**TRINITY SUNDAY 2024 SFTC**

Last weekend we celebrated Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not a real clear concept for me when I was growing up. Is it a dove? Is it a flame? Is it the wind? This week we celebrate the Trinity, and that's just as confusing. It's not something we can figure out. It had to be revealed to us. Our readings today claim that God is one, yet three…and that God is with us. These claims are central to the Christian faith.

We heard Moses state very forcefully that there is but one God: "...you must know, and fix in your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other." But in that time and place, most people believed in many gods. If you read all of Deuteronomy, you'll see Moses repeating the same theme over and over:

 God is one, and there is no other.

Moses also stresses that God is with us, and wants to share life with us. He compares this to the false "gods"

that people of the time worshipped. He said, "Did anything so great ever happen before?...Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as you did, and live? Or did any god venture to go out and take a nation for himself...which the Lord, your God, did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?"

Moses reminds them of this because they were nearing the end of their forty years in the desert.

 Remember, the average lifespan was not long, so most people did not remember the central event of their history:

 the Passover miracle, when God had freed them from slavery in Egypt.

We need to remind ourselves, again and again, where our true freedom lies. Otherwise, we fall back into slavery to those false "gods" that will never really satisfy. Because of the fall, we often misdirect that hunger toward things that are harmful, or that are beneath the dignity of the human person. We are made for something more: to share life with the one true God who is our origin and our destiny. Only in that do we find lasting happiness and peace.

St. Augustine put it so powerfully: "You made us for yourself, O Lord. Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."

The scriptures claim that God is with us. This is most clearly seen in Jesus the Son.

 The first verse of John's Gospel says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the

 Word was God." Then verse 14 says, "And the Word (who is God) became flesh and lived among us...".

The angel who announced the birth of Jesus refers to Him as ""Emmanuel," which means "God with us." "

In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

He's with us with us especially in the Eucharist. In 1st Corinthians 10, St. Paul teaches that this sacred meal is

 "a participation in" the body and blood of Christ. In chapter 11, he says that those who mistreat the Eucharist,

 "will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord."

 That first generation of Christians understood clearly that this sacred meal is truly "God with us."

Jesus also teaches that He is with us in our brothers and sisters, especially the needy and the outcast. He said, "whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me." Mother Theresa referred to the homeless people she served as, "Jesus, in His most distressing disguise." He is with us in ways that we often don't realize.

God the Father is also close to us. In our second reading, St. Paul says that we, "received a Spirit of adoption,

through whom we cry, "Abba, Father!" The word "Abba" is a very intimate one, like "papa" or "daddy."

In the Prodigal Son parable, Jesus told of a father who "ran out to meet" his son who had gone astray, then "threw his arms around (the son) and kissed him." That’s how Jesus describes the Father's intimate love for us.

We talked a lot about the Holy Spirit last week, the Spirit who enables us to speak God's word in our times.

 But the Holy Spirit is key to all of salvation history. In the second creation story, Genesis chapter 2,

 it was only after God breathed into the man that he became a living being.

 The Hebrew word for breath is the same as the word for spirit, so we see the Spirit as the channel of divine life.

When Jesus came to us as man, it was by the power of the Holy Spirit.

 When He comes to us here in the Eucharist, it's also by the power of the Holy Spirit.

 So, the Spirit is the connection between us and the new life we have in Christ.

 And Paul reminds us today that it's also through the Spirit that we cry out, "Abba, Father!"

So God the Father, the Son and the Spirit are three distinct persons,

 but our relationship with one is always tied in with our relationship with the other two.

So, the Trinity is not just some abstract theory. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church calls it

the "central mystery" of the Christian faith, and of the Christian life (para. 234).

That's because it reveals to us who God is, and how God is.

It reveals the different ways that God reaches out to share with us the fullness of life, both here and now,

 and in the life to come.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...