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Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Date: Sunday, June 11, 2017 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** A
First Reading: Exodus 34:4b–6, 8–9
Responsorial Psalm: Daniel 3:52–55 | **Response:** Daniel 3:52b
Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11–13
Gospel Acclamation: Revelation 1:8
Gospel Reading: John 3:16–18
Preached at: the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Braamfontein **in the** Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa**.**

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. This feast asks us to grapple with the very identity of God. To ask, not only who God is, and what God is, but how he communicates to us because we can only be in relationship with someone who discloses themselves to the other. And God wants to be in relationship, so he is communicating with us. It is a fact that communication from the triune God is a means to communion with the triune God. God's purpose in revelation is to make friends with us.

We know that God disclosed himself throughout history through his dealings with his chosen people, and through the revelations of Scripture and of the 2nd person of the Trinity in the Son, Jesus Christ incarnate of the Holy Spirit.

In our first reading we hear the revelation given to Moses. This scene takes place after the people have disregarded God's commandments and instead fashioned an idol, a golden calf, to worship instead of God. God is angry and sends a plague and Moses has to intercede on behalf of the sinful people. Moses is God's intimate friend, Moses hears God and God listens to Moses. Because of Moses' intercession, God renews his covenant with his people, and rewrites the commandments on the new stone tablets. God reveals his unchanging name – the Lord, and explains how his character is merciful and gracious. In forgiving Israel he reveals more of himself, and we learn that God, what we will know as God the Father, is merciful and just. He does not abandon his people, but rather gives us example in how to forgive and to keep his Covenant – no matter what. God loves us, and will keep loving us.

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We know that when we read Scripture we can discern more of God's character – but it only shows us how more merciful, more just, more loving he is.

In our Gospel today, Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, but he may as well be speaking to us all – and he invites us to look into the character of God in more depth by considering the gift of God the Son in Jesus Christ. We are told that God the Father sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. And in our 2nd reading Paul reminds us that The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit should be with us all.

Over time the Church has discerned who God is, and has concluded that the best way of describing the one God is as a Trinity. We often speak about the Trinity but often we don't go into detail about it. Understood simply, God is three co-equal persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. There are many ways to describe the Trinity, perhaps you've heard that the Father is the creator and originator who sends the Son who together with the Father send the Holy Spirit; or perhaps you've heard that the Father is the Lover, the Son is the beloved and the Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. This triune god, one God in three persons, is who we worship and adore and offer continual thanks to, draw strength from, and keep before us always.

Saint Ignatius has a lovely contemplation about the Trinity. In his way of praying he asks us to use our imagination. He asked those who prayed his Spiritual Exercises, and perhaps we can do this together now if you'd like to close your eyes, and imagine the Trinity, the three Divine Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, looking down upon the universe which they have created. And as they look down at the earth through all time they see and hear men and women, of different sizes, shapes and colours; rich and poor; old and young; happy and sad. People speaking different languages. Some being born, others dying; some pregnant, others longing for children; some running and playing, others sick and suffering. Some laughing, others crying. Some in love, some looking for love. Some employed, some unemployed. They see gay and straight, bisexual and transgendered persons. They see those at war and those working for peace. Some are laughing and others are crying. Some are screaming and shouting, others are praying and singing. They see all of us. All of humanity as it is.

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Consider how the Trinity sees and hears all of this. With the gaze of the Trinity, consider how people are treating one another: some loving, others hating; some hugging, others hitting; some helping, others ignoring, hurting, and killing. What do you see and hear?

How do you feel as you imagine the world in this way? How do the three Divine Persons respond to the joys and sufferings of the world? How does the God who is Love respond to us, God's children, who are lost, aimless, suffering, sinning, confused, and hurting?

Hear the Divine Persons saying, "Let us work the redemption of the human race"

I can imagine how the Father might want to wipe away the creation and say it has not worked, perhaps he should send a flood – but he has tried that before and promised he would not do that again. And God keeps his covenant.

I can imagine how the Son might say the only way to save them is to join them. To become incarnate and to become one of the creatures, to become human, and be born as Jesus Christ.

I can imagine the Trinity asking the Angel Gabriel to ask Mary whether she would agree to be part of this plan to save the world, and I can imagine their joy when they hear Mary say yes.

I can imagine Jesus growing up, becoming aware of his divinity and the Father sending the Spirit to him when he is baptized. I can imagine the Son fulfilling his mission from his Father and taking on our sins as he dies on the cross, and when he rises from the dead he sends His Holy Spirit to remain with us as we continue to live as an Easter People.

But most of all I imagine how God looks at the world, looks at us, and says I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. Because God is love and he keeps his covenant to love us, always, forever, no matter what.

When we sin, it is not God who turns away from us, but we who turn away from God. But God is still looking at us, loving us, searching for us, calling us, desiring us desiring God.

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Let us give thanks for our one God, the Trinity who joins us in the mess and reality of our lives – who suffers with us and who never abandons us. Let us constantly remind ourselves of the words of Paul in the 2nd reading, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit should be with us all.

Amen.

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