

Trinity Sunday (A)

11th June 2017

'Communion of love'

Ex 34: Moses on Sinai Dan 3: *to you glory and praise for evermore*
2Cor 13: *grace of Lord Jesus Christ, love of God, fellowship of the Holy Spirit*
Jn 3: *God loves the world so much that He gave His only Son*

Unlike other, pagan, religions around them, the Jews always understood there to be just one God. The ancient Greek and Roman religions, the tribal religions of Africa, etc. — all these involved worship of many so-called gods in their myths and legends ... But for the Jews it was different. In fact, it was part of God's ongoing revelation to them, His plan: that they know Him and love Him as the *only* God. Jews, then, and therefore we Christians too, live and worship God in this way. Muslims also follow this belief, that there is only one almighty and eternal God. It only makes sense that there is truly one source of all that there is: one Creator God who brings all things to be. It is the most basic teaching of the faith, the 1st commandment, "I am the One God; you shall have no other gods but Me."

But with the coming of Jesus, God intended to teach us something new. Not something that contradicted the faith in one God, but something He was now prepared to

share with us. In the life and teaching of Jesus we find that God is not only One God, but He is also at the same time a Trinity of persons. He is not only God and Father and creator of us all, but He is also God the Son, begotten and beloved of the Father, sent amongst us — Jesus — and He is also God the Holy Spirit, the one who makes us holy. Not three gods, but *One God in three persons*.

Of course, we did not know this prior to the coming of Jesus — it is something new and distinctively Christian. Sometimes people will try and say, well, all religions are the same, it doesn't matter which religion you belong to, it's all the same God. Well, hardly! Only to a very limited extent is that true. Yes, there is only one God, but that one true God has revealed Himself to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So, to know and love the one God in the best possible way, is to be a Christian, baptized in the name of "the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit." God is like this — three in one. It is not some Christian image which is only as valid as a Muslim or Jewish idea of God. The Trinity is the heart of our faith, because the heart of the Trinity is love. St John

says in his 1st letter, “God is love.” God could not ‘be love,’ if he were a bachelor God lounging in His bachelor-pad heaven. Love needs to be love of another person, and that’s just what God is: a community of relationships, Father loving Son in the love of the Holy Spirit. That is why the one God cannot just be one person, but is three. He is love, and is the source of all loving. *He loved the world so much* that He sent His only Son to teach & redeem the world; then He sent the Spirit to make our lives holy and full of faith.

That 1st line of the Gospel reading today, some take as the Gospel in miniature. If you wanted to sum up the whole of the New Testament in just one verse, then this is the one: *God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost, but may have eternal life.* It is out of the sheer love of God for His creation that He has reached down into His world: He has sent Himself into the world, made Himself accessible in the world, given Himself into our hands. God Himself is happiness and love; He does not *need* us, but He freely chose to be creative and share His joy.

As Christians, of course, we marvel at what God has done for us; and we sense the humility of God, in freely bringing Himself down to our level in Jesus ... And then we sense even more the wonder of Jesus’s reducing Himself to the forms of the Eucharist. Over the following two weekends, almost 50 of our youngsters will be receiving their first Holy Communion. In this wonderful moment, they are caught up in a new way into the powerful love of God for us: to be able to receive the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion is to accept from Him the love that took Him to the Cross, the love that raised Him from the dead, the love that He wants to share with us through feeding us with His own self. To take part in the Eucharist, to receive the Lord Jesus, is to be part of this outpouring of love from God the Holy Trinity. We must never let our taking part in Mass, or our receiving Holy Communion, lose its awe ... We are recipients of that love that is divine: *God loved the world so much* ... He doesn’t want us to be lost, but to have eternal life, and the nourishment that the Father gives, in the power of the Spirit, is the Body & Blood of His only Son.