

[Readings: Exodus 34: 4b-6, 8-9; Daniel 3:52-55; 2 Cor. 13:11-13; John 3:16-18]

When I first looked at the three readings for today's Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, I paused, I gasped, and then I smiled. What an awesome message you and I, our country and our world need to hear! The Holy Spirit inspired today's readings!

This has been a time of dismay and discouragement. The COVID-19 pandemic. The civil unrest ignited by anger, fear, frustration and exhaustion. What would the patron saint of our parish, St. Martin de Porres, born of a Spanish father and an African slave mother, say? He is a patron saint of race relations, reconciliation and racial harmony. Have we done enough to make us all equal members of the human race while respecting ethnicity, diversity, and the common good? The facts suggest we haven't yet reached that goal.

Speaking at his Wednesday general audience from his papal library on June 3, our Holy Father Pope Francis said: "Dear brothers and sisters in the United States, I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd. We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life. At the same time, we have to recognize that the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost."

Add to this, the news that all the parishes of the Archdiocese of Detroit are going into a new process that will redefine our identity and our future.

Someone asked me recently, "How much more can we take?" And I was reminded of what Archbishop Vigneron said shortly after he arrived here 11 years ago: "There is no sin that cannot be redeemed. There is no suffering that cannot heal. There is no death that cannot result in new life."

In today's First Reading, Moses is taking a second trip up Mount Sinai to get another copy of the Ten Commandments. When he had first come down the mountain to present the original tablets to the Chosen People, Moses saw the sin, the idolatry, and the moral corruption that had taken over God's people during his absence. In anger, Moses throws the tablets at the unfaithful people, and they shatter.

Now, humiliated, Moses slithers back up the mountain, at God's command, with the broken tablets in his arms. In spite of sin, God still gives the people a second chance. God seals the deal by proclaiming the Divine Name of Yahweh, "I am who I am."

Then God gives Moses His own job description: God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity. The response of Moses is to invite God to pardon and to accompany the Chosen People once more and to receive those stiff-necked people once again as God's own.

We need, as individuals and as a nation, to acknowledge our own stiff-necks, our own sins against God and against one another. Let's do that today. To be sorry for any time that we ourselves have been guilty of selfishness and pride. To be sorry when we have failed to see and acknowledge each other as brothers and sisters who are members of the universal human race.

St. Paul echoes this sentiment in our Second Reading, when he gives us the recipe for how God's love and peace will be with us. St. Paul challenges us to mend our ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, even if it means to agree to disagree, and to live in peace with each other.

He concludes with the greeting with which we are familiar at the beginning of Mass: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." Have you ever stopped to think about what the words of this greeting really means? If you have, then you have a grasp of today's Solemn Feast of the Holy Trinity.

The "grace" of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Grace" comes from the Greek word, "charis" which really means "gift." The "gift" of our Lord Jesus Christ is what we NEED to get to Heaven, and I dare say, what we WANT to make our lives have purpose. I think that makes it quite clear that we really, really do NEED Jesus Christ in order to experience repentance, forgiveness, salvation, joy and lasting peace.

The "love" of God... There is only one word for love in English; there are at least three words for love in Greek. There is Philos, the love that brothers and sisters share. "Phila-dephia" is the City of Brotherly Love. There is Eros, the love that only a husband and wife are supposed to share. We get the word "erotic" from Eros. Then there is Agape. It's hard to describe Agape, other than to say that it is the complete and unconditional love and faithfulness that God shows us as God's favorite creation. You and I are incapable of such perfect love. But we do catch glimpses of it from time to time, when God sends us special people and events into our lives.

Finally, "fellowship" or "communion." What does it take to build a community?

Look at your own household. Who's in charge? What is the quality of the

relationships under your home roof? Can one easily see the fruits of the Holy Spirit when they step into your home: gentleness, peacefulness, joy, holiness, modesty, self-control?

A good experience of a family gathering “breathes life” into the family, whether that is through affection and song, or debating and laughing together. The Holy Spirit is that Divine Breath that keeps relationships alive. When we reflect what we are inside, the image and likeness of God, it’s easy to share in their fellowship and community.

In the light of the social chaos around us, we need to become people of grace, love and fellowship. Quoting the Serenity Prayer, I heard someone say, “I am tired of accepting the things I cannot change. I want to change the things I cannot accept!”

A novel fad that has swept the world is the concept of the “selfie.” The person taking the selfie has himself or herself in the middle of the photo op. It’s all about ME. If God took a selfie, it would not be about ME, it would be more about WE. It’s a team effort to redeem the world. The love between Father and Son is the Holy Spirit. When that unity of love is seen and experienced and shared, only then does God enter our hearts and our world.

In the movie, “Bruce Almighty,” Bruce (Jim Carrey) asks God (Morgan Freeman), “How do you make someone love you without affecting free will?” And God answers, “Welcome to my world, son. When you get that one figured out, let me know.”

Here is what St. John says in today’s Gospel: “God so loved the world, that He gave us His Only Son.” I wish that sentence was not in the past tense, as something done, completed and over. I wish it could say, “God so LOVES the world, that God GIVES us the Son and their Spirit.” God still loves. God still gives. God gives in His Holy Word. God gives in this Eucharist! God gives in the ministry, service and action we provide for our families, our community, and our world. We can continue, and thus eventually become that giving, “Triune” action of God today. WE could love the world so much, that WE could give the world our very selves, so that everyone who believes in the message WE bring -- about the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit -- “might not perish but might have eternal life.” AMEN!