TRINITY SUNDAY 2016
(Proverbs 8: 22-31; Romans 5: 1-5; John 16: 12-15)

THE HOLY TRINITY: SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

Have you heard of the “Big Bang Theory”? I don’t mean the television series, although that is an interesting show. I mean the theory about the beginning of the universe. Did you know that a Catholic priest developed the “Big Bang Theory”? It’s true. A Belgian priest named Georges Lemaitre who was also a professor of Physics published his theory in the early 1930s – and none other than Albert Einstein liked the idea. The theory states that the universe originated from a “Primeval Atom” or “Cosmic Egg” (as Fr. Lemaitre called it). Here is the simple version of how he explained the beginning of creation: the universe started out as an extremely dense and extremely hot microscopic particle which exploded and began to expand – and it is still expanding about 14 billion years later (give or take a few hundred million years). Throughout this time, incredible numbers of galaxies have come into being, including our own “Milky Way” galaxy; and, of course, our solar system with all its planets (including earth) has also evolved. The title “Big Bang” did not come from Fr. Lemaitre, but rather from an English Physicist who was making fun of the Belgian priest’s theory. Most scientists accept the “Big Bang Theory” as the way it all happened. As for the t v series, they show in about 30 seconds the “Big Bang” and its expansion through the ages at the opening of each show and also the evolution of life on earth down to the appearance of homo sapiens (that’s us). There is a slow motion video of this clip on the web which is fascinating to watch.

Of course, Fr. Lemaitre believed that God created the universe and thus is responsible for the “Big Bang” and, for that matter, the so-called theory of evolution – although the priest did not claim his theory proved that God did it or even that God exists. Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) accepted Fr. Lemaitre’s theory in the early 1950s. Did you know that? This brief history of the “Big Bang” shows that Catholic thought for several generations has accepted the gradual formation of the universe, rather than the literal Biblical view that God created everything in six days a few thousand years ago – which many other Christians actually still believe.

For me, the “Big Bang Theory” shows us an awesome God who created everything in an awesome way. And why couldn’t he have done it that way? He’s God, after all!

Today’s Feast of the Holy Trinity inspires us to look at what God is really like. The mystery of the Trinity teaches us that God is a community. In the community of persons in the Trinity, there is a complete sharing of resources. Whatever the Father, Son, and Spirit needs is available. The work of the Father, the work of the Son, and the work of the Holy Spirit are all accomplished because the community that is God cooperates completely and shares fully. All the resources at God’s disposal – and that is everything in the still expanding universe – are equally available to
the persons of the Trinity so that the will of God comes to pass. This work of God is always to reach out in love to everyone in the human family.

As the first reading from the Book of Proverbs tells us, the Wisdom of God has existed from all eternity and this Wisdom delights in humankind. God in his Wisdom is very close to us and cares about every person. In the Gospel (from St. John), Jesus proclaims that he will send us the Spirit of Truth who will lead us into all Truth. Many who study the Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit is really a manifestation of God’s Wisdom. And I would say the truth is that God’s Spirit is at work in our hearts to teach us how wise it is to treat everyone, no matter what they look like or where they live, with respect and fairness. We Christians are the Body of Christ and he commissions us in the gospel to share the good news. Part of the good news, as we Catholics know, is to serve the poor and the sick – those on the outskirts of society, as Pope Francis calls them. When we share some of our resources, as Christ commands us, we are mirroring the life of the Trinity which is Wisdom itself and in whose image we are created. The community that is God inspires us to be a community that shares.

If the human family is to survive, it is imperative that we model ourselves more and more on the community that is the Holy Trinity – which is also a unity precisely because absolutely everything is shared. The growing huge chasm between the haves and the have-nots in the world is simply not tenable any longer. Even in the United State, the middle class is now officially a minority – less than 50% of the total population – with a few very wealthy folks at the top and a lot more poor at the bottom than we have seen in this country since at least the Great Depression of the 1930s. The world-wide disparity is leading to global warming because greed fuels disregard for the environment. It is also leading to social unrest and war because you cannot have peace without justice.

We Catholics have a well-developed “social teaching” which goes back to the end of the 1800s at the beginning if the industrial era. Pope Francis has made this teaching front and center of his papacy. Being from Latin America, he knows first-hand the tremendous cost of selfishness because so many Latin countries have had a history of a few families hoarding all the wealth. Unfortunately this phenomenon of greed has traveled north and crossed the border into America – and there is no wall to keep it out. But in this time of world-wide injustice, there is also great hope. This hope is based on the life of the Holy Trinity who teaches us to be generous without measure. We can no longer be just a little bit generous. We who have so much are called to grow our hearts like the Grinch in the famous Dr. Seuss story of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.” The Grinch’s heart was too sizes too small, but it grew three sizes when he saw how the people of Who-ville celebrated Christmas after all even without presents or the tree or any other trappings which the Grinch stole. They celebrated anyway because they realized that the Spirit of Christmas is the spirit of generosity. In the Incarnation, God gave us himself totally. We are in turn called to give from our big hearts more and more generously to alleviate poverty and want from our community and from the planet.
I have no doubt that God wants everyone in the world to be successful in their work and to have all the resources they need to be happy and healthy and joyful as individuals and as families. But always remember that we are Christians and that a Christian’s inheritance is to be God-like. And to be God-like is to eradicate all self-centeredness from our hearts. So let us always remember to share like God the Holy Trinity has shared his life with us. Care about the poor because you cannot be a Christian if you do not care about them. May we take our cue from the “Big Bang” where God exploded in love and self-sharing in a blast that will keep expanding until we hopefully are all with God the Trinity in eternity!

[I want especially to address our graduates today. We all hope you will be enormously successful in your careers. And I truly believe God wants you to be satisfied in your work and to have all the resources you need to be happy and healthy and joyful in your lives, including (of course) when you marry and form families. But remember that God wants everyone in the world to have all they need to be happy too! And so always keep in mind that you are Christians and that a Christian’s inheritance is to be God-like. And to be God-like is to eradicate all self-centeredness from our hearts. So graduates, remember to share like God the Holy Trinity has shared his life with us. Care about the poor because you cannot be a Christian if you do not care about them. The same goes for all of us. May we take our cue from the “Big Bang” where God exploded in love and self-sharing in a blast that will keep expanding until we hopefully are all with God the Trinity in eternity! ]