

- On this Trinity Sunday, it is good for us to recall that the greatest gift any of us can ever receive on this earth is baptism. For by receiving baptism, we receive the gift of the Trinity.
- When we are baptized, we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and at that most sublime moment we enter a covenantal relationship with the Holy Trinity.
- God promises to give Himself to us fully, and He invites us to give ourselves back to Him fully in a covenant of love.
- As a pledge of His love, the Trinity imbues our soul with sanctifying grace and endows us with the virtues of faith, hope, and charity so that we might love God in return.
- Of course, one of the primary ways we prove our love for God is by loving our fellow man.
- If baptism is the greatest gift we can receive, going out to evangelize others so that they, too, seek baptism, is one of the greatest forms of charity we can exercise.
- Thus, our Gospel story tells of the commissioning of the 11 apostles immediately before our Lord's glorious Ascension. Jesus sends them out into the world saying:
- "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."
- And after 9 days of prayer with Our Lady in the Upper Room, these 11 men – who were also joined by St. Matthias as a replacement for Judas – receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost so that they may fulfill our Lord's command.
- So great was their love for their fellow man, that each of the apostles fulfilled our Lord's command at the cost of a gruesome martyrdom – save John, who was nonetheless tortured by being boiled in oil, and also poisoned, and yet miraculously did not succumb to these assassination attempts.
- So, as we consider today's Gospel, and the great gift we've received by our own baptism, we must ask ourselves how well we evangelize others around us.
- In the not-so-distant past, we may have excused ourselves from evangelization efforts as such a large percentage of our country was already Christian. Yet, that's not necessarily the case today.
- Over the course of my lifetime, our country has certainly shaken off its Judeo-Christian ethic as concerns our laws, and none of us can count on our neighbors or co-workers to share our Catholic moral sensibilities.
- On the contrary, there's a great pressure today exerted by corporations and retailers alike to embrace as perfectly normal, behaviors that, just 30 and 40 years ago, were considered immoral and even taboo by the vast majority of Americans.
- My point here is that there's plenty of opportunities for evangelization today, of sharing the Gospel message and leading others to Christ, and we don't even have to set out for far-off lands like missionaries to do so.
- Some of you may worry that you don't know your Faith well enough to evangelize others, or that you haven't had the proper training to evangelize effectively.
- Yet, evangelization is most effectively carried out not by those who are knowledgeable and skilled speakers, but rather by those who exhibit the virtues of faith and hope, and who are absolutely dedicated to practicing charity.

- If we are baptized, we possess these three virtues of faith, hope, and charity already. All we need do to evangelize is to put these virtues into practice, most especially charity.
- As regards practicing charity, our love for others and our acts of charity toward them must arise from our love for God and our desire to please Him.
- Our charity must not be bound up with our feelings, but rather exist in our will, in our efforts to do good works. And it must extend to all that we meet, especially to those whom we dislike – for this is the most efficacious exercise of charity.
- And if we seek first to please God in our daily interactions with others, a freedom is imparted to us that makes being charitable much easier.
- You see, when our primary aim is to please God, He enables us to give freely, without expecting repayment and without worry about the outcome of our good acts. God gives us the grace to give and love with no strings attached.
- This reminds me of a story about St. Thérèse of Lisieux. There was a particular nun in her convent whom no one liked and whom everyone else found impossible to work with because of her violent mood swings and depressive personality.
- Yet, St. Thérèse volunteered to work with this nun in the linen room, where she had to bear with this lady's abuse for more than a year.
- When asked about her experience afterwards, Thérèse responded: "I understand now that charity consists in bearing the faults of others, in not being surprised at their weakness, in being edified by the smallest acts of virtue we see them practice. But I understood above all that charity must not remain hidden in the bottom of one's heart."
- There was a personal cost to Thérèse in her patient exercise of charity with this thorny nun, but it made Thérèse holier, and it enabled her both to be compassionate towards this nun, and to see the acts of virtue this nun practiced that everyone else was blind to.
- When we practice charity with others, especially those we dislike, our harsh thoughts are softened, and the sharp edges of our judgments are rounded off. Then we can begin to see the goodness and beauty of those people we may have written off because of our judgments.
- And when we see the goodness and beauty of others, we naturally develop an affection for them that lays a foundation for a trusting relationship in which they become more open to our sharing of our faith.
- Truly, humble and persistent charity is a key to unlocking hardened hearts so that Christ may enter and make that heart His home.
- Brothers and sisters, in being baptized we have received the gift of the Holy Trinity dwelling within our souls. In turn, we are obliged to live a life pleasing to the Trinity through the practice of the virtues of faith, hope, and especially charity.
- May we dedicate ourselves to leading others to Christ through our humble works of charity, especially those whom we may find disagreeable – and do it all simply with the desire to please the 3 Persons of the Holy Trinity.
- St. Thérèse of Lisieux, pray for us.