

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity (Year A)

June 7, 2020

Homily of Most Reverend Mario Yamanouchi Michiaki
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Liturgical celebrations in June

Every year, we celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost, followed by the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity next Sunday, followed by the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ next Sunday, and followed by the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus next Friday.

In addition, June 13 is the memorial of St. Anthony of Padua, patron of Nikko Church. Last year we chose the last Sunday of June to celebrate this feast. On Saturday evening more than 100 participants joined the celebration with a long vigil prayer and the Word of God. Half of them were young people from various places in our diocese, and I enjoyed dinner and dialogue with them. The next day, we celebrated the international Mass in heavy rain, with more than 200 people including some from Tokyo. Thanks to St. Anthony who called us to Nikko, many were gathered to get to know one another better. This has given me a hope that we can live up to my episcopal motto, "May we become one body and one spirit in Christ," if we call the youth in the other parishes to celebrate the feast of the patron saint of their own parish.

In June, we also celebrate the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist on the 24th, and the feast of the great pillars of the Church, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, which is traditionally known as the day of the Pope. Brazilian Christians call this month full of these feast days "Festa Junina (June Festivals)".

Many people go out of their dioceses to make a pilgrimage to the holy places and deepen their faith life. They are waiting for invitations to the celebration. This is how they live their Catholic life with Jesus.

Meditation on today's three readings

The Bible reveals to us who God is in one word (1 John 4:8). Today's readings let us know the image of God and recognize his presence there.

"A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." (Exodus 34:6) This proclamation comes immediately after the episode of worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32). We have a sharp contrast between the infidelity of the people and the fidelity of God. The God of the Exodus is the God who accompanies his people's history of liberation from oppression.

What God did in the history of Israel is recorded in the Old Testament, and what he did through Jesus is recorded in the New Testament. We can say that people met themselves by being in tune with God in history and that the religion took shape aligning themselves with the God who was walking with them. With God in history Judaism was born and grew. This is defined in the official text of the Faith of Israel and the Church's Declaration of Faith as a historical creed. These creeds are indeed historical events. They are what the Israelites believed as God's work in history. Therefore, if we ignore history, the concept of God changes and becomes a god that has nothing to do with history. It is not the God of the Bible, nor is it the God of Christians. We must read our lives in this way. The hand of God is guiding us. We recognize that God is with us to this day in spite of our faults, our sins, and our separation from the Church. As we look back on the times when we were at our most difficult, we realize that God has never abandoned us and has always respected our freedom.

We read today some short verses from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. They have something close to the Trinitarian conception of God, and we know that this expression was formulated later. Paul's intuition guides us which way to go and how to live as believers in this world. Paul greeted those

gathered to pray in this way: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." (2 Corinthians 13:13)

Today's Gospel, taken from John's, is one of the pinnacles of biblical literature: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." (3:16) The Triune God John claims is the one we confess: "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit".

The motto of Pope Francis

Pope Francis has insisted that God is merciful since the beginning of his pontificate. On March 14, 2013, after being elected Pope, he adopted in his papal coat of arms the motto in Latin he had chosen at his episcopal consecration in Buenos Aires in 1991: "Miserando atque eligendo," which means, "by having mercy, by choosing him." We can find that in the account of Jesus' call to Matthew: "As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.'" (Matthew 9:9) The Pope makes it clear that the Lord looked at Matthew with love and chose him as one of his disciples.

I remember my birthday on December 8, 2015, when I was at Mass in St Peter's Square with several Salesian companions in the drizzling rain. And in the afternoon of the 12th, on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I was there again. After Mass, I was able to see the large Christmas crib decorated at the entrance to St. Peter's Square. My attention was caught by a next-door house to the crib with the statues of the Good Samaritan and the wounded man by the hands of thieves. I understood what the Pope wanted to convey to us that Christmas: just as the shepherds and the Magi were adoring the Child Jesus, cared for by his parents, Joseph and Mary, we have to have the hearts and attitudes of the Good Samaritan if we really want to adore Jesus. I figured out that there will be no Christmas or true birth of God in our hearts if we do not become Good Samaritans.

That made me understand easily what Pope Francis wanted to tell us at the beginning of the Year of Mercy (from December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016):

What he keeps in mind as Pope, always expressed in his gestures and words, is that God is rich in mercy.

When we celebrate Holy Trinity Sunday each year, let us remember once again that God is love: He is merciful to all of us, the weak and the sinners, never abandons us in the midst of crisis, and always opens a way for us to move forward.

Let us end by making the sign of the Cross together: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!"

Note: All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE).