

Homily for Trinity Sunday 2023 Year A

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 Revelation in both the Old and New Testaments shows us that there are 3 persons in this one God.

Down through the centuries the human mind and human language recedes to inadequacy as it tries to grasp and express this cornerstone of our faith - 3 persons in one God.

We call it a Mystery and we settle for what we can understand. But what is it that we can understand?

The words Father and Son mean something to us, because we have a direct experience of parenthood and sonship and at least our mental pictures can be viewed in human form. Our minds can touch "Father and Son." But how do we understand and grasp the Holy Spirit since the only images we have of it are a Dove and Tongues of Fire.

So, the Holy Spirit tends to become the poor relation of the Trinity. Let us think a little bit 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. When God breathed His Spirit of life into the waters, so order was given to chaos.

Adam was the first Man made from the dust of the earth. God breathed His Spirit into him and gave him life. 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 the Holy Spirit is that He is to be found in the whole of Creation, not apart from it: in the world itself, not hovering outside of it.

Christ tells us in the Gospels that the Spirit blows where it wills, like the wind; we do not know where it comes from nor where it is going, so we have no

control of the Spirit. We cannot claim to have a monopoly of Him. He moves where He pleases; He inspires, and He breathes life into whomsoever He wishes.

But 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 at Pentecost, and so the Church was born. That eternal presence of the Spirit in the Church is also its guarantee of truth. The title that we give Him, the Paraclete, sums up the Spirit's role in the Church. A Paraclete is one who gives comfort, advice, and peace.

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

St Augustine described the Holy Spirit as the Love that exists between the Father and the Son.

But we are unable to imagine what the Holy Spirit looks like. All those qualities defy personification, and therefore we cannot visualize or form mental pictures of the Holy Spirit.

But we can determine His presence or His influence by its fruits. All we need to do is look for love, peace, Joy, unity, wisdom, truth, and all that enhances and enriches life and there you will find the Holy Spirit.