

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY - C

Today we celebrate our faith in the triune God and in so doing give honour to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the gospel reading from John we listen to Jesus explaining to his disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes he will make clear to them what the Son has learnt from the Father because the Spirit 'will not be speaking as from himself' but he will be telling the disciples what he has learnt. The Spirit will glorify the Son because Jesus says 'everything the Father has is mine' and all that the Spirit speaks to them 'will be taken from what is mine.' We see how the Spirit assists in the revelation of the Godhead. The first reading from Proverbs reveals the Wisdom of God at work from the beginning of creation. In the second reading Paul tells the Romans that faith enables hope 'and this hope is not deceptive because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,' the Trinity at work.

The **First Reading** is from the book of Proverbs, the most representative work of Israelite wisdom. The main part of the book is divided in two parts: 1. 'The Proverbs of Solomon' ch.10-22.16; (a selection from the Sages; 22.17-24); 2. 'Some more of Solomon's proverbs' chs.25-29, to which appendices have been added. There is a prologue ch.1-9 and an epilogue ch.31.10-31 in praise of the ideal wife. King Solomon, who succeeded King David, was always thought to be the greatest sage of Israel, and according to 1 Kg.5.12, is thought to be the author of some three thousand proverbs. It is impossible to attribute any of these proverbs to Solomon but the collection as a whole does date from Solomon's time. As a whole the book represents several centuries of thought on the part of the sages and with post-exilic additions the whole book was probably given its definitive form in the fifth century. The teaching of this book has been transcended by that of Christ.

This wonderful reading 8.22-31, taken from the prologue of the book, speaks of Wisdom personified and may be understood on this feast as Jesus himself, the Wisdom of God. The concept of personified wisdom was developed in OT times. In Job wisdom is represented as a thing distinct from God or human beings, desirable in itself. In Proverbs wisdom is represented as a person and in this reading Wisdom reveals her origin, created before all other creatures, and her active part in creation; in the verses following our reading those who listen to Wisdom find their way to God. These ideas were developed further and in the book of Wisdom the impression is given that wisdom, an outpouring of God's glory, has a share in the divine nature. This teaching in the OT is resumed in the NT which will give wisdom new and decisive completion by applying wisdom to the person of Christ. Jesus is referred to as Wisdom itself, the Wisdom of God, so like Wisdom in our reading, John in his gospel prologue attributes the characteristics of creative Wisdom to the Word of God, the Word that became flesh. In our reading Wisdom herself speaks and tells us about herself, created by God before all time, she was there with God before anything was created, there at his side during creation and delighted with the results of God's creation.

The **Responsorial Psalm**, Psalm 8.4-9, a reflection on the power of God's name can be seen for us today as a reflection on man, the summit of God's creation. In comparison with the heavens which God has created man seems almost insignificant yet we are made in the image of God, the summit of God's work with the duty to care for his creation.

The **Second Reading** is from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. Paul had not founded the Church in Rome but he intended to visit the Christians there on his way to Spain. This huge letter, with much detailed teaching, is difficult to summarize. The community in Rome was a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish converts and there was a danger that they would look down on each other. Some of the converts from Judaism wanted pagan converts to be circumcised to ensure their salvation. Paul maintained this made nonsense of Christ's redemptive work. The Law was good and holy but made those who kept the Law aware of their need of God's help. This help has now been given in Christ Jesus which is explained in some detail.

The reading, 5.1-5, comes from the beginning of the second section of the letter dealing with Salvation, Paul having taught about Justification in the first section. He begins by saying faith guarantees salvation and shows in this reading that our salvation is the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through our faith in Christ Jesus who was sent by the Father 'we have been admitted into God's favour in which we are living, and look forward exultantly to God's glory.' Paul then makes it clear if it wasn't already abundantly clear to those early Christians that we must exult in our hardships with perseverance which will give us hope, 'a hope which will not let us down because the love of God has been poured into hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.' The Trinity plays a combined part in our salvation which can be achieved by living out the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. We praise and thank Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the gift of faith, the sureness of our hope and the richness of the love of God poured into our hearts.