

Chaplain's Bulletin May 26, 2024



Dear Folks,

Today is the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, a feast day that should get more acclaim than it does. Fasten your seatbelts; we're going deep.

Catholics should, at a minimum, know that there is one God who is three divine, coeternal persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, almost all just stop there and never give it another thought.

Folks, this is the core of all reality and makes all the difference.

As we look at the basic questions of existence and consider what to believe, there are some primal questions. Is the ultimate reality personal or impersonal? If we accept the atheist materialist view, then it is impersonal, and personhood is just a blip in the dance of matter energy in the universe. I experience consciousness, but don't know why (there is vague talk about a byproduct of electrical activity of the brain, but I don't think that explains much). I experience good and bad feelings, and I want to maximize good feelings, and that's about it. In this scenario, when I die, nothing of me is left, and the race will die, and it won't matter that we existed at all. I don't find this very inspiring.

If the Christian point of view is correct (and, in case you are wondering, I believe it is), Then personhood is the foundation of all reality. Beyond even the universe. Furthermore, God is the perfect community of love all by Himself. The Father is eternally giving Himself in love to the Son, who is eternally receiving and returning that love, and the love that passes between them is the Holy Spirit. Though God does not need anything, love by nature is fruitful, and so God created the universe, including us. We are meant to receive His love and give ourselves as gift to Him, and that is the fullness of the meaning of being human and the fullness of joy. Unfortunately, sin inhibits this gift, and we become centered on our own desires (classically: power, pleasure, wealth, and honor). Only by becoming one with Jesus in His perfect gift of self, which culminated on the cross, can we be saved from it. In Him, we can learn how to give ourselves as gift, and receive the strength to do it. The more we grow in Christ, the more we receive His love and the more we give ourselves in love. In heaven, that flow of love becomes perfect and complete. See John.16:20-24 and John 17: 20-26.

We must be careful about self-deception. In our sinful condition, it can be easy to tell ourselves we are loving God and others when we are actually at our center serving our desires. Matthew 6 (the middle chapter of the Sermon on the Mount) is all about that danger. Our scribe and Pharisee friends are the poster children for this.

The big question in life is: are we at our center about serving our own desires, or about giving ourselves in love with our own desires as a side dish? Everything starts from this.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Jim