

I know all the theological things I'm supposed to say about the Trinity; I know it's assumed that I'll talk about the nature of the union between Father, Son and Holy Spirit; or outline the historical development of the dogma of the Trinity; or describe the various trinitarian heresies that sprang up across the centuries. But this has been done countless times over in homilies and books and works of theology since the fourth century by theologians, scholars and Doctors of the Church infinitely better qualified than me to say something – anything – about the Trinity.

I subscribe to the belief that the dogma of the Trinity is all about *relationship*. Three is the most basic number for any relationship: one is static and goes nowhere, two makes relationship possible, and three is the nature of that relationship. Within the Trinity it is love. Take any one of them away and everything falls flat – it becomes two-dimensional. And who wants to live in a two-dimensional world? A shadow has only two dimensions – and who wants to belong to a world full of shadows? Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a timeless archetype of relationship. This means that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a template, a blueprint,

an exemplar of all our day-to-day human relationships. This is because in the three Persons of the Trinity we have a perfect balance being ourselves and being united in relationship with others. When God made us, he made us trinitarian: we are a trinity of body, soul and spirit, or body, heart and mind; from God the Father our spirit is given, from God the Son comes the heart's love, and from God the Holy Spirit is fashioned our physical being. The Father holds our mind, the Son our heart and the Holy Spirit our body. The mind or spirit reveals the work of the Father – because from the first moment of our creation he made human beings in his likeness by endowing us with reason; the Son finds his dwelling-place in the heart or soul – because he came to teach us how to love, and left us his own Sacred Heart as an image of perfect love; the Holy Spirit has guardianship over the body – because the Spirit is the Sanctifier, making holy – *whole* – everything in material creation. In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul says:

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”
(6:19-20).

Two great events in the life of Mary were accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit and both involved her body: first, her conception, and second, her Assumption (body as well as soul) into heaven. In Mary, physicality becomes glorified and transfigured. In this life, the body is an integral part of our journey toward God. Even Friedrich Nietzsche, someone I wouldn't normally touch with an intellectual bargepole, said: 'There is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy.' This spiritual exaltation of the body is the complete antithesis of our contemporary society's obsession with physical beauty and sexual experience: the first holds up ideals of perfection that no one can ever reach or sustain and makes a great deal of money out of it; the second makes anyone with even a modicum of modesty or self-restraint look like a crank. St. Paul said:

"For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the

adoption, that is, the redemption of our body.” (Roman 8: 22-23)

So it isn't just us – it's the entire cosmos, from a tiny cyclamen to an immeasurable galaxy cluster. The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley-Hopkins celebrated the glory of God in material creation in his poem *God's Grandeur* and associates it directly with the power of the Holy Spirit. The last stanza reads:

“And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright
wings.”

The Trinity calls to us. It calls each one of us to share in a union of mutual love. Father, Son and Holy Spirit isn't just an icon and archetype of the way we have been created in the divine image, the Trinity is also the lodestone that perpetually draws us to our home within itself. We're like

flowers turning towards the sun or cats feeling the pull of the hearth. Some of us glimpse this and some don't – but there is no merit or fault in either case. Sooner or later, flowers and cats and every living being will answer the homeward call. We may never judge others on what stage in the journey they happen to be – neither the saint nor the sinner. This is why the Lord Jesus did not hesitate to welcome the prostitute and the tax-collector, for he knew that in his voice, they would hear and respond to that call, while others, who prided themselves on their scrupulous religiosity, turned away with deafening pride.

This universal call home should give us a sense of solidarity with all living things, whether at this time they hear it or not, because it unites rather than divides us, it celebrates our common creaturehood rather than dismissing it, and it blesses all of us with the promise of everlasting joy.