

The Feast of the Holy Trinity C (5/30/10 – *The Holy Trinity and Your Life*)

In the Name JESUS. [Amen]

The *Holy Gospel* appointed for this *Feast of the Holy Trinity* is actually the continuation of a much longer discussion between our Lord Jesus Christ and *the Jews* – which is to say, the Jewish religious leaders ... particularly the Pharisees [JN 8.13]. The Jews’ answer – *Are we not right in saying that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?* [JN 8.48] – is in response to several very confronting statements Jesus has just made. Out of divine concern, our Lord tells them in verse 24 that they will die in their sins because they do not believe that He is the One sent by the Father. Or said another way: they will die and be eternally condemned because they deny that He is the Messiah / Savior / Son of God. Desiring their repentance – a first and necessary step to their faith and everlasting life – Jesus declares that they do **not** follow their father Abraham since they seek to kill Him [8.40]; rather, they are doing the deeds of the devil who is a murderer and a liar and the father of lies [8.41,44].

It is because of His clear, proclamation of the Law – that stands against them and accuses them of sin and unbelief – that these Jewish leaders declare Jesus to be a demon-possessed Samaritan. The sinful flesh – **also yours and mine** – simply does not tolerate such things. It does not like the truth – especially the truth about our natural-born sinfulness in general ... and our particular sins. Our sinful flesh would – indeed – like to put to death anything and anyone who dares stand up and preach such truth. Ah ... but we think we are far too “genteel” for such crassness. We would not – by ourselves – put anyone to death. However, we would be glad if he was simply permanently silenced ... if the Lord decided it was his “time” now! And our own flesh is certainly pleased to try to thwart the work of the Law by casting aspersions on the one who speaks such things – as if deflecting attention from ourselves to another in any way changes our own sin problem.

How often have you not done just that? Someone points out your sin, and you immediately point out his/her sins and shortcomings. Perhaps you

have tried to turn God's word against that person and seemingly in your favor by saying something like: ***Judge not lest you be judged*** [MT 7.1] ... or even the word of our Lord earlier in JOHN 8: ***Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone*** [JN 8.7]. Maybe you have used this ploy: *You do not understand my situation, you have never been in my shoes* – as if **only** personal experience in a sin gives one the right to declare it as sin. But I do not have to steal in order to know that stealing is a sin – that being said, merely coveting the object is sin ... already in my heart. I do not have to murder to know that murder is sin – and yet, just hating someone makes one a murder, ***and you know that no murder has eternal life abiding in him***, as St. John says elsewhere in his first epistle [1JN 3.15]. Nor must I be **sinless** before I can – in Christian love – call attention to sin in the hopes that God's Word of Law will do its work in bringing the sinner to repentance ... causing him/her to hunger and thirst for that righteousness and peace and life that come from Christ alone.

If the preacher – or any other Christian messenger – had to be **sinless** in order to proclaim the truth of God's Law, then no one but Christ alone could speak of sin. And if no one could declare sin without having experienced it – then even Christ Himself could not preach it ... and God the Holy Spirit could not do His work of convicting the world regarding it ... and God the Father, as a result, would not be able to receive us back into His Kingdom with loving, outstretched arms. The devil, the world, and my own sinful flesh might be content with that – no one able **ever** to talk about sin and the eternal condemnation and death that result from it. However, such silencing of God's Holy Word of Law would not honor our Holy Triune God, Who has given us His holy commands. Moreover, such a silencing of the truth would not give to our Holy Triune God the glory that is His rightful due.

More importantly, if all must remain silent regarding God's Holy Word because we are either too sinful to be worthy to proclaim it ... or too holy to understand another's plight with sin – then the most blessed loving Gospel of our Triune God would **also** not be shared with or preached to anyone. And we would all remain in our sin – just like those Pharisees of Jesus' day

in our *Holy Gospel* reading. But thanks be to God that such is not the case.

Notice in our text that, although Jesus declares quite plainly that He does *not have a demon* [JN 8.49], He does **not** deny the Pharisees' other accusation that He is a Samaritan. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews as traitors to their people and God – they intermarried with the foreigners in their land contrary to God's command [EXO 34.16], they accepted only the five books of Moses as Scripture, and they worshipped on Mt. Gerazim rather than at the temple in Jerusalem. By remaining silent on this point, our Lord is indicating His solidarity with us sinners. That is precisely why the Second Person of the Holy Trinity came down from heaven according to the Father's will and became flesh and dwelt among us. The eternal, only-Begotten Son desired to take into Himself our humanity and be one with us ... suffer our temptations ... and become **all** of our sins – so that He might take **all our** sin to the Cross ... endure there the wrath and punishment of God **we** deserve ... and do away with all of our sins.

Moreover, Jesus is the *Good Samaritan* of the parable [LK 10.33-35]. He comes to us when we are dying in our sins and trespasses along the road of this life – mercifully considering **our** need over His own safety and comfort. Christ cleanses the wounds of our sin with the waters of Holy Baptism. The Lord applies the healing balm of the forgiveness of sins He has won for us on the Cross. Then the Savior takes us into the safety of the inn of His Church – where we may be continually fed with the spiritual, life-giving food of His Word ... and strengthened with His true Body and Blood in the Holy Sacrament. And one day He will return to bring us home to dwell in heaven forever with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... face to face.

Notice also the deep humility of the Son in our text ... and how He honors and glorifies His Father. Here is the antidote for the pride and arrogance of our sinful flesh – sinful pride and arrogance exemplified by the Pharisees in our text ... and lived out daily in our own sin-filled lives. The Son is truly equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit in all things – holy, sinless, almighty, uncreated, infinite, eternal ... as we confess in the *Athanasian Creed*. Yet out of love for mankind and in obedience to His

eternal Father, the Son makes Himself a little less than the Father with respect to His humanity. In all that the Son does – both here on earth and for all eternity – He glorifies the Father ... is always seeking the Father's glory ... not His own. Here we see the great calm of perfect faith in the face of great adversity – a perfect faith lived **for us** and **for our salvation** ... a perfect faith accounted to us for righteousness by grace through faith. The Son is not worried about His own Name and glory and honor. He will allow His Name to be maligned, cursed, and blasphemed – and Himself to be rejected, beaten, crucified, dead, and buried. But in all things the Father must be honored and glorified – His good Name protected and magnified.

A few chapters later, when Jesus is speaking about His impending death by crucifixion to some Greeks who came seeking Him, the Son prays: *“Father, glorify Your Name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again”* [JN 12.28]. Ironically – and contrary to all human prideful thinking – it is **precisely** in the Cross that the Son and Father are glorified in most grand manner. For it is there on the Cross that we see the utter love of the eternal Godhead for His fallen creation – as the Son of God pours out His life-blood for the life of the world ... for **your** salvation and **mine**. That is, in fact, the Day *Abraham rejoiced that he would see and saw it and was glad* [JN 8.56]. That is the Day in which the Word and promises given to Abraham and all the Old Testament believers came to fulfillment. That is the Day planned by the Holy Trinity from before the foundations of the world – the Day when we sinners were one and all reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of the incarnate Son.

And just as then, so also now the Son continues to glorify the Name of the Holy Triune God – here in the *Divine Service* ... and most especially in His Holy Supper. The Son's perfect keeping of the Word of God is applied to you here and now. Your sins are forgiven. Your faith is strengthened. You, therefore, may rejoice and be glad in the perfect redemption wrought by Jesus – just as Abraham. You have the promise of eternal life in Christ's Name ... by the working of the Holy Spirit ... to the glory of the Father.

In the Name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT. [Amen]