

TRINITY SUNDAY

On Trinity Sunday it is good to remind ourselves that on planet earth today, the majority of people believe in a God. The largest body of believers is Christianity with Islam a close second and growing. Moreover, over the centuries the vast majority of people have always believed in God. So secularism is a post modern malaise caused by ignorance, arrogance and affluence – common ailments of our jaded materialistic Western culture.

What concerns us on this Trinity Sunday is how do we convince people that Christianity is true? For after all, Islam and Judaism, are noteworthy rivals! Well, firstly, we should be clear about what we assert before we address that issue. Many people may say that they believe in Jesus but what does that mean? Mormons and Muslims both believe in Jesus, but neither are Christian. Why? If you do not believe in the Trinity you are not a Christian. What does the Trinity mean? It does not mean that there are three gods nor three godly people but three Persons who are equally God or partakers of the divine Deity. Not a godhead shared as one might share a corner of a table but that each divine Person – Father, Son and Holy Spirit are substantially God. One might use the example of water to help us grasp this mystery. Water is one chemical substance H₂O but it can be present in three diverse manners: solid, liquid and gas: ice, water and steam. Diverse in form but united in substance as is the Trinity.

It is without a doubt that this mysterious doctrine is not readily grasped by all – Christians included. It did take the Catholic Church, the only Christian church of antiquity, six centuries to nut out the correct theological language on the nature of the Trinity – a teaching that was revealed to us by Christ himself. We cannot change Christ's teachings and if Jesus calls God a Father then he must be a Father. Therefore to use terms such as Creator or Maker instead of Father is an insult to God. You may be thinking, but how can God be a Father if has no physical body and is devoid of an anatomical gender? Good question! It is true that God as Father is body-less since he is a pure Spirit. At this stage, I am sure that someone with a liberal mindset might add its because of the archaic language of the Bible that we refer to God as Father and such patriarchal terms today in our enlightened era are offensive. So, should we rid ourselves of the notion of God as Father? What does the Church say? The Catechism states "that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their **origin** and standard; no one is father as God is Father." CCC 239. Note that he is the origin of maternity and paternity not the effect – as we are. One should not try to make God fit into our world, but rather we fit into His. We cannot squeeze God into our petty mental constructs – he is beyond that, just as a child at the beach cannot contain the ocean in their bucket. So the paternal language of the Bible is for our sake – since he relates to us as a true Father. His actions bear the hallmark of paternal characteristics such as: Creator, provider, defender, protector. Fatherhood bears these characteristics so as to inspire every father on earth to imitate him in caring for their own children by manifesting these properties. That is why we call God Father. What about the feminine dimension? All good things originate in God. Thus, we note that the works of the Holy Spirit are feminine: actions such as life giving, loving, nurturing, consoling, instructing - all bear the maternal hallmark. And of course the incarnational or bodily manifestation of this feminine dimension is Mary – who was always filled with God's grace. God's masterpiece of perfection, says the Catechism CCC 721. As the ideal woman, the New Eve, she is also the model of the Church which is feminine. It is, after all, from holy Mother Church that we receive maternal care, that we are born in Baptism, nourished in the Eucharist, strengthened in Confirmation, healed in Penance and Anointing.

Now, that we better understand the wording of the Trinity what arguments can we employ to assert that the Christian God is the true one? Are there any proofs? Here are three based on the origins of our three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. If God wanted to establish his religion would he not pre-announce the coming of his founder. In short, prepare the world for his religion? Abraham is the father of the Jews, Christ of the Christians and Muhammad of Islam. Was Abraham or Muhammad foretold or predicted before they came? No, but Christ was, for the world was awaiting a Saviour based on hundreds of texts referring to where he would be born, of what family, etc. The second concerns the status of the founder. If God is all powerful, would not his founder have divine powers? Did Abraham or Muhammad work any miracles during their lifetimes? No, but Christ did, thirty-three to attest his divinity. Lastly, to be a good Jew or Muslim one needs to follow the founder's writings – the Torah or the Koran. But for Christians we don't follow a book but a Person who said: Come, follow me!

Finally, we Christians are proud to sign ourselves with his trinitarian formula, a single gesture that dates back to the first century. So let us salute God well in our prayer on Trinity Sunday as we say: In the name....