



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY

June 11, 2017

Introduction to the Word:

As we celebrate the Feast of the Trinity today, and as we look back upon our Easter Message series - Eyes on the Road ([*in which we were invited to ask ourselves if we reflected Christ - if you missed you can hear its entirety on our website*](#)) God's word leads us to talk about what it means to infuse – to pour your life into another and how when we do – we are in unity with the Trinity.

Warm Up Activity:

Each of us has a Starting Point – a moment when we begin and this allow God, others and even self to infuse and influence us toward His will and way.

- a) How might this starting point change how we think about God working in our lives?
- b) How might this starting point change how we think about God working in the sacraments?
- c) What particular blessing of God might you identify in your life? How do you respond to this blessing?

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you alone are our creator, redeemer, animator and giver of life:

Lord Jesus: Reveal for us the love of the Father, **Lord, have mercy.**
Christ Jesus: Redeem us with your life-saving Word, **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord Jesus: Call us to fullness of life through your Spirit, **Lord, have mercy**

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)



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FIRST READING (Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9)

Moses rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, “The Lord.”

The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”

And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. He said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (2 Corinthians 13:11-13)

Brothers and sisters, put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (John 3:16-18)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “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.

“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. The one who believes in him is not condemned; but the one who does not believe is condemned already, for not having believed in the name of the only Son of God.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

In the Ascension we learn that Jesus withdraws, so that we might ourselves be sent out to make Him present in the world. At Pentecost we rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, whom we receive at Baptism and Confirmation and through whom as disciples of Jesus we proclaim the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father. Pentecost comes because all of us need a beginning - but we need one that has His guidance and inspiration - especially in our mission of discipleship. Today we celebrate the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In the Feast of the Trinity - God communicates with us and His message is an infusion into our lives. Each of us seeks to make an impression – even rocks makes an impression in the sand. Our impression is often in the form of communication – think of the various methods we have today to communicate – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Email and even carrier pigeon I guess. But what we communicate – or more specifically – WHO we communicate is the focus of the Trnity.



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It is from God the Father that all begins - He is the infuser into our lives. From within that unity of God we find the image for ourselves too. The Trinity teaches us that we honour not three separate gods distinct - but a unity in the impression of one generated from the Father. So too in our lives when the impression we make is in unity of purpose with God's will for our life, and what we communicate is generated from the Father, we find that our lives are in harmony.

Often the anxiety we feel in life, the confusion we sense, or the turmoil we go through, is because we are embarking upon a path that is not in union and is leaving the impression of self and not God. This disunity is what causes the lack of harmony.

John's Gospel talks about this plan as eternal life. That is our focus and was the focus of the life that Jesus had been discussing with Nicodemus earlier in the Gospel chapter mentioned today. In other words, to have eternal life is to experience the kingdom of God by being born of "water and Spirit," and the gift of the Spirit of God is what enables us to live "eternal life" here and now. Eternal life, therefore, is the baptized person's participation in the life of the Trinity.

So how do we make sure that we are leaving the impression and living in the image of the Triune God. Well two ways get us on the road:

1. That we ask ourselves often in prayer (during our appointment with God) – who are we representing – whose impression are we leaving? In the witness that we give, in the way that we walk as Christians, in the wisdom we share with others – is it our impression or God's impact we seek to make?
2. That we discern and decide we will live vertical lives and not horizontal lives. Horizontal lives just keep "plugging along", they "get through" stuff, or as we have put it in other messages series – they "survive", not "thrive." But a vertical life is always pointing upward to God. In our witness, in our way, in our words and wisdom – pointing to Him and making sure we are in union with Him.

So the Feast of the Trinity asks – who are we communicating, what impressions are we making and who are we in union with? May it be the Trinity!

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

(John 3:16) "*God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son...*"

- a) We have all witnessed examples of heroic love in our lives. Share in your group, one or two that you will never forget, that will always inspire you.
- b) We hear so often that a measure of our love for God is the manner of our caring for the poor and oppressed of the world. If you would, share in your small group, a few of the ways you try to minister to these needy ones on a fairly regular basis.



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- c) If you were commissioned to be a world emissary for peace, where would you start? What would you do? What, in your opinion, will it take for the people of the world to live in peace and love? What would you have us do? Share.
- d) John 3:16 is a popular Scripture verse: you may even see it on a sign held up at an athletic event. Why is this verse so popular?

Discuss together as a group what “vertical living” means to you? What are some ways to encourage each other to make sure you are living lives focused on God? How can you help each other make sure you know who you are “representing” and whose impact or impression you are making?

Intercessions:

Leader: Our response: Lord Hear us

- For Pope Francis: may God strengthen him in his apostolic ministry, for our Bishop Douglas, and our Pastor Father Freitas, may they be given the strength and stamina they need as they shepherd of Christ's faithful people. We pray to the Lord.
- For our parish community, that we may follow the example of Mary and Elizabeth by serving the Lord and one another in humility and fidelity to the invitation of God by being a family of faith who welcomes others and continue to be a home with something for everyone. We pray to the Lord
- For those who are struggling and seeking guidance, for families who are bringing children for Baptism into a new life of faith, for young couples preparing for Marriage, for elders seeking companionship, may they all experience the comfort and care of our community. We pray to the Lord.
- For those from our parish community considering a Vocation to priesthood and religious life. For our two seminarians Hayden and Robin. For Jonathan Reitzel soon to be our summer intern. May they experience the love of the Risen Lord as they seek to discern His will for their lives. We pray to the Lord.
- For the youth and young adults of the parish may they remain close to the Lord and may our example lead them to the practice of the faith among us. For the young people of our parish preparing to go to Steubenville this summer and those who will participate in VBS and at Camp Brebeuf. We pray to the Lord.
- For areas of the world in need, especially in Kenya and in Haiti. May our prayers and support aide them and bring them closer to Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- For all who have died, as well as for all the intentions recorded in the parish book of prayer. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray:
Hail Mary

Closing Activity and Prayer (15-20 minutes)



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(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and “outreach” to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:

- Prayerfully consider ways that your group and our parish could grow at welcoming others, help those who are restless to find a home.
- Prayerfully talk about the summer plans for your group. Heart to Home editions conclude at the end of June – but your group can continue to meet – how can we help?
- Spend time as a group in Eucharistic Adoration – prayer for our shepherds in the Church

“If you wish to enrich days, plant flowers; if you wish to enrich years, plant trees; if you wish to enrich Eternity, plant ideals in the lives of others”. Truett Cathy

- How can your small group invest in others? Whom among your circle of influence can you invite to Mass, to a small group gathering or even DadFest?

Let us pray (together)

*Lord God, merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,
by sending your own Son into the world and pouring forth upon us your love
through your Spirit, you have found a way to share your own abundant life with us. May we
be given the grace to make your impression upon our world, to impact and communicate with
others in your name, so that we may together build your Kingdom and lead others toward
eternal life. We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

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