



Bringing Home the Word †

The Most Holy Trinity (A)

June 4, 2023

Three in One, or One in Three?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

When we limit our reflection on the Trinity to numbers, our thinking takes us far from the reality of God. The characterizations of an old man, a younger man, and a dove do not help much, either. However, these are attempts to somehow talk about the mystery of all mysteries. We cannot adequately conceptualize or characterize God, but we try. Each reading today makes its own attempt.

Sunday Readings

Exodus 34:4b–6, 8–9

[Moses said,] “Pardon our wickedness and sins, and claim us as your own.”

2 Corinthians 13:11–13

Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

John 3:16–18

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

In the Exodus passage, God actually describes God’s own self: “gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love and fidelity” (Exodus 34:6). The Gospel passage tells us how these divine features play out in our lives: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (John 3:16). This Son is God in the flesh. What greater love can there be? The prayer in Paul’s letter seems to scoop us up like an adoring parent would into the embrace of the Trinity: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with all of you” (2 Corinthians 13:13).

Theologians say each person of the Trinity interacts with us in a way unique to each person. Though different, each way is an expression of self-emptying love. The only response required of us is openness to that love. God only asks that we accept that love and allow it to transform us. Then we will be the living example of the Trinity’s love for all. †

*The only response
required of us
is openness to the love of
each person of the Trinity.*

A Word from Pope Francis

The Trinity is...Love, wholly at the service of the world, which He wishes to save and re-create. And today, thinking of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we think of God’s love! And it would be beautiful if we felt that we were loved: “God loves me!” This is today’s sentiment.

ANGELUS, ROME, JUNE 7, 2020



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- Which person of the Trinity do I most easily relate to—the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit?
- Why?

The Fresh Idea of the Most Holy Trinity

Paige Byrne Shortal



Here's a bit of wisdom from Beth Gutcheon's novel *The New Girls*: "The real challenge in a changing world is not to recognize the outmoded, but to preserve that which remains valid."

The desire to throw out the old and embrace the new is not unique to any culture or generation. The difference today is that the new becomes old so fast.

A few years ago I interviewed a bride about the music she wanted at her wedding. She said she just wanted "traditional music." Fortunately, I had the presence of mind to ask her what she thought of as "traditional." "Oh, you know," she replied, "like *Glory and Praise to Our God* and *One Bread, One Body*."

As the composers of these songs were my friends and I had sung on the album that introduced their music to the public, I suddenly felt old. (By the way, "albums" were like big CDs and you could play both sides.)

Is the Most Holy Trinity an outmoded idea? Arius thought so. He was a fourth-century theologian who denied the divinity of Christ and therefore the idea of the Trinity. He was also a talented musician and wrote clever songs with lyrics that proclaimed "there was a time when the Son was not." This may not sound too catchy to the modern ear, but thousands of Christians began to sing these songs, and St. Athanasius and St. John Chrysostom wrote other hymns to counter the effect of Arius' heretical proclamations.

In the liturgy we proclaim that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons in one Godhead. It's a difficult idea to grasp, and great minds have wrestled with it for centuries, but the doctrine is preserved in how we pray. Our prayer is always offered to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, or in other words, it is God within us (Spirit) talking through God (the Son) to God (the Father/Creator). †

Ways to Honor the Trinity

Fr. Leonard Foley, OFM

1. Embrace the greatest commandment: love the triune God "with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt 22:37), and the second most important commandment, to "love your neighbor as yourself" (22:39).
2. Say the Trinitarian prayer often: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit..."
3. Honor God the Father by our generosity, imitating the First Person's self-communicating love: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16).
4. Honor God the Son by imitating the healing and evangelizing ministry of Jesus, who was God's missionary.
5. Honor God the Holy Spirit by seeking to build up God's kingdom and witnessing to Jesus' saving love wherever we go: "When the holy Spirit comes upon you, ...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). †



God of all—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—inspire us to live in loving relationship with each other that the world may know peace and harmony, we pray. Amen.

The Redemptorists

The doctrine of the Trinity is preserved in the way that we pray. We offer prayers to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 5–10

Monday, St. Boniface:

Tb 1:3; 2:1b–8 / Mk 12:1–12

Tuesday, Weekday:

Tb 2:9–14 / Mk 12:13–17

Wednesday, Weekday:

Tb 3:1–11a, 16–17a / Mk 12:18–27

Thursday, Weekday:

Tb 6:10–11; 7:1bcde, 9–17; 8:4–9a / Mk 12:28–34

Friday, Weekday:

Tb 11:5–17 / Mk 12:35–37

Saturday, Weekday:

Tb 12:1, 5–15, 20 / Mk 12:38–44

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June 04, 2023

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Bringing Home the Word †

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) (A)

June 11, 2023

Take and Eat

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Many of us are little different from the Jewish crowds who cried out: “How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?” (John 6:52). Jesus does not explain how the bread was really his flesh. What he did was underscore the importance of eating this bread, which was his flesh. He then goes on and insists that we must drink his blood as well. If these were hard sayings for the people of Israel, who in their ancient past might have shared the flesh and blood of a sacrificed animal, what are we “sophisticated” contemporary Christians to make of it?

The people of Jesus’ time would have recognized several elements from their traditions in Jesus’ discourse, but his reinterpretation of them would have startled them. Like the victim of an ancient holocaust offering, Jesus’ blood is shed. However, it is not poured around the altar; it is to be consumed. Bread from heaven recalled the manna that fed their ancestors in the wilderness. However, the manna lasted for only a day; it then rotted. The bread Jesus gives is living bread that enables those who eat it to live forever. This is a lot to believe. But then, that is exactly what we are asked to do. We might have correct theological language to explain how this transformation takes place, but we still will not understand the mystery to which it points. So what are we to do? Very simply: take and eat! †

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 14b–16a

He...let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers.

1 Corinthians 10:16–17

We, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

John 6:51–58

[Jesus said,] “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.”

The bread Jesus gives is living bread that enables those who eat it to live forever.



A Word from Pope Francis

It is the Church that makes the Eucharist, but it is more fundamental that the Eucharist makes the Church.... This is the mystery of communion, of the Eucharist: receiving Jesus so He may transform us from within, and receiving Jesus so that He may create unity in us and not division.

ANGELUS, ROME, JUNE 14, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What or who nourishes my best self?
- Am I tempted, enslaved, or weakened by less-satisfying “foods”?

We Are What We Eat

Paige Byrne Shortal

Let's play a game. Can you name the homograph (same word, different meaning) for each of the following: the sound a dog makes and the outside of a tree; opposite of heavy or opposite of dark; building where money is kept or the sides of a river; when somebody goes away or parts of a tree; a place for stray animals or sixteen ounces.

If you answered, “bark, light, bank, leaves, pound,” you win!

What if I asked for the homographic phrase for Consecrated Bread or Christian Community?

That's right, it's “Body of Christ.” Jesus uses the same word, “Body”—*soma* in Greek—when he takes bread and states, “This is my body.” St. Paul also uses *soma* in his letter to the Corinthians: “Now you are the Body of Christ....”

The bark of a tree and a dog's bark are coincidental homographs. They aren't related to each other. Not so with *soma*. Without the Body of Christ as the Eucharistic Bread, there is no Body of Christ as Community. And without the Community there is no Eucharist. Each is dependent on the other.

When we emphasize the Body of Christ as the Eucharistic Bread or Blessed Sacrament, we have what is called a “high” theology, Christology, and ecclesiology. [Theology: study



of God (*theos*); Christology: study of Christ; ecclesiology: study of the church (*ekklesia*).] This “vertical spirituality” celebrates the awesomeness of God; the majestic Christ who is King of all Creation; a glorious Church that transcends this world.

When we emphasize the Body of Christ as Community, we are engaged in “low” theology, Christology and ecclesiology, and a “horizontal spirituality.” God is near; Jesus is our brother who walks with us; the Church is fully engaged in the suffering of this world.

Never imagine that you must choose. Both are equally true. We are, literally, what we eat. We consume and venerate the Real Presence, the Body of Christ in the Eucharist so that we can be the Body of Christ as Community, present as Christ in this World. †

What is Spiritual Communion?

Fr. Richard N. Fragomeni

Spiritual Communion is a form of yearning for communion with Christ when sacramental Communion is not possible due to illness, infirmity, or other factors. A Roman Catholic, or any Christian for that matter, who has a desire for union with Christ and who wishes a Spiritual Communion with the Lord should pause for a moment of recollection to remember and give thanks for the love Jesus revealed to us. Then pray, either a spontaneous prayer or this prayer, written by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

“My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you.” †



*God of abundance,
give us the grace to humbly and
gratefully receive the Eucharist
as our food for eternal life.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

**Without the Body of Christ as the Eucharistic Bread,
there is no Body of Christ as Community.**

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 12–17

Monday, Weekday:
2 Cor 1:1–7 / Mt 5:1–12

Tuesday, St. Anthony of Padua:
2 Cor 1:18–22 / Mt 5:13–16

Wednesday, Weekday:
2 Cor 3:4–11 / Mt 5:17–19

Thursday, Weekday:
2 Cor 3:15–4:1, 3–6 / Mt 5:20–26

Friday, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:
Dt 7:6–11 / 1 Jn 4:7–16 / Mt 11:25–30

**Saturday, Immaculate Heart of the Blessed
Virgin Mary:** 2 Cor 5:14–21 / Lk 2:41–51

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Bringing Home the Word

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

June 18, 2023

Showing Us the Way Home

Mary Katharine Deeley

At the ranch where my mother lived in her adolescence, sheep wandered through pastures of grass and shrubs. When it came time to gather them into the corral at night, the ranch hands would get the dogs out and set them to work running around and behind the sheep to keep them together while the hands drove them in the right direction.

Occasionally a young lamb or an injured ewe would fall, and the man closest would pick the animal up with a tenderness that seemed out of character with callouses and sunburned, weathered skin. When we visited the ranch, I

remember vividly the look and smell of the sheep and that the ranch hands thought they were dumb.

While the sheep may not have been the smartest of animals, they knew the men and the promise of a safe pen and water at the end of the hot day undoubtedly made the job easier. From my mother's stories, I remember most the way she described the sheep herders. They did not lead the sheep so much as walk with or behind them. They became part of the procession, rather than the head of it. This kept the sheep calm and moved them faster.

When Jesus looked at the crowd, he saw a people that needed someone to walk with them and show them the way. They needed someone occasionally to go behind them to pick up the strays and the wounded and carry them tenderly home. This is what Jesus does for us. In his compassion, he brings us to pasture and, at the end, he gathers all people into his one flock and guides them home. †

Sunday Readings

Exodus 19:2-6a

[The Lord said to Moses:] You will be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

Romans 5:6-11

God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

Matthew 9:36-10:8

At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.

When Jesus looked at the crowd, he saw a people that needed someone to walk with them and show them the way.

A Word from Pope Francis

To see and to have compassion are always found together in the attitude of Jesus: in fact his gaze is not the gaze of a sociologist or a photojournalist, for he always gazes with "the eyes of the heart." These two verbs, to see and to have compassion, configure Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

ANGELUS, ROME, JULY 19, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who is more effective: one who scolds and gives orders or one who encourages and guides?
- Which one are you?

St. Joseph, the Model for All Fathers

Br. Daniel Korn, CSsR



There is an infinite difference between the judgments of God and our human judgments. If human views had directed divine Providence, some powerful monarch or some learned scholar would have been chosen as the foster father of his Son. But no earthly monarch, no famous scholar was considered worthy of so exalted an office. The just and humble Joseph was the chosen one.

As foster father of the Divine Child, Joseph was the first man to learn of the mystery of the Incarnation. He was the first to have the supreme honor of beholding the newborn infant, adoring him, and taking him into his arms. It was Joseph's privilege also to bestow the holy name of Jesus on the infant God. It

was his privilege to join with our Lady in presenting Jesus in the Temple. It was Joseph who saved the Child from death at the hands of Herod's soldiers, providing him and his Virgin Mother with food and shelter during the long and painful flight into Egypt, the lonely residence of the Holy Family in their exile in a foreign land. How glorious was the office entrusted to Joseph, and what a brilliant light it sheds on his surpassing sanctity!

A Father's Prayer for His Children

Saint Joseph, I come to you with my concerns for the welfare of my children. I recall your anxiety when, to your surprise and Mary's, Jesus was not among your relatives and friends on your return from Jerusalem. I too worry about my children. Many dangers surround the youth of today. Sometimes, in my loving concern for them, I may seem to them to be difficult or even harsh. Help me to remove the barriers that may come between my children and myself. I love my children and desire good and wholesome things for them. Good Saint Joseph, watch over my children and inspire me to know how to speak and act in love. Saint Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for me. Amen. †

Putting the Pieces Together

A father wanted to read a magazine but was being pestered by his daughter. To keep her busy, he tore a sheet out of the magazine that had a picture of the world printed on it. He tore the picture into small pieces and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this picture of the world back together again."

Just a few minutes later, the daughter appeared in the room and handed him the picture all correctly fitted together. The father was surprised and asked her how she was able to fit all the little pieces of the world together again so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper was a picture of Jesus. Once I got Jesus in the right place, the world came out all right." †



Compassionate God, inspire us to speak gently, act kindly, and share generously so that everyone we meet may feel safe, valued, and loved. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

The humble Joseph was entrusted with the office to look out for the Son of God.

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 19–24

Monday, Weekday:
2 Cor 6:1–10 / Mt 5:38–42

Tuesday, Weekday:
2 Cor 8:1–9 / Mt 5:43–48

Wednesday, St. Aloysius Gonzaga:
2 Cor 9:6–11 / Mt 6:1–6, 16–18

Thursday, Weekday:
2 Cor 11:1–11 / Mt 6:7–15

Friday, Weekday:
2 Cor 11:18, 21–30 / Mt 6:19–23

Saturday, Nativity of St. John the Baptist:
Is 49:1–6 / Acts 13:22–26 / Lk 1:57–66, 80

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June 18, 2023

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Only Six Months Until Christmas!

Paige Byrne Shortal

Yesterday the Church celebrated another Nativity—the birth of Jesus’ cousin John, as in John the Baptist, the Prophet, the Forerunner. But before all that, John is the miracle baby – a child born of elderly Zechariah and Elizabeth who, until now, have lived with the “disgrace” of barrenness.

The Scripture says that when the Angel Gabriel, that Announcer of Miracle Babies, told Zechariah he was to have a son, Zechariah, no doubt thinking of his wife of advancing years and his own white hair, said, in effect, “I don’t think so.” His doubt rendered him mute. If you think about it, this is what doubt does. Doubt stifles our joy with suspicion, curbs our celebration with caution, strangles our proclamation of the Good News with, “Hold on just a minute, let’s be realistic, you can’t really expect me to believe that!”

Zechariah had just heard the answer to his prayers. As a couple they had certainly prayed for children and their childlessness was one of the great sorrows of their long life together. But when heart’s desire is finally realized, sometimes we don’t believe it.

We pray and pray for the Messiah to come and he says, “Here I am!” and we don’t believe him. We pray and pray for



peace or for love or for fulfillment or for the chance to make a difference in this world and God says, “OK, here’s what you can do!” and we ignore him.

Sometimes heart’s desire is disguised as losing a job or not getting the promotion, passing the test, winning the race. Sometimes what we really want is contained within a “No” from God and it is then that we must have the courage to say “Yes” to God’s “No” because hidden in that “No” is the “Yes!” we’ve been waiting for.

When the unexpected happens, even the unwelcome unexpected, we should be listening hard for the messenger’s voice. A miracle birth is about to take place – maybe inside you. †

“Lord, What Shall I Do?”

Gary Lauenstein, CSsR,

After working with the Redemptorist novices of North America, I wish every Catholic young person had the opportunity to make a lay novitiate—six months of learning about the spiritual life and methods of prayer, and reading the great classic writings of the Catholic tradition. They would learn about themselves by looking at their family background and their relationships and, especially, by writing a spiritual autobiography about their relationship with Christ throughout their lives.

Fortunately, much of what can be accomplished in a novitiate can also be accomplished through a program of regular spiritual direction. For a young person looking to discover what God really wants of him or her, a year-long program of weekly meetings with a spiritual director is a step in the right direction. Just be sure to start with the right question: “Lord, what do you want me to do?” †



Powerful God, we ask for your protection and for the courage to face the trials of this life as disciples of your Son, our Lord Jesus. We pray always in his name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

Sometimes when our heart’s desire is finally realized, we don’t believe it.

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 26–July 1

Monday, Weekday:

Gn 12:1–9 / Mt 7:1–5

Tuesday, Weekday:

Gn 13:2, 5–18 / Mt 7:6, 12–14

Wednesday, St. Irenaeus:

Gn 15:1–12, 17–18 / Mt 7:15–20

Thursday, Sts. Peter and Paul:

Acts 12:1–11 / 2 Tm 4:6–8, 17–18 / Mt 16:13–19

Friday, Weekday:

Gn 17:1, 9–10, 15–22 / Mt 8:1–4

Saturday, Weekday:

Gn 18:1–15 / Mt 8:5–17

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