

Homily
June 4, 2023
Trinity Sunday
22:30 – 30:19

In the 40 years that I have had the privilege of being a Confessor, either in Confessional or Reconciliation room, more than once I have heard a list of sins and the person says immediately, “Father, it’s the same things. I bring back the same list. What’s wrong with me?” And my smart-aleck response at times has been, “Well, we’re not creative in our sinning.” Perhaps a better response would be, “We fail Christ’s Covenant again and again. That’s true.”

But God as Trinity is constant in his mercy, love and forbearance. It doesn’t matter what you bring. Just come to that mercy, love and forbearance.

And it’s very clear that the Trinity is much involved in that Sacrament. For in the absolution prayer itself we hear, “God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has poured out the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins. Through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace. And I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

There is throughout the Old Testament, as we are told by prophets, psalmists and judges, a cycle of sin, repentance and renewal (or conversion.) They all agree upon this for the Hebrew, and the Jewish people. In our First Reading, Moses is very clearly caught up with the people in this pattern.

Now, there’s a section that comes before our reading today that is important background. Moses in our reading goes back up to Sinai to stand with God. But before that, Moses was coming down from Sinai, having received the Commandments etched by God’s own hand upon the tablets.

And what did he find? He found idolatry and revelry. And in his anger, he destroys the tablets. He smashes them to the ground into pieces. He then takes the golden calf - the idol – grinds it down to

dust, puts the dust into the water and makes the people drink it. He utters, "This is a stiff-necked people."

Now, our First Reading today: He goes up on the mountain with a new set of tablets, hoping that God will refashion what he had already done. He goes up and as it says, he stands with God. God then speaks of the very nature, the essence of his divinity. *"The Lord, the Lord, merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in kindness and fidelity."*

And when Moses goes back down, the cycle – sin, repentance, renewal -- continues.

Today on Trinity Sunday, let's focus on the nature of God. Let's focus on that last word that he utters. Fidelity. In Hebrew, the root word is "**emet**." Its root meaning is truth. All the derivative words that flow from it speak of truth, regularity, stability, constancy. Quite a contrast to humanity's regularity and its inability to remain committed to Covenant.

But divinity is constant. *Emet* is compassion and forgiveness. It is God's nature to take human beings where they are. He takes back the Hebrews again and again. And their Jewish descendants, as they repeat their cycle. But God claims Israel as his own, no matter, in spite of their – yes – stiff-necked character.

John's Gospel passage today picks up on this in a very short, powerful, foundational understanding of God in the New Testament. "God so loved the world that he sent his only son, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

The very reality of Jesus reveals the nature of God's love for all humanity, not just a single people. And thus, it becomes ours -- having been touched by the Trinity in our baptism – to believe, to trust in God's constancy.

Today we praise God: Father, Son and Spirit. We came into the church and hopefully touched a reminder of our baptism (making the Sign of the Cross) and made the very Sign of the Cross - naming Father, Son and Spirit. The conclusion of most of our prayers and of blessings, as we will hear today, is in the name of the Trinity.

This circle of divine love is an eternal constancy. The question becomes: shall we believe? Or in another word that flows from belief: shall we trust that constancy? Shall we be willing to stand with God through our cycles of sin, repentance, renewal, conversion?

But especially today, shall we adore Father, Son and Spirit for their *hesed*, their steadfast love.