

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Life in the Trinity

By: Fr. Munachi E. Ezeopu, CSSP

The high point of the Easter season is over. It was concluded last Sunday with the Pentecost. Today we return to Sundays in Ordinary Time. If there is one theme that marks the Ordinary Time of the liturgical year, it is the theme of growth in Christian living. The liturgical colour green symbolizes life and growth, as we know from nature. Ordinary Time will take us to the end of the liturgical year. If the theme of the Ordinary Time is growth, why then does the church choose to come back to it with the solemnity of the Blessed Trinity? Growth is a practical, everyday concern but the Trinity seems to be high up there, a matter of theological and philosophical profundity.

The best explanation I can find why the church brings us back to the ordinary time of the year with the feast of the Holy Trinity is in the words of the French novelist Antoine de Saint-Exupery: "If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." The church is presenting us with the long picture of the "endless immensity of the sea" we call God. When we are personally caught up in the mystery of the love of God, then we shall find the rationale and the motivation to work for our personal growth in Christian living.

Our second reason from Romans 5:1-5 links belief in the Trinity with the daily practice of Christian living. In this passage Paul speaks of the whole business of our justification and salvation as having peace with God. Being in right relationship with God our Father is the whole point of the Christian life. Paul is quick to add that the way to achieve this is through Christ.

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2)

Our goal is to be at one with God. This is attained through Christ in whom we have access to the Father.

Our hope is to share in God's glory. This hope is nourished by our faith in Christ which justifies us.

Our hope to share in God's glory in the future is not based on wishful thinking. It is based on the fact that even now God has already given us the surety or assurance of what is to come by pouring out the love of God into our hearts:

"And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5)

Note that the love of God is poured into our heart through the Holy Spirit. Christian life is, therefore, not possible without a relationship with God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and his Holy Spirit. This is one big difference between the Christian religion and other religions. Whereas other religions present salvation and godliness solely as a matter between the individual believer and God, the Christian religion agrees that it is indeed a matter between the individual and God and adds that we have two heavenly advocates on our side. First we have our Lord Jesus Christ who redeems us and reconciles us to the Father. And then we also have "another advocate" who carries on the work of our sanctification.

The business is not over the moment we believe in Christ and are justified before God. In fact the business of being a Christian has only begun. From then on, the rest of our lives should be devoted to the business of sanctification, the process of being holy as God is holy. This is where the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of whom we celebrated last Sunday, becomes the guiding principle of our lives. Through the Spirit God's love is poured into our hearts, through the Spirit we learn to love God and our neighbor as Jesus teaches us. As we return to ordinary Time and to the daily challenges of living the Christian life, let us know that we are not alone in the struggle. God the Father is on our side, Jesus Christ the Son of God is on our side, the Holy Spirit the Power of God Most High is on our side. Now this is hope, this is hope that never disappoints.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Proverbs 8:22-31

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

May 26, 2013

靈 修 生 活

天 主 聖 三 節

白 正 龍 神 父

聖神的降臨不但加強並堅定宗徒們的信德，使他們能勇敢地宣講基督的復活，且能在重要及關鍵時刻，不為人的利誘、威嚇以及生命的危險，昂然表示，首先應聽從天主的命，並在受鞭打之後，仍很高興地離開公議會，因為他們認為自己配為「耶穌」這名字受侮辱。他們仍每天不斷在聖殿內，或挨戶施教，宣講耶穌基督的福音(宗五)。

常言道：「有理走遍天下」。正如耶穌升天前所預許的，要因祂的名派遣聖神來，而聖神必要教訓我們一切，也使我們想起，基督對我們說的一切(若十四 26)；並且「這位真理之神來時，祂要把我們引入一切真理」(若十六 13)。

這位真理之神給與我們最大的真理，無非是證明，三位一體的天主就是富於仁慈的天主，因為祂(聖神)在我們內，使我們能在心中，稱讚天主為「阿爸，父啊」(羅八 15)，並且能使我們宣認「耶穌是主」(格前十二 3)，使我們成為天主的兒女，而「我們既是兒女，便是承繼者，是天主的承繼者，是基督的同承繼者」(羅八 17)。

正如教宗若望保祿二世，在他的「富於仁慈的天主」通諭中所說的：「基督將『父』啓示給我們的『這種啓示乃是有關天主性體的最深奧秘的啓示--一體而又三位』」(通諭 2)。天主三位一體的奧秘顯示了，天主就是「富於仁慈的天主」。完整地闡釋了天主是愛的真諦。而使我們認識天主是富於仁慈的天主，是因那在父懷裡的獨生子，為我們彰顯了祂，並使我們認識祂(同上 1)。然而天主聖三的「仁慈」事工則完全顯示在聖子---耶穌基督的身上。因為「由於基督的啓示，我們特別在天主對人的愛中認識祂：即在祂的廣愛世人中認識祂。也就是在這裡，祂的無形的性體，在一種特殊的情景下，變成可見的了。其可見的程度遠遠超過了籍着其他一切受造物所顯示出來的天主性體：天主性體是在基督身上，籍着基督的行動和言語，最後籍著十字架上的死亡及其復活，變成可見的了」(同上 2)。

天主聖三的奧跡完全展現在天主的救贖工程上，與我們人性有極密切的關係，意即使我們能確知我們的人性及其尊嚴。正如在「復活宣報」中，一再地講述天主救贖人性的用心，甚至乃稱許「罪」為幸運的罪，因為它為我們賺取了如此偉大的救主！徹底地顯示出天主聖三「愛」的奧跡。

耶穌基督啓示給我們，天主就是父、就是愛。這完全透澈地描述了，祂(天主)如何地富有仁慈。以親情的方式來實踐祂是愛，即可瞭解若望聖史的那句話：「天主竟這樣愛了世界，甚至賜下了自己的獨生子，使凡信祂的人，不至喪亡，反而獲得永生，因為天主沒有派遣子到世界上來審判世界，而是為叫世界籍著祂而獲救(若三, 16-20)」。因為祂「決不喜歡惡人喪亡，但卻喜歡惡人歸正，離開邪道，好能生存」(則三十三 11)；甚至「祂假裝看不見人罪，是為叫罪人悔改，的確，祂愛一切所有，不恨祂所造的，如果祂憎恨什麼，祂就不會造它。」(智十一 24-25)。

因此，我們由此更能瞭解耶穌在福音所講的「浪子回頭的比喻」。由這比喻中，我們不但了解並認識「富於仁慈的天主」，我們也明白了何謂「生命」；而良善的撒瑪里亞人的比喻，更是邀約我們如何去重視生命，如何慷慨地關懷天主所愛的子民，而印度加爾各答的德雷莎修女，正是我們這時代的先知，她見證了天主在人身上的愛之最深沈的意義，即只要我有能力，就應設法讓我們的弟兄姊妹過個符合人性尊嚴的瞬間生命。

天主聖三的奧跡，道出一場天主愛人，救人的工程，但這項奧跡也要求我們這些身為「祂」的肖像的人，要秉著基督聖言的教訓，和聖神內的真理，去宣揚並落實天主的愛。

摘自「教友生活周刊」

本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 三 年 五 月 廿 六 日

箴 8:22-31；羅 5:1-5；若 16:12-15