

LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

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TRINITY SUNDAY

31st May 2026

John 3:16 Jesus said to Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

There is no mention of the Trinity as such in the scriptures. However, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity that affirms there are three persons in the one God is totally rooted in the teaching of the New Testament. As the church reflected on the mystery of God revealed in the life death and resurrection of Jesus, the awareness grew that God is a communion of love and that we are invited into their communion to find our true worth as human beings. The gospel today highlights the positive aspect of this teaching by asserting that God sent his Son out of love but it also acknowledges the tension created by the fact that we are free to reject this love. We may decide we are self-sufficient and if we do we are lost - not because God wants us to be, but because we are trying to be something we are not.

Reflection

The novelist Graham Greene once said that he would not be able to believe in a God that he could understand. Today we are brought before the mystery of a God who is a Trinity of love and, like Moses, the only appropriate response is to bow down and worship and to continue to follow in faith, confident that we are journeying towards the fullness of life. Today's feast is not intended to baffle us with the unknowable. Nor do we have to get our heads around this mystery, we need only leave our hearts open to what is revealed, namely that our God is a communion of love in whom we are invited to share.

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand

Jesus says something that transcends all human discourse and sums up in awe-inspiring words the whole mystery enshrined in him: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.*"

What can the men and women of today, all of us, feel on hearing these words, attracted as we are only to our immediate need of total wellbeing, and so skeptical of promises of a distant eternal life? What meaning can the love of God have for us in a society full of ambitions, goals and struggles so opposed to love?

The words of Jesus highlight the immense and universal love of God. It could not be otherwise. God has loved the "world", not only Israel, not only the church, or only Christians. He has sent his Son, not to condemn but to save; not to destroy, but to give eternal life. Whether we know it or not, the world exists, evolves, and keeps going under the loving gaze of God.

The best way to know something of the Mystery of love which sustains the world is through Jesus himself. When we know the Son, we are able to see, touch and sense the Father's love for all his children. When we see his life, we are able to sense the Spirit that animates God.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA - Following in the Footsteps of Jesus

The passage is a composite meditation, reflecting the teaching of the Johannine community, taking us to the end of chapter 3. The story starts with Nicodemus and continues with Jesus 'speaking, but these words are really the theology of the later community.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Trinity is not first of all a puzzle, which in principle could be solved, but rather a mystery, a relationship which is first of all lived, never exhausted and only inadequately spoken of in words. This is true of any of the significant relationships in our lives and true, therefore, all the more so of God. Within the mystery of that relationship, we recognise God, from whom we come, in whom we live and move and have our being. We recognise the Son, the way, the truth and the life. We recognise the Spirit, who helps us to pray when we do not know how to pray as we ought.

PRAYER

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be upon us all. Amen.

KIERAN O'MAHONY OSA - www.tarsus.ie

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Jesus speaks of himself being lifted up, a term that can mean a physical lifting, or also exaltation. By this play on words the evangelist explains to us that Jesus 'gift of himself in the passion was a glorious revelation of love, despite all its injustice and brutality. Bring to mind occasions when the love shown by Jesus in his passion was a sacrament of God's love for you.
2. It would be very cushy for us if we could be a source of life to others without cost to ourselves. The true life-givers know that they need the generosity of being lifted up by giving their lives so that others may have life. Recall when you have had that generosity and give thanks for others who have been like that for you.
3. We receive life from God when our faith enables us to trust in God's love for us. We give life to one another when the love between us is trustworthy. Recall memories of that kind of trustworthy love. For whom have you been able to be a 'Jesus person' and give a love that another could trust? Who has shown that kind of love to you and been for you a sacrament of God's love?
4. When people cannot find a love in which to trust they are truly in darkness rather than light. Perhaps you have had such moments. What was it like to be in that darkness, and what was it like to come into the light again when you found a love you could trust?

JOHN BYRNE OSA - Intercom

The feast is the occasion for us to pray for the grace (for the Church and for us as individuals) of a "Trinitarian spirituality".

- Awareness of God as Father so that we stand in his presence with awe and never think we can possess or control him.
 - Consciousness that in Jesus we are sons and daughters of God, sharing in his divinity, so secure in ourselves that others feel "safe" in our presence.
 - Awareness of the Spirit at work in others so that we will respect the freedom of each person especially those who disagree with or are different from us.
- Truly we need to "celebrate" the Trinity.

CONDEMNATION

There is the theme of "condemning". It is not an expression we like; for us it connotes self-righteousness and writing off people. On the other hand it is a theme (like God's anger) that is central to the bible. If we ignore it (throwing out the baby with the bath water) the message of Jesus loses its "muscle", becomes an innocuous, take-it-or-leave-it affair. We must keep the theme of "condemning" therefore, just making sure that we purify it of wrong interpretations. The following are some conclusions.

Jesus (like his followers to the extent that they are true to him) is conscious that he poses a challenge to the world, one that requires a response. Those who refuse to accept him (to "believe in the name of God's only son") must also accept the consequences - "condemnation".

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels

"God so loved the world..." Something of this creative love is expressed in the parent-child relationship. The all-encompassing love of a parent for their child is a model of the intimacy between creator and creature. A parent wants the best for a child, to hold them close, to protect them from harm, to fill them with love and hope. The inseparable bond between a mother and the child she has carried and nurtured in her body has an energy of its own. As the child grows, the love between parent and child continues to flow, sustaining the child, connecting them always with the love from which they came. In a similar way, the Spirit weaves and flows through our lives, joining us with the source of divine love.

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT - Go Deeper