

Memorial Day marks the traditional beginning of summer. School is out. Pools are open. Vacations are underway. Last Monday morning we held observances at the St. Munchin Cemetery and the Cameron Veterans' Memorial. There we recalled the reason for Memorial Day: We remember those who gave their lives defending our country. When a family suffers the killing of one of its members, it is almost too much to bear. When you multiply that by millions of families, it really is too much to bear. We hold annual services to remember the dead, but many people cannot or do not go; they celebrate Memorial Day on a lake or at a picnic. On one hand, we need to remember what this day is about, but on the other hand it is hard to bear the impact of so many deaths on so many families.

At times life overwhelms us with things that are bad or things that are good. A lot of people dream of winning the lottery, but coming into a large sum of money all at once is not always a good thing. If you cannot manage money well when you have a little; you will not manage money well when you have a lot. Some people misuse credit cards; they view the card as a license to spend, rather than a promise to pay. Some of us don't handle love very well. Someone may want to give everything to you – their heart, their body, their possessions – but it may cause more problems than joy. Money, credit and love are good things, but if they come too strong too fast with too much, we can be overwhelmed by them.

Even in the spiritual life, you can get too much too quick. Some people race for answers from a new book, a new preacher, or a new church. They catch fire at first, but then the feeling fades, the Spirit lessens, the help they got goes away, and they lose the good they received.

We think that a large quantity of something will make us happy, but large quantities can bring trouble. They can bring poverty, regret and grief.

On Trinity Sunday this year, we're hearing a gospel about the Father who glorified the Son and sent the Holy Spirit. This passage comes at the Last Supper, when Jesus says farewell to the disciples. In John's gospel, his speech goes on for several chapters, and it could have gone longer, but it doesn't. Jesus could have said more, but he didn't. Instead, he says, "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now." He did not want to overwhelm them.

We sometimes wish we could hear more word from God. But one reason we may not hear it is that we cannot always bear it. God does not overwhelm us with more experience and insight than we can bear. God understands our limitations, even when we do not understand God.

When life poses questions, we want answers. But sometimes the answers don't come all at once; they come later, when we can handle them. In the meantime, we strive to live carefully, seek help responsibly, be patient, and keep focused on the distant goal. The Holy Trinity knows us, cares for us, and helps us as we are able. To know more of the mystery of life and death may be more than we humans can bear.