

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

June 11, 2017



*God our Father,
 who by sending into the world
 the Word of truth
 and the Spirit of sanctification
 made known to the human race
 your wondrous mystery,
 grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith,
 we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory
 and adore your unity,
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*



Collect for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

One of the most difficult articles of faith in Christianity is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. There are times that people over-think this. In many ways we deal with mystery every day.



When we flip a switch we expect the lights to go on. When we take a phone and punch in numbers we expect to be able to talk to another person. If we look around the world we expect trees to bloom, flowers to grow, snow to melt and so on. The world is filled with mystery!

We profess this mystery of the Trinity whenever we make a Sign of the Cross or pray the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed. In the Sacred Scripture we do not find the definition of Holy Trinity but we have many examples of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In the very beginning of Scripture, in the book of Genesis, the first three verses give us an example of the Trinity.

*In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth
 - and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss
 and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters -
 Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light.*

These verses speak of God the Father as Creator, with the mighty wind being the Spirit and then when God spoke, the Word, we have the second person of the Trinity, Jesus.

This year, the year of Matthew, on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we had another example of the Trinity. (Matthew 3:16-17)

*After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water
 and behold, the heavens were opened [for him],
 and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him.*

*And a voice came from the heavens, saying,
 "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

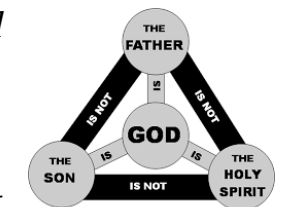
Here, we have the human Jesus being baptized, the Spirit of God depicted in the dove, and the voice of God the Father speaking about Jesus his Son.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers more illumination on Holy Trinity.

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". The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin". (CCC. #234)

The apostolic faith concerning the Spirit was confessed by the second ecumenical council at Constantinople (381): "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father." By this confession, the Church recognizes the Father as "the source and origin of the whole divinity". But the eternal origin of the Spirit is not unconnected with the Son's origin: "The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also of the same nature. . . Yet he is not called the Spirit of the Father alone, . . . but the Spirit of both the Father and the Son." The Creed of the Church from the Council of Constantinople confesses: "With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified." (CCC. #245)



The Latin tradition of the Creed confesses that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son (filioque)". The Council of Florence in 1438 explains: "The Holy Spirit is eternally from Father and Son; He has his nature and subsistence at once (simul) from the Father and the Son. He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and through one spiration. . . . And, since the Father has through generation given to the only-begotten Son everything that belongs to the Father, except being Father, the Son has also eternally from the Father, from whom he is eternally born, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son." (CCC. #246)



Once more, our everyday faith gives us a visual image of the Blessed Trinity. If we look at the conjugal union of a couple we see the creating power of God bringing new life into this world. We remember that each of us is a Temple of the Holy Spirit, being sent by the Father, like Jesus, enlightened by the Spirit.

Scripture gives us many images of how we are Temples of God.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord ... (Ephesians 2:19-22)

... you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... (1 Peter 2:5)

Being a temple of God means that we are carrying the Trinity to all whom we meet. In the second reading for today's Liturgy of the Word (2 Cor 13:11-13) gives us directives on how to live in a world that is filled with both peace and violence. These directives are only possible to live if we are united heart and mind to the Trinity.

*Rejoice.
Mend your ways,
encourage one another,
agree with one another,
live in peace,
and the God of love and peace will be with you.
Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the holy ones greet you.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.*

These mandates allow us to make this broken world a better place as we deal with the events of everyday life. An important way to begin each day with the morning offering allows us to be used as an instrument of God's love and peace. These directives are easy if we are dealing with good people but becomes more difficult when we are dealing with those seeking destruction and violence.

*O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day
for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart,
in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world,
for the salvation of souls, the reparation of sins, the reunion of all Christians,
and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father this month.
Amen.*

Fr. Francois-Xavier, 1844

The first reading for today is taken from the book of Exodus (Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9.). Though, there was no definition of the Blessed Trinity, the reading shows the infinite love of God for his people. Prior to this section, the Chosen People had made a golden calf and were worshiping it as a god. After, Moses had just seen God and was carrying tablets of the Ten Commandments which he broke at the sight of this idolatry. Then we have Moses going back to the mountaintop, knowing of God's great love, pleads with God.

*"If I find favor with you, O Lord,
do come along in our company.*

*This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins,
and receive us as your own."*

In his great love, God did not desert his people but cared for his people for the forty years that they wandered in the desert, going to the promised land.

The Psalm Response is taken from a long hymn from the book of Daniel (Daniel 3:52-56) as the three men were protected from the inferno in which they were placed. Although the fire was stoked to its highest degree, they were being saved by the loving God.

Having returned to the Ninth Week of Ordinary Time on the day after Pentecost, on this Sunday and next we have Solemnities that replace the readings for Matthew, preventing us from returning to the Sundays readings of Ordinary Time.

The gospel for today is taken from the story of Nicodemus who came to Jesus at night. Nicodemus was a Pharisee but wanted to understand the teachings of Jesus.

*Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.**

He came to Jesus at night and said to him,

*"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God,
for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him."*

(John 3: 1-3)

The section that we have from the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, is the Gospel today. Contrary to some people's beliefs, the infinite mercy of Jesus our God shines through, loving each of us in spite of our actions.

*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.*

*Whoever believes in him will not be condemned,
but whoever does not believe has already been condemned,
because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

(John 3: 17-18)

The essence of all of these readings for the feast of the Holy Trinity is that God's love envelops each of us regardless of our state. God's love brings us back to him.