

New Brighton, Sunday 4th June 2023

Holy Trinity

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible and His judgments and how unsearchable His ways!”¹

We can read the following story in the “Golden Legend”, written by a bishop of Genoa during the 13th Century:

A long time ago, St. Augustine, who is now a Doctor of the Church, was walking by the seashore contemplating the mystery of the Holy Trinity, when he saw a little child running back and forth from the water to a spot on the seashore. The boy was using a shell to carry water from the large ocean and pour it into a small pit that he had made in the sand. St. Augustine came up to him and asked him what he was doing.

“I’m going to pour the entire ocean into this hole,” the boy replied.

“What?” said Augustine. “That is impossible, my dear child, the sea is so great and the shell and the hole are so little.”

“That is true,” the boy said. “It would be easier and quicker to draw all the water out of the sea and fit it into this hole than for you to fit the mystery of the Trinity and His Divinity into your little intellect; for the Mystery of the Trinity is greater and larger in comparison with your intelligence than is this vast ocean in comparison with this little hole.”

And then the child vanished. St Augustine understood he was an angel sent by God to remind him of the limits of human understanding in relation to the great mysteries of our Faith.

The first Sunday after Pentecost opens the long liturgical time and the return to the green vestments. Since the 1st Sunday of Advent, we’ve been contemplating the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption. Now we’re living in the time since Jesus went to heaven, and the Holy Ghost is moving our desires and action, since we received Him at Pentecost. The green colour is offered to us as a reminder and a token of Hope for the fulfilment of the promised Jesus made us before His Ascension:

“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”²

This Hope to be saved is a virtue we need to work on with Humility, and that’s one of the reasons for today’s feast. As we are offered the contemplation of a mystery, the first of our Faith, two attitudes could divert us: rejecting with pride this truth because human mind can’t get around with it, or total indifference and neglect for something which is above us anyway, so why should we bother with it.

¹ Rm., XI, 33.

² Mk., XVI, 16.

Both attitudes are highly against the dignity of the Mystery, dignity of God, and also our poor human condition. The story of St. Augustine we heard at the beginning, reminded us how humble and thankful we need to remain when we are contemplating those mysteries.

That is true: we will never understand the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, but we firmly believe that it is the Truth, because Jesus revealed it to us, and we know for sure He can't be wrong or mislead us.

“It appears to me that humility is the truth. I know not whether I am humble, but I know that I see the truth in all things.”³

St Therese of the Child Jesus gave us a nice and simple way to contemplate this mystery. Her simple words could help us to remain poor creatures, adoring this mystery in Humility, as we are not worth to even know about it.

“She often spoke of a well-known toy with which in childhood's days she had amused herself: a kaleidoscope; in form somewhat like a small telescope; on looking through, one sees an endless succession of pretty and many-coloured designs, varying at each turn of the kaleidoscope.

“This toy,” she said, “aroused my admiration and I used to wonder what could produce so pleasing a phenomenon; when one day, after serious examination, I saw there were simply a few tiny scraps of paper and of wool cut no matter how, and thrown here and there. I pursued my investigation and discovered three mirrors inside the tube: I had there the key to the problem.

“This was for me the image of a great mystery. As long as our actions, even the least of them, remain within the focus of Love, the Blessed Trinity, which is figured by the three mirrors, reflects them, and endows them with a wondrous beauty. Jesus, looking at us through the little lens, that is to say, as it were through Himself, finds all our actions pleasing to Him. But if we leave the ineffable centre of Love, what will He see? Mere straws... actions sullied and nothing worth.”⁴

Following the examples of St Augustine and St Thérèse, let's humbly receive this Truth in our hearts, never forgetting the first words of the Athanasian Creed:

“Whosoever willeth to be saved, * before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, * without doubt he shall perish eternally.”⁵

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

³ St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Story of a Soul, Chp. VII.

⁴ St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Counsels and Reminiscences

⁵ Canticum Quicumque, Symbolum Athanasium