

Homily for Trinity Sunday  
May 18, 2008

### Introduction

During my years of study for the priesthood we used to have big-name speakers address us seminarians from time to time on the campus of Catholic University. One such event featured a famous lay Catholic of the time, Frank Sheed. Mr. Sheed, as some of us older people may remember, was the founder with his wife, Maisie Ward, of a wonderful publishing house, Sheed and Ward. Actually, it is still in existence, although the founders have long since died.

On the evening of Mr. Sheed's address we all went to the University with high expectations. We hoped to hear some of the latest news from the Catholic publishing world, or perhaps developments in Church politics, or new theological ideas of the time. However, when Mr. Sheed stood before us, he announced that he wished to speak about God.

I remember being greatly disappointed, thinking "God, how boring". I felt that we would be cheated out of some "really" interesting stuff.

Yet when Mr. Sheed began to speak, I found myself increasingly mesmerized by what he had to say. He literally kept us spellbound for an hour and one half speaking about a subject that was obviously very close to his heart, and one which he lived intensely. I came away from that evening once again chiding myself for rashly judging a speaker and a topic before giving them even the beginning of a hearing.

I so not propose to hold you spellbound today on this the "feast day of God" as Peruvian theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez puts it. But it is a day when we talk about God, when we reflect seriously on the Being who gives our life meaning. So, some reflections about God.

I

First: God is transcendent.

This of course is what we call the "vertical" dimension of our relationship with the Divine. We live and move and have our being in God who is our Creator, the Omnipotent One, all-knowing, eternal, unnamable, that is not confined to pronouns like "He" or "She", Goodness itself, Truth itself, Beauty itself.

God is beyond anything we can know or imagine or grasp. Hence, one of the favorite prayers of St. Francis of Assisi was "Who are you, my God; and who am I?".

God is present to all that exists, sustains all that exists.

From time to time I have the good fortune to celebrate the Eucharist at a girls' high school in Bethesda, Holy Cross Academy. And very often one of the hymns they sing is a lovely

one which contains the words "Our God is an awesome God". And the kids belt it out with great enthusiasm.

## II

Parallel to these reflections on the total "otherness" of God is the fact that God is also Immanent - God has come among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He is "Emanuel" - God with us.

Therefore, despite God's transcendence, God is not some remote, impersonal, indifferent Absolute Being, but a personal, relational, living Presence among us. God is Father, Mother, Friend, Savior, Brother, Hero, Redeemer, Guide, Advocate, Inspirer.

What is more, God is three Persons in one Being, a Community of love and truth, the One we call Father, Son, Holy Spirit; the One we call Source of all being, Eternal Word, Giver of Life

## III

Two more amazing, mind-bending facts/truths about God.

First God came among us to take on humanity's sin by confronting the unjust, evil powers and principalities of His time and of all times. He overcame these evils by his suffering and death. In this we have two amazing mysteries: that of God's Presence among us (the Incarnation), and God's saving action (Humanity's Redemption).

Second, God invites us, allows us - but never coerces us - to share in His/Her very life particularly through Baptism and the Eucharist. It's more. God allows us to share in His/Her dream for humanity by letting us be co-creators of God's New Creation - a world of justice, dignity, peace, unity, freedom and love for every human being and for all human beings.

## Conclusion

In the face of these amazing reflections about God, an appropriate response can be to sing the refrain of that wonderful hymn: "How Great Thou Art":

"Then sings my soul my Savior, God to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

Then sings my soul my Savior, God to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art: