Trinity Sunday-B

May 27, 2018

St. Patrick’s

Three, yet one.

In the Gospel we just heard, the last instructions of the Risen Jesus at the very end of St. Matthew’s Gospel were clear: **“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”**

Father, Son and Spirit. In the 5th century, the great teacher St. Augustine like to speak of the three persons in the Trinity as **“Lover, Beloved, and Love.”** In the 12th century, the renowned mystic St. Hildegard of Bingen preferred to identity the Trinity as **“Fire, Burning, and Flashing Forth”** (1).

The 2003 book by Donald Miller, entitled Blue Like Jazz, begins with these reflections of his: **“In most of my life, until now, God was like a speck off in the distance. It was as though I was on a dirt road and, somewhere off in the distance, God appeared like a speck on the horizon. But now, I see that God is walking toward me. He’s close. Close enough, that I can hear him singing. Someday, I’ll see the lines of his face”** (2).

Oh, Friends, for some folks God is like a **“speck off in the distance**”—Someone we can talk about, but far away.

Don’t *we* want to experience God as **“close,”** truly intimate with us?

A few years ago, I knew someone well who died at the age of 98. Her husband died at an early age, and Winnie raised her children alone. It was a struggle. Over the years, she and God got close. And she loved her Catholic faith. A year-and-a-half earlier, late at night I got a call from her family that she had to undergo serious surgery; at her age, she might not survive the surgery. When I got to her hospital room, her immediate family was there, and the surgeon was talking with her. When she saw me, Winnie greeted me and said, “Father Val, the surgeon’s Catholic! Please give him a blessing.” Her family chuckled. The surgeon smiled, and the blessing was given. She made it through the surgery, but was homebound afterwards.

On a Sunday morning, a son of hers stopped me at the front door of church and told me that Winnie was about to die. In fact, it turned out an hour before she died, I was privileged to give her Holy Communion for the last time on her earthly journey. Weakened by a long illness, Winnie knew she was receiving the Body of Christ, but she had a hard time talking. What remains an indelible memory for me, however, is that, as I led the prayers of the church, Winnie again and again made the sign of the cross. It was her final profession of faith, and repeatedly Winnie made the sign of the cross.

Shortly after that, in eternity, I suggest Winnie saw “the lines of God’s face.”

We made the sign of the cross at the beginning of this Mass and will do so again at its conclusion. It’s part of our Catholic ethos—again and again, we make the sign of the cross. It goes back to that final instruction of the Risen Jesus in today’s Gospel, teaching us to baptize—how?—**“in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”**

*“In the name of,”* we proclaim the one name of God, manifested in the Trinity*—“Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”* Oh, Winnie—and others who have gone before us, whose faith was dear to them—they would fumble at trying to explain what the Holy Trinity means. The word in the Creed we’re about to say together “consubstantial”—they would say, “Huh?” But we know—we could tell—God for them was a far cry from being “a speck on the horizon.” By grace, they *experienced* that love of God. As St. Paul tried to teach in his reading today, the Holy Spirit led them to a deep closeness with Jesus. Ever praying in his name, they *knew* that they were beloved children of God. They blossomed in faith, and experienced Jesus’ closeness, Jesus’ love, in their lives.

It’s our turn now. We don’t want to talk about God as some “speck in the distance”—far away. Our God is close to us. As Jesus promised, **“And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”**

Ask for that closeness. Nurture that closeness. Know God’s love for you—for us. And, let’s keep signing yourselves with the cross and in the name of the Trinity, until we “see the lines of God’s face.”

1. See Barbara E. Reid, “Circles of Love,” America (May 25, 2009) @ deaconsil.com, under “Trinity Sunday—May 27, 2008.”

(2) Quoted by Rev. Jim Schmitmeyer in “Most Holy Trinity B (2015)” under [www.athenaeum.edu/Homilies.aspx](http://www.athenaeum.edu/Homilies.aspx).