

The Most Holy Trinity Sunday - Year A – 5/31/2026 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First reading – Exodus 34:4B-6, 8-9: God appears to Moses and speaks about His character. He is kind, patient, full of love, and ready to forgive, but He also brings justice. Moses bows down and worships Him.

Responsorial Psalm – Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56: This psalm praises God’s greatness. It honors His name, His holiness, and His rule over all creation.

Second reading – 2 Corinthians 13:11-13: Paul encourages the people to live in peace and unity. He blesses them with the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the friendship of the Holy Spirit.

Gospel – John 3:16-18: Jesus tells Nicodemus that God loves the world so much that He sent His Son to bring eternal life. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved, but those who do not believe miss out on this gift.

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Sunday following Pentecost was chosen to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity; this observance was already being celebrated as early as the 7th century. The feast honoring the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity holds a distinct place in the liturgical calendar, and this celebration gradually came to be regarded as a special solemnity. From the 10th century onward, a significant number of churches celebrated this Mass with great solemnity. In 1334, Pope John XXII officially approved this celebration in Rome and extended it to the Universal Church.

Today’s Gospel passage, Jesus proclaims that Salvation is accomplished through the communion of love of the Holy Trinity as He affirms three points:

- God loved the world so much that He gave His Only Son.
- God sent His Son not to condemn the world, but to save the world.
- Whoever believes in His Son is not condemned.

1. God loved the world so much that He gave His Only Son

From a human perspective—if any of us were to have a single, only son—we would regard him as our entire world: the sum of our life, our very existence, and the continuation of our lineage. Consequently, we would lavish him with care and cherish him deeply, protecting him at all costs; we would accept sharing him with another only when he establishes a family with a young woman, thereby ensuring the continuation of our family line. Within the mystery of God, the Father begot the Son, and the Son is the Father’s Only Son, existing eternally. On many occasions, in His prayers, Jesus confided: “I love You, Father, just as You have loved Me...” And out of love for humanity, the Father sent His Only Son into the world.

God’s love is manifested through the act of self-giving by God the Father: “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...*” (Jn 3:16a). The phrase “*so loved*” here indicates that God loves to the absolute limit—loves “*so much*” that there remained nothing more to express or to give; thus, the only remaining course was to give His very own Son, sending Him to express that love for humanity through His own death. In the death of Jesus—the Son of God—we encounter God Himself. The Father gave and sent His Son out of love for all of humanity, so that they might attain salvation. God’s love possesses such immense intensity and magnitude that—were it possible to say so—we would have to affirm: God loves the world, and loves us, even more than He loves His own Son. He did not abandon the world; rather, He bestowed upon us the gift of His Son—the One who lives in

a unique and singular relationship with Him. Only when we hold the firm conviction that the One who was crucified is the Only Son—the Beloved Son of God—can the power of this divine love truly reach us, and only then can we fully open ourselves to its light and warmth. Our very lives depend upon our faith.

But why, if God loves the world, did He give His Only Son to suffer death in order to bring about salvation? Because love requires presence—it requires the physical presence of the beloved, a mutual giving of oneself to the other, and, above all, the courage to die for the one one loves. Had Jesus merely called down from heaven, proclaiming, *“God loves humanity,”* would human beings truly have been able to perceive and feel that love? Yet, they will undoubtedly perceive that love when the Only Begotten Son of God comes to dwell among humanity, sacrificing Himself to save mankind and offering His very self to them.

Furthermore, since humanity has committed sins that offend God—the Absolute Being—mankind is incapable of making adequate reparation for this offense on its own. Consequently, there is a need for One who is the Son of God—absolutely holy—to make a commensurate atonement on their behalf. This is akin to a commoner who, having offended a king, incurs the death penalty; only the king's Crown Prince possesses the ability to intercede with his royal father to secure a pardon for the one whom the Prince loves.

True love is the desire for the beloved to attain a happiness even greater than one's own. Indeed, God loves the world absolutely and desires that we partake in that absolute happiness: to dwell within the very love of God. For: *“God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him”* (John 3:17).

2. God sent His Son not to condemn, but to save the world.

“God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” Indeed, the messianic mission of Jesus was to redeem the world through the Cross. This constitutes the great hope of humanity.

It is readily conceivable for a lowly servant to risk his life to die in place of his noble master, or for a destitute commoner to die for a member of the high royalty; yet, for the Second Person of the Trinity—the Lord of heaven and earth—to offer Himself in death on behalf of lowly humanity is truly something that transcends the limits of human imagination. It is solely out of an overwhelming love for mankind that God was capable of making such a sacrifice. Christ came as the Savior, not as a Judge: He leads humanity to “eternal life.” Eternal life, according to the Gospel of John, is not merely the future existence of a world to come, but also a participation in the very life of God, beginning in this present world.

“No love is greater than the love of one who lays down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13), and no love can be compared to the boundless love that God holds for humanity. God’s plan for human salvation could not be realized without human consent; people must make a choice: *“Whoever believes in the Son is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already.”* The objective of the mission the Son undertook when He was sent into the world was not to condemn, but to save. Yet, even though God’s sole desire is the salvation of the world, the very event of His Son’s arrival inevitably compels humanity to make a decision—the most momentous decision of a human life: to bind oneself to the Only Begotten Son of God through faith, or conversely, to refuse to believe in Him.

3. Whoever believes in the Son is not condemned.

God took the initiative; He “loved first.” Every initiative originates from Him. However, for love to truly exist—beyond mere declarations or expressions, and beyond the initial gestures or signs from one party—there must be a corresponding reception and response. Faith is humanity’s response to God’s revelation of His love.

Jesus clearly reveals to us that the will of God the Father is for all of us to believe in the Son of God—that is, to believe in Jesus—so that, through Him, we may forever contemplate His holy face and rise again on the last day.

Thus, the prerequisite for salvation is to believe in Jesus Christ and to live out that faith. Therefore, whether implicitly or explicitly, it is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God except through Jesus Christ. The stakes involved in this act of faith are of paramount importance: the issue is one of life or death. “Whoever believes need not die, but shall have eternal life.” One must either accept “God's gift”—thereby attaining eternal life, which is the very nature of God—or remain confined within one's own humanity, in which case death is the inevitable outcome. There can be no wavering or equivocation; one must answer with a definitive “yes” or “no” to God's gracious offering.

Jesus reveals that faith must be grounded in the tangible proof of love that God bestowed upon us when He sent His Son into the world. This spiritual rebirth through God, coupled with faith in the Son of God, enables us to discover the true meaning and fulfillment of our lives, leading us toward an authentic, enduring life that never fades away. Whether implicitly or explicitly, it is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God except through Jesus Christ. This means that all those who, through the practice of their own religion or by heeding the voice of their conscience, lead lives of goodness and holiness, are implicitly united with Christ (having received a “baptism of fire”). Likewise, those who courageously sacrifice their lives for the sake of their faith or out of selfless love—even if they have not yet received the Sacrament of Baptism—are also implicitly united with the fullness of Christ (having received a “baptism of blood”).

In summary, as we reverently commemorate and contemplate the mystery of the One God in Three Persons—the Holy Trinity—we are, in essence, gazing upon the Love of God: the Love that bestowed upon the world His Only Begotten Son for the salvation of the world. Consequently, anyone who desires to attain salvation must place their faith in Jesus Christ.

O Lord Jesus, You were sent into the world not to condemn it, but to save it. We pray that You also send us forth to all people, that we may bring them the gift of salvation, rather than going forth to pass judgment upon one another. Amen.