

- **St. Mary of the Angels Most Holy Trinity 5/27/18**
Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40; Romans 8:14-17; Matthew 28:16-20

My Brothers and Sisters,

I may have told you this personal story before – and, if so, please forgive me – but it pertains in a concrete way to today’s feast in honor of the Most Holy Trinity.

The event took place many years ago on a Pentecost Sunday. Three of us: Kevin, a fellow Jesuit, Cristina, a good friend of his, and I, who was spiritual director for both of them, had just celebrated Mass and were seated in a small Italian restaurant nearby. They were on one side of the table and I was on the other. At one point in the meal and conversation, Kevin suddenly asked, “Do you know how much we love you?” and, at the same time, Cristina reached across the table and put her hand on my arm. How was I to respond? Do I say, “Oh yes, I know how much you love me!” or “No, I really don’t know how much you love me.” Wisely, I kept silent – and just allowed their love to flow into me.

Several weeks later, I was making my annual retreat by the ocean at Eastern Point Retreat House in Gloucester. Early one morning, I was seated before the large dining room window, watching the sun rise out of that ocean. As it did so, suddenly, I “saw” Kevin and Cristina in front of the sun, and, as I continued looking, the sun became like God the Father, Kevin became Jesus and Cristina the Holy Spirit. And I heard those words again, “Do you know how much we love you?”

Since then, from time to time, when I have received a special gift like: a deep and moving conversation with a friend, or, being invited to accompany someone in a retreat at a very important time in their life, or, just resting in a place of beauty, or, having been protected from an accident or from making a big mistake, or, sometimes, after a warm Eucharistic celebration right here at St. Mary of the Angels, I hear God whisper: “Do you see how much we love you?” As you see, the voice is not from God as one, but from God as three, and it is not now about knowing God’s love, but about seeing, experiencing and feeling God’s love in these events.

Does the Threeness in God make a difference?

I believe, as you do, that the essence of God is love, a love that seeks communion.

I ask: can there be an outward flow of love if there is not an inward flow of love?

I imagine that the inward love of God as three persons is so dynamic that it creates a centrifugal power of love that sweeps outwards to embrace all people and all creation into oneness. And God's restless inward love will not be satisfied until all people are brought into that loving communion.

As we come to the end of Matthew's Gospel today, we see Jesus' desire, the Father's desire, through the working of the Holy Spirit, is to pass on to the 11 apostles and so to us the mission of witnessing to and proclaiming that love of God to everyone, always.

So it is that Jesus calls his disciples to meet Him for the last time on a mountain. It is the same mountain on which Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, taught them the Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit ... blessed they who mourn ... the meek, ... the merciful ... the peacemakers ... and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ... That was at the beginning, but, as T.S Eliot said so well, "What we call the beginning is often the end and to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." ("Little Gidding")

Like those disciples, whether we fully believe or have some doubts, Jesus commands us, three things:

1. "Go!" -- Get moving! Go as you are! You don't need more training!
2. "Make disciples!" that is, help people to follow Jesus, help them to be committed to Him, in whatever way you can. It is about discipleship, not membership.
3. "Teach!" Teach what I taught on that first mountain: those amazing blessings and promises: Blessed are those ... Happy are those ... Teach those Beatitudes by living them.

The best promise of all, of course, is Jesus' promise: "I am with you always." -- a promise He can make because, being sent by his Father, He lives in each one of us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus commissions us to keep the story alive, the story of God's love for us. We do so by our words and by our deeds, and, especially, by our love for one another.

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Brighton, Mass. 5/27/18