

SoulSpace

SERIES: THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Season colour: **WHITE**

In this series, **Gerard Moloney CSsR** anticipates the World Meeting of Families which will take place in Ireland in August 2018.

This can be true to some extent also of a couple who is deeply in love. They are so in tune with each other, so alert to the other's thoughts and needs, that there is almost a fusion of minds and hearts. Even though they don't share the same DNA, the two almost become one. You can see it in couples who have spent years together, who know each other so well and are so comfortable with each other that they can communicate without words. Such relationships are beautiful to behold.

GOD IS LOVE

Today is Trinity Sunday, the feast in which we celebrate the mystery of the three-in-one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity is a separate and distinct person: the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Each is God, yet still there is only one God, not three. How can this be?

Like all mysteries, it's one that is hard to grasp. One way of trying to understand the mystery of the Trinity is to reflect on St John's definition of God. "God is love," John says. God is love, and where there is love, there is God. To say that God is love gives us an insight into the inner life of God.

The three persons in the Holy Trinity are three distinct persons, but they are so in love with one another, so wrapped up in each other, so welded to one another, that they are perfectly one. Their communion is so strong, their intimacy so great, their bond so deep, that the three become one without ever losing their

individuality. God is an eternal exchange of infinite love. It is perfect harmony, total joy, everlasting peace – this is our Triune God.

Think about the relationship between identical twins or a couple who are deeply, madly, truly in love, and multiply that relationship to the Nth degree – then we begin to get an idea of the inner life of the Trinity.

That relationship of love that is at the heart of the Trinity is the template for how we are to live as Christians, and especially for how we should relate at the level of the family. It is the model for the Christian family, the domestic church.

My relationship with those closest to me should be modelled on the love that makes the Trinity. But I know how hard that is, because there is a big selfish element in me – in most of us. All too often I end up doing what suits me rather than doing the loving thing. In an era when so many marriages are breaking down and so many relationships sunder, where the focus is so much on satisfying our individual needs, where there is a rugged, stubborn individualism on the march, we know how big the challenge is to live as individuals and families where love guides everything.

Yet that is the challenge offered to us on this Trinity Sunday. It is also the challenge offered to us as we prepare to celebrate the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in just a few weeks' time.

How deep does our love run? How united is our family? How forgiving, how tolerant, how patient?

We will never be the perfect family, but we must always work towards a more perfect union, with the Holy Family as our template. ■



Today's readings

Deuteronomy

4:32-34.39-40

Rm 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

The 13th-century mystic Meister Eckhart had a different approach. He asked: "Do you want to know what goes on in the core of the Trinity? I will tell you. In the core of the Trinity, the Father laughs and gives birth to the Son. The Son laughs back at the Father and gives birth to the Spirit. The whole Trinity laughs and gives birth to us."

We have not often been encouraged by preachers or spiritual writers to picture God laughing, or to imagine the Trinity as a community of persons characterised by joy, a joy which overflows in creative, loving being and activity. Perhaps if we did, our own faith would be more joyful and deeply serene, our communities less fractious and more accepting, and our c

GOD'S WORD TODAY

It is notoriously difficult to try to explain the Trinity, One God in Three Persons.

In England in the 19th century there was a determined attack on the doctrine of the Trinity by certain individuals.

William Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, wrote a book defending it. There was a feeling in certain quarters that Wilberforce's attempted defence had done more damage than had the attacks of his opponents.



THREE
BECOME
ONE



The relationship of love at the heart of the Trinity is the template for how we are to live as the domestic church.

They say that identical twins can sometimes read each other's minds, finish each other's sentences, even feel each other's pain. One sibling can sense the other is in trouble even though they are physically miles apart. The pair share identical DNA and so are virtual carbon copies of each other. That's why their thoughts and feelings are so closely aligned. The two become one, you could say.

