

Trinity (B)

(Deuteronomy 4:32-34.39-40 / Matthew 28:16-20)

30.05.2021

Unity & Diversity

It may be important to begin our reflection by stating what should be obvious to all of us. The Trinity is not a secondary element of our faith. It is not a mystery that we celebrate just once a year on the Sunday after Pentecost. All our times of worship, all our Masses are celebrations of the Trinity. As Christians, we never celebrate one Person of the Trinity without celebrating the other two. In his Rule, St Benedict asks that, at the end of each Psalm, the monks “rise from their seats in honour and reverence of the Holy Trinity” (9:7). In our community here, the name of the Trinity is prayed or sung at least one hundred and thirty times a week.

Trinity Sunday is an opportunity for us to reassess the place of the Blessed Trinity in our lives. Do we allow our Trinitarian doxologies, all the prayers we recite change something to the way we relate to ourselves and to others?

Our celebration today reposes on two words which have to be held together: unity and diversity. In the prayers at the beginning and the end of our liturgy as well as in the Preface, we hear the Church trying to articulate with words the mystery of our God in whom the diversity of three Persons is reconciled, unified in one Godhead.

At first, this last sentence may sound a bit esoteric or, at best, very far removed from our human immediate concerns. In fact this statement should find an echo within us because it speaks to a deep longing in all our hearts: the longing to find a balance in our personal lives and in all our relationships between diversity and unity, differences and what we share in common.

Clearly, to reflect on the Trinity is as much about reflecting on our own identity as it is about reflecting on God’s identity. To worship the Trinity would have us desire to become like the Trinity, diverse and unified.

At a personal level, we are composed of many different feelings and expectations, we are the result of many psychological, spiritual and physical experiences and we have been shaped by an incalculable number of meetings, words and deeds.

This diversity which can generate chaos, instability and paralysis within us at time can also, by the grace of the Trinity and God’s unifying work within us, make of us people who are fully alive. The demanding work accomplished by God’s grace within us is a lifelong work of re-creation whereby all the different aspects of our identity are healed and reconciled in order “to clothe [ourselves] with the new self, created according to the likeness of God” (Eph 4:24).

Jesus’ promise that God will make his home within us (cf. Jn 14:23) is the assurance that, all the emotions and events which aim at alienating us from ourselves and which tend to prevent us from being at home in our own skin can become, by the power of the Trinity, a new source of energy for life and purpose.

The same dynamic applies to our human relationships in the Church and in society. While we are tempted to believe that differences are a threat to life, that sameness is the sure guarantee for peace and security, we all know by experience that the refusal to accept differences and the longing for sameness prevent our growth in maturity and the attainment of a peaceful life. Unity is not uniformity. Otherness is part of God’s identity and God’s plan for humanity. The authenticity of our faith is not proved by the fact that we agree on

everything, or when differences are denied and swept under the carpet. The authenticity of our faith is proved when we allow the Trinity to lead us to grow through our disagreements, through our differences.

The Holy Trinity is dialogical, it is made of three Persons in dialogue. This dialogue and communion in the Trinity mark our identity as human beings and as believers. With Pope Francis, we “affirm the interpersonal nature of our humanity” (*Message for the 53rd World Communication Day*, 24.01.2019).

We are the fruit of a dialogue of love and we are made for dialogue. True dialogue requires otherness, alterity, differences, so when we refuse to dialogue, when we confine ourselves to the narrow security of sameness we do not respect our own identity, we shrink and settle for mere survival.

In order to move beyond and get above mere survival, in order to have life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10), we need God who is love (cf. 1Jn 4:8), love revealed to us in the death and Resurrection of the Son and in the gift of the Spirit.

The secret of the Father revealed by the Son and the Holy Spirit is love. God is only Love. He is Love alone. With St John “we know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love” (1Jn 4:16). These words sum up the core of our faith. We believe in love because God is eternally loving among the three Persons of the Trinity, and because the creation is a manifestation of this love which they share.

If we want to deal properly with the storms that trouble our hearts, with the tensions which affect our Churches, and the disagreements and misunderstandings between our Churches, we must keep our eyes fixed on the Trinity; for only the Trinity of love and communion can change our hearts and help us to move forward and beyond division, rejection and self-centredness.

At our baptism, we were all sealed with the name of the Holy Trinity. For St John of the Cross, as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit made their home within us, we received “the light and fire of love” (*The Living Flame...*, Stanza 3, p. 707). We have become light and fire of love in the world. Not a light that blinds others but one that helps us and others to walk the path of life. Not a fire that destroys but one that purifies our hearts and is a place where it is good for others to warm themselves.

Let us pray for one another that, in our families, communities and society we may bear witness to the Holy Trinity as a power for change and growth in concord and harmony. May we be true builders of unity in diversity.