



Bringing Home the Word



Most Holy Trinity

May 22, 2016

The Gift of the Holy Trinity

By Janel Esker

My neighbor shared that she got a porch swing for Mother's Day one year. "Oh," I said, "that's a great gift. Your husband really knows how to shop for you." She replied, "Only because I told him exactly what I wanted. I picked it out; he picked it up." Is anyone else envious of her? Sure, it loses the element of surprise, but it's quite nice to receive exactly what you asked for.

We can spend Most Holy Trinity Sunday meditating on the mystery of the

Trinitarian nature of God, but today's readings also remind us to reflect on the incredible gift of the Trinity. It's exactly what we asked for—even though we wouldn't have known to ask for such a gift.

We experience the creative power of the Father in the Proverbs reading. All the universe's beauty, all the details of nature, all artistic inspirations find their source in the Father. What a most desired gift!

We experience the redeeming power of the Son, who took on our human nature as his own. He knows our struggles and joys, and he calls us to leave behind our sins and follow his example. His love to the end redeems our brokenness and has given us hope which, as St. Paul declares, "does not disappoint."

We experience the sanctifying power of the Spirit, who sustains us daily with the love of the Father and Son. We can choose rightly, live justly, and act lovingly because of the Spirit's guidance in every moment.

What a gift indeed. What a God we have. We are, among all people, so richly blessed. †

Sunday Readings

Proverbs 8:22–31

"When the LORD established the heavens I was there...beside him as his craftsman."

Romans 5:1–5

"Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts."

John 16:12–15

"Everything that the Father has is mine; ...[the Spirit] will take from what is mine and declare it to you."

A Word From Pope Francis

In some sense we are still in a "womb," which is the family. A womb made up of various interrelated persons: the family is "where we learn to live with others despite our differences" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 66). Notwithstanding the differences of gender and age between them, family members accept one another because there is a bond between them....It is this bond which is at the root of language. It is in the family that we learn to speak our "mother tongue," the language of those who have gone before us (see 2 Macc 7:25, 27). In the family we realize that others have preceded us, they made it possible for us to exist and in our turn to generate life and to do something good and beautiful. We can give because we have received."



—2015 World Communications Day message

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What have I asked God for? What do I hope the Trinity offers?
- How do I reflect and manifest the loving unity of the Trinity?

Let God Out of the Box

By Fr. Rick Potts, CSsR

“God can be no greater than the imagination of the believer.” That line comes from Toni Morrison’s 2008 novel, *A Mercy*. She goes on to explain that shallow people believe in a shallow God, and timid people believe in a vengeful God. I must admit, I was shouting “Amen!” as I read those lines. It’s a marvelous way to phrase the familiar concept of putting God in a box.

Tradition tells us God is beyond our understanding, God is infinite and eternal, God stands outside the bounds of space and time. God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient. Our all-loving God fills us with wonder and mystery. God is, as one of my favorite Gospel songs says, “awesome.”

And yet, we often squeeze our infinite God into tiny boxes. I guess it’s inevitable. It’s pretty tough to visualize something that’s beyond our understanding, hard to get a handle on the infinite. And there’s nothing wrong with contemplating God in bite-sized portions—it’s just that we rarely avoid the pitfall of denying everything that doesn’t fit into our little box.

Some insist God is male and deny



any other possible reality. Others see Christian artwork portraying God as anything other than a white European as false or even heretical. Still others attempt to restrict God’s mercy by placing it in a box. The only way to make sense of all the laws and precepts, all the sacrifice and hardship, is to limit who can receive mercy and redemption: “I had to go to Mass every Sunday; surely God will punish those who don’t.” Perhaps we can’t imagine certain individuals being allowed into paradise for one reason or another. We build a box out of justice (our definition) and seal it with self-righteousness, imagining it will hinder the flow of God’s endless mercy to those we deem unworthy.

On one hand, Toni Morrison’s statement seems preposterous. How can

I limit God? If I don’t believe God loves me, it doesn’t stop God from loving me. But it can greatly limit the effect God’s love has on my life. If I deny its existence, then eventually I may not be able to sense it at all. If I deny God’s love, it cannot help define who I am. It cannot change my views or behaviors. It cannot save me from myself.

Yes, we can fall victim to the limits of our imagination, to our inability to immerse ourselves in the awesomeness of our great God. When we cut others off from the God we don’t believe they understand, in our misguided attempts to imagine that God acts and reasons the same way we do, we fail to see the love and mercy that surround us.

Open yourself to the wonder and mystery that is God, and let God out of the box. †



Lord, you willingly gave up your life for the salvation of the world. Give me the courage to love freely and unconditionally.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 23–28

Mon. Weekday (8th week in Ordinary Time):
1 Peter 1:3–9 / Mark 10:17–27

Tue. Weekday:
1 Peter 1:10–16 / Mark 10:28–31

Wed. Weekday:
1 Peter 1:18–25 / Mark 10:32–45

Thu. St. Philip Neri:
1 Peter 2:2–5, 9–12 / Mark 10:46–52

Fri. Weekday:
1 Peter 4:7–13 / Mark 11:11–26

Sat. Weekday:
Jude 17, 20b–25 / Mark 11:27–33