Our readings for this Trinity Sunday do not directly speak of the Most Holy Trinity. Neither do they mention the word “Trinity.” However, most of us probably first encountered the concept of “Trinity” when we were taught how to make the sign of the cross “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28, 19).

It is indeed difficult to understand the concept of the Holy Trinity; that is why we call it a mystery. Even the saints, while still in this life, did not understand it. St. Augustine of Hippo himself, notwithstanding his intellectual brilliance, failed in his attempt to decipher this mystery. It is much easier to contain all the waters in the ocean in a small hole in the sand than to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

That being the case, why do we, Christians, believe in the Holy Trinity? If it is difficult for some to believe in the existence of God, why do we insist in teaching and believing that God is one in three Divine Persons? We, Christians, believe that the one God we worship has three Divine Persons because we believe that God is love, and this is the reason why we believe in the Holy Trinity.

If God is love, it means that He has a beloved. There is no love if there is no one who loves, and no one to love. Who, then, is the beloved of God—the human person? But the human person is relatively new in this world; we are just a few million years old in existence, according to science. If we are not the beloved, then who is—the universe? But the universe itself is just a few billion years old in existence, according to science. Before the beginning of time, whom did God love so that we can say that God indeed is love?

The response of Christian revelation is: God is love because from all eternity, the Son was “in God’s bosom”—the Word that He loved deeply and for all eternity, and this love between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit. In every loving relationship, there are always three realities: the lover, the beloved, and the love that binds them.

Do you still find it difficult to understand this mystery? Even great theologians themselves do not fully understand it. If we happen to find ourselves on the shore of the sea or a lake and are curious to find out what is on the horizon, what is important is not that our sight is clear to see what is on the other side, but to take the boat and cross the water in order to see and know what is on the other side.

Concerning the Blessed Trinity, what matters for us is not to dissect and rationalize the mystery, but to firmly believe and accept in faith what the Church teaches us. This is the boat that we need to take in order to go to the other side to know and understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

—Fr. Timoteo Ofrasio, S.J.

**Nuestra Señora for Christians and Muslims**

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

A true story illustrates the reverence that Muslims in southern Mindanao have for Mary. In Zamboanga a Muslim high school student explained to his Jesuit teacher why he had missed a day of class: “Yesterday was the fiesta of the Virgin Mary, Nuestra Señora del Pilar. I visited her shrine at Fort Pilar to pray and ask for her help.”

Nuestra Señora del Pilar is the principal shrine of Mary in all of Mindanao. It is one of the few Marian shrines that is not located inside a church; on the wall of the city’s old Spanish-built fort is a picture of Our Lady appearing to Saint James the Apostle. The shrine’s outdoor location makes it accessible to Muslims and Christians alike.

In Zamboanga itself, the Feast of Pilar (October 12) is a day when a remarkable spirit of unity and community is manifested. It is observed that some Muslims join the celebration and even light candles as an offering at the shrine. Although there are clear historical and doctrinal divergences between Muslims and Christians, a perspicacious Zamboangueno has asked: “Can Mary’s shrine be an omen of continued Muslim-Christian respect, cooperation, and fraternity?”

**Pastoral Catechesis for the Year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous People**
Entrance Antiphon

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Blest be God the Father, and the Only Begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit, for he has shown us his merciful love.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All — And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These or similar words may be used to address the assembly)

P — Dear brothers and sisters: Our whole life is marked by the sign of the Trinity. The Father created us in love. The Son came to the world to make it possible for us to recover our divine sonship which we lost because of sin. The Holy Spirit continues the work of the Son in the Church and in history until the Lord Jesus returns in glory. In the mystery of the Trinity—“three Persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, yet one Lord, one God”—our journey has its origin. The Holy Trinity is also our final goal. Someday our eyes will finally contemplate the face of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Penitential Rite

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. (Pause)

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All — For we have sinned against you.

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All — And grant us your salvation.

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — Amen.

Gloria

All — Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

God our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race your wondrous mystery, grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith, we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

THE LITURGY

OF THE WORD

First Reading (Ex 34:4b–6, 8–9) (Sit)

The Lord who revealed himself to the chosen people and who gave his name to Moses is a God merciful and gracious, rich in kindness and fidelity.

A reading from the Book of Exodus

EARLY IN THE MORNING, Moses went up Mount Sinai as the Lord had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.

Having come down in a cloud, the Lord stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, “Lord.” Thus the Lord passed before him and cried out, “The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.” Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship. Then he said, “If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people, yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own.”

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Dn 3)

R — Glory and praise for ever!

1. Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praised worthy and exalted above all forever. And blessed is your holy and glorious name, praised worthy and exalted above all for all ages. (R)

2. Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, praised worthy and glorious above all forever. (R)

3. Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom, praised worthy and exalted above all forever. (R)

4. Blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne upon the cherubim, praised worthy and exalted above all forever. (R)

Second Reading (2 Cor 13:11–13)

Our Christian life is imbued with grace, love, and fellowship which
are the gifts and the reflection of the Trinitarian communion. The Holy Trinity is within us and at work in us.

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the holy ones greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.
— The words of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Cf Rev 1:8) (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; to God who is, who was, and who is to come. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 3:16-18)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
All — Glory to you, Lord.

GOD so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful

P — The Father through the Holy Spirit has sent Christ his Son to be one with us, and has made him a source of life for us. Let us raise our petitions to the triune God as we pray:

R — God of love, hear our prayer.

C — Heavenly Father, send your Spirit to the Church that he may help us in our frailty and provide us with gifts that will make us pleasing to you. We pray: (R)

C — Christ Jesus, send the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to religious and political leaders that they may be filled with strength and wisdom to serve your people. We pray: (R)

C — Father, send help to the wayward, the sick, the lonely, and those who suffer in any way. We pray: (R)

C — Divine Spirit, bind the members of our community together in friendship and unity, that our greetings of peace in the Eucharist may be reflected in our everyday lives. We pray: (R)

C — Father of all the living, bring the dead to share in your glory—the glory, too, of your Son and the Holy Spirit. We pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P — Father, you sent your Word to bring us the truth and your Spirit to make us holy. Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons, by proclaiming and living our faith in you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Presentation of the Gifts

P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Gifts

P — Sanctify by the invocation of your name, we pray, O Lord our God, this oblation of our service, and by it make of us
an eternal offering to you.
Through Christ our Lord. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface: The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.
P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.
P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For with your Only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit you are one God, one Lord: not in the unity of a single person, but in a Trinity of one substance.

For what you have revealed to us of your glory we believe equally of your Son and of the Holy Spirit, so that, in the confessing of the true and eternal Godhead, you might be adored in what is proper to each Person, their unity in substance, and their equality in majesty.

For this is praised by Angels and Archangels, Cherubim, too, and Seraphim, who never cease to cry out each day, as with one voice they acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Kneel

Acclamation (Stand)

All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

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THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer
All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us...
All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace
Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)
P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Gal 4:6)
Since you are children of God, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, the Spirit who cries out: Abba, Father.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)
P — Let us pray. (Pause)
May receiving this Sacrament, O Lord our God, bring us health of body and soul, as we confess your eternal holy Trinity and undivided Unity.
Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing
(Pause)

May the effects of your sacred blessing, O Lord, make themselves felt among your faithful, to prepare with spiritual sustenance the minds of all, that they may be strengthened by the power of your love to carry out works of charity.
Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.
P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All — Amen.

Dismissal
(Pause)
P — Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
All — Thanks be to God.