

Readings: [The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity | USCCB](#)

Trinity Sunday

Ever gotten into an argument with someone about who is right and who is wrong? They can get heated, most of us get passionate about proving someone wrong and it feels so good to come out as the beholder of the truth. It's also a very humbling experience when someone proves your wrong, or so I've been told.

Truth... how do you prove something to be true? When you are making an argument, what do you point to as proof that what you say has validity, is based on facts and reality?

We point to either a subjective lived experience, thought or feeling as evidence, or an objective observation to determine and for this reason, what I say, and think is true.

That in itself is good, they are values we can and do use in everyday life, and they are helpful to a certain extent, but they are limited. When it comes to certain topics, especially dealing with things like the dignity of the human person or the nature of faith, these two values as measures of truth cause more damage than good.

Think of the abortion debate. You have people on both sides using objective and subjective truth to argue about whether abortion is right or wrong, about a woman's right to choose, about at what point a clump of cells can be called a human baby with their own rights to be protected. People point to different values of truth to make their point, and the end result is nothing but arguments, protests, anger, and violence, on both sides.

Then there is the Christian debate. You have people arguing who has the truth. Some say that revelation is not done, that Jesus said there was much more the Spirit

would reveal, and they point to a personal revelation as reasons to start a new church claiming to be the holder of truth. My father for example who is a 7th Day Adventist would argue with me that the Catholic Church is wrong, that his church holds the truth. Even within the Catholic church, you have the debate of what tradition the Church should follow, and likewise, if the measure of truth are these objective and subjective values, because these values guide people in all sorts of directions, the results is often just arguments, anger, and we end up even more divided.

Our normal values of truth using objective and subjective realities are not enough, not helpful when it comes to coming together, for this reason we need a different measure of truth, one that is not dependent on us, and that is why we have been given the Holy Spirit which last week on Pentecost Sunday we declared has been received, and whom today we hear Jesus say that what has been given is a **Spirit of truth**, a **teacher**, communicating and declaring truth, a truth that is being taught to us over time, a truth that is present in every century, a truth not subject to our own values because it comes directly from God.

What is this truth that has been given? Jesus places the value of this truth on himself, on his personhood: “***I am*** the **way**, the **truth** and the **life**, no one goes to the father except through me.” Only the Spirit can reveal to someone the truth of Jesus, the truth that in the person of Jesus we find God.

In receiving the Holy Spirit, we are being communicated this truth of Jesus, and who hears Jesus hears the Father. The Spirit communicates the Son, the Son communicates the Father. What we receive in the Spirit of truth, what is being communicated, is that God is relationship, and that we call the Trinity.

We won't try to explain the fullness of the Trinity ... even the best of theologians struggle, because it is not a truth that comes from us, from an objective or subjective analysis, we cannot grasp it fully, it is not us to fully comprehend, but over time we have come to use human language to help us understand this mystery, and at the core of this revealed truth of the Trinity is that God is a communion and communication of three persons who live in full relationship with one another.

What does that mean for us? Why is that important? Well, if we ourselves are persons, made in the image and likeness of God, called to imitate God, then the way we communicate and live in relationship also matters. The gift of the Trinity helps me understand that my personhood depends on my relationship with God and neighbor, I am not myself without those relationships.

This is the basis of what guides the Christian faith, the trinity is foundational in how we worship and how we talk about social issues.

As a Christian, I understand faith is not personal. It's not about me. Sometimes Catholics fall into an individualistic spirituality where the focus becomes "my personal relationship with Jesus" which is very subjective actually, and they become hyperfocus on the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. They rather go to an adoration chapel where it is silent because only there, they can experience the presence of God. Personal prayer is important yes, but dare I say MORE important is experiencing the presence of God in the community. Where two or more are gathered, there is Jesus, present in our midst. Church does not make sense unless it is a communion of persons gathered to make the Body of Christ.

The Trinity also guides our Catholic Social Teaching. If we understand what a person is, and that a person inherently needs relationship, that what a person needs to be communicated is the love of God, then the way I approach issues like poverty,

immigration, economics, politics, abortion, changes. I can't expect to beat someone over the head with my reasons based on objective and subjective truths. People try that and it really does nothing but make people angry because it just become a competition over who is right or wrong.

Just think of how many times the pharisees put Jesus on the spot about moral situations dealing with people. They wanted truth to come as a right or wrong answer, and their value of right or wrong was the breaking or fulfilment of a commandment. They wanted Jesus to use their objective and subjective values to condemn those who broke the law, but Jesus would have none of that because Jesus was operating on a different level of truth, and he always saw the person first, communicating love to the person first, and then call them to a higher standard only to help restore them to society. That is why they got so frustrated with him, they didn't understand.

That often happens today too. Some people get so frustrated with Pope Francis because they want him to lay out clear boundaries between what is right and wrong. They want him to condemn or uphold certain people or lifestyles, but he doesn't. I honestly believe he has a trinitarian spirituality, and he sees that one of the things that has been missing in the church for some time is the need to focus on the person first, regardless of who the person is, regardless of what truths are guiding that person. The church went through a phase where the focus became the truth of doctrine and defending the institution, and that was important, it came during a moment of defending teaching during the protestant reformation, but it also alienated many, and some would argue it also led to clericalism and some of the many abuse scandals. A trinitarian spirituality helps us, guides us, and brings teachings in perspective. The teachings are there not to defend an institution, they

are there for the institution to defend the personhood of all peoples, and help link all of our human family in communion with one another.

We can spend our lives arguing over what is true and what is not. Pentecost Sunday reminds us of the Spirit we have been given. Trinity Sunday reminds us that what have been given is the truth of the Trinity, and this truth guides us towards relationship.

Our spirituality as Christians is inherently trinitarian. We begin our mass acknowledging this reality “the grace of our lord...”

Next week we will be reminded of the unique way in which Jesus wants to remain in relationship with us, as in the prayer of consecration we ask the Father to send the Spirit over bread and wine to communicate Jesus to us through the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Truth, the Trinity, becomes present once again in the person of Jesus, ready to communicate in and through us, to transform our own personhood to be more like the person whom we receive, so that we may continue to learn and be guided to be like the Trinity, self-giving, loving, and desiring to live in relationship forever.