

# Go Forth...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

## MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

# OUR TRIUNE GOD IS LOVE



### SUNDAY READINGS:

Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9

Daniel 3:52-55

II Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

### TRINITY – A COMMUNITY OF DYNAMIC LOVE

Today, as the Church celebrates Trinity Sunday, we are invited to reflect upon a great truth of the Christian faith: we believe in a Trinitarian God: one God in three persons. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, living a life of communion and perfect mutual love.

**Johannine Insights.** We can look to the Gospel of John to hear what Jesus says about the Trinity. “No one can come to the Father, except through me. If you know me, you know my Father” (14:6-7). “You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (14:11). “I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth” (14:16-17). “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you” (14:26). “When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses” (15:26-27).

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**Foundational Theology.** Throughout history the Church has consistently affirmed and proclaimed its belief in the Trinity; yes, it is a profound mystery of our faith. This doctrine leads us to the profound truth that our God is fundamentally *a communion of love*. Again, turning to Saint John, we hear: “God is love, and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him” (1Jn 4:16). “We can know that we are living in him and he is living in us, because he lets us share his Spirit” (1Jn 4:13).

**Knowing God.** You may ask: How does one come to know our Trinitarian God of love? The answer is actually quite simple: *live in love*. A person who loves others for the joy of loving is a reflection of the Trinity. A family in which each person respects and helps others reflects Trinitarian love. A parish in which people love and share their spiritual and material gifts is also a reflection of the Trinity. In fact, Vatican Council II, quoting Saint Cyprian, asserted: “The Church is seen as ‘a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit’” (*Lumen Gentium* 4).

**Imaging the Trinity.** Various writers have given us analogies and illustrations of the Trinity, although all have limitations. Jacqueline (an internet source) tries to illustrate the Trinity for children, noting that the Trinity is like an egg (having shell, white, and yolk); like an apple (it has skin, flesh, and seeds); like water (liquid, solid [ice], and steam); like a shamrock (three-leaved clover). Such images engage our mind and imagination.

**Personal Insight.** I can even see myself as a “Trinitarian missionary,” combining my original American culture with values and insights from the cultures of the Philippines and Bangladesh where I have served in mission. Whatever images may attract us, let us personally celebrate God’s great love given to us through the three persons of our Trinitarian God.

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## NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

**First Reading - Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9:** Today's feast celebrates our faith in the Holy Trinity. It comes one week after Pentecost and is a reminder of both the significance of God's revelation and our acceptance of God's message. The reading from the book of Exodus captures part of God's revelation on Mount Sinai; it affirms that God is merciful, gracious, and compassionate.

**Responsorial Psalm - Daniel 3:52-55:** Remarkably, our "psalm" today is drawn from the Old Testament book of Daniel. The selection is a classic proclamation of why God is to be praised. We praise and exalt "the God of our fathers," blessing his "holy and glorious name," praising God in "the temple of your holy glory," and magnifying him "in the firmament of heaven."

**Second Reading - II Corinthians 13:11-13:** This reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is actually the last three verses of that epistle; it presents delightful advice about how to live in the Christian community. Notice the reference to the three persons of the Holy Trinity; it is one of the several greetings that may be used as a salutation at the beginning of Mass.

**Gospel - John 3:16-18:** Today's Gospel recalls a beautiful scene that happened fifty days earlier, when Jesus appeared to his disciples on Easter Sunday. Jesus breathed on them ["Spirit" means "breath"]. When Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit, their fears were changed, becoming peace and courage. The fearful disciples were transformed into dynamic missionaries; they believed that just as the Father sent Jesus, they were also sent on mission.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James H. Kroeger, who recently published three short, meditative books: ► *Living in Joyful Hope*, ► *Exploring Vatican II Treasures*, and ► *A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis* ([www.faithalivebooks.com](http://www.faithalivebooks.com)).

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