

THE PASTOR'S DESK

May 30, 2010 - Feast of The Most Blessed Trinity



Dear Parishioners,

Last Sunday evening, clergy throughout the world offered Vespers, or Evening Prayer, for Pentecost. In the Breviary, or prayer book, there is a note in red letters (the instructions are in red) which says simply "The Easter Season ends with the conclusion of Evening Prayer." Every year, I come to this point and I always take a moment to reflect on this very quiet end of the most profound (and busy!) time of the liturgical year. I go back to Ash Wednesday and look at the more than one thousand pages of proper prayers and readings for Lent and Easter that I have gone through since that cold day in February.

Before the liturgical reforms, there used to be an octave of Pentecost. The celebration of Pentecost would go on throughout the week, ending with Mass on the Saturday after Pentecost. In the new calendar, the Church returns to Ordinary Time the day after Pentecost. The liturgical calendar still retains the Feasts of the Most Blessed Trinity and The Body and Blood of Christ (moved from Thursday) for the two Sundays after Pentecost. These two Feasts remind us of what Lent and Easter were all about: the love of Blessed Trinity being poured out to us the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ and our participation in the life of the Trinity through the Blessed Sacrament. We begin Ordinary Time with these two mysteries, the Blessed Trinity and the Eucharist, to remind us that our lives are now centered on these mysteries of the Divine Life.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is the most difficult one of which to speak. Priests and Deacons are always scrambling for something to say in their homilies for this Feast. The Church took centuries to find the right words with which to sustain the mystery. There are so many possible misunderstandings and imprecise ways of speaking, that preaching about the Trinity is fraught with difficulty. This is to be expected. In fact, the difficulty in giving a homily could itself be a homily. Because we are stuck with language used to describe the created world, we have to hammer and bend our language in order to speak of the uncreated. The language always wants to bend back to the created. As Catholics we affirm an "analogy of being" between God and creation. Because of this, we can say something meaningful

about God even though we use created words and concepts. Of course, at the same time, we acknowledge that our language falls infinitely short of attaining the reality of God.

Nevertheless, words like "love", "relationship", "procession", "Father", "Son", "Holy Spirit" can be used to refer to the Blessed Trinity even though our primary understanding of these words come from our experience of created things. The love that is the very being of God is something infinitely greater than the love we can experience as creatures; the relationship among the members of the Trinity is beyond what we know as "relationship". The same can be said of all the words used in Trinitarian theology. But, still, what we know as "love", "relationship", etc. can still give a meaningful (if incomplete) entry into the life of the Blessed Trinity.

We can understand the love of God and the sharing of the Divine Life in Christ at least to the extent of giving our lives to these mysteries. Even as the limitations of creation keep us from seeing the fullness of this mystery, we can begin to see the glory of God even in this life. This gives us the hope that the glory of God which we can only glimpse in this life will be seen in fullness in Heaven.

As you listen to the homilies this weekend, realize the difficulty of the task of those preaching. The difficulty itself will be a key part of the homily, disclosing the tremendous mystery of God's own life and the love He has shown us in opening it up for us poor creatures. The Easter Season may have ended last Sunday with the conclusion of Evening Prayer, but the love revealed in the events celebrated at Easter will be with us now and unto eternity.

God bless,
Fr. LaHood

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Memorial Day Mass

Come pray for loved ones, friends and fellow citizens at a special Memorial Mass this Monday, May 31st, at All Souls Cemetery in Germantown. The Mass is at 10:00 am and will be celebrated by Bishop Gonzales. Our SJN Choir will provide the music. For any questions, please call 301-428-1995.