

Then Jesus continues to reveal God to us just by who he is and how he acts, but then he tells us, as we hear in the Gospel lesson this morning, "I can't tell you everything, but after I'm gone" (and he doesn't add this, but he understands it) "and I'm raised from the dead, I come back transformed and filled with God's spirit." Then the spirit of God will continue to enlighten you, to reveal who God is to you if you're open to hearing that spirit, and this will go on and on until we all have a deeper awareness of who God is.

We begin to understand: God isn't singular, individualistic; no. God is community, God is love. You can't have love unless you're loving someone. There has to be the lover and the beloved, and so God is love; there's got to be a community, and the community is bound together by the spirit. That's not a very profound explanation, but at least it helps us begin to get a sense of why we celebrate God as Trinity, not just with one God, but God is a God of love. The lover, the beloved and the spirit who brings them together -- that's what we understand by our Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity.

It took over 300 years for the church to come to understand this in any way -- even to get a deep sense of how God is, yes, one God, but also three persons in one God, a community of love. It didn't happen -- our understanding of it expressed in those kinds of terms -- until the first council of the church, the Council of Nicaea in 325. That's where the spirit is Jesus' promise, reached ... through those gathered in that council and helped them to put into words something of this mystery of who God is -- the God who is love.

One of the extraordinary things about that council that I think might be worth noting is the pope wasn't even there. It's the church through whom God speaks; the Holy Spirit comes to all of us -- to the whole church -- and makes us alive with the presence of God and helps us to bring that presence of God into our world. Not just the pope or the bishops: the whole community, and that's what happened there at the Council of Nicaea. We were able to understand because of the Holy Spirit guiding us, as church, how God is a community of love.

Now what we need to do, I think, is to remember those words of St. Paul in our second lesson today: "The love of God is poured into our hearts to the Holy Spirit who's given to us." The love of God -- God who is love -- that love is poured into our hearts, into our spirit to the Holy Spirit who's given to us. If we are open to that, what will happen? Well obviously, as people begin to go out into our world, we'll spread love and peace and joy and goodness wherever we go.

That's why Jesus came, to bring God's love very intimately into the life of each one of us so that then we can go into our world, transform that world through the power of love. The Holy Spirit poured into our hearts is the love of God given to us to be shared with all others to make our world a better place because it's a world filled with love.

[Homily given at St. Hilary Parish, Redford, Mich. The transcripts of Bishop Gumbleton's homilies are posted weekly to NCRonline.org. [Sign up here](#) [2] to receive an email alert when the latest homily is posted.]

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