

06/15/14 Trinity Sunday A

-- You've probably seen it in a football game on TV: an extra point is being attempted after a touchdown. In the stands behind the goalposts a fan holds up a big sign. It says *John 3:16*.

-- A perceptive fan who knows scripture would recognize that as a part of today's gospel: *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.*

-- If he were in the stands near that fan, he could have an interesting conversation with him at a time out. He might ask, *Does God really love the **whole** world? Sure, he loves me and all true believers. But God certainly can't love infidels and the wicked worldly people.*

-- Yes, many people who call themselves followers of Christ have trouble with God's universal love. From other parts of John's gospel they quote passages saying how the world hates true believers. Some even believe they will be raptured out of this evil world before it goes down to destruction.

-- The holder of the sign might answer, *Sure, I know there is evil in the world. I'm not blind to that. But God has told us that he loves all people, even enemies. How else could he tell us to love our enemies?*

-- God's love is greater and more expansive than normal human instinct. Our first instinct is to help those who help us and turn away from those who don't. But God's love overflows, even to those we least expect.

-- Another person might ask that fan, *You call Jesus God's **only** Son. Sure, Jesus did good things. He was a good moral teacher. But so were many other people in history. Weren't they sons of God? Is Jesus really the one source of salvation?*

-- The fan might answer him: *In one sense we are all sons and daughters of God, since he created us. But Jesus is unique. He is God's Son from all eternity. He alone could save us. Many people have done much good in the world, but Jesus Christ alone is the source of our salvation.*

-- About 13 years ago, a document call *Dominus Jesus* (Latin for the Lord Jesus) came out from the Vatican. It caused a lot of controversy. It didn't say that people other than Christians could not be saved, but it **did** say that all people who are saved are saved through Jesus Christ.

-- Strangely enough, my Muslim dialogue partners had no problem with the document as a statement of Catholic faith. They do not regard Jesus as the unique Son of God, but they understood that this is our faith.

-- Trinity Sunday is a time when we reflect upon the infinite love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's love is so expansive that it is not encompassed in one person. Yet there is still only one God.

-- Yes, that is a mystery. But it's not a mystery in the sense that it's a puzzle to be solved or a riddle to be figured out. Rather, it's something to be celebrated.

-- For we have a God who is rich in mercy, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity. Jesus Christ lived out that fidelity to the point of death on the cross. And the Holy Spirit continues to shower divine love on God's people.

-- We, as members of God's people, should rejoice in that love. And we should reflect that love, however inadequately, in all we do as a Church and as Christians in the world.

-- Whenever we reach out to help the poor, or visit and give comfort to the sick or elderly, or help build a home for a working poor person...or do any number of things to show love and concern, we reflect a bit of the love of the Trinity.

--May we witness to God's triune love through our lives.