



The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity 4 June 2023 – Reflection by Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit”.

This week I enjoyed two days with friends from time in the English College, Rome. We are all post-Retirement age but remaining as active priests in the Church in different ways. One thing we find we are all doing is “supplying”: going to different parishes, mainly at weekends, to step in for priests who need a break or where there is sickness. We end up of course talking about parish life, how the Church is changing and especially how our Faith relates to life today.

One of the items in the news in relation to this weekend’s Solemnity of the Holy Trinity is the construction of the Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi, an Islamic State. The design captures the values shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Made up of 3 places of worship the site includes a cultural centre that aims to encourage people to exemplify human fraternity and solidarity within a community that cherishes the values of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence, while the unique character of each faith is preserved.

The whole project is inspired by the Document on Human Fraternity signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam during the Pope’s visit to Abu Dhabi in February 2019.

Speaking of the unique character of each Faith; Trinity Sunday highlights the belief of the Catholic Christian Community that while God is the one God, he has revealed Himself as three persons. This Revelation is handed on by the Church in the Liturgy, and she stops to reflect on the wonder of God as three-in-one on Trinity Sunday. We have just celebrated the Solemnity of the Ascension where the Risen Jesus left this earth telling His disciples: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*. The Church continues to witness to the Father, Son and Spirit in its Sacraments and Teaching. One of the challenges of Trinity Sunday’s Homily is to say something approaching this great mystery in a new way. I found the reflection of Fr. John Cameron, O.P. in a video on Aleteia refreshing. He comes to it with a new approach saying *“if we were in a position of not knowing the God of Christians, what sort of God would we want?”*

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He thinks we would want a God who meets our deepest needs:

- *a God who values us despite our weakness and frailty: we find this in God the Father, who loves us because we are His, we belong to Him*
- *a God who will walk with us: in Jesus we have a friend who is sensitive and forgiving; He knows the sufferings of life.*
- *we are fleshly, greedy and unworthy at times, but we still yearn for the spiritual in justice, truth, love. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to rise above our self-centeredness in the fruits of the Spirit.*

Fr John concludes the Holy Trinity corresponds to the deepest needs of our life: the Holy Trinity is someone who loves us as we are, not just because we're good. If we could design God, it is the Holy Trinity who connects with our deepest longings.

As my friends and I walked along in a beautiful Park, our conversation turned from the important part Pope Francis is seeking to play in building a more unified world, where Faiths make a contribution to fraternity among peoples and nations, to one of the big issues concerning us in society these days: transgenderism. I think it's true to say we had not grown up in a society or in a seminary where the subject featured at all. Now it is the topic in the media and politics almost every waking moment. We were agreed the Church has to address issues like this from the perspective of Church Moral Teaching, and I plan to do this in a future Reflection. Suffice to say, as three persons, God acts always as a God of love; He does not condemn the world but acts to save it.

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