

Dt 4:32-34, 39-40

Ps 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22

Rom 8:14-17

Mt 28:16-20

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Rachel Carson, a famous author of a few years ago, was once quoted as follows:

1. When I look at the beauty of the world and see the mountains and the valleys, the ocean and the sky. I am reminded that I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth.
2. When I read about bloodshed and violence and see murder and hatred, stress and strife, selfishness and phoniness. I am reminded that I believe in Jesus Christ who, for our sake, was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
3. And when I feel the wind in my face and the freedom of the fresh country breeze, or a walk at sunset, I am reminded that I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life.

Today's feast of the Holy Trinity celebrates the presence of God in the world which He created; and we are reminded that everything in this world bears the mark of God Himself.

On a quiz program the other day, the question was "Which is the most often used word in the United States?" The answer was, "Love." Unfortunately, we have only one word in English for love. So we have to use it for disparate items, such as, "I love Maryland crabcakes," "I love the New York Mets," "I love my wife, apple pie, motherhood and God." That gives you some idea of how confusing the word love is in English.

However, the Greeks had three words for "love." The first word was *eros*. *Eros* could embrace such thing as love of a friend, a man or a woman, love of art, love of philosophy, love of the good life. After Freud, *eros* became erotic and love became only identified only with sex. The erotic became merely that which gave pleasure.

1. You drink the water, you forget the glass.
2. You have the relationship without the commitment.
3. You have the recreation without the dues.

The Greeks' second word for love was *philia*. It was tantamount to the Golden Rule. This is the love we have for humanity. *Philia* was not just a liking, it was a loving. Now there's a difference between the two. Liking is in the emotions. Loving is in the will. Because liking is in the emotions, the emotions can change, grow dull, switch or deaden. But loving is in the will and is therefore subject to command! Hence Our Lord said: "Love one another as I have loved you." This is the difference between the two.

Now we come to the third and last Greek word, *agape*, which has no English equivalent. When a new love came to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ who would not remain in heavenly headquarters, we needed a new word, a word to describe someone who would love the

unlovable. As Christ said, "It is easy to love those who love you." But to love anti-love had never been known before, so the New Testament writers had to search about for a new word:

It was used in Greek rarely, and it had no fixed meaning. Yet, in one form or another, it is used 250 times in the New Testament. This is Christ's sacrificial love. This is the love that we preach, pursue, and seek to pass on.

All that we ever get on this earth of God's love anyway is just a speck, a fragment, a piece, a spark. But if the spark is so bright, then what must the flame be like? This feast of the Most Holy Trinity, this celebration of eternal giving and receiving, of love without beginning or end, of love which does not ebb and cannot dull - this feast reminds us that in our midst are countless sparks of the divine love. The forgiveness we receive and return, the generosity we show to the ungrateful, the mercy we receive without showing thanks, the sacrifices others make for us, and the few, sometimes very few sacrifices, we bring ourselves to offer for others.

If these are sparks of agape, what must the full fire of divine love be like?