

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity – Year A

[*Exodus* 34: 4b-6, 8-9; *Daniel* 3; *2Corinthians* 13: 11-13; *John* 3: 16-18]

This morning we celebrate Sunday mass for the first time under the liturgical guidelines I've issued for the Archdiocese in our situation of pandemic. The first things I notice upon entering the church – and perhaps the first for you also – are the ropes and the floor markings. These are new, put in place to indicate where we can sit and stand. Their practical purpose is to separate and distance us from one another, in order to protect us from contracting the virus. Over the past two weeks our world has become painfully aware of other dividers and markers that are not new but longstanding, and that keep people separated from one another in daily life. I speak of those barriers, which are viruses in themselves, namely, inequality, injustice, and racism. As we watch events unfold among our neighbours to the south, we know that those same separators function close to home in our own country and neighbourhoods.

The mystery of the Eucharist stands in stark contrast to this painful situation. Here at mass God comes to us to overcome division and draw us together in a unity of faith, love and mission. This wondrous encounter with God moves us to look beyond the ropes that will one day be removed with ease, to focus upon the deep systemic separators that are very difficult to eradicate. Difficult, but not impossible. In fact, when we reflect upon the Scripture texts and ponder the gift we receive here in the mass, we see with hope the way forward toward the unity sought by every human heart.

We celebrate today the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. In this mass we bow down in wonder and awe before the ineffable mystery of God who is at once One and Triune. This may strike us right away as something abstract and without any bearing upon what we are going through right now. On the contrary, it is immediately relevant. What is important to grasp is that the knowledge of who God is sheds light upon who we are as human beings. The reality of God unveils the truth of each and every human being's inherent dignity, which is the necessary foundation for fashioning a civilization of love and peace. I'll develop this briefly.

God, who once through Moses revealed to the people His love for them, has now made known through the gift of His Son and Holy Spirit that love is His very essence. From this divine self-revelation, we know that God is in Himself a perfect and eternal exchange of love among Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God, perfect in Himself, needs nothing, yet chose nevertheless to create us and the world around us. The immediate and wonderful conclusion is this: each and every person is wanted, chosen, and desired by God. Pope Emeritus Benedict once put it beautifully: "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary" (Inaugural homily). Pope Francis, of course, underscores this powerfully by his outreach to persons on the peripheries of societal benefit or at the edge of communal notice. What is more, God has sent His Son and Holy Spirit to touch us with His own divine life and thus give us a share in God's interpersonal exchange of love! This sharing in God's very life begins even now by the grace of the sacraments; it will come to fulfilment in the life to come. What this means is that not only are we willed, loved and necessary; but also we are awaited. Knowing that I am awaited by the One who loves me with an intensity beyond imagining sheds a brilliant and beautiful light upon the inherent goodness of my life (cf. *Spe salvi*, 3).

In our current situation we need to take hold of this truth. That horrifying image of the knee on the neck is one outrageous example of the many ways, often subtle, that people receive the message that their life does not matter. Consider: in an age which exalts beauty, power, wealth, and achievement as indicators of human worth, the conclusion to be drawn if I am not beautiful or successful, if I can point to no great achievement, if I struggle intellectually, and so on, is that my life does not matter, that I do not count, that I am not worthy of notice, that my dignity is somehow less than that of others. God's self-revelation puts the lie to all of that. God is love; we exist from that love, in that love and for that love. In God's sight, it is beautiful that each of us exists for the simple reason that we do. We are His creation; we are God's children. That is the basis of our dignity, which no one can take from us.

Now, as we reflect on all this in the context of everything that is presently happening, the question spontaneously arises: what are we to do? At a moment when we are witnessing a worldwide reaction to injustice through marches everywhere, what would God have us do as disciples of His Son? Well, first of all, it is important to remember that God has already given his global response to sin and evil by sending us Jesus. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (*John* 3:16) History has shown that human effort alone cannot eradicate evil. That will happen only if our response aligns with and flows from God's own.

This alignment happens, St. Paul tells us, by three actions: "put things in order, agree with one another, live in peace." That's what we must do. Putting things in order means to live my life in conformity with the Gospel, which will necessarily involve treating every man, woman and child as the beloved of God and worthy of deepest respect. Agreeing with one another does not mean putting an end to divergence of opinion but to think with the mind of Christ, whose love extends to all without condition. Living in peace demands that we examine honestly where sin has separated us from God and others and then actively seek the reconciliation that alone gives birth to peace. By putting things in order, agreeing with one another and living in peace, we manifest before the world the unity that God wills there to be among all people, and become the instruments by which God accomplishes it.

This brings us to our need for the grace of the Eucharist. Through this sacrament, God bestows the help we need to live and do as we must as disciples of His Son. In every mass, Divine Communion touches earth when bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit. By receiving this Holy Communion, physically or spiritually, we are drawn into God's own Triune life, and summoned beyond division to union with each other. May the grace of the Eucharist also strengthen us to manifest this communion before the world, so that, by the march of our witness, all may know that God's love, and our acceptance of it, is the only true and lasting remedy for the sin of division; it is the only sure way to unity and peace.

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
St. Joseph's Basilica
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