

The Most Holy Trinity

This Fathers' Day I'm remembering my father who was born 100 years ago in New Orleans, Louisiana, which had a population then about the same as it has now, around 390,000 people. My mother was born a year later in Clements, Minnesota, which had a population then about the same as it has now, around 200 people. My parents met through work, but my siblings and I often marvel at the odds that these two people would find each other, fall in love and establish our family. If you're a person of faith, you look back at something like that and realize God must have had a plan that no one could possibly have understood 100 years ago. Today that mystery makes sense.

I'm sure you have similar stories in your life. You understand something later that you could not at the time. A person you meet, a book you read, a quote you hear may bestow insight into a mystery of the past. It's not just something that happens to you, but the timing of it that finally reveals some truth.

After the Last Supper, still at table in the upper room, Jesus delivered a jam-packed discourse to his disciples, telling them everything they would need to know after his death the next day. He knew it was too much. At the beginning of today's gospel where he is exploring the mystery of the Trinity, how everything that the Father has is his, and how the Spirit will take from what belongs to Jesus and declare it to them, Jesus says, "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now." After his death, after the resurrection, after Pentecost, then they would see the truth, but the mystery wouldn't have made much sense at this time.

Today we see more clearly how Jesus continues teaching after his death, and how the Holy Spirit guides our actions every day. We believe in the Trinity: the Father who created us, the Son who redeemed us, and the Spirit who enlightens us. We keep learning, and sometimes a new circumstance makes us reflect on the past in new ways.

Last week the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education made public a booklet entitled, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education." This is the first time the Vatican has taken up at some length - about 25 pages - the question of gender identity. When Pope Sixtus V created this Congregation in 1588, he couldn't have foreseen that one day it would take up the topic of gender theory. The booklet bravely enters a controversial field where people have separated gender from sex - positing that you may choose your gender even if your body has defined you as a different sex. The Vatican sees problems with this, but it frames the study in three parts: listening, reasoning and proposing. Even the booklet's title calls the work a path of dialogue. The media coverage has been controversial, but at least we have something now to discuss to discern better how the Holy Spirit is guiding the church today.

Whether you are marveling at the works of the Holy Spirit in your own life or seeking guidance, we believe that the same Spirit is still active in the Church and will lead us to truth. Sometimes the truth is something we are unprepared to face. But it's usually better to receive it. Truth reveals the plan of God. When life is mysterious, only the truth make sense.

Sunday, June 16, 2019