

**Trinity Sunday**  
**June 12, 2022**  
**Homily for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass**  
**of St. Thomas More Catholic Parish**  
**celebrated at**  
**St. Joseph Catholic Church**  
**116 Theodore Street**  
**Scranton, PA 18508**  
**John 16:12-15**

From the earliest days of the Church a good number of believers in Jesus have struggled with the idea that Jesus in the New Testament and God in the Old Testament are the same Being and of the same substance. The heretical solution to their struggle was to posit two gods, one who is loving, generous, sacrificial, and kind; this is the good god, Jesus. The other god is cruel, capricious, judgmental, and even murderous; this is the Lord of the Old Testament and is the wicked god. These two gods are locked in a struggle for the souls of mankind, and to love the son in this construct we must slander the father. This is at the root of the Gnostic heresy and what came ultimately to be called Manichean Dualism.

This heretical understanding of the nature of God was, of course, rejected within the lifetime of the Apostles, and was always a perversion of what they had taught. So within the New Testament we see references in the Epistles of St. Paul, St. John, and St. Peter to this false teaching and their refutation of it. They could do this because they had all met Jesus and spoken to Him and so could relate what He had actually said about Himself.

And in today's Gospel, from Chapter 16 of St. John's account of Jesus' ministry, we read these words of our Lord: "*[The Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*" There is no competition between the persons of the Godhead, and they are certainly not gods at war with each other, battling for our souls. Rather, the Father and the Son are one, and the Spirit which proceeds from them declares their will to us. Moreover, speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus says, "*...he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.*" We see very clearly that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity all have the same will and all desire what is good for us, His human creation.

I bring up the ancient heresies with which the early Church contended, because we see them manifested in new ways today. Many today take for granted that the Lord of the Old Testament and Jesus are at odds with each other. They will quote some harsh passage from the Old Testament, usually having to do with the death penalty, and contrast it with, for example, the mercy of Jesus before the woman caught in the act of adultery. Besides the obvious problem of proof texting being the worst possible way to study the meaning of the Bible, such methods fail to address God being merciful throughout the Old Testament or the very clear passages throughout the New Testament in which Jesus explains that He is going to judge the living and the dead and that those he condemns will spend eternity in the flames of hell. In other words, such people aren't serious biblical scholars; they are merely sinners looking for a god who will judge their sin a bit less harshly or who wish to redefine sin and righteousness altogether.

Having set the Father and the Son against each other, these unserious manipulators then set their sights on the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Having demonstrated, they believe, that the Father is a nasty commander, and that Jesus is God's rebellious yet kind offspring, they contend that the Holy Spirit now continues the rebellion. They don't put it in those terms, mind you, but they do say incessantly that the holy Spirit is doing something "new." That is to say, the Bible be damned—we can find no Scriptural basis for this innovation at all, nor anything in the Tradition—for the Holy Spirit, who is also God, is moving us away from God the Father and God the Son, who was loving but not nearly enough. So now the battle is a three-way struggle, but the one winning in the minds of the innovators is the Holy Spirit, who will place his stamp of approval on everything we want, even if we can find specific passages in which both the Father and the Son condemn what we are promoting.

This heresy has a name, too. It's called antinomianism, the idea that the entire Church is beholden to a private revelation made only to one person, a revelation that in some manner contradicts all prior revelations that we as a Church received in apostolic times and before.

The three-way god competition I have described is real and is used to justify every manner of evil, but seems mostly to be laser-focused on sexual ethics; so where yesterday the chaos in the godhead issued in divine support for fornication and sodomy, the Godhead chaos now gives divine sanction for self-mutilation in an attempt to conform our bodies to that of the opposite sex. And if such surgeries once completed should cause us to become suicidal, the Godhead chaos will justify not just our intentional sterility but also our complete obliteration, in the name of divine mercy.

We see then that the war against the Trinity, three persons in one God, is a war against the order God has given to the world, as well as the refusal to participate in the suffering that God undertook to restore that order once sin had entered into the world. What promoters of the Godhead chaos really don't want is the suffering entailed in conforming our lives to God's will, a will we find is the same in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, as Jesus explained to His apostles in the passage we just heard from St. John's Gospel.

What we must affirm in every conversation we have with those who support Godhead chaos is the truth that God is love. And love is not reflected in conflict, contradiction, and combat, but in unity, peace, and joy. Indeed those are the fruits of the Holy Spirit who has been sent to guide us into all the truth; and those fruits cannot be reconciled to the rotten fruit of incessant arguing over which divine being will justify my sin. If we want peace within and without, the first prerequisite is that our faith exclude the idea that God is at war with Himself.