

Trinity Sunday
5.31.26

As you well know, May is the month of graduations. Students from Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School graduated a week ago Friday. Most high school students graduated last weekend. And college students began celebrating their graduations in the early part of the month.

Every student who receives a diploma should be proud of that accomplishment. It is the result of hard work and perseverance. But having a degree can be misleading. For some, the degree represents an end. But the degree is more a sign of moving on and into something new.

After completing three years of graduate studies, seminarians usually receive a Master of Divinity degree. Before they are ordained, seminarians must show proper competency in theological and pastoral matters. Part of that proof of proficiency involves taking a written exam which lasts several hours or days. If they pass that portion of the exam, they then go before a committee of professors for about 60 minutes who question them face-to-face about theology and other Church matters. It is a nerve-wracking and pressure-filled experience. A Master of Divinity degree is only conferred when the seminarian passes those written and oral tests.

I quickly came to realize that my seminary education was only a starting point for my ministry as a parish priest. Every year most priests try to participate in some level of continuing education to help them better understand the faith and to minister more effectively among the People of God. Those additional classes

or seminars help them to enter more deeply in the ministry which they were ordained for.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity. On the surface, the Trinity is a theological concept. We might think that if we master that concept, then we have a handle on who and what the Trinity is. Seminarians go into their comprehensive exams thinking that if I explain the Trinity as one God, three persons, co-equal and co-eternal, then they will receive a passing grade.

But the Trinity is more than a concept. The Trinity is a way of explaining who and what God is and how God relates to us. As such, the Trinity is a living entity. The Trinity describes God's relationship with us and it also implies how we are to enter into a relationship with God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we stand before God on judgement day, I don't think God will be moved if we announce, "well, I know all ABOUT the Trinity." Rather, God will be moved by the relationship we had with him while on this earth. We, as humans, know that all too well. Love is fostered not by knowing something about someone. Love takes root and develops when we enter into a relationship with them. And love blossoms and grows when we continue to give ourselves even more deeply to that relationship.

The Trinity expresses how God loves us. And our understanding and interaction with the Trinity is what helps foster our faith. Our encounter with the Trinity enables us to experience the love and mercy of God. That encounter is what then enables us to share those same gifts with the Church.

The readings today give us some insights as to who the Trinity is. They also speak of the relationship that God has with us or wants with us. In turn, our lives are forever changed when we give ourselves over to a relationship with the persons of the Trinity.

In the first reading from the Book of Exodus, we hear about God and Moses standing together. God stands with each of us, at every moment. This reading reminds us that we are never alone as long as we call upon the name of the Lord.

The reading also uses these words to describe God's interaction with us. He is, "merciful and gracious...slow to anger and rich in compassion." (Ex.34:6) The only thing God requires of us is that we reach out to our gracious Lord and accept his goodness, as Moses did.

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul tells us something similar. He reminds us that the love we have for others is really the love we have for God. For that reason he says, "mend your ways, encourage one another...live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you." (II Cor. 13:11)

Finally, the gospel passage from St. John tells us that God is all about love. And he loves us so much that he sent his Son into the world. The Son, Jesus Christ, reflects that love by dying for us and freeing us from our sins. Accepting that love and living out that love is what leads to eternal life. (Jn. 3:16-17)

Today's image of God presented on this Solemnity of the Holy Trinity is very different from the words many in the world use to

describe God. Many will say God is distant from us. They say God is vengeful; God is about judging us, condemning us, even smiting us for our sins.

But our living and true God, revealed as Father, Son, and Spirit is all about love. God is all about sharing that love with us. God first does so in the very act of creating us and is reflected in the world around us which he created (Father). God manifests his love by dying and rising for us and giving us a share in his eternal life (Son). And God continues to bestow on us his new life and grace which makes us wise, understanding, compassionate, merciful, and so much more (Spirit).

True relationships only deepen when we give ourselves to conversing with, uniting ourselves with, and walking with the other. This Solemnity reminds us that it is the same in our relationship with God. May today's celebration challenge us to move beyond what we *know* about God to a full and life-changing *relationship with* God – that begins here on earth and lasts for all eternity.

Amen? Amen!