

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Proverbs 8:22-31; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

Introduction/Context: There was no special day in the early Church set aside to celebrate the Most Holy Trinity. To combat the Arian heresy which erroneously claimed that Jesus was not really God, Christians developed the Creeds which sought principally to explain the One True God who exists as Three Divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pope John XXII (d. 1334) ordered a universal feast in honor of the Trinity on the first Sunday after Pentecost. This day was raised to the dignity of a First Class feast by Pope St. Pius X (d. 1914). After Vatican II, it was given the rank of a Solemnity – the highest rank of feast.

There is a superb logic to the timing of this feast! Attention first is placed on the Son's **Ascension** to the Father. Then, our eyes are fixed on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on **Pentecost**. Then, we turn our sights to the **Mystery of the Triune God**.

Today we celebrate our constant profession of belief in the doctrine of a Holy Trinity, the most fundamental of Christian truths and the most mysterious of all dogmas. *God the Father created us. God the Son redeemed us and reveals to us who (or, more properly, "Whose") we truly are. God the Holy Spirit sanctifies us.*

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While studying in Germany, one day after a class at the University of Bonn a new classmate approached me with a question I never before had been asked: "What is a Christian?" [Actually, he asked: "Was ist ein Christ?"]. He explained to me that he recently had arrived from the United Arab Emirates, overheard me say in class that I was a Christian and did not know what that meant.

A hundred responses shuffled through my mind. Quickly sorting through them, I sought to get to the *core* of what it means to be a Christian.

Of course, only then, did I further realize that however good my explanation, I was left to deliver my answer to him in the German language!

What, then, does it mean to be a Christian?

A Christian is a *radical lover*. "Radical" is from the Latin *radix* meaning "root" or "source" [or at the core]. Christians are those who dare to love *as we first have been loved by God*.

- *God loves us*, not because we are especially good, virtuous or boast any special merit.
- *God loves us*, not because we are we are useful or even necessary to Him.

- *God loves us*, not because we are good, but *because He is good*.
- *God loves us*, although we have nothing to offer Him.
- *God loves us*, even when we're in the ragged attire of the prodigal who no longer is wearing anything lovable.

Loving radically – to be a Christian - means sincerely trying to follow this path.

- Not just loving those whom we like, those who please us, those who suit us.
- Not just loving those who have things to offer us and those from whom we are hoping to gain some advantage.

Radically loving – to be a Christian - means that we are good to those who really need our kindness, *even if we do not especially like them*.

Being a Christian is something *quite simple* and at the very same time *completely radical*.

(pause)

Do you remember the renaissance astronomer Nikolaus Copernicus (d. 1543)? Until Copernicus it was universally held that the earth was the center of the universe and the sun and planets all rotated around the earth.

Copernicus proposed that the sun was stationary and that the earth rotated around it. Radical.

Friends, being Christian means that we no longer see ourselves as the center of the universe around which everything and everyone else must turn.

Instead, Christians accept quite seriously that we are one of many among God's creatures, *all of whom turn around God as their center*.