



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. This is the central belief of our faith as Christians – that God is one God, but three distinct persons. Without trying to explain the depths of what this means (because our finite words cannot describe the infinite glory of God), I will rather speak about what God as Trinity means for us.

As I mentioned last week, the Fathers of the Church said that God the Father is the Lover, God the Son is the Beloved, and God the Holy Spirit is the Love which unites them. With this in mind, we recognize that God is a community of persons. Another way of saying it is that God is a family.

We know from the book of Genesis, that we were made in the image and likeness of God. If God is family, it means that we were made to be family – to be in communion with other persons – that we were made to love and be loved.

Being in love relationships actually make us who we are called to be. But what is love?

Our world often understands love to be an emotion – how we feel about another person. While emotions are a real part in our humanity and relationships, the essence of love is not an emotion. If that were the case, then when our emotions began to wane (and they *always* will wane... and wax and wane), we would think that love has died. If love were merely an emotion, there would be no way that we could ever claim, "I will love you forever," or even, "I will love you for the rest of my life" because we cannot always control our emotions. Love, rather, is a choice – a choice to choose the good of the other for their own sake. We see this clearly in Jesus' love for us – He died for us so that we could have eternal life with Him: He chose our good over His own good. We see this in the parents who get up in the middle of the night to care for their children: they don't feel good about it (at least in the moment), but they do it because they love them. If love is a choice to will the good of the other, then even when the emotions disappear, we can choose to love: choose the good of the other.

Now we need to ask, what does the "good" of the other mean? To choose the other person's good doesn't necessarily mean letting them have whatever they want. When I was growing up, when a child was given whatever they wanted, they were called, "spoiled." Why? Because they were formed to be selfish, which keeps people from becoming the best people they can be. If a parent let a child run wherever he wants, that child will probably run into danger. Parents restrict their children – whether the freedom to run where they want, or bed time, or other family rules – not because they hate their children, but because they love them and want them to grow. This means that willing the good of the other is looking out for the person's best good. While we may not be able to see clearly what this means in all circumstances, we can see that it may mean telling loved ones that the path they are on is leading to destruction. The world would call you a "hater" for that, but it is truly love, for it is choosing the best for the person.

One of my favorite saints, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, said this, "Sacrifice is the food of love." Love is only manifested to the extent we are willing to sacrifice our own wills. Looking at the example of calling someone out for their destructive behavior (for instance, in an intervention), means that you have to be willing to sacrifice your relationship with this person if they choose not to hear your loving words.

When we look to Almighty God, we see His love is a self-sacrificial love. His love wills the good of the other (us) over Himself. Made in His image and likeness, we are called to grow in sacrificial love like our God. May we have the courage for this sacrifice!