



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Most Holy Trinity - Year B

In the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit

*Readings: Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40, Ps 32, Romans 8: 14-17,
Matthew 28: 16-20*

Everything we do and say and are in our lives as Catholic Christians begins with the proclamation, 'In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

It is so much a part of our identity and self-understanding that, I suspect, we seldom stand back and marvel at what an extraordinary and remarkable statement it is. Not only does it mark us out from the non-believer in fairly dramatic terms but it also separates us from our fellow monotheists by speaking of our experience of the divine reality in terms that they find both incomprehensible and shocking.

Christians do not do this deliberately as a gesture of offence but because we cannot deny the truth of the historical revelation that causes us to begin every prayer, every liturgy, every invocation of Heaven and every approach to the mission to Man by declaring the truth in whose name we stand and whose eternal word we speak.

It is a puzzlement to our Jewish forebears, 'our elder brothers and sisters in faith' as Saint John Paul the Great so movingly called them. Why take the profound monotheistic revelation, which burst successively on an idolatrous pagan world through the prophetic offices of Noah, Abraham and Moses, and complicate it in this apparently inexplicable way?

It is a sacrilege to the iconoclasts who swept out of the desert in the 7th century to the extent that Islamic inscriptions on the inner octagon of the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount specifically deny the Sonship of Jesus and reject the Trinity wholesale..... 'Say not three...'

The revelation of the Trinity is embedded in the teaching of Christ. It is at the heart of the Gospels and it is present both in the act of Creation in Genesis I and on the banks of the Jordan at Christ's Baptism.

In the former the Creator God, the Father, utters His Word (which will incarnate in Christ) and sends the Spirit to order the chaos. The word for 'God' is, tellingly, plural. In the latter both the Father and the Spirit bear testimony to the Son. 'Come to the Jordan', says St. Augustine, 'and see the Trinity'.

And it is in the threefold name that the Apostolic Band and the Church Of God are commanded, by the Risen Lord Jesus to go into the world and bring all nations back to God through the waters of baptism.

So Trinitarian theology is neither an accident nor simply an option but rather a further revelation of the nature of the one true God.

What we are repeating faithfully is the truth that God has entrusted to us about His very self. Three persons – One God. Why does it matter?

It matters because it is true. Like all great scientific discoveries – and remember Theology is the Queen of Sciences – it has an extraordinary beauty and fundamental simplicity for all its apparent complexities and inexhaustible depths.

The alternatives to Trinity are essentially threefold.

An eighteenth century post-Enlightenment deism, an absentee landlord, a watchmaker who has wound up a clockwork universe and walked away – a being about whom we can know little and with whom relationship is unachievable and indeed, from his viewpoint both unnecessary and undesirable.

There is stopping at the Mosaic revelation of the Law in which everything is configured in an intense and forensic legalistic examination of both self and community which is essentially inward looking and does not fully comprehend the Abrahamic blessing to all the nations.

And there is the fierce, judgemental, hell haunted pronouncements of the Surahs which, while exhaustive on punishment, have little to say of the gifts of the Spirit or the love of God for Man.

The Doctrine of the Trinity declares that God is One. In His self-revelation to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, He reveals Himself both as Cosmic and Eternal, Contracted by love to our Humanity which He has created in

His own image (His words not mine) and drawn into Himself in the Incarnation, and Personal and Familial in the outreach and ordering and sanctifying power of His Holy Spirit.

Because God Himself is, at the heart of His being, relational, we can have a relationship with Him. How that works is revealed in natural law, in His self revelation in His creation and in His Word, in the action of His Spirit in our souls and supremely in the Incarnation of Jesus. The Bible tells us in Psalms that, 'The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom'. It is. But it is not the end of the matter because Scripture tells us that 'perfect love casts out fear'.

Christianity is the final revelation of that journey from the righteous fear of the Almighty, who holds our destiny in His hand, to the loving, penitent, grateful response of the human heart liberated by His love and restored to his intended destiny in the Eternal Presence.

The Trinity is the incomprehensible mystery of God made manifest to Man. Nothing less.