

Living Trinitarian Love

Trinity Sunday – Cycle C – 16 June 2019

Also, Father's Day

Readings: Prov 8:22-31; Rom 5:1-5; Jn 16:12-15

“The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom)

“God is love” (1 Jn 4:8) is the Bible’s shortest and finest description of who God is. Thus, since we’re created in the image and likeness of God, the closest that we can get to ‘imaging’ God or ‘presenting’ God anew to our world, today, is through our own acts of loving. Love can be the central theme of Trinity Sunday, and we could look at the dimensions of love revealed in the readings. Besides, as a supplementary theme, we can also mention ‘Father’s Day’ as reminding us of our own earthly fathers’ love, which in some way has given us insight into God’s love for us.

Three Scriptural Signposts:

1. *God is Creator, and love is creative:* The first reading from the Book of Proverbs is one of the sapiential books of the First Testament, containing a collection of wise sayings and instructions to enlighten minds. Today’s passage speaks of the presence of Wisdom, personified, and partnering with God when God created the universe. “I was beside him like a master workman” shows how Wisdom cooperated intelligently with God as a designer or “fashioner of all things” (see Wis 7:21). In the act of creation, we see Wisdom as God’s child in the ‘heart’ or ‘bosom’ of God as expressed in the gospel of John (1:18)—a great source of delight. Besides Wisdom being a great source of delight for God, “the inhabited world” and “the human race” are also a great source of rejoicing and delight. There is indication here of a creative parent-child relationship of great love and joy which results in the creation of the world—with humankind at the apex or as the crown of creation. In the act of creation, God is revealed as love.
2. *Our Lord Jesus is Saviour, his love redeems us:* The second reading from St Paul’s letter to the Romans begins with, “We are justified by faith, we have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.” God sends Jesus into the world out of his unfathomable and unconditional love for each of us in order to save us (Jn 3:16). This reading contains a trinitarian dimension since we are told that Jesus is the peacemaker, the bridge-builder, who reconnects us to God. This is the gift of God, the ‘grace’ given through our being one with Christ—sharing in God’s glory. However, much as we share in God’s glory through our hope in the resurrection, we must also share in the sufferings which come our way; since “suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.” Our ultimate hope is living in love—just as the three persons of the Triune God live in perfect, self-giving love. The image of God’s love being “poured into our hearts” is suggestive of the waters of baptism whereby we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit and incorporated into Christ’s Body, the Church. In being a ‘member’ of Christ’s Body-Church, each Christian follows the same pilgrim-path that Christ walked—from suffering to new life. Here we see the redemptive, salvific aspect of love.
3. *The Holy Spirit as Guide, love as supportive and consoling:* The gospel passage is from Jesus’ ‘priestly prayer’ at the Last Supper when he promises his disciples the gift of the

Holy Spirit “who will guide you into all the truth”. Prior to Jesus’ death, the disciples do not understand the full import of his message. Like everyone else, they can only think in earthly terms which are self-referential rather than God-centered. However, Jesus promises them the Spirit as consoler, comforter, guide and teacher. The ultimate teaching, however, is profound truths about ‘*who*’ God is. In other words, the Spirit continues and consolidates the work entrusted by the Father to the Son, ever consoling, supporting and strengthening Christ’s disciples. Here, we see the enlightening and empowering aspect of God’s love.

Linking the Psalm (8) to the Readings: “How great is your name, O Lord, our God, through all the earth!” Even before we glorify God’s name, the whole cosmos echoes a symphony to the ends of the earth. God’s glory is sprayed across the skies as, with your fingers, “you’ve arranged the moon and the stars.” We have been created through God’s Wisdom-Word-Spirit. Let’s always give glory to the Triune God—Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer—and *be* ‘images’ of God’s love.

Three Insights from Tradition:

St. Augustine said, “Where there is love, there is the Trinity”. He gave the ‘analogy of love’ with Father—Son—Spirit as Lover, Beloved, and Love flowing between them, respectively. It’s said that Augustine walking on the beach contemplating the mystery of the Trinity. While so doing, he saw a little boy on the beach who had dug a hole in the sand and was going out to the sea again and again and bringing some water to pour into the hole. Augustine asked him, “What are you doing?” The boy replied: “I’m going to empty the entire ocean into this hole.” “That’s impossible, the ocean will not fit in the hole you have made,” said Augustine. The boy replied, “And you cannot fit the Trinity in your tiny little brain!”

Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est*: “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:16). These words from the 1st Letter of John express with remarkable clarity the heart of the Christian faith: the Christian image of God and the resulting image of mankind and its destiny. In the same verse, St John also offers a summary of Christian life: “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us”.

Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia*: “The ability of human couples to beget life is the path along which the history of salvation progresses. Seen this way, the couple’s fruitful relationship becomes an image for understanding and describing the mystery of God himself, for in the Christian vision of the Trinity, God is contemplated as Father, Son and Spirit of love. The Triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living reflection.”

In Lighter Vein: When asked: “Who are the three persons in God?” a little girl replied, “God the Father, Mary our Mother, and Baby Jesus!” Though she got her ‘persons’ wrong, she inadvertently indicated that Trinity must somehow be related to family and community. Today, let’s give thanks for family-love. Moreover, on Father’s Day, let’s remember our daddies who made many sacrifices to teach us about God’s love—not in theory and talks, but in practice and by way of example.

May we firmly believe that God-*Abba* (Creator) planned salvation by sending the *Son* (Savior) and *Spirit* (Sanctifier) to lead us to eternal life. Glory to the Tri-Une God—Father, Son, Spirit, Amen!
