

Homily
May 26, 2024
Feast of the Holy Trinity
22:57 – 33:15

As I said at the beginning, we are here for one purpose today: simply to give praise and thanks to our God for who God is. It's the only day of the year when we completely focus on how we name our God – Father, Son and Spirit. And it's a name that has touched us so many times. But we'll get to that in a minute.

We worship the God of Abraham, the God who is **One**. There are to be no other gods besides him.

Others worship this God as well, but with different names and different understandings. We are cut from the same original cloth, but not the same.

Our Jewish ancestors, indeed, our Jewish brothers and sisters of today, name God as **Adonai, Jehovah, El**, (as in Samuel, Manuel). And another name, which we will not speak because our Jewish brothers and sisters would never speak it. They will simply bow their heads and say a substitute, Adonai, or another of the names.

For the Jews, it's one God. One God.

For our Muslim brothers and sisters, they name God **Allah, who is One**. They make it very clear every time they say that name, "*Allah, who is One.*" Now, they have other attributes for God, ninety-nine, to be exact, by which they will name this God they call Allah.

And for them, there is only One God and there's no other way to express it.

But for us Christians, we celebrate God who is One, and yet three Persons: **Father, Son and Spirit**. We could describe them as: Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. But those are functions.

No. They are Persons. Father, Son and Spirit intimately bound together into Oneness.

They are **Trinity**.

Now, our understanding of this Trinity required 5 centuries. It took 4 Councils in the 4th and 5th Centuries to come to a complete understanding of who our God is. And who Christ is and how Mary, the Mother of God relates to Christ. Five Centuries, for understanding. But as we heard at the

very beginning of Mass and in any of Paul's writings, and even in the Gospels, the early name was Father, Son and Spirit.

Now this feast was not celebrated until the 14th Century. Pope John XXII proclaimed this feast for the Universal Church and it took a while to "take on." Notice it was the 14th Century, John XXII, and we had to wait five more centuries to have John XXIII. It was a perfectly good name. I don't know why they waited that long. And it became an official Feast of the Church – a Solemnity – in the 20th Century, under Saint Pope Pius X.

You see, how we pray about what we believe takes time to come to where we are today. We should never assume that the way we do it today was the way they did it in the 1st Century. Or any other century. But there's always a continuity.

There's a principle in Roman Catholicism in how we pray. It's called "**Lex Orandi – Lex Credendi.**" Yeah. That's Latin. "Lex" for law. "Orandi" for prayer. "Credendi" for belief. The law of prayer is the law of belief, and vice versa.

You know that large book – (You want to hold that up, Amelia? – The one that nearly crushes a few of our servers. Thank you.) That's the Roman Missal. Why do we have that? So that when we pray, especially the priest or the deacon - when we lead the prayer, we pray it as we believe it.

(You know. We're not supposed to just make up the stuff of prayer at Mass or in Sacraments. I can tell you, when a priest gets excited and makes up the prayer, he'll say it wrong. And that's not what he's supposed to do.)

So how do we pray of this God who is One in Three? Well, just look at the Mass. There's a clear indication. We begin with the Name. (Demonstrating.) Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And then, as today, a quote from Paul, I mentioned earlier, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Yes, we are named "Christian," after the Christ, but we are blessed always in the fullness of the Trinity. And then of course, we get to the "Glory to God," which is completely made as a "Praise Psalm" for our God. Thus, the conclusion of the Collect, "*Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.*"

And then of course, the Creed, that 4-part proclamation of what we believe (by the way, rooted in those four Councils): Father, Son, Spirit, Church. We're intimately bound together with this God, through being the Community of Believers.

Then there are the Eucharistic Prayers, all thirteen of them, where it's very clear who we are praying to. The fullness of God. We name **Father**. We use the words of **Jesus**. We call down the **Spirit**. And then the Great Amen: *"Through Him, with Him and in Him; in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours Almighty Father forever and ever."*

And of course, then the recapitulation of the beginning, the blessing in the name of the Trinity.

Two sacraments also make it very clear. We were baptized in the Name of the Father, Son and Spirit. Yes?

Then there's the prayer of absolution for Confession - Reconciliation. And it goes like this:

*"God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. – Through the ministry of the Church (notice the 4 pieces, just like the Creed) – 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**, the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**."*

Our prayer, my brothers and sisters, is shot through with the name of our God. It is today when we specifically praise God for that name, that mystery which has marked us and will send us forth at the end to proclaim the goodness of God as He has been revealed to us in Christ.