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REFLECTIONS FOR FEAST OF MOST HOLY TRINITY

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There is no doubting the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. There have been many attempts in the course of history to understand who God is as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are insights that can be helpful. One runs something like this. The Father, as the title suggests, is the origin of all things. It is he who begets or gives existence to the Son. The Son is the exact image of the Father. Yet they are separate. The Father gives himself totally in love to the Son. The Son for his part gives himself completely to the Father. From the mutual love of both there emerges the third person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the mutual love bond between the Father and the Son. So, there is the picture of a family relationship between the three separate persons. It is therefore, not surprising that we consider the Trinity as being the model for all family relationships. Mutual self-giving in love is a clear direction for all families to follow.

The persons of the Trinity play their part in the Gospel for the feast, this year. The context is the final departure of Jesus from this world. Before he leaves he commissions the eleven apostles to continue his own ministry. Since his resurrection Jesus is vested with full or complete authority resembling that given to the Son of Man in the book of Daniel. The "one like the Son of Man is given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples and nations and languages should serve him." (Dan7:14). Assured of this divine authority Jesus commands the Apostles "Go make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The Apostles are to make disciples. A disciple is more than a follower. He is one who learns and continues to learn right through life from Jesus and from the Good News he has entrusted to us. The command to the apostles embraces all nations including the predominantly Jewish community to which Matthew directs his Gospel. The words of Jesus presume a ritual of initiation where baptism in the names of the Trinity is the way into membership of the church. There is more in question here than a formula of baptism. Baptism brings us into communion with the persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The apostles are to teach the prospective disciples "to observe all the commands I gave." Jesus gave us many keys to good living. Many of them are outlined in the Sermon on the Mount in the early chapters of Matthew's Gospel. They enshrine the values and directions that guide us to live as good human persons. He goes beyond the very basic requirements of the Ten Commandments to encourage us to take on qualities that show great respect for other people.

Jesus ends his commission with an assurance "that I am with you always; yes to the end of time." He is the one who realises the fulfilment text that we find at the beginning of the Gospel. "Look the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son, whom they will call Immanuel (God with us)." The Risen Christ remains with his people all the time as grace, support and a port of call whenever we feel the need for help.

