



The Most Holy Trinity 26 May 2024 : Reflection by Mgr Daniel McHugh

“Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)

We have all been moved this week as we have heard the outcome of the enquiry into contaminated blood. We heard that 3000 people have died as a result of receiving infected blood products in the 1970's, 80's, 90's and 30,000 were infected with deadly viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis. It is said that even now an infected person dies every four days. It was striking to hear how families have been impacted on having gone through so much. One family spoke of this from another perspective: the appreciation they felt to have the outcome of the enquiry and how it was “an opportunity to hold each other closer and hold those lost even tighter.” I was so struck by what the family of “Perry” said on air that I rushed to write it down.

I recall it now as I begin my reflection on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity because the Feast gives us an opportunity for appreciation too: to enter more fully into the mystery of God's love that we are celebrating. We can get so carried away by theologising that we forget the most important aspect: it is about becoming part of the eternal Trinity, entering into and living in the Divine Family.

Only yesterday I was reminded through a Facebook post from 2 years ago of the Baptism of baby Lahna: The proud parents, their parish priest and I (having performed the Baptism) stood before the Altar to record that special day. The caption beneath the picture had these words “A beautiful moment: Lahna becomes a Child of God”. The parents and the grandparents, and other members of the family are fulfilling the words Jesus spoke to the disciples as recorded for us in St Matthew's Gospel on Trinity Sunday. Jesus commissions them to baptise and to teach: the mission of Jesus is now to be taken to all people in the name of the Holy Trinity:

“Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.” As baptised Christians, we share in the life of the Blessed Trinity and seek to invite others to share in God's love.

The first step in passing on Faith to our children is Baptism. Later they are introduced to the person of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion: in these weeks I have seen

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Facebook posts of my young cousins celebrating their First Holy Communion Day, the girls dressed like brides as they commit personally to follow Jesus. Again the growth in the love relationship to Father, Son and Spirit is marked in a Liturgical Rite: First Holy Communion, an occasion marked by other festivities too. Then, I am seeing posts of pictures taken at Confirmation in my former parish: the anointing in the Holy Spirit traditionally marked by a visit from the Bishop to conduct the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the young person taking the name of a Saint they admire, and setting out as young adults to witness in their turn to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is much to say about the way we grow in our relationship to the Trinity and how this is marked liturgically by Sacraments e.g. the Sacrament of Marriage and the Sacrament of Ordination to Priesthood.

Indeed our whole earthly life is lived in God and with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: that life is nurtured in prayer and by moments in the Church's Liturgical Year that highlight the importance of this relationship. Sometimes the love relationship comes to the fore, as it has done for those families impacted by the infected blood scandal, in moments of crisis. An example for me this week was when I was called on the phone by a former parishioner whose mother is nearing death and in Hospital. He was anxious as he wanted the Anointing of the Sick for her and wasn't sure how to reach the Hospital Chaplains. I was very happy to be able to help him reach the Priest. It is a wonderful Sacrament in which we are united to the Holy Trinity on our last journey. There are a number of dimensions to the Ceremony: the lighted candle; the special blessing and central the anointing with the oil of the sick and these words:

"Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit."

Response: **Amen**

"May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."

Response: **Amen**

Father Ferlita in his commentary quotes this prayer in his conclusion and I think it sums up our sense of thanksgiving for this Solemnity:

*"Father,
You sent your Word to bring us truth
and your Spirit to make us holy.
Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.
Help us to worship you, one God
in three persons, by
proclaiming and living our
faith in you."
Amen*

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