

FIRST READING: Proverbs 8:22-31

A reading from the Book of Proverbs:

Thus says the wisdom of God: "The LORD possessed me, the beginning of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago; from of old I was poured forth, at the first, before the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet the earth and fields were not made, nor the first clods of the world. "When the Lord established the heavens I was there, when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; when he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth; when he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command; then was I beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race."

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

***O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!***

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place - What is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?

***O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!***

You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet:

***O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!***

All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field, The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

***O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!***

SECOND READING: Romans 5:1-5

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans:

Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL: John 16:12-15

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

## Reflection for Trinity Sunday

Today is a feast that celebrates a basic Christian Dogma, the Trinity. Christians believe in One God having three persons in complete and perfect unity. It works like this. God is love. God's love is so immense and perfect that the Father begot the Son. The Father and Son's love is so eternal and unconditional that they breathed the Spirit. The Father and Spirit are both completely other than us, but Jesus, God's Son was born a human being who is just like us in all but sin.

We have just finished celebrating the Easter Cycle last Sunday on Pentecost. We know the story the season tells by heart. Jesus suffered and died for our sins, rose from the dead, returned to the Father and then sent the Holy Spirit to form, guide and inspire Christ's Church. I like to define the Church as the People of God; not just us Catholics but all who believe in God and Jesus who are alive in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit. This notion of the People of God is especially meaningful as we strive to build a new parish out of three. People define the Church's identity not the buildings and locations where they gather.

How can God have three persons and still be one? The good Franciscan Sisters who taught me had a pat answer for such a question, "It's a mystery!" I never really knew if this was because they didn't know the answer or if this was a profound truth I was hearing. The problem lay in the definition of a mystery. A mystery is a puzzle that we are unable to solve. We all know puzzles and how rewarding they can be when we solve them. Crosswords, jigsaws and putting together an IKEA couch are all puzzles we can solve or assemble.

Forming a new parish is going to be like those. It will be a challenge for us to see it through and a delight when we are all home, together, where we belong. I work crosswords all the time. They keep me mentally on my toes. Finally finishing the Sunday puzzle, days later, can feel like a triumph. When the 1001 pieces finally fit, we can appreciate the full picture. To look at our new parish forming like this can be a way to experience the change all three of us face. Our three parishes want our joint task to work. For crosswords I sometimes need a pony, an aid to solve the hints. For a jigsaw puzzle, I need my eyes and fingers to operate in sync to work the trial and error process of assembly; first the border, then the colored areas and then the completed picture. In the process of building community, we'll have each other on whom we can rely.

Then there are the mysteries that we cannot solve. God is a mystery. We already know God by faith. We can remember God at any time. We can see God reflected in all nature, all people and every event of our lives. All we need do is remember and we can see God here. My favorite example is love. If I ask what is love? What can we say? It's much more than an emotion. We can experience it in many ways. There's the love shared with lovers. There's love of pizza. There's love of our parish. As any widow or widower knows, love lives long after our beloved is gone. The context is in our relationships. We've known it from the time we've bonded with our parents and experienced it growing up with friends. We know it in joy, sorrow, fear and frenzy, for we rely on each other.

We cannot define those we love by their function. We describe them by their person; in our relationship to them and in their relationship to us; lover, parent, child, brother sister or friend. Even our boss and coworkers share that experience with us. One first meets another and strangers become acquaintances. Acquaintances can become friends. Some friends become lovers. We can only move forward in our relationships and can never regress. Unlike social

media which allows unfriending, we can't unknow the people we already know. This is the mystery of human relationships. People can move away, friends can have a falling out, spouses can become exes and those we love can die. A relationship can never be undone. It may remain in our memory, but remain it always will.

This experience, I believe, of our human nature is the heart of the mystery of God, the Trinity. Some have tried to define God by function; Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Not very moving is it? No, we describe the mystery with the language of a relationship; Father, Son and Spirit. It feels as familiar as it is moving. We may or may not have gotten along, always, with dad. But we all know the meaning of Father. I remember a boy who called his grandpa "Dad." I asked him why. He had never met his father. Here's his reply. "Any man can be a father. Only some can be a dad." This is what Jesus called his Father in prayer. Abba is Hebrew for daddy or papa.

I have never had any kids. I have held many babies though. The first was my newly born sister whom I held in my arms on my lap when I was five. My newly born goddaughter when she was just hours old and I felt the bonding take place as I held her. She was the youngest healthy baby I ever held. I've held all the babies I've ever baptized too. My official title is, "The Reverend James D. Beath." No one calls me that. To those who know me as a priest, I'm simply, "Father Jim." We all know what Father and Son can mean. We've experienced it all our lives. We also know Mother and Daughter too. Jesus had a mom just like we did. Wisdom in today's first reading is a feminine word. In English, words have no gender, but in Hebrew they do. I struggle with Spanish to get the gender of words right.

Then there's Spirit. The Latin root means breath. Breath is a sign of life. We call breathing our respiration and the word contains spirit. All living beings respire; animals, plants and fish. We all do it differently for where there's breath there's life. As an aside, my family name is Scottish and in Gaelic Beath means life. Sometimes people have mispronounced it as Breath. We take our breathing for granted until we get a stuffy nose. From our first breath to our last, we don't stop breathing. The Spirit's always with us through this life while we're alive. Breathing is our reminder.

God has made us in God's own image and likeness. God's son was born one like us, in all but sin. Through God's gift of faith we believe. Because of faith our baptism has made us God's sons and daughters making Jesus our brother. The mystery we may never understand but the mystery we can experience in every moment we live, every person we meet and each time we remember God. We approach God's mystery after God first gave us life. The mystery is deep within us that we live with every breath. God is a mere thought away and closer than our beating hearts.

We know that our Redeemer lives in our every breath and in all we meet.

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