



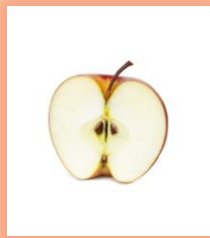
Bible Study - Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Year A

St. Maria Goretti and
St. Peter Claver
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For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17 NABRE

Reading I: Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE. St. Augustine, the great North African theologian, expressed the theology of the Holy Trinity in these few sentences: "...the Trinity is one true God and it is exactly true to say, believe and think that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one single and the same substance or essence" (*De Trin.* I, 2, 4). Many often wonder what binds this "single and same substance or essence?" I suggest it is *Love*. Who could love someone who calls on Him only when He is needed? Who could love someone who turns away from the love He gives them for personal pleasure and convenience? You know the answer, God. It is God the Father who loves, God the Son who redeems, God the Spirit who inspires and guides. The Holy Trinity is all about love. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is implicit and not explicit in Scripture. Some



Do you see the Trinity?
Whole apple = Trinity
Skin of apple = Father
Seed of apple = Son
Pulp or juice = The Holy Spirit

assert that the Trinity is more explicit in the New Testament. But note that in Hebrew, Elohim is translated God. It is the plural form of El. However, the entire Bible can be viewed as a revelation of God's love for us.

The first reading gives the basis for its eventual exposition of the Trinity and describes the second meeting between Moses and God on Mount Sinai. After Moses calls for God, (vv. 5-6) He appears in a cloud. The cloud is the essence of God, His Spirit. He gives this self-revelation, "**the Lord, a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness**" (NABRE). This is a God of love. Moses' response was to show his love for God by worshiping Him (v. 8). Moses showed the love God revealed to him by asking forgiveness for the Jews, a stubborn and stiff-necked people (v. 9). From those stubborn people came the Son of God, incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is all about *Love*. DISCUSSION QUESTION: How has God revealed Himself to you?

WHERE IS THE WORD "TRINITY" FOUND IN THE BIBLE?

As many have concluded, the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible. But the Bible makes clear references to the Father, the Creator, the Son, the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier. The Bible clearly states that there is one God. Here are verses from the Gospel of John that refers to the Trinity. *"But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you."* John 16:13-15 (New American Bible, Revised Edition [NABRE])

Reading II: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE. How do you say goodbye to friends that you love as you part company for a time? Perhaps you wish them the love and peace of Christ in everything they encounter until you meet again. This is what St. Paul does in the verses we read for this Sunday.

These three verses of today's reading are the last verses of St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Some conclude that it was written during his third missionary journey and probably from the City of Ephesus. This letter contains Paul's spiritual advice, as well as his praise of them to nurture their faith in Jesus the Christ. He gently reminded them of their faults and encouraged them to change and repent (v. 11). He begged them to live in "Love" so that the God of love and peace could be with them. At the celebration of the Eucharist, he reminded them to greet each other with true love and with the "Pax", the "Kiss of Peace." St. Paul wished the entire Trinitarian Blessing on the church in Corinth. He wished that they receive the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that they received in Baptism. What a blessing filled with love! DISCUSSION QUESTION: How do you say goodbye to someone you love?

Gospel: John 3:16-18

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE: Frederick Buechner, in *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, describes the Holy Trinity this way: "If the idea of God as both Three and One seems far-fetched and obfuscating, look in the mirror someday. There is (a) the interior life known only to yourself and those you choose to communicate it to (the Father). There is (b) the visible face which in some measure reflects that inner life (the Son). And there is (c) the invisible power you have in order to communicate that interior life in such a way that others do not merely know about it, but know it in the sense of its becoming part of who they are (the Holy Spirit). Yet what you are looking at in the mirror is clearly and invisibly the one and only you."

Jesus, the master teacher, in two verses (vv. 16-18) gives the essence of the Holy Trinity. He says that the Love of God the Father, willed "the world" to have everlasting life, through the death of His Son. He loved us, He willed it, and we have it. The essence of the Holy Trinity is **LOVE**.

Part of the verses in this Sunday's Gospel is a conversation with Nicodemus, a rich Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin (vv. 1-15). The Sanhedrin was the supreme ecclesiastical court of the Jews. Nicodemus heard of Jesus and was anxious to learn more about Him. To conceal his interest he came at night to meet with Him. It is believed that Nicodemus did not publicly follow Jesus until after his conversion. (See Jn. 7:50-52). He defended Jesus when the Pharisees wanted to condemn Jesus to death. It was Nicodemus who assisted Joseph of Arimathea in the burial of Jesus (Jn. 19:39).

When we think of it, this passage gives three important revelations about God. **1)** Our redemption was initiated by God. The very essence of God is Love (1 Jn. 4:16). **2)** The breadth of His Love is for "the world." Put another way, God, the Creator of the world, through His Holy Will, redeemed us by giving Himself as a sacrifice to erase our sins. He loves "the world." **3)** To live as a Christian means to imitate the Love that binds the Holy Trinity. The story of Jesus is the story of God's love for us. At Baptism, we share in the death of Christ who loves and lives in us through the Holy Spirit. The life we live must reflect that **Love**. (Gal 2:20). To live in Christ means to love like Christ. It's all about **Love**. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How does your life imitate the love of God?

Pray About It.

Monday

Deut. 6:4. Create a special greeting for the people you meet today.

Tuesday

Read Jn. 7:50-52. Did Nicodemus learn what Jesus taught him?

Wednesday

Read Gal. 2:20. Show someone that Christ lives in you.

Thursday

Read Jn. 3:16-18 slowly. Can you return this love?

Friday

Give the members of your household a "Holy Kiss."

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHINGS ON THE HOLY TRINITY

261 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

262 The Incarnation of God's Son reveals that God is the eternal Father and that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father, the Son is one and the same God.

263 The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (Jn 14:26) and by the Son "from the Father" (Jn 15:26), reveals that, with them, the Spirit is one and the same God. "With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified" (Nicene Creed).

Resources: *The Gospel According to John, Introduction to the New Testament*, Raymond E. Brown S.S. Doubleday New York, Ny. Pp 341-344; *2 Corinthians*, Mary Ann Getty; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 1150; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2017*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.ND. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 153-158; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. The Sunday Readings Cycle A, Kevin O' Sullivan, O.F.M Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 207-212; <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism>; Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 93.

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2017