

May 30, 2010

This weekend we celebrate the central mystery of our faith and of our life. It is the mystery of who God is: one God in three divine persons. This mystery was revealed by Jesus and professed from the beginning of the Church.

The mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is so important that we profess it formally at every Sunday Mass in the Creed. We also begin the rosary professing our belief in this mystery in the Apostles' Creed.

We begin most of our prayers as we make the Sign of the Cross saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." At Mass, the priest greets us with the salutation taken from the conclusion of St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians (13:13): "The grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Along with the Our Father and the Hail Mary, the prayer we learned so early in life and say so very frequently is: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is not only something we believe and profess. It bears deeply upon the way we live our life. God intends for us to live our entire life in communion with each of the divine persons. This is possible because when we were baptized, the priest or deacon poured water over us as he proclaimed: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

"In the name of" means much more than "on behalf of" or "as a follower of." It really means into the life and existence of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. What is this life which we are privileged to share?

God is love. From all eternity, the Father begets His Son in the love of the Holy Spirit. The Son perfectly returns that love by giving Himself entirely over to the Father in the same Holy Spirit of love. Thus, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is acknowledged as the mutual love of the Father for His Son and of the Son for His Father. The Trinity is one God in loving inter-relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All of us are created in the image and likeness of God. We reflect God's image and likeness not only through our intelligence and free will. We are created to live in a communion of love in reflection of the Holy Trinity. God never intended us to live solitary lives, but to live in communion with God and with one another, a communion that is meant to be both life-giving and loving. Selfishness, self-centeredness, and exaggerated individualism, so often found in our culture, are very contrary to God's plan for us.

The alternative Opening Prayer for this weekend's Mass expresses well our faith and the communion we are invited to share through our Baptism: "God, we praise you: Father all-powerful, Christ Lord and Savior, Spirit of love. You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share in your life and your love. One God, three Persons, be near to the people formed in your image, close to the world your love brings to life."