

The Holy Trinity (C)
(Romans 5:1-5 / John 16:12-15)
15.06.2025
Relationships

The feast of the Holy Trinity which we celebrate today is an opportunity for us to reflect on who God is. The challenge for us is that the more we think we know about God, the more we realise that we know very little about him. That is why we speak of the *mystery* of the Trinity. A mystery is not something that we cannot understand, it is something that we cannot fully understand... at least, as long as we journey on this side of life.

In the passage we heard from Paul's letter to the Romans, the apostle gives us some clues to help us deepen our knowledge of God and our understanding of the Trinity.

The first aspect that it is important for us to retain today is that "through our Lord Jesus Christ (...) we are at peace with God." This is what, in the letter to the Ephesians, St Paul calls "the mystery of God's will" : "to bring unity to all things." (1:9.10) At its core the Trinity is a mystery of relationship, of togetherness and communion. In Christ the Father restores us and the whole of creation to a right and life-giving relationship with him.

Herein lies what is truly amazing about God: he does not exist for himself. The Trinity does not concern only the three Persons of the Godhead enjoying communion on their own. The life and the unity of the Trinity overflow and are shared with you and me. To believe in the Trinity means believing that, ultimately, life begets life through relationships. A 12th century monk and archbishop of Canterbury wrote: "If someone lives only for himself and for his own advantage, and considers only himself in deciding how he should live, we can consider [this whole life] to be wholly dark." (Baldwin of Ford, *Tractate* VI, p. 169) To celebrate the Trinity is to turn away from the darkness of individualism and to return to the light and joy of communion.

Moreover, in the Trinity, God reveals his great humility. He does not intend to relate to us from afar, just occasionally and according to his good will. He humbled himself and he came seeking to make his home within us and to establish with us "a covenant for all generations to come." (Gn 9:12) God thirsts for us and will never give up knocking at the door of our hearts to seek admission therein.

The Blessed Trinity does not accomplish its work in us from outside of us but from within us. Commenting on St Paul's statement to the Corinthians: "you yourselves are God's temple" (1 Co 3:16), the Protestant theologian Miroslav Volf reminds us of this central tenet of our faith, mainly that "we are defined by how God relates to us" because "the flame of God's presence, which gives us new identity, burns in us inextinguishably." (*The End...* p. 79)

One of the consequences of the indwelling of the Trinity within us is that, in our turn, we become a mystery which unfolds and reveals itself in all our relationships: in how we relate to God, to others and to ourselves. It is worth remembering Pope Francis' words. He believed that "for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy [should be given] to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family." (*Fratelli...* n. 277)

Unlike the Trinity of life, when our relationships are driven by envy and manipulation, by prejudice and fear, by bigotry and pride, when we think that we can be great

on our own and act like a bully, then we simply connive with death, we are no longer truly living but barely surviving.

In order to help us in our desire to be fully alive, according to St Paul, through Jesus Christ “we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand”, and through the Holy Spirit “God’s love has been poured into our hearts.” (Rm 5:2.5) Through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, we are equipped with grace and love and made capable to fight the good fight.

According to St Paul, God’s grace is not sterile (cf. 1 Co 15:10). Through love, grace works for our good and for the good of all. The call to allow grace to reign in our lives (cf. Rm 5:21) is a call to cooperate to the restoration of the image of the Trinity within us, and to participate in the building of the Kingdom of God.

As Fr Michael Casey formulates it, in this new creation founded on communion and relationships: “selfishness is replaced by sensitivity, conflict is replaced by harmony, stalemate is replaced by dialogue, aggression is replaced by patience, withdrawal is replaced by participation.” (*Grace*, p. 191)

Today, many of our brothers and sisters in humanity, and so many of our political leaders, are driven by a delusional sense of autonomy which is supposed to make them great again and to feel secure. Last week, on the feast of Pentecost, Pope Leo reminded us that “where there is love, there is no room for prejudice, for ‘security’ zones separating us from our neighbours, for the exclusionary mindset that, tragically, we now see emerging in political nationalisms.” (*Hom.* 08.06.2025)

The grace of communion in love, which is the grace of the Trinity, is an anticipation of heaven. It is our goal, the destination of a journey which begins here and now in our families and communities.

Holy God, holy Trinity, holy Father, Son and Holy Spirit
holy and strong One, holy and mighty One,
you give us life, you give us love, you give us yourself;
help us to give our lives, our love, ourselves to you
and to all our brothers and sisters.
(cf. D. Adam, *Traces...* p. 82)