

An Image of the Trinity

Deut 4:32-34, 39-40; Rom 8:14-17; Matt 28:16-20 (Trinity Sunday)

June 11, 2006

The greatest apostles are those who create networks of communion wherever they go. The power to create such networks doesn't have much to do with "professional" preparation. The power to do so has more to do with letting yourself be borne along by the Spirit.

The Fathers of the Church taught that the Tri-unity of the living God maintained within God's oneness a relation of *perichoresis*. Perichoresis, from a Greek word meaning "dancing around," refers to the co-indwelling, co-inhering, and mutual interpenetration of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As a result of their perichoresis, each person of the Trinity freely affirms the others in their identity and difference. And to the extent that each affirms the identity and difference of the others, each affirms itself in its own richness. Or to put the point in negative form: There is no negation of the other persons in any of the three persons' self-affirmation. Each person's self-affirmation is actually a loving of the others as the fullness of its own being. It is this mutual relation of love among the Trinitarian persons which creates unity in plurality. (And clearly the word "person" as used in Trinitarian theology is not at all what we ordinarily mean by the word: the individual separated from others by body, psychology, history, etc.)

Jesus and his disciples believed that this way of living and relating could be replicated among human beings. That's why believers considered themselves sent to create networks of disciples. So when they talk about teaching, they're not referring to the verbal transmission of doctrine, but to learning to enter into that form of relations lived by the God of the Trinity. "Go and make disciples of all nations...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The writer of the Book of Deuteronomy believed that the Israelites passed through historical experiences that allowed them to "discover" the presence of God in those very experiences. The God of the Bible is a God who reveals himself in the journey of his people, in the interpersonal relations of his followers, and in the actions and steps of growth taken and realized at every stage in the life of individuals and communities.

Today's migratorial comings and goings force people caught in such currents to sharpen their capacities for creating new relationships. In the midst of this social phenomenon it's not difficult to find men and women who continue to weave fraternal networks. These are people who follow the steps of the God of Jesus in their own lives, in the doings of their communities, and in the trials of the poor.

To be on the move, in migration's social dynamic, isn't an optional experience. Rather, circumstances themselves move people along. At any given moment, the migrant's life is displaced in a movement critical for his (or her) identity in diversity. To himself he is at the same time one and various. Something remains of his own self, but at the same time he feels the necessity of welcoming and integrating something which is not his own. In this way the migrant person becomes the image of the God of the Trinity, the God who is One in three persons.