

May 18, 2008 – Feast of the Blessed Trinity
Prepared by Sr. Peg Kilduff, MM with Fr. Tom Burns, MM, Lima, Peru

First reading: Exodus 34: 4b-6-8-9	Moses communicates with God, asking God to “come along in the people’s company” portraying a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness.
Psalm: Daniel 3: 52-56	Praise for God who is above all in all ages.
Second reading: 2 Corinthians 13, 11-13	God as One is manifested in three persons.
Gospel: John 3: 16-18	God gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

In today’s reading, we have the self-revealing God communicating with Moses and, through Moses, to the people as “Yahweh, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.” So even many years before Christ, there was revealed to the human race that God was Emmanuel, a God-with-us, concerned our existence and our particular destiny within the freedom of human kind.

A Maryknoll Sister nurse from Peru writes the following, illustrating God-with-us: “Victor, who has HIV/AIDS, knocked promptly at 9 a.m. at my door as agreed upon previously. I rejoiced to see him standing there. Knowing that he may well be hungry, I prepared breakfast for him. As we talked he told me how his father refused to support him and his mother made him leave the house at 7 a.m. so she could lock up and be on her way. Victor spent the two intervening hours in a church praying for light to know how to meet the difficulties of blood tests, medicines, and lack of money for transportation. He said that he prayed for patience and understanding of his new life in a world of HIV and AIDS. Like so many others of similar plight, Victor was experiencing marginalization, rejection, weariness, often hunger and, in his case, shame and embarrassment regarding his past life with no family support. I shared with him how I had been praying at approximately the same time for him and for his ability to be faithful to his new regime of medication and appointments. Then he smiled at me and said: ‘You prayed for me the same time as I was praying. How compassionate God is! God does respond to our prayers and really is concerned about each of us.’”

There are many Victors in this world, youth whose bodies have given way to the human immune virus, often filled with fear for the present and the future. The Peruvian hospital where this Maryknoll sister nurse bases her AIDS work has 520 patients receiving the anti-retroviral treatment, with a waiting list of 50 more patients hoping to be accepted for the same program. In all of Peru there are 30,000 known cases of HIV and AIDS; globally, there are approximately 33.2 million known cases. When we reflect deeply on the AIDS pandemic, we realize the need for changes in the patent laws in order to allow greater access to the medicines that permit a quality of life for all. We realize the needs for a much wider consciousness of this growing global problem and for effective solutions.

In the reading of the letter to the Corinthians, we listen to the farewell that Paul directs to the Corinthians; it rings like a solemn benediction bespeaking the action of a triune God. Paul, therefore, seems to have been led through his own experiences in ministry to recognize and affirm with conviction that God as One is manifested in three persons.

Also in the Gospel, after His dialogue with Nicodemus, Jesus takes it upon Himself to clarify for his disciples the nature of His mission and His origin. The very root of the

Trinitarian mystery is Jesus' love for God, moved by the Spirit – and that is also what is to be the root of our daily relationships in the human community as believers in a triune God. It could be said, then, that at the very heart of God there is a community of persons within one nature and that relationship is so strong and so powerful that it reaches out to all of us, it affects all of us as one people, one Global Community.

One example which concretizes this concerned relationship of one for the other is that of a group of HIV and AIDS patients in Lima. Members of the group learned of other patients who were living in the emergency zone as a result of a devastating earthquake in Peru last August. In spite of their efforts to organize around a common pot to survive amidst the chaos, they still lacked many essentials such as fuel and large pots for cooking, water, and food supplies other than rice from Caritas, etc. The Lima group went down to assess the needs and returned to begin a solidarity effort with others having more resources. Today, six months later, the Lima group is still sharing that powerful God-with-us relationship with their brothers and sisters with the same virus.

Tom Burns, a Maryknoll priest working in Lima, gives another example:

“Not long ago in the middle of a reflection on ‘Communion and Mission’ with some lay leaders on the deanery level, it occurred to me off hand to share my favorite image of the Trinity... I was really surprised at the response I got.

“Referring to a sculpture I had once seen of three figures dancing in the snow, I invited one of the women and a young man to come forward and asked each of them to take my hand. I then told them that we were the Trinity – Father, Spirit and Son, explaining that ‘ruah,’ the word for Spirit in Hebrew, is feminine (“spiritess”).

“Since Peruvians love dancing (so do I) I asked everyone to begin singing a well known ‘huayno’ (a dance from the Andes) called ‘Ojos Azules’ (‘Blue Eyes’) and the three of us began dancing. I then sent the ‘son’ out to invite others into our ‘round’ and to dance with us. They began joining in, smiling, singing and laughing as they did. Then it was the ‘spiritess’ turn and more joined in ... Eventually everyone was dancing and singing.

“There is nothing like dancing (especially a ‘round’) to express the joy of life, and friendship. This is especially true among the poor who experience life as gift: they know they wouldn’t be alive if it were not for the ‘others’ and the ‘Other.’ There is nothing like a party among the poor and dancing is their way to share and celebrate this giftedness and friendship.

When dancing, all want to share the joy and invite others in. Even those who do not join in for various reasons enjoy watching and singing. Once we finished the dance, I explained that the mission of the Trinity was to go out and invite people into the joy of the fullness of life - life shared and celebrated in this communion dance of the Trinity. First the son goes out and then the spirit/mother and, as the joy becomes contagious (‘see how they love one another’), everyone wants to do the inviting and joining because no one should be left out... the good news has to be shared by all.

As I sat down to take a breath, I was totally surprised by the spontaneous applause that broke out. That day I think the message got across - I think we all better understood the ‘mystery’ (beauty) and mission of the Trinity in our hearts -where it really counts.”

Many times the world does not believe in God because those who preach are empty of a real experience of God. We talk about our relationship with God but often do not act as brothers and sisters among ourselves. We talk about Jesus, God’s Son, but we do not think about the crucified of our times such as the peoples of Darfur, of Iraq, victims of HIV and AIDS, the hungry in Africa or in Latin America. We talk about the Holy Spirit but many times we are moved by other forces such as pride, arrogance, economic gain, etc. It seems as if

a real encounter – one with the other – comes out of the lived experience of the call to love. This loving relationship – with ourselves and with others – is what reveals God as Trinity.

For more information:

Read more about the global impact of U.S. policy decisions on people living with HIV and AIDS in Maryknoll's *Loving our neighbor in a shrinking world*. Through this resource, Maryknoll missionaries encourage voters in the 2008 U.S. elections to scrutinize candidates' policy proposals through the lens of those who, both in the United States and overseas, lack basic necessities, endure the scourge of racism, live with gender-based discrimination or feel the immediate impact of climate change.

Email for a copy, or find the election guide here:
www.maryknollogc.org/2008elections/index.htm

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: *Peace, Social Justice & Integrity of Creation*
P.O. Box 29132 Washington, D.C. 20017
phone: (202)832-1780 fax: (202)832-5195
ogc@maryknoll.org www.maryknollogc.org