

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, May 26th 2013

Our First Reading from the Book of Proverbs is a long poetic reflection of the co-eternity within the Trinity. Before this thing, that tangible and familiar creation, before the sea was set, some personal presence was. After this series of creational illustrations, this “Was” states that it found delight in the interplay with the human race, imagine that! We interpret this “was-ness” to be the Holy Spirit, whose descending upon the Apostles, we celebrated last Sunday.

It can sound as if the Holy Spirit was like a little child or elf playing in God’s backyard delighting God by tumbling or just getting down and dirty. It is poetic and serious. God is more than meets the eye, but through the play-work of the Spirit we can see something of the “Was-ness” and “Is-ness” of God.

In the five chapters of John’s Gospel containing the Last Discourse, Jesus is pictured as giving, handing over, and commending many things from his Father to his disciples. In the few verses from this section, which we hear in today’s Gospel, Jesus is telling his friends that what he is giving he has as his and the Father has shared all with him. He is the Truth and has passed and will continue to pass this Truth, this existence on into the world. Truth does not allow us to be righteously aggressive nor defensively secure. He, Jesus, as Truth, lived vulnerably and available to be received and or rejected.

Jesus is the “What” of the Trinity which is offered for the acceptance or dismissal of humanity. In our disrespectful youth, when a friend would offer something, holding it out in their hand, the fun was to bring your flattened hand and up from underneath, knock it flying. A good way to lose friends, I would say. What would happen if that friend did the hand-offering of a gift a second time — foolish on him.

It seems one way to get a quick, but insufficient glimpse of this mysterious Trinity, is to watch how the creative Hand of God keeps offering, with delight, the gifts of life, personality, physical, psychological, for us and to us. The Spirit of God seems to be how the material, spiritual, all are handed again and again whether we slap it away or reverently take it in. Here is a little hint. We can be sure something we have or something we are, is a gift when we desire to hand it on, hand it over, hand it without strings. This interior freedom and desire is an experience of how the Spirit of God plays its part in the Trinity. God gives the Son and then gives the Spirit so we can know and receive the Son in Whom all else is created and handed to us. The Spirit is given so that we can see, know, receive all the other gifts in the Son, in Christ, and then are gently moved to keep them moving along.

We can slap, refuse, deny and reject, but Love moves outward, respecting the slapping hands, and works to perhaps find away into our other hands. So it is all about being loved in action. God is not a thought, a good idea. God is a triplex of offering, receiving and continuing. The Trinity is indeed a mystery and so is how patient, faithful and insistently consistent God is, was and always.

“Since you are children of God, God has sent into your hearts the spirit of His Son, the Spirit Who cries out, Abba, Father.”

Larry Gillick, S.J.