

Rev. Joseph Keating  
Holy Trinity Sunday (A)  
Homily

In recent months, we have been thru a lot. Separation from one another, fear of an invisible viral threat, greed evidenced by empty shelves, anxiety and anger about an uncertain future. We miss our friends, and we miss full participation in the sacraments. This is what we long for.

In recent days, we have seen even greater chaos in our country. Hatred of our fellow man, acts of violence, selfishness and opportunistic theft, destruction of our neighbors' property, contempt for the law and its officers. In response to a brutal injustice, we have witnessed overreaction by some and indifference by others. We all want justice, even if we don't agree on how it will be accomplished. This too, is what we long for.

What have these simultaneous crises taught us? Do we have ears to hear? What have the corona virus and the riots taught us about ourselves as humans?

In every human heart, there is a longing. It's hard to describe. It's a desire for joy, but not fleeting pleasure. A desire to quench our thirst, but not for a drink. A desire for peace, but not just absence of conflict. A desire for justice, but not just retribution. A desire to be in communion, but not just to stand next to someone. A desire for equality, but not just an equal amount of material wealth. We feel a certain emptiness when a great party comes to an end, and everyone goes home, and we long for a celebration that never ends. And yet, we find nothing in the natural world that completely satisfies this longing. There are plenty of things with which we try to satisfy this longing, but it's ultimately a desire that nothing in this world can fulfill.

I'm talking about the desire for God. It's a desire that musicians have sung about in every age. Two songs I can think of off the top of my head, "Everybody's got a hungry heart" by Bruce Springsteen, and "God-shaped hole" by Plumb. Both songs speak of the human heart's search for a perfect love that can satisfy that deepest desire.

Because of this desire, we go searching for an infinite being who can satisfy the desire. In ancient times, people created idols to worship, grand temples in which to pray to them, and mythologies to explain the world and our place in it. Some of the smartest ancient philosophers were even able to figure out that, if there is a God, he must be one, and he must be almighty.

And those philosophers were right. But they still didn't *know* this God. They didn't know his name. They didn't know much about him at all—they just had an inkling that he was there.

Then, that God did something amazing. He revealed himself to mankind. Slowly but surely, he began to call certain men and speak to them: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses. And to Moses, he finally gave his name: I AM. In Hebrew, Yahweh or Jehovah. The God who simply is, and who created all that is.

You see, for all the marvelous things that humans have been able to create, discover, and build, we would not be able to discover who this God is on our own. He had to reveal himself to us so that we could know him. We had to **receive** God's self-revelation. We didn't create this God out of clay or wood; we received knowledge of him. But that's not the end of the story. This God continued to reveal himself to us.

When was the last time you went on a date? For me, it was about 13 years ago, so I'm a bit rusty on how dates are supposed to go, but maybe you can remember what it was like to get to know someone special. It doesn't happen all on the first date! A relationship takes months and years to unfold. You get to know the other person little by little. That's the way it is with God. We couldn't handle it all at once, on the first date! God slowly revealed himself to mankind in a way that we could **receive** it.

Think of that moment when Moses approached the burning bush and heard the name of God for the first time: I AM. That was a big moment in the relationship. The next big moment in our relationship with God was the Incarnation—the coming of the Christ in the flesh! Jesus was foretold by the prophets, but even they didn't quite understand that the Messiah would be God's own Son. God had to reveal that to us. And lastly, the final big moment in our relationship with God,

the sending of the Holy Spirit, which we just celebrated last week. Now we know who this God is! He's one God, but he's a **community** of three persons.

In this community, there is perfect equality, for the three persons of the Trinity all share equally in the divine substance. In other words, each person of the Trinity is God. That's what we mean when we say in the creed, that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father." He is of the same divine substance. Paul's letter to the Colossians says of Jesus, "in him dwells the whole fullness of deity."<sup>1</sup> And in Jesus' own words, "All that the Father has is mine."<sup>2</sup> That means that not only was Jesus a man, but he is also God.

Furthermore, each person of the Trinity is eternal. There was not a time when the Son did not exist. He is "born of the Father before all ages." There was not a time when the Holy Spirit did not exist. St. Augustine once reported that some people dared to ask, "What was God the Father doing before he begat the Son?" to which he answered, jokingly, "He was preparing Hell for those who ask such questions!" The Holy Trinity has always existed, and always will exist. Remember, God's name is simply, I AM. In every moment, I AM.

We couldn't have known who this God is by using our own intelligence alone. That is how we know that this God we worship is not one of our own making. Rather, we received our knowledge of him.

Not only do we receive God's self-revelation, but we also receive our own being from him. You see, brothers and sisters, we are made in his image and likeness! That explains our longing for community, our longing to live forever, our longing for perfect beauty, goodness, truth and peace. We long for God! It's no wonder we spend our lives chasing these things, because we want God to be within us!

And he offers himself to us, each and every day. Most especially in the Holy Mass, when we **receive** the Holy Eucharist, the real presence of the Son, into our very bodies. And there, dwelling within us, our God makes us like him. He transforms us from within, calling us to become like himself! God has made you and me in his own image, and he calls us to share in his likeness.

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:9

<sup>2</sup> John 16:15

If God is holy, then he calls us to a life of holiness. Scripture says, “be Holy, as the Lord your God is holy!”<sup>3</sup>

If God is love, then he calls us to grow in the virtue of love. St. John says, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”<sup>4</sup>

If God is one, then he calls us to be united. Jesus himself prayed for us, saying, “Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are.”<sup>5</sup>

If God is a communion of persons, we are called to live in communion with one another. St. John writes, “If we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of his Son Jesus cleanses us from all sin.”<sup>6</sup>

If God is a co-equal Trinity, then we are called to share an equal human dignity, regardless of race. St. Paul writes, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>7</sup>

I could go on, but I think it’s clear: we who have received our being from the Holy Trinity, bear his seal upon our souls. “He made us, we belong to him.”<sup>8</sup> We receive our identity from the Holy Trinity, for we are made in his image, and we are destined to become like the Holy Trinity.

What is essential to human life? What nourishment must we receive to sustain both body and soul? We reach for food when our bodies get hungry. But God himself is the answer to every hungry heart. With St. Augustine we cry out, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

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<sup>3</sup> Leviticus 19:2

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4:7

<sup>5</sup> John 17:11

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 1:7

<sup>7</sup> Galatians 3:28

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 100:3

This is why churches must always remain open. We are not merely sacks of meat, made for material goods. We are human. And we are made for God.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, amen.