

June 4, 2023
Cycle A – Most Holy Trinity Sunday

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Psalm: 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

Notes from Bishop Peter

1. Let's use our imagination and go back to the creation of the universe. It was the Belgian Catholic priest, Georges LeMaitre, astronomer and mathematician, who theorized that the universe began with what he called a Primeval (first) Atom. The popular expression is the Big Bang. Being a priest, he believed that God created this atom out of nothing. He then calculated that the universe is constantly expanding and is approximately 13.8 billion years old.
 - a. Our planet Earth was formed about 4.3 billion years ago and because of a series of explosions, has an atmosphere capable of sustaining human life. All this by chance? Not for the believer.
2. This is fine but our hearts need to understand more about God. We might be able to come to the conclusion that God exists as did Aristotle but this doesn't tell us anything about God's inner being.
3. At an appropriate time God chose to reveal God's self through the chosen people, Israel. We saw in the firsts reading something about who God is when he says, "The Lord is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." (Exodus 34)
4. Then God showed Israel that he stands with the poor and oppressed when God liberated Israel from bondage in Egypt.
5. God continued throughout the history of Israel to instruct his people how to live by the 10 commandments and other points as well. His people are to accept him as the only God and love him with all their heart, soul and strength and their neighbors as themselves.
6. They are to treat all people with respect, even foreigners, and make sure that there are no poor among them. (Deuteronomy 10) If they don't keep his Covenant, he will let them fend for themselves. This occurred in 586 BCE when the Babylonian army entered Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and the city and deported many of its inhabitants to Babylon.

7. But God is rich in mercy. The people returned and began rebuilding their Temple and city.
8. Then in what is known as the “fullness of time,” the Father sent his Son who revealed something of who the Father is. We have the parable of the Prodigal Son as well as today’s beautiful Gospel text from John, 3:16-18: “For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him.”
 - a. Because Jesus stood by those who suffered even to the point of curing on the Sabbath, he angered the Jewish leadership (not all Jews) who had him arrested and sent him to Pontius Pilate who unjustly condemned him to be crucified.
9. But that is not the end of the story, as we know. Because Jesus was obedient, his Father raised him from the dead and made him the source of eternal life (beginning now and ending in heaven) for all who believe in him.
10. But how do we know about Jesus in the 21st Century? Jesus sends (present tense) his Holy Spirit who creates the church and makes each convert capable of living as Jesus did.
 - a. Of the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis said: “Without the Spirit, Jesus Christ would have been a figure of the past. Without the Holy Spirit, the church would be nothing more than a moral society.”
 - b. The Holy Spirit makes all believers other Christs, shown by the anointing with Holy Chrism we receive when we are baptized and confirmed. Thus we can say with Saint Paul, “I live, now not so much I but it is Christ who lives in me.”
 - c. Moreover, the Holy Spirit: (1) Has poured God’s love into our hearts so that we can be LOVE too, even though the ideal is difficult to attain. (2) Raised up prophets through the ages who call us to live the basics of Jesus’ teachings in the Bible and transmitted to us over the centuries by the church, prophets like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother Teresa calling us to respect human life and treat everyone with dignity; Pope Saint John XXIII who was the peacemaker par excellence and Pope Saint John Paul II who taught that human life must be respected from

conception until natural death. (3) Has helped the church reform itself throughout the centuries. (4) Is in the hearts of all people of good will, helping us to see what God wants of us, in particular eliminating anti-Semitism and especially today, racism that expresses itself in demeaning and mistreating other human beings who are racially different. May the Spirit's power bring peace to our suffering land.

- d. Finally, the Spirit leads us to Jesus and Jesus brings us back to the Father. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can give glory to God by living as Jesus demands. If we do, Jesus will bring us to Heaven one day where we will see God face to face. Then we will realize that letting the Most Holy Trinity lead us/ even where we would not have chosen/ will be well worth the struggle.

Amen.