

## **The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Lectionary: 166**

### **Reading I - Proverbs 8:22-31**

Thus says the wisdom of God: "The LORD possessed me, the beginning of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago; from of old I was poured forth, at the first, before the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet the earth and fields were not made, nor the first clods of the world.

"When the Lord established the heavens I was there, when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; when he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth; when he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command; then was I beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race."

**Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 R (2a) O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!**

### **Reading II - Romans 5:1-5**

Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

### **Gospel - John 16:12-15**

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you."

## To know, love, and serve God...

When, in his book *'Friends of God'* St. Jose Escriva commented on today's second reading, he said that in this reading we see *"the divine interlacing of the three theological virtues which form the backing upon which the true life of every Christian man or woman has to be woven"*<sup>1</sup>, he is teaching us that these supernatural virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity act together in us, causing us to grow in holiness. Such that, faith leads us to know and be sure of the things we hope for; hope ensures that we shall attain them and enlivens our love of God; charity, gives us energy to practice the other two theological virtues.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, when Pope Pius XII said of our joy in and understanding of the eternal union with God in the next life that, *"In that celestial vision it will be granted to the eyes of the human mind strengthened by the light of glory, to contemplate the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in an utterly ineffable manner, to assist throughout eternity at the processions of the Divine Persons, and to rejoice with a happiness like to that with which the holy and undivided Trinity is happy,"*<sup>3</sup> he was teaching us that, for those for whom it is true that their lives are rooted in the theological virtues and who cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit who guides and perfects them in 'Truth', our current lives of participation in the divine life of the Trinity, as extraordinary as it is, pales in comparison to what awaits us in eternal life.

Doctors of the Church and great theologians have given considerable thought and engaged in vigorous discussions by which they have provided us with a deep and rich understanding of the mysteries of God such as Gods' trinitarian nature. That is, the doctrine of the Trinity, of the three divine persons who are turned toward each other in the unity of their divine being. But what of the rest of us? Do we all need to become theologians at their levels of expertise? Do we have to become so intellectually developed as to be able to read and comprehend their works? We do not. As St. Paul says, *"As for myself, brothers, when I came to you I did not come proclaiming God's testimony with any particular eloquence or "wisdom." No, I determined that while I was with you I would speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. When I came among you it was in weakness and fear, and with much trepidation. My message and my preaching had none of the persuasive force of "wise" argumentation, but the convincing power of the Spirit. As a consequence, your faith rests not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God."* [1st Cor 2:1-5ff](#) Although their writings and those of various other Saints among us can be of great value, according to our circumstances that afford us the time to read and our own abilities to understand, God has ensured that all who are born again of [water and spirit](#) can know God.

Reflection on personal and historical human experience and on the gift of salvation by faith and the sacraments, meditation on Scripture, prayerful study of the teachings of the Church derived from Scripture by revelation of God, are all principal resources for us to know God. For example, the words of Jesus in the Gospel reading today reveal to us that God is a total unity of three persons, an everlasting community of living love, of mutual self-giving. In fact, the entirety of the Word of God reveals to us a God who is being, being which is love, love which is personified in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – 3 persons with one nature.

The supernatural virtue of Faith enables us to trust God. To trust what is revealed in the Word, in the wisdom of God which is Christ. Of the Father we learn that he differs from the other persons in that the Father is the unbegotten origin of all. Scripture also reveals that in the fullness of time, God sent the Son. Gods' love was revealed to us by sending the Son to be incarnate of the Holy Spirit and born of a woman. The Son of God, revealed to us the path that leads to eternal and divine life. We learn from Scripture that

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<sup>1</sup> St J. Escrivá, *Friends of God*, 205

<sup>2</sup> [Saint Paul's Letters to the Romans & Galatians](#), The Navarre Bible (Dublin; New York: Four Courts Press; Scepter Publishers, 2005), 86.

<sup>3</sup> Pius XII, Encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis* (1943), no. 80

through the Incarnation of the Son, God assumes our human nature, perfects it, and establishes the New Covenant. By the power of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, our human nature is sanctified, gives the necessary gifts for our pursuit of holiness, and leads us to the glory of heaven.

Understanding the Trinity is not just about abstract knowledge but about being drawn into the mystery of God's love, leading to salvation and restoration of the relationship with God. When we are justified by faith, we are put into a right relationship with God. Being in a right relationship with someone involves much more than simply believing that they exist. God wants more from us than simply to believe that God exists. God wants us to trust. Actualizing and relying upon the theological virtues, beginning with Faith, enables us to be theologians like Mary, who trusted God completely and so treasured and pondered everything she experienced and learned. We too can contemplate, reflect upon, pray about all that God reveals to us through the wisdom of God revealed in the living Word and human experience.

St. Augustine, in the first chapter of Book 1 on the Trinity says, *“The reader of these reflections of mine on the Trinity should bear in mind that my pen is on the watch against the sophistries of those who scorn the starting-point of faith, and allow themselves to be deceived through an unseasonable and misguided love of reason.”*<sup>4</sup> In fact, the whole first chapter is about the difference between pursuit of the knowledge of God rooted in the theological virtue of faith as opposed to natural reason, and he warns of the folly of the latter. Philosophers and theologians could never have told us that for all eternity God has been loving the Son, and the Son has been loving the Father, and this personal love between Father and Son, which is also eternal, is the Holy Spirit... not without the theological virtues, grace, and the Holy Spirit. Many Christians can go a lifetime not realizing they have a false understanding of God. Relying solely upon their natural reason and the argument of others doing the same, which is exacerbated these days by social media, memes, internet experts of dubious origins, and Christian pop culture elevated Priests, Pastors, and evangelists.

No one can come to know God as God is, without Grace, the gratuitous gift of God, which is necessary for salvation, and is essential to supernatural faith. It provides a supernatural light that illumines the intellect, enabling it to grasp and assent to supernatural truths. Trusting God and being the recipients of grace, we assent to divine truth by the command of the will, which is moved by God through grace, and which ensures that we can achieve what is beyond our natural abilities, such as natural reason.

Human experience speaks to us of our desire to love and be loved. Divine revelation enables us to understand this desire, our nature and the nature of our relationships. With the aid of the theological virtues, grace, and the Holy Spirit we can know that we were created for love. Created in the image and likeness of God who is love. The more deeply we treasure and ponder this revelation of God, the more we will love God as God loves us. If this is how we live and love in right relationship with God, then we will grow in knowledge and love of God. We will deeply desire to serve God. We will increasingly love our neighbor as ourselves. We might not become great intellectual apologists like St. Augustine, but we will become great missionary disciples who can preach Christ crucified, testifying to others about the transformative salvific love of God that saved you, like St. Paul.

We need to ask ourselves: how well do I know God? Does this knowledge lead to love of God? Do I know God better today than I did one, five, twenty years ago? Is my knowledge of God a fruit divinely aided intellect and will?

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<sup>4</sup> Edmund Hill with Saint Augustine, *The Trinity (De Trinitate)*, ed. John E. Rotelle, Second Edition, vol. I/5, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2017), 63.