

## Homily for Trinity Sunday 2021 Year B

Today is Trinity Sunday, the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, when we should try and think a little of the incomprehensible mystery of the inner life of God. We profess that we believe in one God, and yet revelations in both the Old and New Testaments shows us that there are three Persons in this one God.

Down through the centuries, human mind and human language recedes to inadequacy as it tries to grasp and express this cornerstone of our Faith, Three Persons in One God.

We call it a mystery and we settle for what we can understand out of the dense language of theological formulae. Now, what is it that we can understand?

The notion of the words “Father and Son” means something to us because we have a direct experience of parenthood and sonship and at least our mental pictures can be shaped in human form. Our minds can touch “Father and Son”.

But how on Earth do we understand and grasp the Holy Spirit, because the only images we have of it are a Dove and Tongues of Fire. And so the Holy Spirit tends to become the poor relation of the Trinity.

So let's think a little bit more about the Holy Spirit today.

At the very beginning of Creation in the Book of Genesis we read of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters of the deep. Water was a symbol of Chaos, and as God breathed his spirit of life into them, Order was given to Chaos. Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth. God, we read, breathed life into him.

And so underlying the whole of creation is this living breath of God, the Holy Spirit, and this “breath” sustains life - take my breath away and I revert to the dust from whence I came.

So, perhaps the first thing that you can say about this Holy Spirit is that He is to be found in the whole of Creation, not apart from it; in the world itself and not hovering outside of it.

The day-to-day business of living is the field of activity of the Holy Spirit: life itself is shot through with his sustaining influence.

Now Christ tells us in the Gospels that the Spirit blows where it will. Like the wind, we do not know where it comes from or where it is going, and so we have no control over the Spirit. We cannot claim to have a monopoly over Him. He moves where He wants to, and He “inspires”; He breathes life into whomever He pleases.

Now Christ promised to send that Spirit as His gift to the Church, and it was the life-giving Breath of this Spirit that strengthened the failing hearts of the Apostles in the upper room of Pentecost. And so the Church was born.

That internal gift of the presence of the Spirit in the Church is also its guarantee of truth. One of the titles that we give Him is the Paraclete, summing up His role in the Church. A Paraclete was someone who would stand beside you, especially in a court of law, to give you support, comfort, advice, and peace.

Remember Christ's words, “My peace I give to you”.

And so then, what do we have so far to describe this Holy Spirit? We have this loving, comforting, free and life-giving presence that permeates the whole of Creation. It gives order, it sustains life and guarantees truth. It builds up and never destroys. It imparts deep and abiding peace and comfort. It is always given in terms of a free gift, and we only have to ask for it.

Some of the great theological thinkers and teachers of the early Church got into fierce disputes and even heretical positions trying to make some sense of the mysterious inner life of the Trinity, but one of the most beautiful images comes from the great St. Augustine, when he described the Holy Spirit as the Love that flows eternally between the Father and the Son.

So what image are we left with then of this Holy Spirit? None at all, for all these qualities defy personification. We cannot visualise or form mental pictures of the Holy Spirit. But we can determine His presence or His influence by His fruits, His sevenfold gifts. Look for Love, Peace, Joy, Unity, Wisdom, Truth, and all that enhances and enriches life, and there you will find the Holy Spirit.