

Trinity Sunday Year “C”

May 21-22, 2016

*Quaeram faciem tuam semper ardentem.*

Readings: Proverbs 8:22-31; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

It is perhaps the supreme test of any homilist or theologian to address effectively the sublime mystery of the Trinity in fewer than ten minutes. After all, the mystery has confounded the brightest theologians in all of history. “On the Trinity” was the second longest work of Saint Augustine. He toiled on it intermittently for sixteen years. The mystery has left perplexed even the brightest theologians in all of history.

“Dear reader, whenever you are certain about something as I am go forward with me; whenever you hesitate, seek with me; whenever you discover that you have gone wrong come back to me; or if I have gone wrong, call me back to you. In this way we will travel along the street of love together as we make our way toward him of whom it is said, ‘Seek his face always.’”<sup>1</sup>

Is there any value to thinking about God, or is it a futile exercise in comparison to praying to God? Our Catholic intellectual tradition clearly holds that there is value in thinking about God, for our better understanding leads to a more complete loving. Another way of looking at this is in the idea of seeking God. More than an intellectual exercise, it is much more akin to a longing of the heart.

O Lord my God, my one hope, hearken to me, lest through weariness I be unwilling to seek You, “*but that I may always ardently seek Your face.*”<sup>2</sup> Jesus said that the Spirit will guide us to all truth. Augustine knew that we would cleave to God and see the Holy Trinity only when we burn with love.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 1.3.5

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ps 105.4, Ps 24:6 “Seek out the LORD and his might; constantly seek his face.”

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV.28.51

The ascent of the human mind to God is an ascent to beauty and truth itself. God is known so that He may be loved more purely. So let us consider this question—Do we burn with love for God so as to know Him better?

We host many Confirmations here, and I often see the looks on the faces of the students as they exit the sanctuary following pictures with the bishop, or while they are taking pictures with family members in one of the shrines following Mass. It is truly a joyous day in their lives, and reminds me of re-capturing that joy in mine.

Often theology, our understanding of things, flows from our experience, given our ability to look back and reflect. Theology reaches maturity by additions.<sup>4</sup> Truth becomes clearer with time.

In grappling with the Trinity, Augustine reasoned that since we were created in God’s likeness and image, thus there must be some “image” of the trinity in each of us. Scripture teaches us that God is love. In order to have love, there must be a lover, the one loved, and the action of love itself. In order to be love, God must at the same time be the object, the subject and the verb.

We are never going to exhaust our knowing in this life, nor our loving. Finding will only lead to further seeking—let us seek as those who are going to find, and find as those who desire to continue to seek His face. Somewhere in that delicate balance, we will grow in our love for God.

If we tire of seeking God’s face amidst the mystery, we have truly ceased living a Christian life. In effect, we have stopped growing, and we will begin rather quickly to slip backwards.

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<sup>4</sup> cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 31, XXVI

We must never tire of seeking, for in so doing, we will continue to find and more importantly, be found. For God will always continue to seek us, to draw us closer in Communion with the Blessed Trinity.

As Jesus noted in today's Gospel, there is much more to say, but ultimately the Holy Spirit will guide us to all truth. Let us never tire of seeking the face of God each and every day in the sublime mystery of the Holy Trinity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.