

HOLY TRINITY – June 2012
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Here it is, Holy Trinity Sunday,...and I'm the lucky one who gets to preach...I'm convinced that on Holy Trinity Sunday, God is up there getting a big chuckle watching us preachers struggle to explain the unexplainable: the great mystery of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – three persons, yet one God - with each person fully and totally God ...Well, I decided God isn't going to get a laugh at my expense,... so I won't be trying to explain the Trinity....But, I thought since God has such a great sense of humor, He wouldn't mind if I had a little fun imagining how one of the great comedy teams of all time – Bud Abbot and Lou Costello - would handle explaining the Trinity...I think Bud and Lou would do it something like this:

Lou (*the short chubby one*): Hey, Bud, you're pretty smart. I bet you know a lot about religion.

Bud (*the one with the mustache and raspy voice*): Well, yes Lou, I do know about religion....What would you like to know?

Lou: I drove past a church today and it had a big sign that said "Holy Trinity Church"... You know, Bud, I've seen churches named St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Catherine,.. but I never heard of St. Trinity. Who is this St. Trinity?

Bud: Lou, Trinity is not a saint... Trinity is the way that Christians have come to understand God as revealed to us in the Bible...The Trinity is God: One God – Three Persons - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Lou: That sure sounds like **three** gods to me.

Bud: .No, Lou, one God, three persons. It's a mystery Lou.

Lou: Hmm. One God – three persons...Come to think of it, this is a very big world and there are lots of people for God to watch. So probably the Father works the day shift, the Son the night shift and the Holy Spirit the graveyard shift....

Bud: No Lou. There are no shifts... God's working all of the time.

Lou: O.K. So if God's working all the time, its still a very big world, so maybe God divides the world into thirds. You know, a third for the Father, a third for the Son and a third for the Holy Spirit...

Bud: No, Lou. No thirds, no divisions. God is undivided.

Lou: I still don't get it...Let me try this way, Bud...I think God must be a big baseball fan. After all, aren't the first words of the Bible "In the Big Inning?"

Bud: No, no, Lou, it's "In the beginning" not "In the big inning."

Lou:. Oh...Anyway, God must be a big baseball fan; He invented it.. So let's say that God's team is playing a baseball game and God's team is up to bat. The Father is up first, and He hits a single. Tell me, Bud, who's on first?...

Bud: God..

Lou: You mean the Father?

Bud: That's right, Lou.

Lou: OK. Now the Son comes up to bat and He hits a single and God goes to second base. Now, who's on first?...

Bud: .God.

Lou: Wait a minute...I thought God was on second base.

Bud: That's right. God is on second and on first.

Lou: Ooh, I'm getting so confused...O.K. Now let's say the Holy Spirit comes up to bat and lays down a perfect bunt. The Father goes to third base, the Son goes to second base and the Holy Spirit beats out the throw – safe at first! Now, who's on first?

Bud: God....

Lou: But you just told me God was on second and third.

Bud: That's right...God is on 1st, 2nd and 3rd... God is on all the bases. The bases are loaded with God.

Lou: This is getting more confusing by the minute. If there's only one God, how can God be on all three bases?....

Bud: Lou, God can do anything.

Lou: Well, if God can do anything, why doesn't He make Himself easier for us to understand?...

Bud: I don't know, Lou. I'm sure God has good reasons....But, don't worry about trying to understand the Trinity. Just be thankful that God has made Himself known to us and is here with us, even if we can't quite figure Him out.

Aren't a lot of us like Lou?...We want an explanation... But believe me there isn't any. ...The Trinity isn't a mystery to be understood; the Trinity is a gift to be celebrated. ...So, I'm with Bud.We should get down on our knees every day and give thanks that our God is not a distant, hands off kind of God, somewhere in outer space, leaving us to stumble along on our own. ...Instead we have a God who can't stay away from us...Because our lives matter to God. What happens to us matters to God..We see that throughout Scripture and history: God the Father sending prophet after prophet to enlighten His people...Jesus the Son coming to live as one of us and to die for all of us. The Holy Spirit bursting into the world at Pentecost....And, our God is no solitary God...Our God is a family, a community of three persons bound together by their LOVE for one another.... A love so great, so perfect, so powerful, that God wants to share it with His creation – with us....And this mutual love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit for one another overflows to each of us,... is poured out into our hearts as St. Paul tells us in his Letter to the Romans,....drawing us into the inner circle of God's family,...calling us to share in the life of the Holy Trinity...That's what God wants – to share His life with us...God wants a relationship with us....Moses told his people that way back in the beginning....Jesus preached it over and over. God wants to be in our life...as Father, as Son,..and as Holy Spirit,...right here in the nitty-gritty, down here in the trenches with us,...in every suffering, in every crisis and every cross,... and in every joy , and every triumph.

My friends, here's the main thing: we have a God who just won't leave us alone...So often we're busy, rushing from one activity to the next,...loaded down with obligations and responsibilities – our work, our family, school, sports – that we might not give God a second thought as we move through our day...If you are anything like me, you can go hours, days, even weeks...totally oblivious to how God is involved in your life...For example, not a day goes by that I don't marvel at some miracle of creation:...a beautiful flower,.. a star-filled sky,...a baby's tiny fingers,...the face of one I love,...but do I ever stop to realize that those are all the work of God the Father, Creator of the Universe and everything in it? ...And how many times have I had what seemed to be a chance encounter with someone who was dealing with a very tough situation and they really needed to talk, really needed support and prayers?...Was it truly just a chance encounter? ...Or was it God the Father bringing our two hearts together?

And what about God the Son whom we heard say in our Gospel, "I am with you always?" ..Well remember when that person you really can't stand - the one who gives you all kinds of trouble – was diagnosed with cancer,...and you sent her a card and prayed for her complete recovery?...Was that because Jesus' voice echoed in your ears, "Love your enemies, ...Pray for those who mistreat you?"...Then there was the time you were very sick, in pain, afraid,.. "God why is this happening?...Why aren't you helping me?" ...And you thought about Jesus hanging on that cross in agonizing pain, and you realized that Jesus knew what you were going through, and that He was there suffering with you...And this gave you strength to keep on going. ...And remember when that missionary came and told us about the children living in extreme poverty in Central America, and even though your own finances were pretty shaky,... you dug deep and offered to sponsor a child?...Was it because you recalled Jesus saying, "Whatever you do for

the least of my children, you do for me.”? ...God the Son, with us always, challenging us, strengthening us to live as He showed us how to live.

Then there is God the Holy Spirit, who came on that first Pentecost and who is with us today. ...The Spirit dwelling within every believer,... animating our faith and our worship,... guiding us, leading us,...turning on the lights for us when our paths are unclear, uncertain...The Holy Spirit who keeps the words and deeds of Jesus alive in our minds and hearts so that we always know what Jesus wants us to do...The Holy Spirit who gives us the courage to then go and do it. ...God the Holy Spirit, ever leading us to holiness.

My friends, whether we're aware of it or not, God is right there in the center of everything going on in our life... as God the Father,... as God the Son,...as God the Holy Spirit...God is there.

Getting back to the baseball scenario, think of it like this: God is on 1st, 2nd and 3rd base, and it's up to us to pick up the bat, step into the batter's box and bring God home..- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – home into our lives...We can pick up the bat, step into the batter's box and start swinging,.. or we can sit on the bench...It's up to us...The best part is that God loves us so much that He'll let us stay up there and keep swinging as long as it takes; there's no “three strikes and you're out!”...There'll be times when we swing and miss the ball, and times when we'll hit a foul ball,... but if we keep on swinging, eventually we'll connect,... we'll get hold of the right pitch and clear the bases...and bring God fully home into our lives...Then, if we're ever asked, “Who's on first in your life,” we'll be able to answer without hesitation, “God...God.'s on first.” AMEN!