



## ONE GOD: THREE PERSONS

A seminary professor once gave a two-hour lecture about the theology of the Most Holy Trinity. The lesson was all taught in Latin. At the conclusion of his presentation, he summed up his entire lesson by saying, *mysterium est*---is a mystery. He needed the students to understand that the Trinity is a mystery of our faith that is beyond full explanation, or our ability to fully comprehend. However, it is important to note that just because we cannot fully explain something does not mean that it does not really exist. That is the difference between *mystery* and *mythology*.

In today's Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, we celebrate the wonders of the love of God, who has revealed himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each year, this feast comes one week after the end of the Easter season and one week before the Feast of Corpus Christi. Last week, we celebrated Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and what some call the birthday of the Church.

Perhaps the best way for us to understand the Trinity is to use a comparison. The Trinity has been described by making reference to our experience of sunlight. God the Father is like the sun, shining upon us. God the Son is the ray of light that comes to us from the sun, and God the Holy Spirit is the warmth and heat given off both by the sun and its rays, giving life and light to the world. The Most Holy Trinity is all about relationship, how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit relate to one another and to us.

Each of our readings today helps us to see something unique about that relationship. The first reading, from the Book of Proverbs, explains that *wisdom* was present with God before the creation of the world. Wisdom is an aspect of the Holy Spirit, so this reading tells us that God was Father, Son and Holy Spirit, long before Jesus took flesh or the Spirit was sent forth. Indeed, God always was and always will be, a Trinity of persons united in a oneness of love.

The love of the Trinity was so strong in the soul of Paul that he told the Romans, in our Second Reading, that he can even boast of his afflictions. According to the Apostle, the suffering he endured helped him to build up endurance, to grow in virtue and to increase in hope. In Paul's belief, hope in Christ never leads to disappointment, but only to fulfillment of the promise of salvation. The love of God, poured out for us by Christ - through the Holy Spirit - enabled Paul to endure his suffering. That same Spirit has seen the Church through persecutions since those early days.

The Gospel for this Feast of the Most Holy Trinity is taken from John's account of the Last Supper. Having predicted His arrest, Passion, death and departure from this, world, Jesus reassures his disciples that One is coming after him who will preserve their faith and guide them in truth. The Father has given all he has to Jesus, who, in turn, gave his all for us on the Cross. He then sent the Holy Spirit upon us to continue the gift of God's love through all generations, until Christ comes again in glory.

Recalling those old Latin seminary lectures that left both professor and student marveling at the mystery of the Holy Trinity, let us be reminded of another phrase passed down through the Church over the centuries: *Deus semper maior*-God is always greater. This feast day reminds us of this essential truth about God: He is wholly other. He is beyond our description, comprehension or explanation-but far from being beyond belief. God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit-is a mystery that draws us deeper and deeper into the mysteries of divine love and eternal life.

*O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth...Psalm 8*

