

TRINITY

The biblical concept of God as Trinity is quite central to Christian Faith. Like any other mystery, the concept of Trinity too is a mystery quite difficult to comprehend. However, what cannot be understood by reason can be experienced by heart. As Blaise Paschal said, “The heart has its reason which reason (our mind) does not know.” ‘Trinity’ is not so much a doctrine to be rationally understood as a communion to be experienced. Experience is never by the head but always through the heart. Trinity is a relationship and communion made viable through love, sharing and self-giving.

Trinity as Communion through Love and Mutual Self-giving

God said in Genesis 1:26, “Let **US** make humans in our own image.” The use of the plural “**US**” reveals God’s nature as community and relationship. The God of Christianity is a Community where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit love each other, share with each other and give themselves to each other. The community of the Trinity is a circle, so one is not superior to the others. There is no domination. No one has power over the other. The Father is not almighty, but all loving and all vulnerable. The people of the Old Testament times may have thought of God as almighty and all powerful because their religious consciousness was still evolving; their understanding and experience of God was only partial. Since they had imagined God as their King, they projected onto God the image they had of their own kings who ruled over them.

But, in the Gospels, Jesus doesn’t use the adjectives “almighty” and ‘all powerful’ to describe or qualify God. Jesus doesn’t present His Father as an almighty King. Rather, He reveals to us a God who is unconditionally loving (Mt 5:43-48), compassionate and merciful (Lk 6:36), forgiving (Lk 15:20-24), and just and generous (Mt 20: 1-16). He reveals God as a shepherd who goes after the lost sheep (Lk 15:1-7). While we prefer autonomy and self-sufficiency, the Trinitarian God opts for collaborative inter-being.

Taking after his Father, Jesus too lived his life not as someone who expected to **be served** but as one who came **to serve** (Mk 10:45) which he demonstrated by capitulating and condescending to wash the feet of his followers (Jn 13:5-9). He was gentle and humble in heart (Mt 11: 29), had compassion for people who suffered (Lk 7:13) and even wept at someone’s death (Jn 11:35). Finally, just as the Father had given up the only Son He had (Jn 3:16), Jesus too gave up both his divinity (Philippians 2: 5-8) and his life (Jn 10:11; 19:30). It is not the mighty and the powerful who give up, but the vulnerable.

The idea of God as ‘almighty’ and ‘all powerful’ is a projection of humans’ need to see some people as elites, rulers and superiors and others as proles, the ruled and inferiors. The mighty and the powerful like to exploit those who are under their care (1 Samuel 8: 10-18; Jn 10:8-13), whereas the Trinitarian God warns us against the temptation to lord it over others (Mk 10:41-44).

Our spirituality depends very much on the idea we have of God. If we understand God as almighty and all powerful, then we too desire to be mighty and powerful. If we think of God as a King, then we too like to behave as Kings. If we have a concept of God as One who ordered the execution of the enemies of Israel, then we too will justify the elimination of those whom we

don't like. However, when we understand Trinity as a communion of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit loving each other in mutual acceptance, then our spirituality becomes one of mutuality. We can never have a cephalic understanding of this Trinitarian Community as the Trinity is not a concept; rather, we can only experience the Trinity as a Communion of sharing and self-giving.

Therefore, we will be able to understand and experience the Trinity only if there is love, sharing and self-giving in our family – between the husband and the wife, and between the parents and children. A communion implies the elimination of divisions, discord, and disconnectedness, which is possible when we are vulnerable and willing to let go. If the Trinity's communion results from a letting go, then our families and society also need a constant process of letting go for it to become a communion. Thus, whereas a cephalic understanding of Trinity is almost impossible, the Trinity becomes a reality in our family and community if we are able to forgive, share, and let go. The God of the Bible is a community, where neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Spirit looks for independence or freedom, but express themselves in mutual sharing and communion.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity this Sunday, we pray that every family in our parish become a place where the Trinitarian God of the Bible is experienced among its members in a life of communion and mutual self-giving. Amen.

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