

FATHER O'CONNOR'S HOMILY FOR 12 JUNE 2022
THE MOST HOLY TRINITY-C

Proverbs 8: 22-31

Romans 5: 1-5

John 16: 12-15

There was a missionary who was serving in a foreign land. He came back home for vacation. He saw a sundial that was for sale. So he bought it and took it back with him to the missions to teach the people how to tell time.

He set up the sundial in the center of the village, and the people thought that it was beautiful. But the missionary was totally surprised a few days later when he saw that the village people had built a roof over the sundial – to protect it from the sun and the rain.

Sometimes, when we are face-to-face with a doctrine like the Trinity, we can treat it like the people treated the sundial: that it is beautiful, but has no real bearing upon our daily lives.

Yet the doctrine of the Trinity, that there is one God in three divine persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is “the central mystery of our Christian faith and life” [Catechism of the Catholic Church, #234]. And we would not have discovered the Trinity all by ourselves. The Trinity is a specific revelation of Jesus Christ to us.

We believe this but, practically speaking, what does it mean for our daily lives? How can we remember that the Trinity dwells within us right now through the life of God's grace?

You and I, as Catholic people, begin and end our prayers with the Sign of the Cross: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” These holy words and gesture remind us that there are three persons in one God, and that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, became man and died on the cross for us. So we should ask ourselves: do I always make the Sign of the Cross with thoughtfulness and devotion?

When we enter church, we stop and dip our fingers into the Holy Water font and make the Sign of the Cross. Why? Because this is how we became members of this Family of God. We were baptized with water in the name of the Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – and that day we formally entered the Church. So we make the Sign of the Cross with

Holy Water to remind us of our Baptism whenever we enter a church to pray. That is how we came to belong.

At a funeral, the body of our loved one is welcomed at the entrance of the church and sprinkled with Holy Water to remind us of the promise that Jesus made to them on the day they were baptized: “In the waters of Baptism they died with Christ and rose with Him to new life. May they now share with Him eternal glory.” And the Lord always keeps His promises.

Down through the ages, theologians have used various examples to help us to a clearer insight into the mystery of the Trinity.

Saint Patrick used the three leaves of the one shamrock to illustrate three persons in one God.

Others have used the example of water which can exist in three different, distinct forms: steam, ice and liquid – and is still H₂O in all three.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola used the example of three notes being sung or played together and forming one musical sound as a chord.

The Trinity, one God in three divine persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is a doctrine that we can never fully understand. Yet it can have a practical influence on our daily lives. Here is a practice that I recommend to you as a part of your daily prayer. It can change your life!

Each night before you go to bed, take three minutes – in honor of the Trinity – to look over the day you have just spent.

During the first minute, pick out the high point of the day – something good that happened – like having a great talk with a great friend. Then speak to God the Father about this and thank Him for it.

During the second minute, pick out the low point of your day, something that you regret – like being unkind or selfish. Then speak to Jesus about it and ask Him to forgive you.

During the third minute, look ahead to the next day to some critical point – like having to do something that is difficult for you. Then speak to the Holy Spirit about it and ask for the help that you need to deal with this tomorrow.

As you can see, this nightly practice – if it becomes a habit – combines prayer with a daily examination of conscience. And it helps us to remember that the Trinity dwells within us right now through the life of God’s grace.

Let us conclude with the holy words and gesture that proclaim the Trinity, “the central mystery of our Christian faith and life,” as together we

pray the Sign of the Cross. “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”