

Trinity Sunday
Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40;
Romans 8:14-17;
Matthew 28:16-20
Little Flower - 5/26/24

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. When I was in grade school, we were taught that the mystery of the Trinity was the greatest mystery of all the Christian mysteries.

The heart of Old Testament revelation is that God is one and personal. In today's reading from Deuteronomy, Moses explicitly states that God is one: *"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."* He reminds us that God is personal by pointing out that God is relational, namely, that God chose the Israelites, did wonderful deeds on their behalf, formed them into a nation, gave them the Promised Land, but also gave them statutes and commandments to be kept so that they might prosper and have a long life in the land.

The heart of New Testament revelation is that there are three Persons in one God. Throughout the Gospels, there are references to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. However, Jesus revealed the mystery of the Trinity, three Persons in one God, when as part of the Great Commission, he sent his apostles out to baptize *"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

How can there be three Persons in one God? This seems like a complete contradiction. In Christology class in Rome, Fr. Jean Galot explained that when talking about the three persons in God and the oneness of God we are referring to two very different realities. When we talk about God's oneness, we are talking about God's nature, what God is. When we talk about the three persons in God, we are talking about who God is, i.e. God's identity. God is three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there is no contradiction when we say there are three Persons in one God.

In the first chapter of Genesis, on the sixth day of creation, God said, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground. God created man in his image; ...male and female he created them"* [26-27]. This has three implications for us. We often think of ourselves as being in the image and likeness of God because we have an immortal soul and have the gifts of intelligence and freedom. However, we need to note the shift from the singular to the plural in Genesis: *"God created man in his image; ...male and female he created them."* In other words, if the Trinity is the greatest mystery of God, the image and likeness of God is found not first of all in us as individuals but in human community, of which marriage is the prototype.

Second, our culture is individualistic. In other words, living in our culture can make us focus too much on ourselves as individuals and not enough on ourselves as members of communities. All of us are part of multiple communities. Marriage and family, of course, are most important. We are also part of extended families. We typically live in neighborhoods. We belong to parishes. We work with others. We belong to other organizations. All of these are communities in some sense. It is important that we prioritize the communities to which we belong.

My brothers and sisters, God said, *"Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."* Because we belong to communities, we are called to be stewards of the earth on which we live. This means we must cherish the earth and work together to create a more human world not just for today but also for tomorrow.