

Homily for Trinity Sunday (B)

'Mother, today we learned all about the Blessed Trinity,' little Martha cried, rushing in from school. 'Tell us what you've learned', her mother said. 'Well', she said, 'there's the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – she paused dramatically – 'and Amen isn't anybody'.

The doctrine of the Trinity, even though it is a mystery, is central to our Catholic faith.

At primary school the teacher taught us the one plus one plus one equals three

But, when learning about the Trinity, we were taught that one plus one plus one equals one. Therein lay the mystery. But perhaps we are looking at it too analytically. If we compare God to the role of a human father it might help to see the mystery through a different lens.

As a parent he is known by the affectionate name of 'Dad' or 'Daddy'. The Aramaic word 'Abba' referred to in the second reading today, is a most endearing way of looking at God. Jesus referred to God as His 'Abba'. How many of us see God as an affectionate father who is always there for us and has our total good at heart. Of course if we've grown up without a father-figure our image of God the Father may not be so rosy.

But at work your Dad takes on a different role. He is skilled at his job and is a great colleague who has contributed to the success of the firm or who is very involved in his union supporting the rights of other workers.

As a married man he is cast in a different mould - he loves his wife, the one to whom he has committed himself totally in the sacrament of marriage.

Now, I know that's an idyllic picture but it might go some way in explain the inner life of the Trinity – three dimensions of the One God but all divine persons in their own right.

God does not exist in a vacuum but in a community of persons. In other words, God is not a remote isolated figure. The same should apply to us. The Book of Genesis tells us that it's not good for man to be alone. Christian spirituality does not encourage flight from the world in order to find God. That is not the same thing as spending time alone with God our Father in prayer, which is highly recommended.

The Trinity is three in one and one in three. Taking an example from everyday life we see that a man loves his wife and vice versa and their children are the fruit of that union. They become a trinity. But single people or celibate people are not excluded from this. When they sacrifice their lives for someone in their immediate family or church or local community, they too reflect the inner life of the Trinity because altruistic love has a ripple effect spreading beyond its immediate confines to society at large.

The Trinity is an eternal exchange of love and creativity between the Father and the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our ultimate destiny in Heaven is to be part of that exchange sharing forever in it innermost life.