

Trinity Sunday
6/7/2020

THE VACCINE

In the Gospel St. John speaks of the love of God who sends his Son so that we might have life. Elsewhere he tells us that God is love. He doesn't say God is loving but that God is love. Now if God is love, then there is love going on within God and that love going on within God we call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is not some lonely being floating around out there somewhere but a family. God himself is an eternal exchange of love an eternal outpouring of love. God is a communion of life and love, a communion of life giving love and love giving life. Pope Benedict has described the Trinity as a circle of love. God is love. God loves us. God desires our love.

The Trinity is our *origin*, our *goal*, our *model* and *something more*. The Trinity is our origin, not only because we are made by God but because we are made in the image and likeness of God. That doesn't mean God has ten fingers, but that like God, we have intelligence; we can "know" but on much more deeper level, it means that we can make a gift of ourselves to others, it means we can love. We're most like God in our ability to love, to truly love. The Trinity is our goal. Heaven is to share in the life and love of God, to share in the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the Trinity is also our model of how we are to live our lives.

Just as God is a communion of persons, a community of life and love, so too, are we to be and this is done, appropriately enough, on three levels. The first has to do in a *general* way with our common humanity. All people possess a dignity and are made in the image and likeness of God. And just in terms of that common humanity, we are to live in harmony, to work for the common good and to live as a communion of persons.

The second regards a more *specific* way, the Church. The Church is a communion. The Church is to be a communion of persons, a community of life and love based on the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The third is in a more *privileged* way for those called to the Sacrament of Matrimony. God is a communion of persons, a community of life and love and marriage is a communion of persons, a community of life and love. In other words, marriage is an insight in to the life of God, the life of the Most Holy Trinity. In terms of our humanity, as members of the Church and for those called to the Sacrament of Marriage, our model is the Blessed Trinity.

This vision of Trinitarian love is noble, beautiful and also difficult. This vision forms our values. When we recognize these values, we can start to see anti-values

that compromise this reflection of God's love. And we can see it on all three levels. First in terms of the Sacrament of Marriage and all the challenges it faces today. Second, in terms of who we are as members of the Church where rancor and division, abuse, outside attacks and many other problems beset us and third, we can also see in on that first level of our basic humanity and that's what I'd like to look at more today.

There are many assaults on the communion of our common humanity and we could easily come up with a long list. But recent events make certain problems stand out. COVID-19 is a virus affecting, threatening and assaulting all human life on this planet that is our common home. That tiny, nasty looking virus is causing pain, suffering death and grief.

But there are many other nasty viruses. Fear can be a very contagious virus. Now there is a holy fear that we can call reverence. It keeps us from sin. But there is an evil fear that closes us in on ourselves. A fear that builds walls and leads us into sin. Fear disrespects human life and fear leads us to lash out with violent words and in extreme cases, even with violent actions.

The virus of fear can mutate into hatred, racism, disrespect for human lives, born and unborn, for the stranger, or the property of others. It also takes on many other grotesque form.

Racism is aptly described as the original sin on the American soul and as we have seen, it can still raise its ugly head. Racism leads to what St. John Paul II called, *a culture of death*. Racism reveals a failure to love our neighbor and is one of many wounds on the body of Christ. Just this past week Pope Francis said, *We cannot turn a blind eye to racism*. The tragic killing of George Floyd and the subsequent violence are both reminders of the wounds we still bear and some of the viruses we still carry as a society. It attacks who we are called to be in terms of our common humanity and who we are as a country.

We await a vaccine for the corona virus. What about these other viruses? Where is the vaccine for them? Perhaps that vaccine is already present, but we have to receive it. Perhaps that vaccine is to be found in the love of God, in the love that is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The love of God that recognizes that all people are made by God and in the image and likeness of God or as The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the divine image is present in every person. [1702]

Or as our founding fathers taught, all people are created equal, *that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights...* In other words, this equality and dignity and the rights that flow from them come from God and to violate them is to violate the work of God. The love of God that is stronger than fear. St.

John says, *perfect love casts out fear*. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, *Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love*.

The love of God calls us to love rather than hate; forgiveness rather than vengeance; justice rather than iniquity; mercy rather than anger; to accountability and transparency rather than evasion and confusion; to courage rather than fear; to peaceful resistance rather than violence; to hope rather than despair; to generosity rather than greed; to empathy rather than hardheartedness; to self-gift rather than self seeking, to communion rather than division, to life rather than to death. The love of God calls us to take these values and put them into practice in systemic ways, in personal ways, in big ways and even in every little way.

Here in the Eucharist we enter into that moment where Jesus' seeming defeat led to his victory as through his death he opened for us the way to new life. Here Jesus nourishes us with his word and with his body and blood under the form of bread of wine so that we might grow in and reflect to others the love Jesus shares with the Father and Holy Spirit.

The love of the Trinity is our origin, goal and model but it can something even more. In that love of the Trinity we find a vaccine to heal wounds and warm hearts; to heal so many of the viruses in our world today. We do this by concrete, practical steps to make our world a better place. We do that out of the love of God that challenges, requires and commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

May we each receive that vaccine and with lives of intentional faith, both live and share with others, the love of One God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Dante described the Trinity as *the love that moves the sun and other stars*, may that same love move our hearts into action.