

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Sunday

Today is Trinity Sunday. Today we celebrate the oneness of God as it is shown in the love of the Father made real and concrete in the human Person of his Son Jesus and still present in the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel according to John, there are many references to God as Father, Son and Spirit. The main point of every reference is that each manifestation of God in relationship to us does what the others want. None are soloists, strictly speaking. They play each other's music. If we pull out every instance of one or the other being mentioned in the Bible, it presents a view of total harmony between them. Today we read that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide and teach the followers of Jesus after his Ascension. The Holy Spirit continues to guide and teach even today. The message and the mission is the same whenever God is revealed in Scripture whether it is the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 16:12-15

Today's Gospel is from Jesus' farewell address to his disciples. In it he is preparing them for life without him. When the disciples became aware that he would be "dying" and leaving them, they were naturally afraid and sad. They felt like most groups feel when a beloved leader and founder is about to depart or die. "What will happen to us? How will we continue?" His words are meant to encourage them, to support them. He would send someone just like him to guide them and be their advocate. His Spirit would enlighten them and help them understand what had happened. Later as the Church grappled with the mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there were differing opinions: were there three gods? Or three Persons, or what? As bishops and theologians grappled with those opinions, the doctrine of the Trinity developed. There is one God united in Three Persons. They are a communion of love.

How might this connect with marriage and family life? Think about the idea of diversity in unity. Differences exist between people but those differences don't stand in the way of their loving each other and treating each other as equals. Isn't that a big part of family life? In marriage, we often marry someone because, as is said, we share many similarities. We both like the music of the 70s, hamburgers medium-rare, the color purple, quiet evenings, and conservative politics. Many of these similarities brought the two together. They knew there were differences, but these were not emphasized before marriage. But they surely surfaced front and center after the wedding. Dealing with them became a major task in keeping their marriage alive and growing. If their love is strong, the differences will not be a negative pulling apart, but a positive increase of their commitment to each other. Something similar can be said about their children. Affirming God's Trinitarian love can shed light on marital and family love.

Parent Survival

If there are differences in God and differences between each of us, then it follows that no two parents are alike and no two parenting styles are absolute. There will be similarities between parenting styles, for instance, all good parents will also be good listeners. But there will also be important differences. One family parents one way, another does it another way. Sometimes comparisons are not only inappropriate, they can also be dangerous.

So rejoice in the ways that you have learned to parent well. Don't slavishly look at others for tips or guidance. Be honest with your own situation and decide to do what you judge best. In other ventures like writing for a living, teaching, being a doctor or nurse, running a business, delivering mail, being a sanitary engineer, no matter what the career, there are general "rules." But we each do what we do in our own special way. That's important. That's how we do our best. In a sense, as the song goes, we do it our way. And in doing it that way, we will be our best.

Car or Meal Talk

Game time! Have each person in the family express at least one difference they perceive and really like in the other family members.

One-Line Prayer

Dear Father, Son, and Spirit, help us to appreciate the differences between us as you do. Amen.