

The Trinity: God's Closeness

**Homily by Rev. Robert Gillelan
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There are times we pause and reflect on our parents with grateful hearts as we remember all the sacrifices that they made on our behalf and all the different ways, great and small, that they showed their love for us. And I think that's a way to celebrate this Sunday of the Holy Trinity: looking back with grateful hearts and thanking God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Trinity, for all the sacrifices they have made on our behalf and all of the ways that they have shown us their love.

In the readings today, especially our first reading, we kind of get that started when we go back about 3,500 years to maybe the 15th century BC, where we see God and Moses having this conversation on Mount Sinai for a second time. The Israelites have worshiped falsely the golden calf, and Moses is upset, and he breaks the Ten Commandments, and so he has to do it all over again.

He goes up on Mount Sinai with fresh tablets, and there God speaks to him. And God identifies Himself as being a God who is merciful and gracious and slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity, and let's face it, that's everything you want in your God.

So it's good news. And Moses says, "Look, I really need your help because this is a stiff-necked people. They are very stubborn. I'm going to need your help." And, of course, they agree, and salvation history moves forward.

But when we look at this in a broader sense, what's happening here?

This is a transcendent God, a God up in the heavens, who is initiating, who is desiring this relationship with these people, really representing humanity. This transcendent God wants a relationship with humanity.

He chooses the Israelites. And in order that this relationship, this personal, interpersonal relationship, will work, God gives them Ten Commandments.

And we remember that God said, “If you follow these ten things, we're going to have a good relationship. If you don't follow these ten things, we're not going to have a good relationship.” This is God covenanting with His people Israel and entering more fully into the human experience as a transcendent God.

Okay, now we move forward. Fast forward 1,500 years to Jesus. Jesus is not transcendent, is He? Jesus is imminent. He is God with us, walking around on this earth, flesh and blood, God incarnate.

And now God, who has come down from the heavens, who is with us, wants an even deeper personal relationship with humanity when Jesus chooses His twelve disciples. That relationship gets pretty deep because He calls them friends.

So now humanity is on a friendly basis with God, who is walking around down here on earth. In order that this relationship works out, Jesus teaches His disciples many things, giving primacy to love, teaching them how to love God and one another.

And to cap all of this off, to show how much God loves us, Jesus, God incarnate, dies on the cross for our salvation, remembering that Jesus said that's the greatest thing you can do: for one person to lay down his or her life for a friend.

And then Jesus ascends to the Father, and the Holy Spirit comes to us. The Holy Spirit, not transcendent anymore but not really imminent in the way that Jesus was, but God in pure spiritual form. Jesus tells us that His Spirit will be with us to guide us into all truth and to remind us of everything that Jesus said and did, and to sanctify us, to help us, to nudge us in the right direction so that we may live our lives in holiness, in God's grace and friendship, and also, as we hear in so many of our liturgical prayers, to bring the Church, the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church, into a stronger union.

You know, if there's anything we can say about our God, it is that our God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God—is very

persistent. For millennia, this God in three Persons has shown this burning desire to be close to humanity and to be one with humanity and has done everything in His power to make that happen.

You know, if that's not something that you really resonate with, well, maybe try this: God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, could not imagine this universe without you in it.

And then how about God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer? Saint Augustine tells us that if you were the only person on earth somehow in need of redemption, Jesus would die on the cross for you alone.

And then the Holy Spirit, who is with us always, reminds us of this love—the love of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—which is almost unfathomable in our minds. That is the love in which we live. That's the love that, especially when we celebrate this Eucharist, is being poured into our hearts.

So with grateful hearts, let us praise the Holy Trinity, undivided unity, Holy God, mighty God, God immortal, be adored.

Happy Feast Day.