

15 June

This is perhaps the most challenging Sunday of the year for the homilist. The choice is stark; open the theology books and get yourself completely contorted trying to explain the mystery of the Trinity or lead people into an ever deeper awareness of God's presence in our lives, his grace at work within us, his Spirit moving us and shaping us into disciples of Jesus, the gift of faith as a real experience of the Trinity in our lives. The Trinity is the mystery of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a deep and profound relationship with each other, in a communion of life and love that each of us shares in through the gift of faith.

We often think of the mystery of the Trinity as a jigsaw puzzle, three separate pieces coming together to form one divine being. But the danger is that we become too abstract and philosophical. In today's first reading from the book of Exodus, Moses wasn't looking for philosophical abstractions; he was looking for the face of the living God. On the long, tiring, challenging and sometimes difficult journey of faith, when the chosen people of God nearly drove him completely mad, Moses called on the name of the Lord. In the face of so much human rebellion and sinfulness, Moses must have been expecting the anger and fire of God to blaze forth. But what do we hear instead? The Lord being described as a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness. As usual, the bible completely turns our expectations of God upside down. We often think that the story of the bible is sinful humanity's slow path to forgiveness and redemption, trying imperfectly to please a distant God. In fact, today's first reading reminds us that it is God who comes down to us, who searches us out to reveal his mercy, compassion, forgiveness and tenderness. The mystery of God not hidden but revealed.

It is in this context that we understand today's feast of the Trinity; not the God who hides himself in heaven as some gigantic mystery but the God who reveals himself tenderly and lovingly in the mystery of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the God of creation, the God whose Son embraced our weakness on the cross and rose to life to set us free, the God of the Spirit who creates and renews the face of the earth. We encounter this mystery of the Trinity, we are touched by the mystery of the Trinity in the sacraments that are celebrated, in the word of God proclaimed in this

place, in the spirit of unity which gathers us together, in the song and prayer of our faith, in the ministries of service done to build up this community of faith, in the building up of our own families and each person's unique faith story and journey.

Something of the great mystery of God is revealed in us being together and seeking to draw others to prayer and celebration. That's what St Paul is talking about in today's second reading; living together in unity and peace, helping one another, discovering the happiness that comes from faith. Unity, mission, service, prayer, discipleship; these are the themes that helped the early Christian community to grow and prosper. This is the same call that comes to us in Baptism when we receive that great sacrament in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The gift of faith unites us with the story of faith we hear about in today's first reading and the story of faith which is your journey and mine – our very real encounter with the Lord who is a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and tenderness. We are called to be in relationship with God and each other. This is the God who reveals himself to us in love.