

The Most Holy Trinity – May 26/27, 2018

– Reflection

Way back when I was in high school, I remember liking Math and actually excelling in the subject. I think that had something to do with the teacher I had for Algebra who was funny, down-to-earth, and a priest who was a great communicator and educator. But as I moved on in school, the teachers, in my opinion, didn't measure up to that first one I had. They were boring, disorganized, unclear and, sadly, had no gift for teaching higher Math. I remember working on homework assignments in Geometry and especially Trigonometry after sleep-inducing classroom lectures where I could easily solve the first few problems, but when more variables were introduced, those wrinkles threw me for a loop. I'd hand in assignments with more question marks than answers, more confusion than comprehension. Math became just one big intimidating mystery to me that would hurt my brain and wound my ego.

How is a mere mortal to speak of the mystery of God? How is one to understand the depths of the Divine relationship of three Persons in one God? Who could ever fathom such an unworkable Math problem and be expected to give a correct answer and a cogent explanation?

Throughout the years of the Christian Era, stretching even before to our Jewish roots, seers and sages, mystics and monks have wrestled with this central mystery of faith: who is God? Missionaries have used triangles and shamrocks to simplify the unexplainable. Artists have painted whirling dancing circles that blur the partners into one endless

round of energy. Others have imagined a bearded aged Father, a crowned virile Son, and a peaceful dove carried upon the breath of the wind, a Holy Spirit.

Even a great mind like St. Augustine's had great trouble in contemplating the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The story is often told that the saint was once walking on the seashore trying to think about this mystery and coming to no real understanding. He came upon a little boy who was pouring water from the sea into a pail. The water was already overflowing. Augustine questioned the child, "What are you doing, little man?" The child replied, "I'm trying to get all the sea water into that pail!" Augustine smiled and gently said, "But you can't do that. The sea is too vast and your pail is too small!"

The sea of the mystery of God is too vast, and the preacher's mind is too small!!

Maybe we could try to own the mystery together. Let's close our eyes ... close our eyes. Make the Sign of the Cross. Do it slowly. Use your whole hand. Gently touch your forehead, your chest, your shoulders. Make it wide ... all your movements graceful arcs in the air.

Keep your eyes closed. Think of everything you have been everything you are now everything you ever hope to be. Think of all you have known all you have felt good bad in your life. Think of all the people you have known and loved all the people you have not loved all the people who have passed through your life all the people you have still to meet. As you imagine all of that that you are able, now, slowly, o so slowly, make the Sign of the Cross again.

That's the mystery of the Trinity: in the love of the Father and the Son united by the Holy Spirit, everything we have just imagined finds a home in God. There, all creation is transformed into something more beautiful, wondrous, and life-giving than we can imagine.

I still don't understand, but I trust, I believe, I confess ... and the great sea of God's love fills me to overflowing "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."