

Reflections on the Trinity

The existence of God in the form of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost provides a very practical and useful model for human life. The best of whatever we can possess here on earth will always be a dim reflection of that which the Holy Trinity has enjoyed from eternity past, into the present, and onward without end into the future.

Think, first of all, about the three Persons of the Trinity as existing together in a condition of love and fellowship that has never changed. It is a place of uninterrupted fulfillment and contentment in each other's company. Such an idea is almost impossible for us to grasp, because we live very much within the bounds of time. We spend a few good hours with a friend, but the hour arrives when we must call it quits, and move on to something else. The experience fades into the realm of memory. We can certainly cherish it on that level, but we cannot continue to live in it. This remains true of every human relationship, and all experience. There is always the shadow of termination. We cannot prolong the glories of the springtime, the liberty of summer, the sensations of the fall, or the stark beauty of winter. The consequence is that we live always with a tinge of regret. Although we are grateful for the hope that unpleasant times, long or short, will only be temporary, we wish that we could clutch and hold onto the best moments we encounter.

The members of the Trinity live in unending, unchanging, and delightful contemplation of one another. When Jesus prayed for His disciples, He referred to this: *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world* (Jn 17:24). Marriage can be an earthly context for such an experience. Two people, through mutual love, respect, and admiration, like twin stars revolving peacefully around one another, living life out in a holy, private place known only to them. The thought of boredom doesn't enter, because they never need to look outside the marriage to find their primary resources for life. It is all contained within the walls of the relationship. And best friendships, faithful and long-term, certainly have this same element, as well.

Next, consider the element of submission. *I and the Father are one*, said Jesus (10:31), but He also said, *my Father is greater than I* (14:28b). The Father has the preeminence by way of authority. The Son in obedience to the Father performs the work of redemption. The Spirit, sent forth by the Father and the Son, does Their bidding. And yet, as the Creed stated, "the whole three Persons are co- eternal together and co-equal." In human terms, servanthood can never im-

ply equality, but the Holy Trinity *always* expresses equality in terms of service. What does this tell us? Hierarchy was built into everything by the God who is Himself hierarchy. Authority doesn't have to be a bad word. Neither does obedience. The Father does not abuse His position of preeminence. The Son does not put because of His submission to the Father. The Spirit does not complain about His mission to carry out the will of the Father and the Son.

Lastly, consider communication and the Trinity: *...I speak to the world those things which I heard from [God]* (8:26b) said Jesus to His enemies; To His Father, He prayed: *For I have given them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them...* (17:8); and to the disciples, he said: *...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak...* (16:13). The great heavenly Council that is the Trinity has met in session before time began, and they have shared among Themselves every detail of the universe of their making. Perhaps our own names have been spoken among Them. Relationship and communication are inseparable. Happy is the home where there is liberty for free expression. Happy is an exchange of words where there is no room for misunderstanding. Happy are those moments when we succeed in saying what we mean, and meaning what we say, to everyone's benefit. Never did the Father hurt the feelings of the Son. Never did the Son address the Father with impertinence. Never was the Spirit given directions that were uncertain and disorganized.

In God the Three-in-One we find these three qualities that we can emulate on a very human level: 1. Satisfaction in relationships that nothing need ever change, providing a sacred place of growth and development that cannot be touched by anything outside it. 2. The principle of authority and submission which, rather than being an imposition, are the key to liberty, when they are operating as they were intended to do. 3. And communication, filling all the earth as it does in a thousand different ways every moment, providing the means by which our hearts, and thoughts, and plans are shared among us, and brought to life.

As we contemplate these things, we learn more and more about Him who created all things, and created us, just as we are. For all things reflect the very nature of the One who exists eternally...

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.