

Trinity Sunday
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An Antidote for Indifference

This weekend marks the unofficial beginning of summer. In the spirit of Memorial Day, this holiday weekend people from all walks of life will pause at parades and town greens to remember and honor the sacrifice of those who died in battle. What they sacrificed was all they could give. Tomorrow words of thanksgiving will be offered for the blessings of freedom that we possess.

The church knows how to do this.

Remembering and giving thanks are the essential practice of being a person of faith. It is what we do. So much of our worship is about remembering the many things God has done for us. Each time we celebrate Holy Communion, we recite the history of this saving work. It is so routine that it easily falls under the radar. The words change, but the litany remains constant. Giving thanks for life and creation, the beginnings of our faith story in ancient Egypt and Israel, recalling the works of the Prophets to point us in God's direction and not down the road of self-destruction, and we hear of the coming of the Messiah, the Christ to gather up the world and lift us all to a place where we are one with God and one with each other. "Do this in remembrance of me," we hear again Jesus' own words.

We have all probably seen movies or television shows when something traumatic happens to a character and then all of a sudden, they have no memory at all of who they are or what happened up to that moment. Amnesia. This was always common feature of the soap operas my mother and grandmother used to watch each afternoon. These shows were always on in the background of my childhood: *Guiding Light*, *As the World Turns*, *the Edge of Night*.

There is also a collective form of amnesia that can set in after an event that offers a place and time to forget or deny what really happened. People go on living. Narratives and counter narratives take shape. Tragedy and trauma can cause memory lapse. But we can't forget the past because it shapes us in ways we may never know. What is that much-quoted phrase: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

You are I have the summer months before us to prepare and gear up for what looks like a bruising national election season. In what has been almost become cliché, the outcome of this election may truly be the "the most important in our lifetime." The Bible does not give us a roadmap for safekeeping the kind of democratic system that we have today, but my head and my heart tell me that one person freely voting for someone to represent them has to be a high point in the aspiration of the human desire to be free. Our faith story began after all with the deliverance from oppression of the Pharaoh in Egypt: It is what our Jewish

siblings remember each Passover. Jesus was called the new Moses, to lead all humanity to freedom and lives of joy, compassion, and love.

If and when I ever start feeling even a bit cynical and wary about our very human, flawed, creaky and fragile system in this country – I hear about voters who are so turned off by it all that they declare that they will stay home on election day -- I think of our friends in Cuba, who live under a military dictatorship and whose elections are theatre. They aspire to have a real and fair elections and a future free from oppression. Fr. Aurelio in Cardenas tells me what I saw in April: the daily electrical blackouts are getting worse as the summer sun heats up and food is hard to come by.

How we are people of faith stay engaged in a broken world that also reflects God's glory?

Some of you may have seen Pope Francis on 60 minutes last week. He spoke about the globalization of indifference. "Do you want me to state it plainly? People wash their hands! There are so many Pontius Pilates on the loose out there... who see what is happening, the wars, the injustice, the crimes... "That's OK, that's OK" and wash their hands. It's indifference. That is what happens when the heart hardens... and becomes indifferent. Please, we have to get our hearts to feel again. We cannot remain indifferent in the face of such human dramas."

When I hear the word 'indifference,' I ask and wonder how we got there. Is our world today just too big and complicated? Do we know too much about what is going on in all corners of the world to be able to process it all and care? What can one person do?

Enter the prophet Isaiah who responded to the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

We can hear these words when and if we feel that someone else will do God's bidding, take up the charge, repair the breach, and lift up those who have been overlooked and forgotten. "Here am I; send me" is the remedy and antidote for indifference. Each one of us I have to believe has a part to play – even if we think it is a small one.

Each year on the Sunday after Pentecost we dig in once again to the mystery of the Trinity.

At its heart, the way the Trinity developed in the early centuries was about believers trying to make sense of how they experienced God. They came to know and believe in a God who created the world, the seas and the stars and gave them life, and then they heard about and met God's chosen one, the Messiah, the Christ, in Jesus son of Mary from Nazareth in Galilee. When he was raised from the dead and appeared to so many, this new way of believing took hold and grew throughout the known world. What energized and pushed believers out into that world was this Spirit that could not be contained. It inspired them, lifted them up, protected and guided them. Jesus said it himself: The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

The Trinity is about relationship. It is about the community of God. The current Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has said that it is “not a puzzle to be solve but a reality to enter into.”

Saints and mystics have tried to explain how this all works. We have people like John of Damascus, a monk who lived over a thousand years ago – who offered up these images of the Trinity. “Think of the Father as a spring of life begetting the Son like a river and the Holy Spirit like a sea, for the spring and the river and the sea are all one nature. Think of the Father as a root, of the Son as a branch, and the Spirit as a fruit, for the substance of these three is one. The Father is the sun with Christ as rays and the Holy Spirit as heat.”

We have St. Patrick of Ireland who legend has it that upon meeting some chieftains along a meadow -- who were curious about the Trinity -- Patrick picked a shamrock, and explained how the three leaves are part of the one plant, and how similarly the three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, are part of one Supreme Being.

For those of us who are not saints or mystics, maybe this day or this week – set aside time to consider how you experience God. It could be as simple as that. Sit. Pause. Be silent. Keep the noise at bay. Be open.

Faith can grow and change over time. It can deepen and challenge us. It took centuries for early believers to finally put words to the mystery of the Holy Trinity – a gift for the ages.