

Sunday by Bishop Elisa Buberwa
May 18th 2008

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Manhattan

Gen 1:1 – 2; 4a, Ps. 8, 2 Cor. 13:11 – 13 and
The Holy Trinity Sunday.

Sermon

2 Cor. 13:11 – 13

1. Introduction:

Today is the Holy Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost in accordance with the Church Year. I like the Church Year System, although it is despised (looked down) by some Pentecostal churches at home. I like the system because it connects us to the roots – the historical church – the church of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Commemorating the Holy Trinity Sunday is very significant because of the centrality of the Trinitarian doctrine in the Christian Church. The One true, God, “Self – revealed in Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It (Holy Trinity) signifies that within the one essence of the Godhead, we have to distinguish three “persons” who are neither three gods on one side, nor three parts or modes of God on the other, but coequally and coeternally God” (Walter A. Elwell (Editor), Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, page 111).

Therefore we confess in the Athanasian Creed:

“This is the true Christian faith that we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God without confusing the persons or dividing the divine substance” (article 384, Athanasian) Creed).

Why am I bothering you with all this doctrinal details. One might ask me. It is because, today is the Trinity Sunday. If I do not bring up this detail today, when will I? In my 21 years service as pastor, (and 7 years as bishop), I have found that sometimes we assume too much. We have to make sure that such central doctrinal emphases are deliberately repeated, again and again, because of their centrality in the Christian faith

2. My sermon is based on a short text 2Cor. 13; 11 – 13 – the second lesson for this Sunday.

The Apostle Paul is concluding his second epistle to the Corinthian Christians and thus he says “finally, brothers and sisters, farewell.

He wishes them to:-

- Put things in order – orderliness – a Christian Virtue; your Synod Assembly 15 – 17/05; was very orderly. I was impressed.
- Listen to his appeal
- Be in unity
- Live in peace

We could summarize Paul's message this way: He exhorts these Christians to abide in the knowledge of God (implied here is "faith" also) and then apply that knowledge of God to their daily lives i.e. they should live in unity, peace and love among them selves and with all people.

We too, brothers and sisters, as we celebrate this Trinity Sunday, we are reminded of the importance of unity, peace and love, among us Christians and between us and other people. And by way, the three are interdependent in many ways. Let me give you an example: "Between" 2003 – 2005 (2 years about) we had a problem (or conflict) in the ELCT. This problem threatened our unity because there was a division between us bishops. But what was affected was not only unity but certainly love and peace. We thank God the conflict was resolved and now (since 2006) by God's grace, we are one again. We are happy and peaceful; we love one another as before. A call to unity, peace and love, is a call directed to my church and your church; my people and your people; and all people. I urge you to be particularly careful when you find yourselves in differences, misunderstandings and conflicts; e.g. in your families, work places, congregations, etc. Resolve your differences as soon as possible, otherwise they may grow bigger and bigger and finally poison your unity, peace and love. So a reminder: unity, peace and love. Yes our world today is more developed: educationally, technologically, economically etc; however, just as it was necessary for Paul to remind the world of the first century Christians, we too need to be reminded of the significance of unity, peace and love. A desire for a better world is and continues to be our desire. St. Paul concludes his letter by wishing Corinthian Christians, a better world – of

unity, peace and love. On this Trinity Sunday, the word of God wishes us unity, peace and love also.

3. The End.

Verse 13 points to the Trinitarian formula very clearly. And let us end this reflection by all of us reciting it:

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you”.

Amen.