



The
Mystery
of
Communion

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

CYCLE A

Exodu 34: 4b-6, 8-9
2 Corinthian 13: 11-13
John 3: 16-18

GATHERING

(An unlit candle, a crucifix and clover plant or picture of a shamrock rest on a table in the gathering place.)

This week we contemplate the love of the Father revealed to us through Jesus, the only Son of the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Last week we witnessed the breath of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples and the radical change that took place in the lives of all who received it. How did you respond to some movement of the Spirit in your life this past week? *(Members share briefly.)*

OPENING PRAYER

(The candle is lit. The leader calls the community to some time of quiet in the presence of God, Father, Son and Spirit. After some minutes, a member of the community reads as follows.)

The Testimony of St. Athanasius

Member: We acknowledge the Trinity, holy and perfect, to consist of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit... It is a wholly

creative and energizing reality, self-consistent and undivided in its active power, for the Father makes all things through the Word and in the Holy Spirit, and in this way the unity of the Holy Trinity is preserved. Accordingly, in the church, one God is preached, one God who is above all things and through all things and in all things. God is above all things as Father, for he is principle and source; he is through all things through the Word; and he is in all things in the Holy Spirit.

From the Office of Readings for Trinity Sunday

(The community joins in singing, "How Wonderful the Three in One." The song may be found on the Internet.)

Focus Question

When have you been the glue that has held family, friends or a community together?

SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the gospel reading, the facilitator invites members to mention a word, a phrase or an image from one of the readings that particularly struck them this week. Members then read over the commentary and consider the questions in silence for several minutes before entering into conversation.)

Commentary

The Trinity is often shrugged off as a mystery too deep for us to understand. The word Trinity does not even appear anywhere in the new testament. It would take the early church centuries to put this experience of God into the formulation we call the doctrine of the Trinity. And we hold this Mystery as the central doctrine of the church.

The mystery of the Trinity orients us to the Christian way of participating in the life of God, Father, Son and Spirit. The mystery of God who is, is revealed for our sakes in the Father's sending Jesus in the Spirit as the mystery of love. Our God is a mystery of *persons in communion*, who dissolve death, sin and all forms of alienation for the sake of life in

The Trinity is not just a doctrine. It is our spirituality:

The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that it belongs to God's very nature to be committed to humanity and its history, that God's covenant with us is irrevocable, that God's face is immutably turned toward us in love, that God's presence in us is utterly reliable and constant... Trinitarian spirituality is one of solidarity between and among persons. It is a way of living the gospel attentive to the requirements of justice, understood as rightly ordered relationships between and among persons.¹

This relationship-oriented Mystery is pre-figured by the first reading when the Father, knowing the sinfulness of his people who have just worshiped the golden calf, announces that he is "a merciful and gracious God, rich in kindness and fidelity."

The reading from the gospel of John contains one of the most quoted new testament texts. How often we have seen it displayed on bumper stickers and raised on placards at football games! "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, so that everyone that believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." (John 3:16) The God who heard the cries of his people in Egypt, now sends his Son, the Word made flesh (John 1: 14) so that everyone who believes in him may be saved. In God, we are *persons in communion*, in the communion of our God.

When we accept the salvific and reconciling grace of the Son through the Spirit it enables us to "encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace...greet one another with a holy kiss." And so, we raise our co-mingled voices in praise to the Father as we sing with our responsorial, "Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever."

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION:

- ◆ How do you work to create unity in your relationships in your family and in other groups to which you belong?
- ◆ Describe a time in your life when you let go of your opinions, wishes or needs to achieve unity and peace.

¹The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality, Michael Downey, ed. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1993

- ◆ Our culture exalts individualism and self actualization. Describe a time when these cultural values impacted your ideas and opinions and created a conflict that threatened unity and peace in your family and other relational situations.
- ◆ How has the acceptance of diversity enhanced your family, parish and community relationships?
- ◆ Describe a time when you reached out in reconciliation to a family member or friend from whom you had become estranged.
- ◆ Name a *creative* moment, a *saving* moment or a *sanctifying* moment in your life recently that put you in touch with God.

RESPONSE IN ACTION:

- ◆ If there is some practice, opinion or possession which, if you let go of it, you know would add to the unity and peace of your household or family, make some effort this week to let it go.
- ◆ Promote JustFaith in your parish, a program designed to empower and expand parish commitment to social ministry. It's an opportunity to study the church's commitment to the poor and vulnerable in a lively, challenging small group process. For more information, go to www.justfaith.org.
- ◆ Set aside twenty minutes some day this week for reflection and prayer. Be in communion with our God. Pray for the grace to listen more attentively to your family and others with whom you are in relationship.

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER:

(Members stand, join hands and gather in a circle around the table. The leader invites the community to some time of quiet. A selection of instrumental music is played. When the music is complete, the leader prays as follows.)

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins but on the faith of

your church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Members: And also with you.

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

(Members exchange a sign of peace. Returning to the circle, but now standing to face outwards from the circle, the community prays as follows.)

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master; grant that I may not
So much seek to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand, to be
Loved as to love, for it is in giving that we
receive; it is in pardoning that we are
pardoned, and it is in dying that we are
born to eternal life.

(The session concludes with members signing themselves “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”)