

Homily060720a

FULL REVELATION WITH NO SECRETS

The first few chapters of the Book of Genesis are among my favorites. There is so much there. The inspired author has managed to convey in a simple story the great depth of meaning that God wants to reveal to us human beings. Precisely about being human and about our relationship with God. You will remember the Garden of Eden. It was filled with fruit-bearing trees of every kind. Our first parents can eat of the fruit of all these trees. There are two other trees in the Garden. The Tree of Life. And the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve may eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life. They shall not eat of the fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil. God even tells them why: “For on the day you eat of it you shall die.”

Some might ask right away: Then why did God put that Tree there? If the fruit of the tree is so harmful to the man why didn't God just keep that to Himself? Good question. God shares himself with those he has created. God desires to share himself. God desires to reveal himself. That is who God is. God goes out of himself—in love. Always. Before creation. In creation. That is who God is. No holding back. No secrets. God trusts those he has created and to whom he has given freedom. God believes in them and trusts they will listen to his word and heed it, live in harmony with it.

Do you remember the scene in the story where the Lord comes to the Garden of Eden at twilight? He comes to walk in friendship with the man and the woman. God did this daily. But this time they are not there. Or, rather, they are there but they have hidden themselves among the trees. God calls out for them. “Where are you?” Adam responds: “I heard you in the garden and so I hid myself. I was afraid because I was naked.” “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the fruit of the Tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

That was the first time we human beings experienced fear. The fear we experienced was not from the wildness of nature. We were afraid of being in the presence of God. The One who gave us life. The One who planted Garden Earth. The One who saw to all our needs. The One who protected us and shielded us. The one who asked us to trust him. We did not though. We disobeyed. We reached out and took what the Lord had not given us. We failed to respond in trust to the trust God showed to us.

And suddenly we were afraid. Suddenly we realized we were truly vulnerable. We had been vulnerable all the time before that too. But it did not matter then. God protected us. Now we want to hide ourselves from God. And this wanting to hide gave birth to a very human thing: the secret. Our first parents decided they could keep something from God. They tried to hide it, to keep it secret but they failed. We can try. We will fail. We are to have no secrets before God. We can have no secrets before God. And God has no secrets before us.

And it is because God has no secrets that today's feast of the Holy Trinity is so important. The great blessing of the Hebrew people among all the ancient peoples in the world was that they

believed this truth: there was only one God. That is what they believed and how they lived and worshipped. But the Oneness of God was not all. There was more to God. And God wanted all his people on earth to know this. God is truly One. But God is One and more than one. God is three. There is the Giving Love that is God. There is the Receiving Love that is God. There is the Unifying Mutual Love that is God. Father. Son. Spirit.

Yes, the Trinity is the deepest of mysteries difficult to understand. But the Trinity is not a secret to be kept back from us. The Trinity is revealed to us. The very inner life of God. It is for us to know this. Us. Even though we proved to be untrustworthy. It is vital for us to know this precisely because of the secrets we sometimes hold onto. One such secret is those we hate, or look down upon, or despise. Sometimes it is a single person or a particular family. Sometimes it is a people, a particular group of people. Fellow humans whom we do not accept, or like.

Those of a different nationality perhaps. Or a different ethnic group or different racial group. But we don't want anyone to know. We got to great lengths to pretend otherwise. To pretend we do not hate a particular person or particular group of people. It is our own little secret. But it never remains secret. It comes out. It shows itself. It is too strong, this hatred. It cannot be contained by our little efforts. It comes out in a word, a look, a gesture, a sneer on our faces, or the tilt of our heads. And it is wrong. It is not of God. It is not the way Our Lord ever looked at anybody. It is not the way Our Lord looks at us. And we cannot allow it to be.

God sent his beloved to reveal this truth to us: that God's Word to us was one of love despite our sins, our fears, our vulnerabilities, our secrets. Jesus is the person who has revealed this to us. Jesus is the one who revealed the forgiving love that the Father is. Jesus is the one who lived this in human form to the point even of death. Jesus is the one who was raised up and eventually reunited with the Father. Together they sent their Spirit, a Holy Spirit, to us. Another Advocate. An empowering Spirit. Involving us in the very inner dynamic of God's own love. The Son was not sent to condemn us. The Son was sent to forgive us. The Son was sent to invite us to a place at the Father's table in his kingdom. But the Son came to invite each and every one of us. Not just some. Not just those of our choosing.

Sometimes I think we humans think that God has a secret that He has kept from us. The Secret? That God loves some of us but not all of us. That God loves some more than others. But God's Word in the Gospel of John says different. For God SO loved the world...He sent his Beloved Son. To all of us. To restore all of us. To save all of us. Despite our lack of trust. Despite our secret hatreds. God so loved the world. And us. And us. Yes. And all of us.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.