

HOMILY ~ THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

JUNE 3/4, 2023

Today is Trinity Sunday, three persons one God; and this concept is a little difficult to understand. I have tried many illustrations, and many people have told me that this illustration was helpful to them; so even though I have used it once before, I am going to share it with you again today. For all of you here today, I am Fr. Jim. You see me as Fr. Jim, you interact with me as Fr. Jim, you see the public priest side of me. I am also Uncle Jimmy to my nieces and nephews. They know that I am a priest, but they see and interact with me in a very different way than you interact with me. I am also just Jim to many of my long-term friends. Many of my friends knew me long before I became Fr. Jim. They know that I am Fr. Jim and they know about Uncle Jimmy, but they see me as just Jim. These are the people I socialize with, and these are the people I travel with. They do not relate to me as Fr. Jim or Uncle Jimmy. So there you have it. Three different identities, one person. All three of these identities are there all of the time, but depending on who you are, you see only one of them. Kind of like three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God. Kind of like the Trinity.

I think the Trinity has a big impact on our image of God. We all have an image of God, but we are not always totally conscious of what it is. I suggest that you spend some time over the next week thinking and praying about your image of God, because you can change your image of God. Jesus reveals to us a God that is loving, compassionate, forgiving and just. Images that are not consistent with this are a distorted image. Many of us developed in image of God as an old man with a white beard who keeps track of when you are naughty and when you are nice, and punishes us when we are naughty and gives us things when we are good. That is not God. That is Santa Clause. Our relationships with people affect our image of God, and our image of God affects our relationships with people.

How many of you have seen the movie "*The Shack*?" It is an old movie, but I watched it again last weekend. I think the movie does a really good job portraying the Trinity. In the movie, the main character's name is Mack. His young daughter was brutally murdered, and he is having a hard time grieving this loss. He is angry with God. He gets an invitation from God to spend a weekend at the Shack. They treat the Trinity as three different persons. The image of God the Father is generally a father figure. In the movie, the Father is

portrayed as a black woman. This is how our relationships with people affect our image of God. Mack had an abusive father who physically beat Mack and his mother, and his mother could not protect him. The image of God the Father is not very good for him because he did not have a good relationship with either of his parents. There was a black woman in the neighborhood who treated him in a very loving and supportive way. He could accept her as God the Father because he had a good relationship with her. What is your image of God the Father? If you did not have a very good relationship with your parents, that may affect your image of God. There may be another adult in your life that could improve that image. The Son was a thirty something Middle Eastern looking male. That makes sense. I think it is easier to relate to Jesus because he was human, just like us. My image of Jesus is that of a best friend who will love me no matter what I do. Even when I do stupid things, they will love me. I can tell him anything, and he will not judge me or reject me. He will always have my back. If you have not had good experiences with friendships, maybe friends have betrayed you. This could affect your image of Jesus. You may have a hard time trusting him. The Holy Spirit was a young Asian woman. She is involved in things that are more mystical and illusive. That is consistent with my image of the Holy Spirit. That creative work of the Holy Spirit is more like the wind. We do not know where it comes from, and we do not know where it is going, but it moves us. Even though the movie depicts them as three individuals, and they behave as three individuals; but it is apparent that when one of them is present, the others are present even though you cannot see them. Each of the individuals has total knowledge of what has transpired, even though they were not physically present.

So, what is your image of God? Spend some time defining it. I go to God the Father when I need advice, to God the Son when I need a best friend, and to the Holy Spirit when I need some guidance on something more elusive. I am glad there are three persons in the Trinity. Three persons, one God.

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim