

The Holy Trinity!

In an ever increasing way, we have been talking about evangelization ...
you know, **the activity of sharing the Good News of God** with other people.

Well the **National Evangelization Conference** was held **this past week**.

And **guess where it was held?**
New York? Chicago? Philadelphia? LA?
No ... Birmingham, Alabama!

Yeah ... the **National Evangelization Conference** was held **just 10 miles away...**
at the Doubletree Hotel on 8th Ave South!

We advertised it for weeks in **the Bulletin** and I'm pleased that some of you were
able to come down and hear one or more of the **great Catholic Evangelists** from all
over America. **Dr. Scott Hahn & Dr. Ralph Martin,**
Michael Warsaw – CEO of EWTN,
Dan Burke – Editor of **National Catholic Register** newspaper,
Allen Hunt who teams with Matthew Kelly at **Dynamic Catholic,**
Tim Staples of **Catholic Answers** and
Mrs. Kelly Wahlquist founder of (WINE) **Women in the New Evangelization.**

What a marvelous assembly of energized Catholics!

Scott Hahn was **the keynote speaker** at the dinner Tuesday night ... and afterward,
I waited in line and got his input on an apologetic question I'd had for a while.

I asked him if I could give him a blessing and he said **sure ... so I blessed him ...**
then he signed one of his **most recent books** for me.
“Joy to the World” How Christ’s coming changed everything (and still does)

He signed it *“To Father Deering, thank you for the gift of your Priestly Fatherhood.”*

What an honor to get coaching and affirmation from Dr. Scott Hahn ...
I was the one who was blessed!

Scott Hahn has written 40 books ...
imagine that ... this busy **college Professor** with **6 children & 14 grandchildren**
has written 40 books ... while many others watch TV.

What would move a guy to do that?

Nothing other than **the fire of God’s love** burning to be shared with the world.

In addition to his many books, Dr. Hahn has also recorded many CD's ...
making it **very easy for us to receive his ideas and inspiration ...**
especially for those who don't prefer to read.

For many ... including myself, this way **the first way** I heard about Scott Hahn ...
back in the **early 90's ...** when I heard **his conversion story on cassette tape!**

One of his **recent CD's** is entitled "**Abba**" or **Allah** where **Dr. Hahn discusses** the
important differences between **Catholicism** and **Islam.**

We'll soon have it available in our CD Rack in the vestibule.

The difference between **Abba & Allah** is key to our celebration of **The Trinity** today.

Some years ago, **Dr. Hahn was scheduled to have a public debate** at Penn State
with a **Muslim scholar** on the subject of **The Trinity.**

And **when the upcoming debate** was still 6 months away **Dr. Hahn happened to run**
into the man during in his travels and so they planned an impromptu breakfast ...
that didn't even last a half hour!

You see, as soon as Scott referred to God as Father, down came the Muslim's fist
on the table and he interrupted Scott and he urged him to stop blaspheming!

About 4 minutes later Scott referred to Jesus as Son... again, down came the fist a
second time.

And **the Muslim explained that Fatherhood and Sonship** are merely human and
finite designations and to project them onto God is the essence of blasphemy.

Scott began to wonder how exactly they were going to debate the Trinity 6 months
later ...

And he tried to find some common ground through the use of analogy

Scott said that **God is all-powerful ... he is omnipotent.**

We **humans** have power but it's **finite.**

The **Muslim** nodded.

Scott said that **God is all-knowing ... he is omniscient.**

We **humans** have knowledge but it's **restricted.**

The **Muslim** nodded.

Scott said **God is all-good He is omnibenevolent.** The **Muslim** agreed.

Scott said **God is also all-merciful and all-loving.** The **Muslim** agreed.

Scott said, since you can see that power and knowledge and goodness and mercy and love are unlimited in God ... and limited in us ...

why not just bundle these Divine attributes and label them Father?

The Muslim just stared intently at Scott and went on to explain why from a Muslim perspective that's unacceptable

He used a **curious analogy**

He was finishing a Doctorate degree at one school and was going to be moving to get a **Post Doctorate** degree at another school.

Well, in his current apartment in **Philadelphia** he had a **pet dog**.

He said I love the dog ... but when I move I signed a lease that allows no pets and so I tried to give him away but since no one will take him I'll have to kill this dog.

Scott thought he was joking and said, "With love like that, who needs hate."

The Muslim wasn't amused ... he had made his point.

This was **the nature of a love** that exists between a Master and a Slave ... between an Owner and his Property.

Scott tried to go on but in short order ...

down came the man's fist a third time and he stood up and said,

"I've asked you once, twice but not a third time" and **he** stormed out.

Scott was stunned ... the restaurant was silent ...

The waitress came to take his order but he was no longer hungry

Scott paid for the coffee and then he and his friend who was with him went out to their car and they sat in silence for some 10 minutes.

Then, **Scott's friend** who is Baptist said,

"I don't think I've ever appreciated before what it means to say,

***Our Father, who are in Heaven.**"*

And **Scott** added ... "And I believe in God, **the Father Almighty!**"

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son!"

And **his Baptist Friend** said, "Scott ...

*"Glory be to **the Father** and to **the Son** and to **the Holy Spirit!**"*

Can I have an Amen? *Amen!*

Do you realize how blessed we are to know God as Father not Master?

**You see sometimes it takes outsiders to show those of us on the inside ...
all that we have come to assume and take for granted.**

**As we pray our Creed and the Our Father every Sunday ...
do we cherish the truth that ... God is our Father and we are His children!**

**Scott went on to study Islamic theology and philosophy a bit more ... and
he discovered that that Muslim accurately represented his belief system.**

that Islam is by self-description a religion of Divine Slavery

whereas Christianity is a religion of Divine Sonship.
(a relationship that Muslims consider blasphemous and presumptuous).

By the way, that Muslim subsequently cancelled the debate ...
which Scott did not regret at all!

You know, I've had Muslims tell me,
"I believe in the Bible and I also believe in the Koran."

Well, that's a big lie ... because the Bible reveals God as Father!

In Jesus' High Priestly Prayer in the Gospel of John, chapters 14 to 17,
He addresses God as Father ... 51 times!
And if you include all 4 Gospels, God is addressed as Father, 170 times!

Now to the people of that time ...this was radical information ... and yet,
the seeds of this truth were planted at the very beginning of the Bible.

In Genesis God said, "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*"

These plural pronouns point to the truth ... that God is more than one person ...
God is a community of Persons ... He is One God in Three Divine Persons!

God gave us another hint of his plurality in the Old Testament Book of Proverbs
which we proclaimed today in our First Reading ,

*"When the Lord established the heavens I was there ...
Then was I beside him as his craftsman and I was his delight day by day."*

God knew that the people would not be able to grasp the mystery of who he was
at that time, so, He patiently waited to reveal Himself through His Son Jesus.

And even then, Jesus knew that we could only comprehend so much ...
and that **the mystery of God** would continue to be revealed over time.

In our **Gospel** passage today, **Jesus** says to His Disciples,
“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.”

Jesus revealed Himself as the eternally begotten Son of God, and then,
Jesus sent His Holy Spirit into the world to guide us in all truth.

Thankfully, we’ve had **the Holy Spirit** with us for **some 2000 years now**
and through Him, we continue to appropriate more of **the truth of who God is.**

This much we know ... He is a **Triune God** ... He is one God with 3 Divine Persons.
And **these 3 persons** are in the most intense love relationship with one another!

God **the Father** is Love
God **the Son** is Love
God **the Holy Spirit** is Love!

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said it this way, *“God is wholly and only love,
the purest, infinite, and eternal love. He does not live in splendid solitude but rather
is an inexhaustible source of life that is ceaselessly given and communicated.”*

What a powerful description ... the **love of God** is ceaselessly given & communicated

Yes, God is **the Lover**, Jesus is **the Beloved** and the Holy Spirit is **the Love** that
flows between them ... ceaselessly given and communicated.

So, God in Himself is an intense Love Relationship.

And in **His great love** ... He invites us into that **Love Relationship.**
And **if we** freely choose to love and become like Him in love,
then we will merit to share in His Eternal Love ...
a love that is ceaselessly given and communicated

And even while we’re here on earth, **God** gives us a foretaste of that love

St. Paul points this out in our **Second Reading from Romans** when he says,
*“the love of God has been poured out into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”*

The **Holy Spirit** is **Divine Love**; He is **Love Itself**. And **the Father** has poured out
His Holy Spirit into our souls through His **Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.**

Think for a moment of **the times** in your life **when** you desperately wanted someone to believe what you were telling them ... that what you were saying was true.

I'll bet you said something like, "*I give you my word.*"

In **this way**, you were sealing the authenticity of what you said with your word.

Well, **God** did **the same thing 2000** years ago when He sent His Son to redeem us. He sealed the authenticity of what he said by giving us his Word ... literally!

You see, **Jesus is the Word of God.**

We hear this reference as **John opens His Gospel saying,**

*"In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God ... and the Word was God."*

So, when God sent His Son Jesus to us ... He literally gave us His Word!

We revere this when we pray the **Angelus saying,**

"and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!"

So, in giving us Jesus, God gave us **His Word!**

That means that **the authenticity of His Self-revelation** is true and trustworthy ...
that **God is Father** and we are **His Children ... not his Slaves.**

The **fact** that **God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit** is not something we would know
by looking at the Created World. So God revealed it to us by **Divine Revelation.**

It is **only through Divine Revelation** that He unveils the **mystery** of who He is.

In **all 3 of our readings** today from **Holy Scripture,**

God reveals that He is a mysterious community of **persons.**

We reverenced this in our **Opening Prayer** when we prayed:

Father,

*You sent **your Word** to bring us **truth***

*And **your Spirit** to make us **holy.***

*Through **them** we come to know **the mystery** of your life.*

Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons.

How perfect that **this feast** honoring the **Most Holy Trinity** falls right between the **dates** where we honor our **human Family Members**, our **Mothers** and our **Fathers**. with **Mothers Day** in mid-May and on **Fathers Day** in mid-June. **We humans are family just as our God is family.**

I know of a non-Catholic **Christian man** who has attended numerous different **Protestant** churches. And on visiting the **Catholic Church** he said one difference he noticed is the way we pray to God.

He said in the **Bible** churches it's all about **“me and Jesus”** And **most prayers** there end with **“in Jesus' name we pray.”**

Whereas in the **Catholic Church** it's the **Father**, the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit** that begins and ends and permeates every prayer!

It's not just **me** and **Jesus**. It's **me** and the **Father** and the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**!

Recall **the last words** that Jesus spoke to **His Apostles** as He ascended into Heaven. He said, **“Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,”**

And those are the very words that the **Priest** or **Deacon** spoke at your **Baptism** to bring you into God's family.

It's through **Baptism** that we are called to share in the **life** of the **Blessed Trinity**, beginning here on earth, through the eyes of faith, and continuing after death, in God's eternal light.

As we celebrate the **Feast** of the **Most Holy Trinity**, contemplate the Creed we profess and all the prayers that we pray ... and rejoice in knowing the mystery of God as Trinity!

God is three in One ... He is **Father, Son** and **Holy Spirit**.

And we are **His children**!

We are not **Slaves** to **God the Master**.

We are **Sons** and **Daughters** to **God the Father**!

We are **Brothers** and **Sisters** to **Jesus, the Son** !

So, “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit!” Amen!