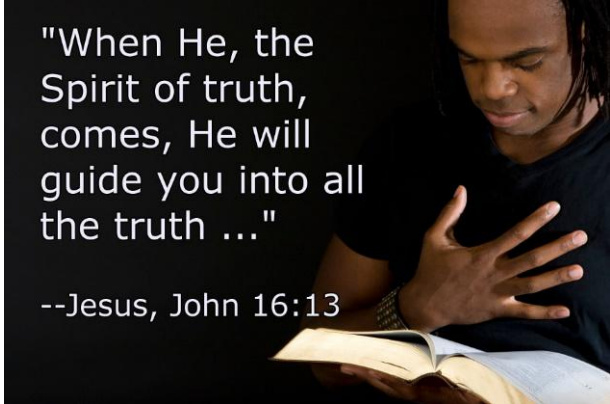


Homily – June 15th, 2025 – Trinity Sunday

Before any of the great religions were established, including Christianity, there was wisdom. Cultures were guided by wisdom figures, guides, mentors—men and women who had been on some kind of spiritual journey themselves. These

A photograph of a man with dark skin and long hair, wearing a black shirt, looking down at an open book. His hands are resting on the pages. The background is dark.

"When He, the
Spirit of truth,
comes, He will
guide you into all
the truth ..."

--Jesus, John 16:13

wisdom figures lived by a truth that was not only bigger than their little, individual truth, but also by a truth that was humbly passed on from generation to generation. Since there were no books or computers, wisdom was

passed on verbally through stories but more precisely through rituals and the good examples of the elders themselves. The things that were really worthwhile knowing had to be revealed to you. For example, all boys, if they were to become men, had to go through an initiation process. They were called rites of initiation and not lectures of initiation. You couldn't read a book, follow a lecture, and pass a written test and expect to be considered a man.

We've rarely given our First Nations peoples credit for the wisdom that guided them long before our European ancestors landed on these shores. If it wasn't beaten out of them outright, it was ignored and played down as paganism. Yet, today's first reading, from the Book of Proverbs, tells them that Wisdom accompanied God from the very beginning. Wisdom is personified in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) as feminine. Proverbs tells us that before God created anything Wisdom was already there. As the waters, the hills, the skies, the fields

and the soil emerged, Wisdom was there delighting in the whole thing. Like a kid on Christmas morning, Wisdom was there ***“rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of Adam.”***

Jesus himself, no doubt, was a wisdom figure. The more I read the gospels, the more I’m convinced Jesus didn’t come to establish his own religion nor to downplay or ridicule human wisdom as something pagan or ungodly. He came to share with us the wisdom of God. He came to reveal the truth about God and God’s passionate love for all creatures, including us. On the night before his own crucifixion, Jesus says, ***“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”*** He seems to be implying that if we open to his spirit, we will gradually grow in the complete truth. Jesus also knows that we have to be ready for wisdom. There is no point in teaching chemistry and physics to grade 3 students; they are just not ready for it. Or, to put it another way, “when the student is ready, the teacher appears.” What you knew at 44, you weren’t ready to know at 24. It had to be gradually revealed to you. If you are a mother, a lecture on motherhood by your own mother was OK. But motherhood was gradually revealed to you starting on the day you became a mother and, apparently, never ends. Once a mother, always a mother. Even if your children are long gone from the house, you are still learning what it means to be a mother.

Perhaps that’s one of the truths the Feast of the Holy Trinity has to teach us--that our faith is a revealed faith. We don’t get faith in one shot. It’s revealed to us over time, and it isn’t always a welcomed intrusion. I find it interesting that the last book of the Bible is called “The Book of Revelation.” It’s almost as if God is saying

to us in the final words of the Bible, “This isn’t the final word. Stay tuned. Stay opened to the revelation that I still want to give to you, the revelation you couldn’t handle when you were younger. More is to come, much more.”

I bet you, if you thought about it, wisdom figures given to you in your life had the gift of openness. Not gullibility. Openness. They, themselves, never stopped learning. They never gave you the impression that they had all the truth so just sit at the master’s feet and listen! Real wisdom figures both “know” and recognized that they “don’t know.” They learned to live with the paradox of life and taught you the same. By the way, the enemy of faith is not doubt but certitude. When we’re so darn sure we have the truth and all the truth, that’s the telltale sign we’re not growing in the wisdom of God. Unlike humble people, know-it-alls have nothing to pass on.

Another thing mentors, guides, wisdom figures tells us is that on the path of life there are no lone rangers. We don’t come to God by retreating to a mountain top with a really good self-help book. We need each other. We need the world of relationships, not just human relationship but also a healthy relationship with the natural world. We are in relationship because God is in relationship. The Trinity is a relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. If God’s essence is relationship, and we are made in the image of God, we, too, cannot live fully outside of relationships. I know in my own life, whenever I try to go it alone, I get lonely, depressed, frustrated, feel misunderstood, and under-appreciated. But one good conversation with a person who cares about my soul and is willing to buy me a coffee and a Boston Cream donut at Tim Horton’s, and

I'm back on the horse! Trinity reminds me that we need each other in hard times, and we need each other to rejoice in good times like Lady Wisdom rejoiced alongside God when the universe was created.

In an overly simplistic way of thinking, the love between the Father and Son creates a third love, a third reality--the Spirit. Yet the Spirit is more than the combination of Father and Son. In a similar way, each of us is a unique person, more than the combination of our father's genes and our mother's genes. That makes each person an icon, a reflection of the Divine Trinity. I could look at a baby all day long; it's free entertainment, if nothing else. While observing them, you know that while they are a mishmash of both parents, they are so much more.

Here's a story that reminds me of Trinity, of the fact that we are more than the sum of our parts, and that we are guided by a Wisdom that's bigger than all of us. And, all we can do is rejoice in it. This is an old Jewish folktale that goes like this.

There was once two brothers who farmed together. They shared equally in all of the work and split the profits exactly. Each had his own granary. One of the brothers was married and had a large family; the other brother was single.

One day the single brother thought to himself, "It is not fair that we divide the grain evenly. My brother has many mouths to feed, while I have but one. I know what I'll do, I will take a sack of grain from my granary each evening and put it in my brother's granary." So, each night when it was dark, he carefully carried a sack of grain, placing it in his brother's barn.

Now the married brother thought to himself, "It is not fair that we divide the grain evenly. I have many children to care for me in my old age, and my brother has none. I know what I'll do, I will take a sack of grain from my granary each evening and put it in my brother's granary." And he did.

Each morning the two brothers were amazed to discover that though they had removed a sack of grain the night before, they had just as many. One night the two brothers met each other halfway between their barns, each carrying a sack of grain. Then they understood the mystery. And they embraced and loved each other deeply.

There is a legend that says God looked down from heaven, saw the two brothers embracing, and said, "I declare this to be a holy place, for I have witnessed extraordinary love here." It is also said that it was on this spot that Solomon built the first temple.

~Fr. Phil