

TRINITARIAN LIFE or THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF LOVE

Isaiah 40. 12-17, 27-31

2 Corinthians 13. 11-13

Matthew 28. 16-20

I speak to you in the name of  the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

When it comes time to speak of God, and especially of God as the Trinity, three persons and one essence, we always risk saying more than we really know or can ever know. That is the risk today on the Feast of the Holy Trinity. It is the temptation before every preacher. More often than not our analogies for the Trinity give way to heresies; the three and the one become a nonsensical math problem; and the Blessed Trinity is left holding little meaning for our day-to-day life. However, that is not because the Holy Trinity is unimportant or irrelevant. It is because the deepest and the most important things of our life can rarely, if ever, be talked about. They can only be experienced.

Here's a challenge for you: define 'love' and list the reasons why you love that one person above all others. Count the ways and you'll find that words fail. No list is long enough, and after a while the reasons begin to sound hollow and empty. Or describe for me the most beautiful day of your life. Maybe it was sitting in the silence of a sunset; or the day your child was born. The colours and feelings, though real, sound trite compared to the reality of that beauty. Or tell me about the deepest joy or tragedy of your life. Tell me the story. The facts may be accurate, but words can never contain the fullness of that joy or tragedy. At most they point to it.

When it comes to speaking about the most profound, meaningful and life-changing things or events of our lives, words fall flat. They only seem to trivialise. So it is with God. Perhaps that is why in today's gospel our Lord does not explain or define

the Trinity. Instead he speaks of relationship and participation. Human beings, all nations, the entire world, are to be baptised, plunged, washed, immersed in the name, that is, the qualities and characteristics of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. In our epistle reading St Paul describes these as grace, love and communion (or fellowship). At the end of his second letter, he entrusts the Corinthians not so much to what God does, but to *how God is*. God's being is the eternal Trinity. That *being* is the basis for God's *doing*. This is true for us as well.

You and I were created to participate in, and to share the life of the Holy Trinity. It is our spiritual DNA. Remember the words of Genesis: "Then God said, "Let us make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness"" (1. 26). Trinitarian life is the pattern from which we were created. It is both the basis and destination of our lives. The Trinitarian life is a choreography of love: three equal persons, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, each one dwelling in the other by virtue of an unceasing movement of mutual love.

Our lives, marriages, families, schools, workplaces and parishes are supposed to become images or icons of this choreography. You and I are invited to join this dance of mutuality and love, as we relate to God and as we relate to each other. Whenever we see the world through another person's eyes; whenever the joys and sorrows of another person become our own; whenever we completely give ourselves to another person, holding nothing back; whenever we both lose and find our life in the life of another person; then we are most like the Triune God. When those things happen, we have moved from being created in the image and the pattern of the Triune God and we have begun *living like* the Triune God.

We see this, do we not, in those rare married couples who live and love as if they were one, without ever losing their distinct uniqueness as two persons. Although they are human, together they manifest divine love and reveal God's life in this world.

For ultimately, Trinitarian life is not about numbers. It's not a quantity, but rather a quality, a way of being. It's that kind of relationship with God and with another that allows us to say, 'I love, therefore I am'.

The image of God in humanity is Trinitarian. It is in every one of us. The divine image offers a life with *God and others* that is relational, personal, participatory, communal and loving. This is the life for which we were created. It is the truest pattern of who we are and how we are to live. To turn away from God or another, to withdraw our life from God or another, to live in isolation, to exclude God or another by declaring that we have no need of them are the most unnatural and un-Godlike things we can do.

Our love for one another and our faith in the Holy Trinity are integrally related. You cannot have one without the other. A genuine confession of faith in the Triune God can only be made by those who show mutual love to one another. Our love for one another is the pre-condition for a Trinitarian faith; and a Trinitarian faith is what completes and gives meaning to our love for one another.

Beware, however. Living a Trinitarian faith is not easy, and you might even call it dangerous. Living a Trinitarian faith means responding to God and living in love, vulnerability, openness to others, sharing and participating in one another's lives such that we become one. That is how Jesus lived and died. That is the resurrected, ascended, and 'pentecosted' life that Christ reveals and offers to us. It is how we are to be and live. Our culture neither recognises nor rewards this kind of Trinitarian life. To the world, it looks like weakness and dependency. In God's world, however, it looks like holiness. Humanity is most authentically itself when it participates in and manifests the divine life. As St Irenaeus said in the second century, 'The glory of God is man fully alive'.

Every Sunday in the Nicene Creed, we confess our belief in God who is the Trinity. We confess the oneness of God as well as the uniqueness of the three Divine Persons. This may be what we believe, but is it how we live?

Every moment, every circumstance, every relationship is one in which we can make real and visible the divine life and love of the Holy Trinity. That is the human vocation; and it is what we were created to do.

Amen.