



The Holy See

VISIT AT THE PARISH OF St LINUS IN ROME

HOMILY OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

Sunday, 25 May 1997

1. “*Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: to God who is, who was, and who is to come*” (Gospel acclamation).

The Church ceaselessly repeats this praise to the Most Holy Trinity. Indeed, Christian prayer begins with the sign of the Cross: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, and often ends with the Trinitarian doxology: “Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever”.

Every day constant praise of the Trinity rises to God from the community of believers; today, however, the first Sunday after Pentecost, we are celebrating this great mystery of faith in a special way.

Gloria Tibi, Trinitas, aequalis, una Deitas, et ante omnia saecula et nunc, et in perpetuum! — “All glory belongs to you, Holy Trinity, one God, before all ages, now and for ever!” (First Vespers of the Solemnity of the Blessed Trinity).

In this liturgical formula we contemplate the mystery of the ineffable unity and inscrutable Trinity of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is what we profess in the Apostles’ Creed:

“I believe in God ...

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord ...

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary”.

And again, in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed:

“We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets”.

This is our faith! This is the Church’s faith! This is the God of our faith: Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

2. The Liturgy of the Word invites us to deepen our Trinitarian faith. In the first reading taken from Deuteronomy, we heard Moses’ words, which remind us of how God chose a people and showed himself to them in a special way. The Second Vatican Council, stating that man, through creation, can come to know God as the first and absolute Being, notes that nevertheless God himself was first revealed to humanity through mediators and then through his own Son (cf. *Dei Verbum*, nn. 3-4). The God whom we profess today is the God of Revelation, and we believe all that he has deigned to reveal about himself.

This Sunday’s biblical readings stress that God came to speak of himself to man, revealing who he is. And he chose Israel to receive this manifestation. He said to the chosen people: “For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask ... did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live?” (cf. Dt 4:32-33). Moses meant these words to refer to the manifestation of God on Mount Sinai and to the giving of the Ten Commandments, as well as to his personal experience on Mount Horeb. At that time God had spoken to him from the burning bush, entrusting him with the mission of freeing Israel from slavery in Egypt, and had revealed to him his own name: “*Yahweh*” — “*I am who am!*” (cf. Ex 3:1-14).

3. These biblical texts guide us *in deepening our knowledge of the Trinitarian mystery, which leads from Moses to Christ*. The Evangelist Matthew mentions that before ascending into heaven, the Risen One told his disciples: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:18-19). The Trinitarian aspect of the mystery made known to Moses is fully revealed in Christ. Through him, in fact, we discover *the unity of the divinity and the trinity of Persons*. A mystery of the living God, a mystery of the life of God! Jesus is the Prophet of this mystery. He offered himself in sacrifice on the altar of this immense mystery of love.

4. Dear brothers and sisters of St Linus Parish! Today I am pleased to celebrate the Solemnity of the Blessed Trinity with you. I cordially greet the Cardinal Vicar, the Auxiliary Bishop of this area, your parish priest, Mons. Sergio Casalini, and the priests who work with him in the great variety of pastoral activities.

I address a special thought to the many religious communities who live and work in this area, thanking them in particular for their valued service in the kindergartens and in the elementary and middle schools, and in the care of newborn babies at Christ the King Hospital and the Pia Opera

Ambrosini. I greet the “Seguimi” group and the guests and directors of Casa Betania, as well as the members of the various parish groups and all of you, dear faithful of this parish, which this year is celebrating the 40th anniversary of its pastoral life. May the Lord bless everyone!

Your first parish priest, Mons. Marcello Rosatella — to whom I express my gratitude — and many of you certainly have moving memories of the beginnings of this community, when the liturgical celebrations were held in a wooden chapel. Once a country district, this neighbourhood has steadily undergone a rapid urbanization, with many inhabitants from different regions of Italy settling here.

Unfortunately, it is experiencing the many problems that burden the inhabitants of a great metropolis, but today I would like to say again to you: *Do not be afraid!* Commit yourselves instead with great generosity, in communion with the whole diocesan community, to preparing the city for the Jubilee of the Year 2000. Christ brought divine life to be kindled like fire

5. I know that by the Holy Year, thanks to the good graces of the Vicariate of Rome and the generous contribution of the members of the International Rotary Club, your parochial community will be able to worship in a new parish church. I express my appreciation and gratitude for this important gift to everyone taking part in the project. The construction of the new church, a sign of God’s presence among your homes, is an incentive to you to become more and more a living Church, made up of baptized people who are aware of their dignity and vocation, capable of witnessing consistently and courageously to Jesus Christ and his demanding Gospel message.

6. “*You have received the Spirit of sonship through whom we cry ‘Abba! Father!’*” (Rom 8:15).

With these words, St Paul emphasizes the apostolic Church as the herald of the Most Holy Trinity. God reveals himself as the One who gives life through Christ, the one Mediator. We believe in the Son of God, who brought divine life like fire to be kindled on earth.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and giver of life. Through the Holy Spirit, believers become sons in the Son, as St John writes in the Prologue of his Gospel (cf. Jn 1: 13). Begotten by the Spirit, men address God with Christ’s own words, calling him: “*Abba, Father!*”.

Through Baptism we are inserted into Trinitarian communion. Every Christian is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; he is immersed in the life of God. What a great gift and a great mystery!

Quite rightly then the Church with deep gratitude sings her faith in the Trinity in the *Te Deum*:

“*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth*”.

“The heavens and the earth
are filled with
your majesty and glory.
The glorious band of Apostles,
the white-robed army who shed their
blood for Christ, all sing your praise.
And to the ends of the earth
your holy Church proclaims her faith
in you: your true and only Son,
who is to be adored, the Holy Spirit
sent to be our Advocate”.

Amen!

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