

Feast of the Holy Trinity 2020 (A): The Image of Perfect Family

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you" (2 Cor. 13:13).

Today is the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, a feast day of the family of God!

Every time we begin in prayer, we invoke the name of the Triune God, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We signed ourselves with the cross - in the name of the Father, the creator and provider, and of the Son, who gives himself as food and salvation, and the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and sanctifies us.

How do we come up with this belief?

In a nutshell, this belief of the Triune God came from the real experience of the people who experienced God's all-embracing presence. In the Scriptures, we notice that God relates to his people, not as an abstract person, but a God who is rich in mercy and slow to anger, and is affected by the suffering of his people (cf. Ex 34:6-7; 3:7). Specific passages of the Bible tell us that Jesus talks and addresses this God as "Abba," which means Father. And he wants us to call God as Father, "Your Father in heaven" (cf. Matt 6:9-13). Through Jesus, we knew that God the Father loves us so much, as the Gospel proclaims: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..." (Jn 3:16). And on the other hand, Jesus' disciples have a growing awareness of who he is as they followed him in his ministry, although it was only a glimpse. But after Jesus' resurrection, they professed that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Lord, the Son of Man. Their experience with the risen Lord slowly revealed to them of who Jesus is. It was through the Holy Spirit that confirmed what Jesus had taught about himself. In Jesus, they saw the face of God. It was St. Paul in his writings, especially his letter to the Philippians, articulated that Jesus is the Son of God: "For though he is God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at...." (Phil. 2:6).

It is with a conviction that we can say that the belief of one God in three persons is real. This is how God reveals himself to his people, and this is the way we understand his relationship with us.

When we say that God is our Father, God acts as loving parents act - a God who creates, sustains, and cares for us. And when we say that God is the Son, it means that the same one God acts as a loving brother, a God who helps, saves, and redeems us. And when we say God is a Holy Spirit, it means again that that same one God acts within us as a soul or a principle of life - a God who enlivens, strengthens, and sanctifies us. Always the one same God, revealing himself in mysterious ways. We can confidently say that this truth about God is a fruit of a carefully reflected life situation as God reveals himself to his people.

Holy Trinity is an image of a perfect relationship, the perfection of love. God is not a lonely living in glorious isolation, but a united family of three happy persons. As we sign ourselves "in the name of Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," we remind ourselves the life of the Triune God who is the source of love, self-giving, unity, understanding which are essentials in building a relationship, in the family, in the community, and the whole human family. Indeed, we are all initiated and inserted into this divine family through the Sacrament of Baptism. We became adopted sons and daughters of God's family. We are given the privilege to share in the happiness of its members and savor the love that unites them. It is from this belief that all the practical consequences of Christianity flow. Someone said that to neglect any person in need is like neglecting a member of your own family. To hurt or insult anyone is like hurting or insulting one of your own family. To sin with anyone is like sinning with someone in your own family. To cheat anyone is like cheating your own family. If

you have let down the family in any of these ways, you can hardly expect a big welcome home when you arrive. I couldn't agree more about this practical application of what a member of a family ought to be.

Our faith in the Triune God invites us to work together as a family to heal the sins that divide our human society. We can't face the crisis as individuals, nor carry the pain on our own or only look out for ourselves. Just as the sufferings inflicted by the pandemic are communal, our response is also communal, as sons and daughters in the Triune God's family.

The simple prayer, together with the sign of the cross, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," is a perpetual reminder that we are all meant to be one family with different colors and cultures under the Triune God. A task that we are forever called to work on. I can't imagine when we enter heaven, and we will be advised to segregate by race and colors. I believe all forms of segregation are dissolved (If there is, it will only be a hierarchy of functions, like hosts of angels, cherubim, seraphim, archangels). The reality of the unity of the family of God is celebrated through the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The holy Eucharist is the visible manifestation of this unity. It is the foretaste of the family feast in heaven.

Let us continue the mission and our participation for the unity of the family of God by heeding the exhortation of St. Paul, who said, "Brothers and sisters, rejoice (know that you are a member of the family!). Mend your ways (eliminate toxic attitude), encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11).

We are adopted sons and daughters of the family of God. Let us give honor to this family, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God bless you!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Many Hewe
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