

As you well know, there are many problems in this world and one of the biggest ones- one of the most fundamental ones- is that we are at each other's throats all the time, literally and figuratively. Suspicion about the other side, anger, the refusal to dialogue, the outright denial of the other side's perspective, the violence that too often erupts from all that.

And I'm not talking only about politics, but how can you avoid that even being part of the conversation? But it's bigger than just politics- it's this sense- whether conscious or otherwise- this sense that I am better than you and I deserve more than you and I have more rights than you and you better know it and you better like it if you know what's good for you.

And part of the tragedy of all this is that this is so often espoused by people who say they are people of faith- Christian or otherwise- and that this is what God wants. I'm only a very imperfect and very fallible human being, but I can confidently speak for God that this is *not* what God wants.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Trinity, that inscrutable and yet profoundly important part of our faith that we can never fully understand and that's OK. It's that we live the Trinity that matters.

The concept of the Trinity can't help but be obscure- three yet one, one yet three- try to explain that one- but it doesn't have to be a part of our faith that we don't pay attention to except on Trinity Sunday. Our lives and our relationships should be mirrors of the Trinity- and we are already equipped to do so. We are in all kinds of relationships- friendship, the married life, parenthood, religious life, family life in general, intellectual friendships, work relationships, the list can go on and on.

And in each relationship, we have the choice of whether or not we will treat the other person in that relationship as an equal and as a fellow child of God who were put into our lives for a reason, whether we can name that reason right now or not.

The Trinity invites us to become united to the love that is inherent within it- the love of Father and Son in the Holy Spirit- and to boldly and happily show that love- not just for ourselves but also for the people around us and for the world around us. The love of the Trinity allows us to become more and more like God- more and more showing the image of God to the world so that when a person sees me, they see God- when a person sees you, they see God. Just imagine that, but it's true and it happens all the time.

All this makes a real difference in how we live in the world and in how we live our lives. To train ourselves to see each other, and ourselves, as good by nature and worthy of God's love and forgiveness and grace and compassion- which takes time and patience, granted, but which helps you to live life free of needless criticism of the other and free of unwarranted suspicion and fear of the other because they are not like me or they are not of my tribe.

To see myself and everyone around me as a community of love- a community which, like the Trinity, is without domination or subordination- a community in which we all have something to offer and whatever is offered is treasured and lifted up - and when we deny that we are all one and that we need one another in ways we can probably never understand or fully appreciate, we're just fooling ourselves and we're just hurting ourselves.

For many centuries, this icon that is here (*the icon will be in the sanctuary by the lectern*) has helped so many people to at least begin to make sense of this Trinity and to understand it at a deep level that is beyond words anyway. It is an icon painted- *written* is the technical term for having created an icon- by Andrei Rublev, a Russian Orthodox monk of the 15th and 16th centuries, and it portrays the hospitality that Abraham showed to the three angels that came to him and announced, to Abraham's great surprise, that his wife Sarah would be bear a son and he would be the father of all God's people. But it's really about the Trinity- I invite you to come

and take a look at it after the Mass and see how the three figures- the three persons- in the icon form a circle- symbolizing the constant and eternal work of God- a circle is the shape of eternity.

The figure on the left represents the Father, the figure in the middle the Son and the figure on the right the Holy Spirit. And their heads are bowed to one another, signifying how the Spirit leads us to the Son and the Son leads us to the Father, and that they are one.

And see how the three angels are all equal- the size and shape of their halos all identically the same, and not one angel more imposing or more important to the whole than any other.

And if the persons of the Trinity can see themselves as equal and all essential to the goodness of that reality, then why can't we humans do the same in our families, in our communities, in our country?

Because we are all equal and we are all interconnected and we are all responsible for one another- whether we like it or not- we don't give in to calls for fear and for exclusion of people and especially not for violence against anybody. We can criticize our leaders at every level- we can and we should since, when it comes down to it, they work for us- but let's not be at each other's throats.

We need each other.