

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Cycle C
May 30, 2010

Readings: Proverbs 8:22-31; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

Do Not Fear Adversity

Do you ever notice that some people never seem to be happy. St. Augustine speaks about his own experiences in his book *The Confessions*. He writes: ***“I long for prosperity in times of adversity, and I fear adversity when times are good.”***

Adversity is all around us and we can be overwhelmed by it; either through the suffering it causes us, or through the anxiety we feel that our good times might come to an end. But St. Paul reminds us this morning that our afflictions are not something to be avoided or feared. In fact, he claims that we should boast of our afflictions, but that we can only do that if we have a close relationship with God. Our faith must be strong and then we can look at our afflictions as opportunities given to us by God to grow spiritually. St. Paul says: ***“Affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”***

If all we had was our mortal life on earth, suffering and affliction would not be something to desire, and especially not to boast about. But, because we as Christians believe in something much better in an eternal life to come, we accept our sufferings because we know that they can help us grow closer to God.

- Our afflictions strengthen our endurance; we grow stronger to resist temptations.
- Our endurance builds and tests our character as we grow to be people of virtue; we not only avoid doing what is wrong, but also strive to do what is good and right, not counting the cost.
- And through our virtue we have great hope in all that God has promised us; we are not concerned with temporary sufferings because we await eternal joys in heaven.

We pick up our crosses and follow Jesus. We do not enjoy sufferings, but we are called to endure them. St. Augustine, speaking to God, said: ***“Who would want troubles and difficulties? You command us to endure them, not to love them. No person loves what he endures, though he may love the act of enduring.”*** We do not enjoy our sufferings, but we can enjoy the act of suffering if we know that it is God’s will and we are offering our suffering up to Him. We may not enjoy fasting, for example, but we can fast with a smile on our face because we know it builds our endurance and that through endurance we can grow closer to God; we may be able to see Him face-to-face sooner because our time in purgatory may be shortened.

The Spirit of God has been poured into our hearts and will lead us and guide us to the Father and to the Son. The three were there at the creation of the world and we will see their glory for all eternity. As we walk on our daily journey, we must remember to keep the future glory of eternal life in heaven always in the forefront of our thoughts. We cannot allow ourselves to despair and get bogged down with the drudgery, adversity, and afflictions associated with our short sojourn here on earth.

And so, as you carry out your daily duties, offer all your actions and sacrifices to God. Do them all in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Deacon Joe Hulway