



# THE YEAR OF ST. PAUL

## ST. PAUL & THE TRINITY

Sixth in a Series

June 7, 2009

**T**hose who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:14-17

### A Family of Faith

The mystery we celebrate in today's feast—the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity—is at the very core of our Christian faith. "The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the 'hierarchy of the truths of faith'" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 234).

It took centuries for the Church to come to a formal understanding of what it means to be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." When St. Paul wrote his letters, the Church had no creed, no formalized statements of dogma. Paul would certainly not have recognized the name of today's feast, "The Most Blessed Trinity"! But that is not to say that he would not have recognized the mystery that language seeks to describe. Paul's writings have helped to shape the Church's understanding of the Trinity. Several of his letters end with a distinctly Trinitarian blessing, which is echoed in the liturgy: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with all of you" (2 Corinthians 13:13).

Today's reading from the *Letter to the Romans* speaks of our adoption as sons and daughters of God, an adoption in which all three persons of the Trinity play a part. God becomes our Father because through the



Icon of the Most Holy Trinity. Joan Brand-Landkamer, Cathedral Iconographer

Son, we are given the Spirit, who is a "Spirit of adoption." In the power of this Spirit, we are able to call on God as father. Children are, of course, heirs, and if we are children of God then we are God's heirs—"joint heirs with Christ." And Christ himself, St. Paul says, is the way to perfect this relationship, for we must suffer with him if we are to be glorified with him.

St. Paul uses the language of father, son, and adoption to express the mystery we celebrate today: God is a God of relationship. Through our baptism we are drawn into relationship with God.

**Novena in Honor of St. Paul**  
We will conclude this Year of St. Paul with a special novena of prayer, beginning Saturday, June 20 and concluding on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and

Paul, Monday, June 29. All Masses during the novena will conclude with a special procession to the place of prayer in honor of St. Paul.

### Prayer for the Year of St. Paul

Glorious Saint Paul,  
Apostle to the Gentiles,  
when the Lord called, you answered,  
and you spread the good news of the Gospel  
to the very ends of the earth.  
Pray for us, that we may serve Christ as you did:  
proclaiming the name of Jesus  
in good times and bad,  
when convenient and when inconvenient.  
Pray for us, that we may welcome  
all the people we meet  
with compassionate hearts and open minds.  
Pray for us, that Christ may live in us as he lived in you.  
We pray in the name of the One  
who is your Lord and ours,  
Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.