

Year A Holy Trinity

Ex 34:4-9; Dn 3; 2 Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18

ROME. We celebrate the solemn feast of the Holy Trinity this Sunday. After the Easter season, which culminates with Pentecost and the giving of the Holy Spirit, we remember that God is Triune. God the Father created us and redeemed us from sin and death by sending us his Son, and the Son upon the Cross handed us the Spirit (Jn 19:30; 20:22), which he had promised (Jn 14:15-17, 23; 16:7-15). This Holy Spirit is a gift to us from the Father and the Son (Jn 14:16; 16:7).

Through the Spirit we are drawn into God's very life, into God's very Self. In the first reading, we hear attributes of God, very strong words especially in the original Hebrew text. Yahweh is a God *rahûm w^ehannûn*, he has the compassion that flows from a mother's womb and also blesses and protects us with his "grace or favor." God is rich in *hesed w^eemet*, the first word (translated "love, mercy") meaning a surprising, rule-breaking, unexpected love, undeserved and astounding, free and transporting, and the second word being almost the opposite, *emet* connoting firmness, reliability, what can be counted on and expected as always being there, faithful! What a wonderful combination: God can always be expected to do the unexpected in surpassing himself in gracious acts of undeserved love and compassion and salvation, deeds and gifts and people and events that throw you off your feet. This is what comes forth from the dynamic (powerful and moving) Trinity.

But the Trinity is a "mystery" which must be lived and dwelt in in silence and prayer. My third stop on my pilgrimage was Dijon, actually the outskirts, Flavignerot, where the community of Carmelite nuns of which Blessed Élisabeth of the Trinity was a member has moved, a spacious property on a hill with a new, simple and modest convent. The community numbered maybe ten, most of whom were young. I was the only outsider, living in the guest quarters, and little was said, but spirituality hung heavy in the air. I first heard of Élisabeth in 1973, and had waited all that time to feel some more of her spirit: her brief life was spent living in the mystery of the Trinity which dwelt in her soul (Jn 14:23). In that little and simple chapel, where the relic

of part of her arm is and where a life size photo with those eyes of hers stares at you, I felt her presence as I prayed with her sisters. They gave me my own little relic as a gift when I left.