to experience how God calls us to holiness in our daily rhythm of waking and resting, working and playing, laughing and worrying. When we can find God here, how much more glorious the great seasons of our year will be! (p.42)

Living Ordinary Time

The above quote by Dan Connors points us in the right direction when it comes to living this time of our Liturgical Year. This is a time for us to seek and respond to God as he comes to us in the ordinary events and encounters of daily life. Seeking, finding and responding to God in the happenings of daily life are the main goal of the spiritual life.

Praying the Scriptures that are read in Church every day is another excellent way to live Ordinary Time. An excellent aid to a fruitful meditation on the daily Scriptures can be found in *The Word Among Us*. This monthly devotional contains the text of every daily and Sunday Scripture readings of our Church Year. It also has a reflection on one of the readings. In addition, it has several other articles on various aspects of the spiritual life and articles on some of the saints.

Liturgical color: Green, the symbol of hope

Trinity Sunday — The Communal Dimension

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity—One God, Three Persons—is the central mystery of our Catholic faith. The following are some reflections on this mystery of our faith.

Reflection #1

In his book *New Sundays & Holy Day Liturgies*, Fr. Flor McCarthy SDB writes:

The Christian God is not a remote, lonely God, watching us with a critical eye from heaven. The Christian God is a little community of love. This community consists of three distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who want to share their love with us.

What kind of a community is the Trinity? The Trinity is a community where there is intimate loving and sharing. It is a community where there is equality, full participation of the three members, and outreach in love to all creation (mission). The Father initiates, the Son implements, and the Spirit empowers.

We Christians should strive for community. Why? Because God is community, and we are created in God's image: "God made human beings in the image of himself, male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27).

We are not meant to exist in isolation. Right from the beginning God's will was that we be a community of brothers and sisters, in the image of the Trinity. In this community there can be differences (these enrich), but there must be no divisions.

The image of God is at its best and brightest in us when we live as a community where there is love and sharing. We cannot have this intimacy in a parish of thousands, or even hundreds of people. It can be achieved only in smaller groups. The parishes of the future may consist of a network of small communities. Though these will have their own autonomy, they will be open to one another and combine together to make a communion of communities (the parish).

Not only should there be intimacy, there should also be equality among the members, full participation of all in the life of the community, and outreach or mission. The full participation of all the members is applicable not least in the matter of decision-making.

As for mission, if we do not give witness to community, our apostolic efforts will come to naught. The love that we preach we must first practice. Jesus did not go about evangelizing people on his own; he did so as a member of an itinerant community. And so it was with the early Christians.

For a description of the ideal community we do not have to look further than John's Gospel. John is the great theologian of community. Jesus says, "May they all be one, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (Jn 17:21).

We, of course, are human and fall short of the ideal. Yet we must never cease trying. If Jesus asks us to make community, it is because with his grace it is possible. In practice it involves certain procedures, such as: being socially together, supporting each other in the spiritual life through faith-sharing, prayer, and the Eucharist in common, engaging with the world (mission), being accountable to the community for what we do and how we administer material resources.

From all of the above, it is obvious that the question is not will we, or will we not, do something about community? The only question is: What exactly are we going to do as Christians? We are saved through relationship. So community is not an optional extra. It is of the essence of Christianity.

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Reflection #2—Growing into Mystery

The following reflection is by Fr. Denis McBride, C.S.S.R. He begins with a piece on *Understanding Each Other*.

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 creations, 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 we heard today 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 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

Today's second reading 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.

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Prayer to the Blessed Trinity

*You, Eternal Trinity,
are a sea so deep
that the more I enter in,
the more I find;
and the more I find,
the more I seek of you;
for when the soul is satisfied in your abyss,
it is not satisfied,
but it ever continues to thirst for you,
Eternal Trinity,
desiring to behold you
with the light of your light.
As the heart desires
the springs of living water,
so does my soul desire
to leave the prison of this dark body
and to behold you in truth.
O how long shall your face
be hidden from my eyes?
O abyss, O eternal Godhead, O deep sea!
Clothe me with yourself, Eternal Trinity,
so that I may run this mortal life
with true obedience,
and with the light of your most holy faith.
Amen.*

St. Catherine of Siena

Have a blessed week,

