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O Lord, if we find favor with you, do come along in our company” (Exodus 34:8).

The Most Holy Trinity

Exod 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Cor 13:11-13; John 3:16-18

During my time as editor of *Celebration*, NCR’s worship resource, I fielded lots of homilies on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The challenge preachers face each year came home to me when I tried writing one myself for *Pencil Preaching*. I was rescued from some serious doctrinal and even mathematical approaches by Benedictine Sr. Mary Collins when she agreed to write a feature on Baptism. With her deep liturgical and sacramental theology, she brought readers in through the back door to the Holy Trinity by explaining the meaning of Baptism. To be baptized, she affirmed, was to become part of the Community of God.

God is a Community. God is about relationships. We find our human identity and purpose by imitating this interpersonal, divine Communion. We are alive because we are expressions of the inner Life of God, the eternal mystery that creates and holds the Universe together by Love. The Trinity is the dynamic wellspring of Being underlying everything that is, both visible and invisible, past, present and future.

The importance of this analogy becomes evident in every aspect of life. Unity in diversity is the secret of the natural world, the basis of ecology, the key to social harmony, the bonds of human family, the goal of evolution, the need for dialogue in moving religious, ecumenical, intercultural and political camps past their tribal loyalties to create community instead of descending into chaos.

But, of course, the Trinity is not an idea but an epiphany. Like all profound truths, it remains hidden in plain sight until we experience it. Many years ago, while visiting my older brother, his wife and their first child, a lively toddler racing around the living room, I became the rapt audience for a favorite game in which his parents whispered messages to the little boy, who ran back and forth delivering each one with breathless delight.

What occurred to me was that this beloved child was not just carrying messages, he *was* the message between his parents. A young couple, united in love and moving into an uncertain future, conceived a child as the incarnation of their intent to become a family (eventually adding six new lives). The joy of the game was beginning a circle of love that has expanded into a second generation in their first grandchild. Behold, the Big Trinity inspiring little trinities, love flowing back and forth between persons emptying themselves into one another.

The surest path to the Trinity is to live fully, to savor every chance to create relationships. What is a life well lived if not the sum of our relationships? Add up the best moments of your personal story, and the whole will be greater than the parts. In that wholeness we glimpse the holiness of the Beloved Community of God, indwelling us, the divine favor that joins us on the pilgrimage of life and, as composer Burt Bachrach once reminded us, the one thing necessary:

What the world needs now is love, sweet love

It's the only thing that there's just too little of

What the world needs now is love, sweet love,

No not just for some but for everyone.

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