

Trinity Sunday

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 6:1-8

Second Lesson: 1 Pet 1:1-12

Homily

This is Trinity Sunday,
and that is no small thing at all.
This is a day in which we are asked
to think about the unthinkable,
to enter into a Mystery that cannot be penetrated,
to turn our eyes toward what we cannot behold,
as we prayed in the collect:
*"...to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity,
and in the power of the Divine Majesty
to worship the Unity..."*
We've all been instructed in the careful wording
with which the Church described God,
that there is only One God, one substance,
one eternal and indivisible Being,
but that in this One God
there are three Persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
All this is true, and without all this
it is impossible to understand the Scriptures,
or to hold the truth of the Christian Faith.

But what does it all mean?
Who is God? What is He like?
Can we know Him?

We began this morning with Isaiah's vision,
Which is also remembered and given anew to John
in the passage from Revelation that is read
for the Epistle of today's Mass,
a clear, distinct, very real,
and yet incomprehensible vision.
It is of a heaven full of beings,
of angels and seraphim
and unrecognizable creatures,
and elders and saints who have gone before us.
It is of a heaven where everything centers
on a throne, and on One sitting on the throne,
who is too great and too brilliant
to be described,
though Isaiah and John both try.
Everything centers on Him,
all the light comes from Him,
before Him the incense rises,
and around him a shout and a song are heard,
such that the place trembles.
The earth, too, trembles in His Presence,
and all things fall down and worship Him,
as one chant of three 'Holy's rises before Him.

We are in awe, We worship.
We behold as best we can,
but still we do not know Him.

But we do know Him,
as St. Peter wrote:

*"Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which according to his abundant mercy
hath begotten us again unto a lively hope
by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"*

We know Him in the Word made Flesh,
for God the Son came to earth,
was born of Mary, died and rose again,
and this, our Brother in the flesh,
who could be seen, heard and touched
by mere men, whether friends or enemies,
was the appearance of the almighty God
in the midst of His creation.
They could know God,
not the fullness of what He is,
for that is beyond knowledge,
but they could know Him
as we know one another,
and so may we because of their reports:

*"...having not seen, [we] love;
... though now [we] see him not,
yet believing, [we] rejoice
with joy unspeakable and full of glory: "*

We know Him, and He Himself said,
"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"
And He Himself sent the Holy Spirit,
also God,
to inspire (breathe life into) those Apostles

*"Unto whom it was revealed, that
not unto themselves, but unto us
they did minister the things,
which are now reported unto you by them
that have preached the gospel unto you
with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;
which things the angels desire to look into"*

By that Spirit
we have their record in the Scriptures,
and we have their heritage
in the constant witness of the Church,
and we have also the witness
of the indwelling Spirit in us.

We cannot understand the mystery of His Being,
but we can know Him,

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Let us pray.

All glory be to thee, Father Almighty,
All glory to thee, the Only-begotten One,
All glory to thee, O Spirit of life,
All glory, praise, and adoration to thee,
Undivided, Everlasting Holy Trinity. Amen.

Trinity Sunday

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Gen 1:1-2:3

Second Lesson: John 1:1-18

Homily

Let's start at the beginning.
It's just what both of today's readings do.

Before anything existed,
before time began to run
(if "before" has any meaning in such context),
God was, or better, "God IS."
All existence is a mere reflection
of His eternal, timeless, infinite Being.

In Genesis:
"In the beginning God created ..."

In John:
*"In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made by him;*

and without him was not any thing made that was made. "

In Genesis
"And God said, ..."

The Creation Story presents a description
of six days filled with creative activity,
each act of creation accomplished by a speaking,
a Word,
a Word that, as St. John tells us, was with God.
a Word that was God,
a Word, as he makes clear, that was Jesus Christ.

And again in Genesis,
*"... the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the
waters. "*

Do we see it?
In the very first chapter of the very first book,
in the origin story that begins the Bible,
one finds very distinct hints
of the very complexity of the Godhead
that Christians, centuries later,
came to see as a testimony to the Holy Trinity.

Genesis further says:
"And God said, Let us make man ..."

This is an odd construction.

The word for God, in the Hebrew is plural in form, what is called the majestic plural, used for emphasis, but still plural in form. the word for "said" is a singular verb.

"Let us make" is plural.

While nothing can be proven by such grammatical notes, This is only one of many places in the Old Testament.

where there is what we would see as a confusion of number.

The Hebrew language does things like that, and God chose to give His Word in Hebrew.

Just a few verses after our lesson, we can read this:

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Notice:

God
said (a Word spoken)
the breath of life,

(breath is the same word in Hebrew as Spirit)
The Trinity hinted in the creation of Man.

Listen to John, toward the end of the Second Lesson:
"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) ... No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

The Word by which creation was spoken into being, became flesh, born as a man, and dwelt among us, and in Him we behold the fullness of God

The insistence that there is one God, that God is one and no more, is constantly being coupled with these strange hints of plurality. Jewish mysticism has trod some strange paths in trying to make sense of all this. Beginning in the New Testament and through the early centuries of the Church, Christians, having met the person of Jesus, began grappling with how to see all this through the revelation that was in Him, the revelation of Him that he declared

to be the whole purpose if the Old Testament..

We have a deceptively simple formulation,
something we can affirm and get our minds around,
but can never fully understand.

There is but one God, one Being, one Substance,
but there are three Persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
distinct, but never separated;
and from that theology can be built.

Please, don't think this homily has proved the
Trinity.

That is much too big a job,
but, please, allow these thoughts
to guide your reading of the Scriptures,
and to direct your prayers.

Let us pray.

All glory be to thee, Father Almighty,
All glory to thee, the Only-begotten One,
All glory to thee, O Spirit of life,
All glory, praise, and adoration to thee,
Undivided, Everlasting Holy Trinity. Amen.

Trinity Sunday

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Ecclus 43:1-12, 27-33

Second Lesson: Eph 4:1-16

Homily

What a marvelous reading from Ecclesiasticus today!

What a beautiful show Our God puts on in the heavens!

The heat and light and glory of the sun.

the cool beauty of the moon,

and the wondrous feasts it proclaims.

The ordered dance of the stars above,

and the beauty of rainbow, framing the earth in colors ...

Creation is an amazing thing.

Every detail of it has something to say about the glory of God.

When we are talking about the universe,
we are talking about the work of God Himself;

He is revealing Himself day by day, hour by hour,
in the things He has made.

But, as we are all too aware,
a great many of the people who study the universe
(scientists, we call them),
never see the revelation of God at all,
and perhaps deny that He even exists.

Ecclesiasticus again:

*"We may speak much, and yet come short:
wherefore in sum, he is all.*

*How shall we be able to magnify him?
for he is great above all his works."*

The things we see,
the beauties of nature,
the wondrous intricacies of life --
these are not God.

It is easy to get caught up in what we see,
in what we know,
in what we can understand.

But all that we know is merely a reflection,
merely evidence of an unseen Hand.

The comprehensible merely points onward
to the incomprehensible

*"When ye glorify the Lord,
exalt him as much as ye can;*

*for even yet will he far exceed:
and when ye exalt him,
put forth all your strength, and be not weary;
for ye can never go far enough.
Who hath seen him, that he might tell us?*

*and who can magnify him as he is?
There are yet hid greater things than these be,
for we have seen but a few of his works.
For the Lord hath made all things;
and to the godly hath he given wisdom. "*

And here is the real message of Trinity Sunday:
Not so much that we understand the Mystery,
for we cannot, That is beyond our ability --
not so much that we remember the language
with which the Church describes the Trinity.
though we must remember and affirm it:
That God is one, and there is no other,
but that the Persons of
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost
are distinct and not confused with one another,
that each is fully God, and yet there is only one God.
-- These things we must remember and believe,
but yet, we cannot comprehend.

And that is what this Feast is about.
that we worship a God that is greater than we are,

that we join with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven.
who bow down before Him,
crying out the threefold, "Holy, Holy, Holy"

-- And yet that we can know Him,
that we can know God-made-man,
Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior,
that through Him
we can know the Father Almighty,
that through Him we can receive the Holy Spirit,

that through Him we can indeed be made one.
one with Him, one with the Father,
one with the Holy Spirit,
one with each other in Him, in His Church.

As St. Paul said,
*"One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
One God and Father of all,
who is above all, and through all,
and in you all. ...
... Till we all come in the unity of the faith,
and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a
perfect man,
unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of
Christ:*

*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to
and fro,
and carried about with every wind of doctrine,
the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,
whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
But speaking the truth in love,
may grow up into him in all things,
which is the head, even Christ: "*

Let us pray

All glory be to thee, Father Almighty,
All glory to thee, the Only-begotten One,
All glory to thee, O Spirit of life,
All glory, praise, and adoration to thee,
Undivided, Everlasting Holy Trinity. Amen.

Trinity Sunday

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Job 38:1-11, 16-18; 42:1-6

Second Lesson: John 1:29-34

Homily

The Scriptures make it very clear
that mankind is the capstone of God's creation,
made, as it is declared,
on His very own image.
And the human mind is an amazing thing,
a marvelous instrument that can do many things.
We can find out,
we can learn,
we can figure,
we can dream and imagine.
There seems little that our minds cannot do,
and, sometimes, we think there are no limits.
What could be bigger and grander than our minds?
There are those that think
they have it all figured out,
or, at least almost all of it,
and that, given enough time,

they can puzzle out the rest of it,
all by themselves, without God.
Maybe there's no God at all,
or if there is, He doesn't really matter.

That really is the secular world-view,
Religion, you see, doesn't really matter.
If it's not actually harmful,
it's just a quaint, old-fashioned hobby

Well, Job, after all his well-known troubles,
was demanding answers,
insisting that he be able to understand it all,
to figure it out,
and make his own judgments.
God is pictured as saying:

*"Who is this that darkeneth counsel
by words without knowledge? "*

"What gives you the idea
that you can make sense out of it?
Come on, little boy, and look."

He takes Job by the hand,
and leads him to all the wonders
of this enormous universe,
and quizzes Job,

"Do you understand this?
Can you explain that?"

*Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
I know that thou canst do every thing,
and that no thought can be withholden from thee.
Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?
therefore have I uttered that I understood not;
things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. ...
... I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear:
but now mine eye seeth thee.
Wherefore I abhor myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.*

Trinity Sunday is a day to contemplate mystery,
first of all to remember that God is far too great
for us to begin to comprehend Him.
We know nothing of Him but what He has shown us.
We don't have it figured out.
But He has shown us what we need to know
what we need in order to worship Him,
what we need in order to be saved.
How?

In the Lamb of God to whom John pointed,
in Jesus Christ, God-made-man,

through the wondrous and counterintuitive
event of Bethlehem,

God showed Himself to us,
and walked among us,
finally to die for our sins,
and rise to call us to new life.

On that day, as recorded by St. John,
He revealed Himself as openly and directly
as we are able to handle

*And John bare record, saying,
I saw the Spirit
descending from heaven like a dove,
and it abode upon him.
And I knew him not:
but he that sent me to baptize with water,
the same said unto me,
Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending,
and remaining on him,
the same is he
which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.
And I saw, and bare record
that this is the Son of God.*

John baptized Jesus.
The Spirit appeared as a dove.
The Father's voice declared His beloved Son.
There, in the waters of Jordan,
stood revealed the one God in three persons,

and there began the ministry to draw us
into unity with Him forever.

Let us pray:

All glory be to thee, Father Almighty,
All glory to thee, the Only-begotten One,
All glory to thee, O Spirit of life,
All glory, praise, and adoration to thee,
Undivided, Everlasting Holy Trinity. Amen.