

Sunday of the Most Holy Trinity – June 12, 2022 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Cathedral of Saint Paul, Birmingham, Alabama – 7:15, 8:30, and 11:00am Masses – 700 words

Some people are tempted to think of God as being in total isolation from us – completely aloof, separated from us, above us. But even if that were true (and it most assuredly is not), God could never be alone. For in himself, he is a Trinity of persons, who constantly, from and for all eternity, remain united with one another. We speak of the “holy and undivided” Trinity. It is impossible for God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three divine Persons in one God – to be alone. And his will for us is that we should not be alone or isolated either: we should not be isolated from each other, nor should we be isolated from him.

It really is possible for us to be alone, however. We are able to isolate ourselves from one another – and worse than a passive isolation, we are capable of actively shutting others out. Worse still, we are able to isolate ourselves from God, on some level at least. But we can never thrive in this way, nor can we really live this way for long. We were made for unity with each other; we were made for union with God. The extent to which either or both is lacking in our lives is often proportionate to our level of happiness or sorrow. “It is not good for man to be alone” – some of the earliest recorded words of God in the scriptures.

We see how nowadays, though, there are increasing forces at work to isolate us from each other and from God. I often think about this in connection with our immersion in technology. It has overcome us – yes, even those of us who remember times that were different (and, I daresay, times that were better). Today, we are frequently staring at screens – if not on a phone or tablet, then a television (and everywhere we go – literally in every home, waiting room, restaurant, other public space...). We are often not encountering reality as it is, but instead a virtual reality that is mediated, filtered, curated, and ideologically sifted.

This is just one of the isolating forces that threatens to separate us from God and each other today, and a survey of the world around us indicates that it is succeeding on a grand scale. There are many other such forces and trends, though. It is a matter for us to contemplate, to evaluate – and then to take action against. We need especially to be attentive to these matters insofar as they affect young people. I must say that I am impressed with the way that many of our parish families actively try to seek out and promote healthier patterns of living as a communion of persons with each other and with the Triune God.

The enemy of our souls wants us to be disenfranchised from each other and from God. But God wants us to face reality squarely – that is, with our true faces, not with our avatars or “profile pics”. Our life is meant to be that of a communion with him, who is never alone – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and with our family, friends, and neighbors; those whom God, in his providence, has put in our paths, and not merely on our “timeline”. What if the power grid were to fail; what if the internet were to black out? Would we know what to do? True and lasting happiness is never found in a man-made virtual reality.

Indeed, it is our union with the Triune God, which comes through the practice of the sacraments and our being together as his people, that fully equips us to face the often-harsh realities of our time. It is an understatement to say that there is strength in God’s grace – there is also strength in numbers. In this regard, we do well also to be attentive to the lonely and the vulnerable, reaching out to draw them into the circle. God is not distant from us and he is never alone. He wills that we be close to him and to each other; that we care for each other. May our encounter with him today help us to be vigilant against all isolation.