

May 22, 2016 The Beauty Of A Name Homily: Brothers and sisters, in the early days of the Hollywood film industry, it was not uncommon for the heads of the major studios to make a demand - an unreasonable and insulting demand - of some of its leading actors. Incredibly, some were asked to change their name. In the mind of the movie mogul, a name must be attractive and appealing. The bosses relied on their publicity departments to choose names that were likely to catch the eye of the moviegoer. So often in the entertainment capital of the world a name was regarded as no more than a marketing tool. And all for the bottom line - profit! Let me cite just two examples. The actor Marion Morrison's name was changed to John Wayne; the actress Ruby Steven's name was changed to Barbara Stanwyck. One actress, Kim Novak, defied her boss, Harry Cohn of Columbia studios, who insisted that her name be changed to Kit Marlowe. She was understandably offended.

A name is a blessing. It is a sacred gift from our parents. It affords us an identity and dignity. In addition, a name allows us to enter into a personal dialogue with others, especially God Himself. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calls each of his sheep by name (Jn.10:30)! To have a name allows us to be in communion with living and deceased relatives on a close, personal basis. In many European countries, there is a tradition known as "Name Day" that consists of celebrating a day of the year associated with one's name. It should be obvious that to forfeit one's name for a shallow reason is tragic, if not contemptible. By robbing us of our name, as so often occurred in the concentration camps during the Second World War, one's innate God-given dignity is threatened and sometimes even erased by those who demean and dehumanize the so-called enemy.

Today is the feast of God. The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. Every time we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, we remember God's name in which we are baptized. The Church makes people Christian by calling on the Trinitarian/Tri-personal God. "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" are the very words by which we identify ourselves as disciples of Jesus and members of His Church.

At the beginning of every mass, we call upon our Trinitarian God in prayer. How often do athletes bless themselves by making the sign of the cross! Hallowed is the name of God. In the 17th chapter of John's gospel, Jesus utters a prayer in which he says: "Father, I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known" (Jn17:26). In St. Paul's justly famous hymn in his letter to the Christian community at Phillipi, he exclaims, "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bend of those in heaven and on and under the earth" (Phil. 2:10). In today's gospel the Evangelist writes movingly of the Holy Spirit, who will guide the disciples of Christ to all truth (Jn.16:22).

What possible lessons can we learn from today's feast of the Holy Trinity?

First, The God of Jesus Christ is not alone! He is no solitary God. He is a perfect communion of light and love. In his deepest mystery, God is a communion of persons, a family since He has in Himself Fatherhood, Sonship and the essence of the family, which is Love.

In a culture rampant with individualism and self indulgence, Christians today are called to offer a witness of communion: a mystery which has its roots in heaven, in the inner life of God. One need only consider marriage, the family, human fellowship and the worshipping Church to fully appreciate the mystery of God and the call to imitate Our Lord as revealed in the first book of the bible, the book of Genesis: “God created man in his own image, in the divine image he created him male and female he created them” (Gen.1:27).

We are "hard-wired" for communion. It is not good for us to be alone! The feast of the Holy Trinity ought to inspire in each one of us a spirit of awe and wonder. It is because of Christ that we are blessed with a revelation of the Divine mystery, one that eludes our power of reason.

Praise the Holy Trinity!