

Trinity Sunday, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus said to his disciples:

'I still have many things to say to you
but they would be too much for you now.
But when the Spirit of truth comes
he will lead you to the complete truth,
since he will not be speaking as from himself
but will say only what he has learnt;
and he will tell you of the things to come.
He will glorify me,
since all he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.
Everything the Father has is mine;
that is why I said:
*All he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.*'

(John 16:12-15)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The early Christians struggled to understand the belief that God is both one and three. Many great councils of the Church were held to clarify what this meant and to find the language with which to describe the trinitarian relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. It was not until the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 that the doctrine of the Trinity was defined.
- Many of the prayers of the Church express our belief in a triune God (three persons in one). One of the greatest and most simple of these prayers is the sign of the cross, in which we dedicate ourselves 'in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.
- St Augustine described the Trinity in terms of the Lover, the Beloved and the Love that exists between them.
- St Patrick reportedly used the shamrock to explain the three persons in one God to the pagans of Ireland.

EXPLORING THE WORD

The people of Israel were unique among the nations of the ancient world in that they held to a belief in one God. But Jesus speaks of this God as 'Abba', Father. There is an implied relationship with this God. Jesus also speaks of the Spirit, and again, there is a relationship implied between Jesus and the Spirit, for this Spirit will continue to speak the words of God and of Jesus and will glorify them. Thus begins the early church's deep reflection on the mystery of Jesus and the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. This relationship was ultimately formulated in what we now call the Trinity.

In this text, Jesus is not simply addressing those present with him but all those who will search for the truth down the centuries to come. All of us are led to complete truth and understanding through the actions of the Spirit, who directs us to the Father and the Son:

At the heart of the mystery of the Trinity is a Father whose love is incarnated in the Son who gives life to the world, and in the mutual love which exists between the Father and the Son and touches our lives as the Holy Spirit.

(F. Maloney, *This is the Gospel of the Lord, Year C*, Sydney: St Paul Publications, 1991, p. 115).

- Explore the ways in which Jesus embodies the love of God.
- How does the Spirit continue to lead us to the truth?
- You could look at some depictions of the Trinity in art (an internet search will yield many results). Compare the classical representations with some more contemporary images of the Trinity. Discuss what these suggest to you of the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What are the things that have led you to search for the complete truth?
- What have you learnt so far?
- Where do you feel the Spirit leading you now?
- There are many different images that people have of God. God can be a distant, cosmic figure, something of a Santa Claus from whom we ask favours, or someone to turn to only in times of trouble. Explore together some of the ways you have thought about God during your life. Has your understanding changed over time? What have been the significant moments that have led you to a new understanding of God?
- Start and end each day with a sign of the cross this week. Contemplate the meaning of this action and live each day 'in God's name'.
- One beautiful prayer to the Trinity is:

*Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.*

Memorise this prayer and pray it often this week.

