

The Sacred Trinity, one being, three persons, one God. No matter how hard we try, we just can't wrap our heads around how this works. In our practical mind's eye we try to picture how such a being would look, keeping in mind that he is beautiful, and we fail miserably. We are taught that God always was and always will be, and once again our practical mind fails to comprehend. We kind-of-sort-of get always will be, but always was? That is totally beyond us.

Then we try to delve into the internal relationship between the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit and we are confused once again. The Father gives to the Son, the Holy Spirit flows from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit Gives life; the Son creates all things and is obedient to the Father. And by the way, they are all equal in their relationship with one another. Baffling!

Toss in that we are made in the image and likeness of God; that the Son of God, that is God was born of a woman and shares in our humanity; that the Son of God, that is God died on the Cross, and rose again and our befuddlement is complete. Think about it, how can God die, and if he is dead, how can he resurrect himself? Yet he did.

The only way that we can try to understand God is to put a box around him, put limits on him, and try to put controls on God in our own mind. In other words, if we become heretics we can try to fool ourselves into thinking that we understand God, but all we have done is violate the First Commandment by trying to make ourselves into God in order to understand God. It all boils down to the fact that the Trinity, one being, three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God is completely incomprehensible to the human mind.

How do we develop a relationship with this God that we admit that we cannot understand? Lets look at a common human example. Every husband who completely understands his wife please stand up. Every wife who completely understands her husband please stand up. Judging from the number of married couples who are seated in the pews, even as husband and wife, even with 40, 50 or more years of an intimate and loving relationship, spouses don't understand each other. But they do love each other; they do have trust; that is have faith in each other. I know that if my wife didn't love me I wouldn't be here in this Church speaking to you today.

I know the effects of her love, but I can't say that I totally understand it, or her and she would say the same about me and we can all say the same about God.

Which leads us to a 'what comes first, the chicken or the egg' problem. What comes first, trust, or as stated in the context of our religion, faith, or love?

To answer this question, us old married people need to recall when we first encountered our future spouse and you youngsters need to take notes. There was some kind of draw, he or she is cute, or smart, or athletic, whatever that initial attraction was and then you actually spoke with each other and went on a date. Much like in our encounter with God, we have those moments of awareness, of attraction, that pull that makes us want to know more, to come closer to this being we call God, even if sometimes we aren't even aware that he exists.

After the first date the couple decides if they want to continue the relationship or just call it a day. If they decide to continue, in their internal conversations they see the other person in a positive light. When they speak with their friends about the relationship, it is in a positive light. Every time they speak positively about their relationship, it reinforces how good the relationship is in their own minds. We literally talk ourselves into being in love; unfortunately, we can also talk ourselves out of being in love as well.

Part and parcel of that human love is trust; faith that the one person isn't going to act in a manner that is harmful to the other person in the relationship. So in our most important human relationship, the chicken and the egg grow in tandem to the befuddlement of our practical minds.

If we accept that we are made in the image and likeness of God, and that we are children of God, how do we grow to love him? How do we talk ourselves into loving God just as we talked ourselves into loving our spouse? Where is the conversation? Where is the exchange? As goofy as it sounds, but every person understands this as a fundamental level, where are the hugs?

God speaks to us through the Word, Sacrament and prayer. In the beginning of St. John's Gospel he states: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (*Jn 1:1*). Pick up your Bible and study some Scripture. Thru Scripture we can come to know God

better than any of the people who attended the Sermon on the Mount except the Apostles. In prayer we build our relationship and come to love God. And Sacrament? Those are the hugs. Human hugs are from the outside in; God's hugs are from the inside out.

In all of this talk about love and relationship, we must hark back to St Paul's letter to the Romans that we read today. "... if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him." (*Rm 8:17*) No one anywhere ever grew at a party. Our greatest growth comes when we suffer. The question we remember on the test is the one we got wrong. We come closest to people in our lives during times of adversity and when we lay our sufferings at the foot of the Cross; that is when we come closer to God.

But our human tendency is to avoid suffering and pain to the point that we will abandon those who are closest to us in order to avoid it, if the pain and suffering is great enough. That is where we need the grace of God in the Sacraments the most. Not when our relationships are fun and exciting, maybe not even when they become boring. But when they become difficult to the point of suffering, then the grace of our sacramental marriage holds us together and allows us to grow. Married or single, whenever we tie ourselves to the foot of the Cross, that is when the perfect love that is in the Trinity, Father Son and Holy Spirit draws us to himself and carries us through our problems to the peace and joy waiting for us on the other side.