

### Unity in Diversity

The prayer “Glory be to the Father, ...” was one of the first prayers any of us ever learnt. Every Mass begins and ends in the name of the three divine persons. There are repeated references to the Trinity throughout the Eucharist. In a variety of ways the Church keeps us conscious that the Trinity is at the heart of our Christian Faith and today we have the celebration of Trinity Sunday.

The Trinity is not just something that we are to believe in, a matter of faith to be sure, but rather distant from everyday life. The Trinity in fact provides the basic pattern according to which our daily life should be lived and provides us with the ability to follow that pattern. Today’s feast reminds us of all that.

The inner life of the Trinity is an extremely active one that nevertheless in no way compromises the oneness of the godhead. The Father begets the Son, the Son takes on humanity as Jesus the Redeemer, the Spirit expends grace and strength on all who believe. There is great diversity within the Triune God. But there is no splitting up of the divinity. God remains one.

The Lord gives to his Church the gift of being akin to the Trinity. Yes, of being one people, but having that people enrich itself by encouraging its members to live the divine life in a variety of ways.

The Mass preface celebrating Christian unity refers to unity in diversity. “How wonderful are the works of the Spirit revealed in so many gifts. Yet how wonderful is the unity the Spirit creates from their diversity, as he wells in the hearts of your children, filling the whole Church with his presence and guiding it with his wisdom”.

Language is one of the many ways in which that unity exists in diversity. The Church over the centuries always worshipped God in a variety of languages, not just Latin but Greek, Syriac, Malayalam and the other languages of the Eastern Churches. Add to that the great range of languages in which the Western Church now worships. But diversity of language need not bring about division. It is our Christian gift, stemming from the pattern of the Trinity, to make diversity in language and in worship a matter of richness and never of disunity.

Christians do not have a perfect track record for maintaining unity. But today, they are trying to do better than they did in Reformation times. When Benedict XVI was installed in front of St. Peter’s after being elected Pope, he was flanked not just by cardinals and Catholic bishops but by leading Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox clergy. A gesture only, it is true. But one in the right direction, the direction of a life lived in unity as brothers and sisters sharing the one trinitarian faith. Each of us can at our own level contribute to that unity in a great variety of ways.

Humphrey O’Leary CSsR  
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