

H. Trinity, yr. A., Xavier church, Ex. 34, 4b-6, 8-9; 2 Kor. 13, 11-13; Joh. 3, 16-18.

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Dear brothers and sisters, today marks the feast of the Holy Trinity. How can we understand the meaning of this feast a little better? Let us begin with the first person of the Trinity, God the Father. We heard in the first reading from the Old Testament, the book of Exodus, that God appears to Moses, in a cloud. This appearance is in a series of events in which God makes a covenant with the people of Israel, through Moses. Incidentally, this is the second time Moses receives the stone tablets with the ten commandments from God. The first time, he finds out that during his stay on the mountain, the people have made a golden calf, an idol before which they bow down. In anger at this, Moses smashes the stone tablets and throws the golden calf into the fire. But a day later his anger has calmed down and he goes back up the mountain anyway, trying to make reconciliation with God.

And then God the Father appears to Moses again, in a cloud. This is a wonderful example of how God revealed himself to the Jewish people. God remains invisible; you cannot perceive Him. But He reveals Himself to be a God of mercy and compassion, great in love and faithfulness.

The big difference with the New Testament is that God does show himself in it, and that is in the person Jesus Christ. Jesus is the second person of the Holy Trinity. In Jesus, God reveals himself. Jesus lived with the apostles, Mary and Joseph and the people of Nazareth. They experienced Him. The apostle John testifies to it in his Gospel. 'So much did God love the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.' Jesus is the Word. Constantly going back to His words in the Bible and praying to Him strengthens our faith.

John also speaks of judgement, pointing out our great responsibility to take our faith seriously. In our time, this is still sometimes difficult because we are so often confronted with people who do not believe. Yet it is precisely our faith that is a source of strength, enabling us to overcome the evil forces in life.

Older people, who have believed in the Triune God all their lives, I have often heard testifying that faith has given them strength in difficult times. The Gospel calls us all to bear witness to our faith, especially in these times.

On the other hand, it is also fitting, not to judge those people who may have a weak faith, or who say they do not believe at all. We should try to love these people as God loved the world. And yes, we may try to give them further insight or advice, but

judgement does not come to us, but to Jesus Himself. If we treat people this way, our world will become a place where we can live in peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have talked about God, who loves the world, and about Jesus, who spoke to Nicodemus and to the apostles. What to say about the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity? We celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus to the disciples and therefore also to us. He is the Helper who remains with us always, who dwells in us.

We can rely on the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us through the Scriptures, through the leaders of the Church and who pleads for us with unspeakable sighs, as St Paul puts it so beautifully in the letter to the Romans. It is therefore important for us Christians not to grieve the Holy Spirit, which would happen when we give in to dejection, or when we harden our hearts. Instead, when we open ourselves to the Spirit, we will discover in us an ever-increasing sensitivity, an ability to discern what matters. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and trust. May we discover and cherish these fruits in our lives. Amen.