

May 27 2018

Trinity Sunday & Memorial Day

“We are children of God and heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

Our task is not to seek love, but to remove all the barriers we have built against it.

Background

The word, Trinity, was first coined in the 3rd century by one of the early Greek Fathers named Tertullian as a way of trying to understand the repeated references Jesus made about his "Father" and his ending "The Holy Spirit." He saw a three-someness there. The Greek word he used was "pericoreosis" meaning "dancing" - not dancers, dancing. What he intuited was that God as Trinity is to be understood in terms of relationships, of energy flowing inbetween, of influencing and being influenced.

This is a good description of life - a constant moving and flowing and influencing and being influenced. Science describes this as the action of the universe - a constant flow of planets, stars, and atoms all influencing and being influenced by each other. The action of Trinity is the action of the universe is the action of Trinity. Experiencing life is experiencing Trinity is experiencing life. One such life experience is that of loving and being loved.

"A few years ago, Dave Anderson heard something on the radio that struck him. 'Love is a choice, not a feeling.' It hit him that he had been distracted in his relationships with his family. He decided to change this.

"When he got home, he kissed his wife and said, 'You look really good in that new sweater. That's a great color for you.' Sara was taken aback, wondering if David was digging at her for buying more new clothes. But when he smiled, the genuine compliment began to settle in.

"The next morning, David brought her breakfast in bed. And she thought to herself, who is this man, and what has he done with my husband. Love is a choice, not a feeling. And so it went. For two weeks at the beach house, they were relaxed and happy. His daughter, Shannon, once asked her mother, 'Mommy, did daddy win something?'

"One night Sara suddenly stopped and looked at David with the saddest expression. He asked, 'What's the matter?' She began to cry, 'Do you know something I don't know?' 'What do you mean?' 'The checkup I had a few weeks ago. Did Dr. Lewis tell you something about me?'

Dave, you have been so good to me. Is there something wrong with me?' David wrapped her tight in his arms and said, 'No, there's nothing wrong with you. I'm just starting to get something right with me.'"

Loving relationships is a beautiful experience of Trinity. One might think we would always opt to for this kind of relationship. but not always so. We can easily put up barriers against it. Rumi was a Muslim Mystic, a Sufi, in 13th century Persia. It was he who said, "*Our task is not to seek Love, but to remove all the barriers we have built against it.*"

Barriers to Loving Relationships

One barrier is the fear of Intimacy. It is a major obstacle to relationships - to the flow of Trinity. Intimacy is the foundation of good relationships. It involves self-revelation - a revealing of myself to you and of you revealing yourself to me. This is Trinity work - our not remaining distant and anonymous to each other. God loves us by revealing God's self to us. We love each other by revealing ourselves to each other - between husband and wife, between friends and colleagues, brothers and sisters, parents and children.

This sounds easy, but the truth is, we are easily scared of intimacy. The core human fear is that if people really knew us, they wouldn't love us anymore. So, it is hide ourselves and pretend to be someone we're not. And this creates a problem. When someone comes up to us and says, I love you, we can't believe them, because we haven't revealed ourselves to them. In the back of our minds we say, no, you don't love me, you just love who you think I am; you love who I'm pretending to be. If you really knew me, you wouldn't love me anymore." Choosing isolation blocks the flow of Trinity within us.

Observing Memorial Day

Today is the feast of Trinity Sunday. It is also Memorial Day Weekend. For some, this brings sadness at the loss of loved ones. For others it evokes honoring those in the military for what they gave. both sentiments are expressed in "Flanders Field":

*In Flanders field the poppies blow,
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky,
The larks still bravely singing fly.*

*Scarce heard amid the guns below,
We are the dead. Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn,
Saw sunset glow.
Loved and were loved:
and now we lie In Flanders field!*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you, from failing hands, we throw
The torch: be yours - to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders field.*

How do Trinity Sunday and Memorial Day come together? In many ways, I suppose. I offer one: Memorial Day will more and more become a commemoration of peoples living together in Mercy, Compassion and Forgiveness when we allow ourselves to live more and more within the loving flow of Trinity.

**“We are children of God and heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him
so that we may also be glorified with him.”**

This is Memorial Day and the Feast of the Trinity. They are about us.

So, Happy Feast Days, Everyone!