

"Trinity and Personal Witness"

Feast of the Holy Trinity

Homily of May 26, 2002

by Fr. Brian Joyce

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity, which brings a lot of pictures and images to my mind. The first one is of a triangle. Somehow, that goes with the Trinity. The second one is (In fact, I'm wearing them.) of Irish shamrocks, with the legend of St. Patrick teaching about the Trinity with shamrocks. The third is a picture of three gentlemen sitting side by side, holding hands, with clouds all around them. I saw that depiction of the Trinity in the cathedral in Mexico City in 1960, and the guide told us that it had been condemned by the Vatican because it was heresy and misrepresented the Trinity. But I think it is still there.

Actually all those images are way off the mark and not very helpful. For example, God as a geometric pattern, a triangle, doesn't do much good for me. And God as a Celtic plant doesn't do a lot of good for me. And God as celestial triplets does no good for me. What we celebrate and name as a Trinity is a much deeper reality than that. It says first of all, we believe in one living, awesome God, the same as in the history of Judaism and of Islam. There is one God, faithful, living and true. But this God doesn't live in isolation and in solitary splendor, but in a vital vibrant community that we don't fully understand, and in relationship. And we know that because the way we meet and experience God in our own lives has been, first of all, we experience God as the One Who gives us life, our Author, our Creator, our Sustainer. Just by existence we think of God as Creator. But at the same time, there has been a breakthrough of the presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that Jesus, in Whom we see God and hear Jesus praying to God as "Abba," or "Daddy." And finally, we experience the life-giving spirit of God, the spirit of God that gives us energy and gives us insight and bonds us together as a human community, bonds us together as a baptized community. We really get to know God best through one another. It's through the personal and communal journey of one another. I think of my parents. I think of parishoners I have known. I think of teachers I have had. I think of people who have shared with me their own experience. That's where I get to know something about God. It's never from a book or all alone.

That's why we think it's a very good weekend to hear from those newly baptized who joined our Church at Easter and have something to share of their personal communal journey with us. At this Mass I am going to invite John Gullickson. John and his family moved here two years ago from Washington D.C. His religious background was thin, a few trips to some Unitarian Churches. But I have to let him share the rest of his journey

with us..... John.....

"Seven years ago I noticed an odd habit with my Catholic future wife. When we went to the mega-mall, in the parking lot, instead of being like me and looking for spaces at the very back end of the parking lot, she would drive right up to the front of the entrance to the mall, to the very, very front, and she would look for spaces there. And, to my surprise, she really did find spaces up there sometimes. And I kind of thought to myself, "What audacity she has, looking for spaces at the very front of the mall!"

Well, having gone through the RCIA program through this church, I have gotten an understanding of how the Church works and also an understanding of why my wife sometimes behaves the way that she does. But let me tell you. The RCIA experience was a little bit different from what I expected. So, I want to tell you my top five myths and realities, what I expected and what the RCIA program actually was.

Myth #1: There is a Church-wide RCIA textbook with questions at the end of the chapters that every single RCIA group uses. And you have to study hard!

Reality: Although certain topics are repeated each year in the RCIA the people who put on the RCIA create creative exercises to demonstrate whatever it is that they happen to be teaching for that week. So it is different every year. So, it is very fresh.

Myth #2: The format of the RCIA is mostly lecture and it is serious and sombre.

Reality: Almost all of the RCIA sessions include group discussions that allow the candidates to express the spiritual growth that is occurring within them through the process of the RCIA.

Myth #3: Taking over 7 months, the RCIA process takes a long time. Reality:

One's spiritual growth is a life-long process which takes a long time but the RCIA is a fun, social, learning activity which breaks up your work week and goes by very, very fast.

Myth #4: It will be awkward talking about my inner relationship with God

amongst priests, sponsors and people that I barely know. Reality: Sharing feels good especially when one is sharing their spiritual beliefs in a comfortable supportive environment amongst friends.

Myth #5: The RCIA, its relationships and rituals, are, for all intents and

purposes, over at your Baptism. Reality: The RCIA is just the beginning. It encourages candidates to keep involved with the RCIA, ministries, and faith-

sharing groups.

Coming back to how I began this whole discussion, why does my Catholic wife decide to park in the front of the parking lot at the mega-mall, and not at the back of the parking lot, as I do? Father Joyce answered this question during the RCIA. "The point of the New and the Old Testaments," he said, "is that God... loves... you." This good news is one of the things that distinguishes Catholics from other religious groups. It is hard not to think positively and be optimistic when you remember that God...loves...you! I am glad there is a parking space for me in the front of the parking lot at Christ the King Church!"