

TRINITY SUNDAY (FATHER'S DAY) JUNE 19, 2011 CYCLE "A"

TITLE: GOD FOR US, GOD WITH US, GOD WITHIN US.

READINGS: Gen. 1:1-:4a, Ps. 8, 2 Cor. 13:11-13, Matt. 28:16-20

I want to wish all the dads here a very happy father's day. It was Bill Cosby who observed that boys grow up spending hours throwing baseballs and footballs and going to games with their dads. And when they make it big on the football team at college, before the big bowl game when they get interviewed, the first thing they say is "Hi Mom!" Once a mother was working very hard in the kitchen, preparing a new and special recipe for dinner. Her little boy was giving her fits, running in and out of the kitchen and ignoring his mom's threats and warnings. When he finally knocked her specially-prepared dish off the table all over the floor, his mother lost it, grabbed a broom and started after him. The boy made a quick exit and crawled under the house to escape his mom. So she decided to let her husband take care of the problem. Soon he arrived home from work, and still upset over their boy's actions, she yelled to him, "Go, do something about your son!" The father crawled under the house and when he saw two little bright eyes peering around from a pillar, he heard his son say, "Dad is mom after you too?"

Besides Father's Day we also celebrate Trinity Sunday today. There is a wonderful example of being a father which we can learn from a very old legend. It is a beautiful legend which tells us about the Cherokee Indian Youth's rite of passage. A Cherokee youth is taken by his father deep into the forest. He is blindfolded and left sitting alone. He must remain there alone throughout the entire night. He is not allowed to remove the blindfold until the sun's rays break through the morning dawn. He cannot cry out, nor can he tell anyone about his experience. If he survives the night, he is then a man. The night, full of strange sounds, wild animals, whistling winds, shaking and rustling branches is terrifying. But the young Cherokee boy sits bravely, stoically. Finally he reaches the peace of the morning sunlight breaking through the darkness of the night. He then reaches up and removes his blindfold and discovers his father, sitting beside him, loving him, and protecting him from harm.

It is God, our Father, even when we don't know it nor acknowledge it, who is sitting beside us loving us protecting us from harm. God whom we see today in our first reading who made us special, altogether different from all his others creatures for he made us in his very own image and likeness. "So God created humankind in his image," Genesis tells us, "in the image of Go he created them, male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'" Gen.1:27-28. And over and over again we are reminded, "And God saw that it was good." God the father who is the creator and sustainer of life. God the Father, all powerful (omnipotent) all knowing (omniscient)

all present (omnipresent) everlasting. This is our God who spoke and the world was created. Our God who guides the stars, who rules the heavens, who orders the planets in their orbits. The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the Prophets. Our lawgiver and judge. Our God whose ways are not our ways, who loves us, each one of us, with his everlasting love.

But our God can seem so far away, so removed from us at times that we are afraid we don't know or feel close to him. With infinite wisdom our God solves this dilemma for us. He reveals himself in the gentle, the compassionate, the loving Son Jesus, who becomes one of us so that we may know and love God better, love him personally. In Jesus, the Son, we are exposed to the approachable side of God, the God who would lay down his own life in behalf of the creatures he had formed out of the clay of the earth. Soren Kierkegaard, the great Danish theologian told about a prince who wanted to find a maiden suitable to be his queen. One day when he was in a local village he passed through a poor section of the town. From his carriage he saw a beautiful peasant girl. He passed that way often and soon found himself falling in love with that maiden who was one of the very poorest of the village. How would he seek her hand? He could have ordered her to marry him, but even a prince wants a maiden to love him and want him as well. So he decided to give up his royal robes move into that village, not as a prince but as a simple peasant. He lived among the people, shared their food, their interests and spoke their language. In time the maiden fell in love with him for who he was. She loved him because he first loved her. Our God, too, showed us that he is with us, that he loves us with an everlasting, unconditional love. So when we want to tell people what God is like, we point to the person of Jesus Christ. God himself is incomprehensible, but in Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, we find that God makes himself knowable.

Finally it is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity who sanctifies us, who is our advocate with the father, that person who wishes to indwell us, to bring us to the realization of the presence of the living God - **intimacy with God**. That is what the Holy Spirit brings to our lives. The Holy Spirit gives us guidance, comfort, strength. It is through the Holy Spirit we know our God makes his dwelling place, within us.

Paul in today's selection from 2nd Corinthians, emphasizes a very important function of the Holy Spirit, that of fellowship. We hear in these two short verses his encouragement to live with each other in peace, to greet each other with a "holy kiss" as was the custom in mid-east culture. He then invokes the Trinity, calling upon the grace of the Lord Jesus the love of God the Father and finally using a special Greek word, *koinonia*, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit who unites us into one Christian family.

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy Trinity today, we raise our hearts and minds to the Father, our God who created the heavens and the earth and us in his very own image. We are encompassed by the love of his son who descends gently to our earth to save us. We live with the Holy Spirit the *Paraclete*, which is the biblical word for Spirit, who lifts us to the heavens. Thanks be to our God who is for us, with us, within us. **Amen.**

Pastor Barney