

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity | For Sunday, June 7, 2020

## A Unique & Dynamic Communion

*Written by Br. Silas Henderson, S.D.S.*

**Exodus 34:4B-6, 8-9**

**2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

**John 3:16-18**



*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. —2 Corinthians 13:13*

There is an African folk tale about three blind men who examine an elephant to try to determine what sort of animal it might be. One grabs hold of the elephant's tail and exclaims, "This creature is very like a rope." The second man runs his hand over one of the tusks, declaring, "This creature is very like a spear." Finally, the third man, patting the wide, solid side of the elephant, says, "This creature is surely a wall."

Individually, each of the blind men grasped *an aspect* of the majestic creature, but their understanding was limited. But, by sharing their insights, they were given an understanding of elephants that none of them could have alone.

Like the experience of those three men, all of the Church's various celebrations throughout the year work together to help us enter more deeply into the mysteries of salvation and the ways that God has been — and continues to be — at work in the world. This Sunday's celebration honoring the Most Holy Trinity is no exception.

This special day honoring the Holy Trinity was, however, a fairly late addition to the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts. In fact, Pope Alexander II (d. 1077) is said to have objected to having a special day to honor the Holy Trinity because, as he observed, the Holy Trinity is celebrated every Sunday and every day in the Church's prayer. It was Pope John XII who made the Feast of the Holy Trinity part of the official liturgy of the Universal Church in 1334.

Falling as it does on the Sunday after Pentecost, this day honoring the Trinity brings together all the mysteries that we have celebrated during the seasons of Lent and Easter: the creative, saving, and sanctifying work of God that not only freed us from the powers of sin and death, but which also unites us as a community of faith — the Church.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity also reminds us that the God whom we adore is “one God in the Trinity” and “Trinity in unity” (from [The Athanasian Creed](#)), inviting us to consider that all of our relationships are reflections of that unique and dynamic communion that exists within God — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By grace, we are constantly being invited to be part of that relationship, to live in the love of God.

We get a sense of this when we recall Jesus’ words to his disciples (recounted in the Sunday and weekday Gospels in the days before Pentecost) about his relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, whom he promised would come to his followers after his departure. In these beautiful texts, Jesus explains that the promised Spirit, “will take from what is mine and declare it to you.” But, as [Sister Barbara Reid, O.P.](#), notes, “What is Jesus’ is also what is the Father’s as Jesus asserts, ‘Everything that the Father has is mine.’ There is no ‘yours and mine’ in the Godhead — only ‘ours,’ as the three interweave in a communion of love in which there is no possessiveness,” (from [Abiding Word, Year A](#)).

## PRAYER

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For with your Only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit  
you are one God, one Lord:  
not in the unity of a single person,  
but in a Trinity of one substance.

For what you have revealed to us of your glory  
we believe equally of your Son  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
so that, in the confessing of the  
true and eternal Godhead,  
you might be adored in what is  
proper to each Person,  
their unity in substance,  
and their equality in majesty.

For this is praised by Angels and Archangels,  
Cherubim, too, and Seraphim,  
who never cease to cry out each day,  
as with one voice they acclaim:

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts!*

(Preface of the Solemnity of the  
Most Holy Trinity in *The Roman Missal*)

In the end, our celebration of Trinity Sunday is an invitation for us to continue to move beyond our selves and our own sense of “mine.” In the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, God continues to bless us — in the ongoing act of creation, in the freely given gifts of healing and redemption of Christ, and the life-giving Spirit that inspires faith, hope, and love — and invites us to receive the graces and gifts he so freely gives. As [Henri Nouwen](#) reflected in [Sabbatical Journey](#),

I am deeply convinced that most human suffering comes from broken relationships. Anger, jealousy, resentment, and feelings of rejection all find their source in conflict between people who yearn for unity, community, and a deep sense of belonging. By claiming the Holy Trinity as home for our relational lives, we claim the truth that God gives us what we most desire and offers us the grace to forgive each other for not being perfect in love.

Trinity Sunday reminds us that we are called to extend that invitation to others by sharing what we have received.

*Br. Silas Henderson, S.D.S.*