

Trinity Sunday: May 31, 2015
Divine Providence Sunday
"To God be glory forever" (Rom. 11:36)

It is such a joy that we can all gather in community to celebrate Liturgy today. Each of us has come together as one body in Christ to celebrate the feast of the Holy Trinity....three persons in one God. .

The Liturgical readings for today are filled with mystery. The three persons who are God are not drawn apart by their perfect individuality, but united into one in love. This feast is about right relationships.

The theology of the Trinity is profound and truly unknowable. In the Creed of St. Athanasius it states "Father incomprehensible, Son incomprehensible, Holy Spirit incomprehensible."

Words fail us when we come face to face with incomprehensible mystery. Yet the mystery in some way unfolds in and with us as we gather to break bread together in this Eucharistic Liturgy. While it is natural to recoil in the face of mystery, Paul in his letter to the Romans embraces his inability to understand the mystery of God. "O the depth of the wealth, wisdom, power and knowledge of our Provident God! How inscrutable are God's ways! Who has known the mind of God?" Realizing in ever deeper ways the profoundness of this mystery Paul then exclaims: **"To God be glory forever."** Romans 11:33-36

There is a legend about St. Augustine's pondering with difficulty the mystery of the Holy Trinity; three persons in one God. As he walked along the seashore absorbed with his meditation, he noticed a young boy repeatedly taking water from the sea and emptying it into a hole in the sand. Augustine craned his neck and asked the child: "What are you doing?" "Can't you see" the boy responded: "I'm emptying the sea into this hole." "Son, you can't do that" encountered Augustine". To this the boy replied: "I will sooner empty the sea into this hole than you will manage to get the mystery of the most holy Trinity into your head!". Upon saying that, the boy who was an angel according to the legend, quickly disappeared, leaving Augustine alone with the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. **"To God be glory forever."**

Adding to the hidden treasures of the mystery of the Trinity, the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence throughout the world celebrates "Providence Sunday" on this feast. This international celebration for us is a day when we are invited to remember and give thanks for the gift of the charism of Providence given to us as members, associates and friends of Providence to make God's presence and love a more experienced reality in our world.

The gift of our internationality in and of itself sings the praise of our Triune, Provident God in our coming together as one community from different parts of the world in worship. Take a moment to look around at the faces of those who are united as one in this worshipping community: older and younger, Asian, Hispanic, Caucasian, African.

Each face is etched with a mysterious reflection of our provident, creative God. Each of us is a unique person, with our personal stories that cannot be replicated. Yet, we carry within us, the same breath of life...God! **"To God be glory forever"**

The second account of creation in Genesis tells us that God took the matter of the earth, formed a body, breathed life into itand Adam lived.

Our creative provident God has breathed God life into each of us. The theologian, Beatrice Bruteau, maintains that we are not merely creatures with a body and a soul made in the **image** of God. Our very **essence** is God: God's breathe.... God's life-giving energy. Our bodies may be limited in time and space, but they are temples created by God to reflect in some way the uniqueness and individuality of each of us, gathered as one in God with the center of our beings, God's breath, gifting us to experience our existence in an unlimited way ... gifting us to embrace all reality in life and all people as acts of God's Providence.

Providence challenges us to refuse to define or be defined by any of the qualities of our bodies or personalities, by our social positions, our history, our jobs, our religions, or the geographic regions or time when we were born.

Our community as Sisters of Divine Providence is gifted in a special way with the charism of Providence for our world. Barbara Doherty, a Providence Sister, states that Trinity is the celebration of an extraordinarily powerful love permeating the Universe, bringing everything in the Universe into right relationship with everything else, God's Eternal Loving Design. Our actions, as Sisters of Divine Providence are to mirror the Power of a Provident God. They are meant to make the presence of God believable... more understandable.

This, I believe is what the gift of our Providence charism, given to Bishop Ketteler and Mother Marie in 1851 in our foundation as a religious community, speaks to us today. Be co-creators, mirroring the Power, presence and compassion of a Provident God. Include everyone, grow in interdependence and reach out to those who live at the margins of society, believing that God's providence is with us in all we experience and everyone we meet.

Providence challenges us! Each of us, in our individuality and differentnesses, leads us to respect and make the power of our Provident God a bit more comprehensible.

I would like to share a story that may elucidate and aid us in our calls to be co-creators with our compassionate God of Providence, thereby unraveling a bit of the mystery of Providence.

On a cold December day, a warmly dressed woman was walking through the business district of New York when her eyes caught sight of a young boy who was standing barefoot looking into the display window of a shoe store. She asked him why he was looking so earnestly in that window. He responded: I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes. The woman took him by the hand, went into the store and asked the clerk to get her a half dozen of socks for the boy. She then asked the clerk if he could bring her some water and a towel. She took the young boy to the back part of the store, knelt down, washed his little feet and dried them with the towel. By this time the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing them on his feet, she purchased for him a pair of shoes. She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. Patting him on the head, she smiled and said "m,"Now, my little fellow, are you feeling more comfortable? As they left the store, the astonished child caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, answered her question with these words: "Are you God's wife? **To God be glory forever**"

I don't think we will ever truly grasp the fullness of providence in our daily living, but remembering how the Divine Plan has broken into our lives certainly frees us to be about the work of making God's Providence more visible in our world.

Have you ever gained an insight into how our Provident God walks with you, cares for you, or writes straight with crooked lines? Take a moment. Think about this action of God for you. (Pause)

Many times we can only discover the guiding power of God's providence in retrospect.....in little ways and big ways.

One such retrospective awareness of the power of God working in my life came in the guise of a community assignment to a new ministry. I was happily involved in teaching German at Bishop McCort High School in Johnstown. Everything seemed to be going right. I was happy. I had so much energy and felt incredibly creative. I had just received a Fulbright scholarship to study in Germany. What could be better!

I was asked to come to Pittsburgh in ministry as the Mistress of Novices. I had to forgo accepting the Fulbright Scholarship and leave what I had grown to love for the sake of this new ministry. Why? Where was my Provident God in all this change, detachment and insecurity? Was our God truly a God of Providence who was with me? It wasn't until years later that I began to gain insight into how God had visited me in what I experienced as a harsh reality, to be one of the greatest Providence gifts of my life. I don't know where the path to study German would have taken me. But I do know that this experience set my direction in life as a Providence Woman on a pathway I never dreamed was a possibility. With St. Paul I pray: **"To God be glory forever."**

When you reflect on the mystery of the Trinity or God's Providence working in your life, what comes to mind? What images play before you? How have you experienced God's providence working in your life? (Pause) How has it drawn you to your knees to pray: **"To God be glory forever?"**

There are many ways to be co-creators with our Provident God, but we must trust enough to allow the Spirit of Jesus to be our guiding companion in our journeys of earth life.

When we leave this worshiping community experience today, we will look the same, but we can't possibly be who we were when we arrived. We have been touched by our Provident, Trinitarian God and have been offered some gift of Providence that enables us to be open to the ways we are being called. We have been challenged to be the face of our provident God in our relationships, our outreach to the poor and disadvantaged. We have been sensitized with a growing awareness of how we are being invited to be co-creators with God, to be inclusive people of peace, to truly **BE** providence in the midst of the chaos of our world reality. With Mother Marie de LaRoche we cry: "Visibly do I see in all things the wonderful Providence of God." And together as one body we pray with St. Paul: **"To God be glory forever."** Amen!

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