

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

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Lectionary 164:

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/053126.cfm>

Possible preaching themes:

- The fullness of the Trinity, revealed through Christ in the Incarnation, reshapes our understanding of our relationship with God and creation.
- Natural signs alert us to the call of our vocation as stewards of God’s creation.
- Peace is a cornerstone of the Trinitarian life, embodied by Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Possible scientific resources:

- Neuroplasticity is the brain’s natural ability to reorganize and adapt in response to changes and injury. The Incarnation introduced a new way of looking at our relationship with God and creation.
 - This [article](#) discusses the two types of neuroplasticity (i.e., structural and functional plasticity), which are responsible for learning and recovery from injury.
 - This [video](#) explains that the brain dynamically changes from “womb to tomb”—suggesting that being stuck is not the nature of the brain—requiring us to make choices that will enable us to experience positive outcomes.
 - This short [article](#) proposes that neuroplasticity can be self-directed by cultivating positive habits.
- The earth experiences climate change through thresholds, or “tipping points,” that are often irreversible. These natural phenomena call us to take our responsibility as stewards more seriously.
 - There are [nine tipping points](#) the earth could experience, including the melting of ice sheets, loss of biodiversity, frequent droughts, and decline of marine life.
 - Scientists suggest that the earth has reached a [tenth tipping point](#) or aquatic deoxygenation.

- This [article](#) proposes that there are “positive tipping points” or interventions (e.g., electric vehicles, renewable energy sources) to mitigate the tipping points.
- Peace is a fundamental Christian virtue rooted in the Trinitarian love. In contemporary times, it involves promoting well-being, addressing early exposure to violence, and responsibly utilizing science to foster peace.
 - This [research](#) suggests that peace requires improving the quality of life and mental health of everyone, especially those in war-torn countries.
 - By rewiring the brain, we can deviate from “[childhood programming](#)” accustomed to violence.
 - This [article](#) argues that that science can be used for peacebuilding.

Homily outline:

- **Scientific explanation**
 - Neuroplasticity is the brain’s ability to reorganize and rewire its neural pathways.
 - Through this rewiring, new patterns of thinking and learning can develop.
 - Studies reveal that we are responsible for rewiring our brains through the habits we form, the lifestyles we adopt, and the ways we process information and life experiences.
- **Cosmic Christology**
 - The impact of the message, *“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life,”* could not have been more relevant to those facing political and social struggles in the time of Jesus. It continues to resonate with people today who are experiencing severe economic hardship, political unrest, racial discrimination, and religious persecution.
 - This message of the Gospel is meant to give us hope in various stages and moments in our lives when we need more strength and reassurance—that we belong, we matter, we are cared for, and we are loved.
 - But this message of hope is not only for humans. Ilia Delio, a Franciscan sister and theologian, proposes an inclusive Christological framework which she calls “[cosmic Christology](#).”
 - Delio posits that the Incarnation of Jesus is about the revelation of God’s love to creation, not only to humanity, so that the cosmos may encounter God’s overflowing love revealed through Jesus Christ.

- Delio’s cosmic Christology draws on the Trinitarian model of love, in which God the Father is the source of love, shared with the Son, and sustained by the Spirit. This dynamic communion is extended to the cosmos (humans, animals, plants, and all forms of life).
- Drawing on Franciscan tradition, Delio’s Christology illustrates a renewed vision of what love is, whom we are called to love, and how we are to love. Delio asserts:

“Incarnation is also about seeing the hiddenness of God... who is hidden in everyday, ordinary reality. What do you see when you see another person? When you see a rabbit? A tree? A sand dune? Do you see only sand? Or do you see something more?”

- Such an inclusive view of Christ’s dwelling in creation extends our love to all creatures and empathizes with them in their suffering. As we humans face all the life-depleting struggles we are confronted with, creation suffers, too. The destruction of communities across the globe comes with the dying of other species. In the face of exploitative capitalist structures, the flourishing of creation is impeded.

- **Neuroplasticity and Rebuilding the Cosmic Community**

- Neuroplasticity reminds us that the mind is not fixed or static. Just as neural pathways can be reshaped, so too can our theological imagination.
- We have long believed that Christ came primarily for humanity. Through the wonders of our brainwork, we are invited to expand our theological imagination and look at the Incarnation of Christ as an act of the Trinity to embrace all creation.
- If creation is included in Christ’s Incarnation, we must then treat creation as our neighbor whom we must love and include in our hopes.
- In a time marked by deep social divisions, even the idea of “neighbor” can be difficult to embody. Thus, it calls for rewiring our relationship with creation and healing the disharmony that has fractured it.
- The belonging, care, and love assured to us through Christ’s Incarnation must overflow into our relationship with creation by:
 - adopting environmentally-friendly and less consumer-driven lifestyles;
 - appreciating other species and respecting their autonomy without removing them from their natural habitats;

- advocating for the vulnerable members of the ecological family by supporting initiatives that protect their flourishing; and
- caring for abandoned or stray animals through adoption and compassionate stewardship.

Tags: brain, cosmos, Incarnation, neuroplasticity, peace, Trinity