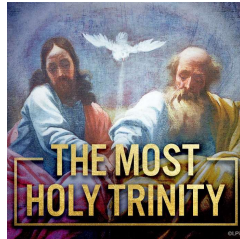


St. Luke the Evangelist Parish
13 North St., Geneseo, NY



Praying With the Trinity

Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff
June 3, 2020

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Praying With the Trinity

Opening Prayer



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Webinar Tips

- All participants are muted to reduce background noise
- If slides are not fully visible, check at the top center of your screen for “fit to window” under arrow.
- If you would like to ask a question, at the bottom of your screen you should see a box with the letters “Q & A”. Click it and you can type your question. It will show on my screen.
- In addition to the slides, you should see a video of me. It should appear in the upper right of your screen. It should not block any significant content on the slides. If it does you can drag it around.

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The Trinity – It’s Complicated → Heresies

Singer-Towns (*The Catholic Faith Handbook*) summarizes some of the heresies (63):

- “Docetism claimed that Jesus is truly God but only appears in disguise as human. This teaching denied the full humanity of Jesus.”
- “Arianism, on the other hand, denied that Jesus is fully God. Arius lived around the years 250-336, and taught that Jesus was a creature like we are, and did not exist before he was conceived. Arius saw Jesus as greater than other humans but less than God.”
- Nestorianism held that Jesus was “two separate persons” and “not fully united in the one person of Jesus Christ.” Hence Mary was mother of the human Jesus but not God.

(See also page 81 of the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*)

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The Trinity – It’s Complicated → Heresies

For our discussion tonight the heresy “extremes” of “Tritheism” and “Modalism” (O’Collins, 86) might be of the greatest interest.

Problems with:

- Tritheism - Isaiah 45:5, “I am the LORD, there is no other, there is no God besides me.”
- Modalism – in the gospels, there are times Jesus is conversing with the Father

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The Heresies will lead to the
Nicene Creed that we use
at Sunday Mass

(more on
the Creed later)

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What Words Can Adequately Describe The Trinity?

“When it is asked ‘Three what?’ then the great poverty from which our language suffers becomes apparent.” St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Trinitate* (O’Collins, 174).

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Faith & Mystery

“The word *sacrament* also has its origins in the Greek term for “mystery,” *mysterion*. The sense of the term *mystery* is something **unfathomable**, something so **extraordinary** and **overwhelming** that we can **never fully comprehend** it. Sacraments are often called “sacred mysteries,” **not in the sense of problems to be solved**, but rather in terms of **sacred realities to be immersed in** and to be experienced again and again.” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 11. cf. *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 51)

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Trinity as Central Mystery

“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth” (John 16:12-13a).

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Trinity as Central Mystery

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 27

“The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.”

(see Genesis 1:26-27)

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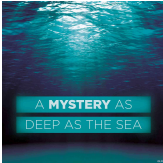


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Trinity as Central Mystery

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 234


“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.”



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How is the Trinity part of **every** prayer we offer?

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How is the Trinity part
of **every** prayer we offer?

- The Sign of the Cross

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Invoking the Trinity at Mass

(some examples)

- We begin and end Mass with the Sign of the Cross
- Jesus is at the heart of Mass as we celebrate the Eucharist
- However, the prayers are generally addressed to the Father (Eucharistic Prayer and other prayers)
- The Holy Spirit also plays an integral role in the Eucharistic Prayer. We pray that the Spirit come upon the gifts of bread and wine so that they become the Body and Blood of Jesus. We also pray that the Spirit transforms us.

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Invoking the Trinity at Mass


(some examples)

- We can also look at the most common words ending the Collect (opening prayer) "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:"
- The Trinity is focal in the Creed

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Can we read about
the Trinity in the
Bible?

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Can we read about the Trinity in the Bible?

- The word “trinity” is not found in the Bible. However, the foundation for understanding the “trinity” is.
 - We see the three persons together
 - At Jesus’ Baptism
 - At Jesus’ Transfiguration if cloud is seen as Holy Spirit (O’Collins, 41-42)
 - Matthew 28:19 – go baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
 - John 14:9 – “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”
 - John 14:16 – “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always.”

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Can we read about the Trinity in the Bible?

Old Testament

- 3 visitors to Abraham (Genesis 18:1-15)
- Genesis 1:26 – “Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.”

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Then when was “trinity” first used?

Late 2nd Century

“Tertullian was the first Christian writer to exploit the term *person* in theology, **the first to apply Trinity** (*Trinitas*) to God (*De pudicitia*, 21.16; *Adversus Praxean*, 8), and the first to develop the formula of *one substance in three persons*” (O’ Collins, 105).

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Which Person
of the Trinity
Do You Relate To In
Your Own Prayer?

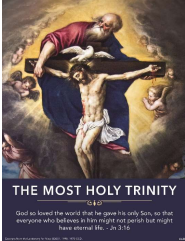
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Which Person of the Trinity
Do You Relate To In Your Own Prayer?

- The Father
 - The Son
 - The Holy Spirit
- Or God in General?



THE MOST HOLY TRINITY
345
God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)


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Images – God in General

- Tiny whispering sound (1 Kings 19:1-13, v12)
- Burning bush (Exodus 3)




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Images – God as Father

- Old man – male yet God has no gender – “father” who watches over us (see Collins pages 12ff)
- New Testament
 - Jesus calls God, “Abba Father” in the garden - see Mark 14:32-42 (cf. Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6)
 - God called “father” 51 times in synoptic gospels (O’Collins, 45)
 - Lord’s Prayer



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Images – God as Father


- Is God ever called “father” in Old Testament?
 - “A little more than 20 times” (O’Collins, 14)
 - “Is he not your Father, who formed you, who made you and established you?” Deuteronomy 32:6
 - Psalm 2:7 – “You are my son; today I have become your father.”
 - We might think of O.T. God as punishment/discipline but Psalm 103:13 speaks of the Lord’s compassion.
- Model father
- Creed
 - Father
 - Almighty
 - Maker – *all* things

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Images - Jesus



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Images – Jesus

- Jesus as Face of God
- New Adam - Philippians 2:5-11
- Matthew 1:21 – “She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
- Matthew 1:23 – “and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.”
- John 3:16-17 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

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Words in the Creed describing Jesus

- Begotten - Taken from Irenaeus “or whatever term anyone applies to his begetting, which in truth is indescribable....Only the Father who begat him knows, and the Son who was begotten.” (*Adversus Haereses*, 2.28.6 as quoted in O’Collins, 98)
- “God from God, Light from light, true God from true God”
- Consubstantial
- “through him all things were made”
- “by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” (virginal conception stresses his divinity (O’Collins, 36-38)

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Images – Holy Spirit





Living water –
John 7:37-39

Tongues of fire - Acts 2:3
Dove - Matthew 3:16, Mark
1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32

Strong Driving Wind
Acts - 2:2

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Images – Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is received in the laying of hands (Acts 8:14-17)
- In the Old Testament – “spirit” used some 400 times but as “spirit of God” which isn’t necessarily “Holy Spirit” (O’Collins, 31-32). Holy Spirit is not known until Jesus revealed it.
- Creed
 - “the giver of life”
 - “who proceeds from the Father and the Son (see John 15:26)
 - “who has spoken through the prophets”

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Relationship of the Three

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me” (John 15:26).

- “God is one” (Galatians 3:20)
 - How can “God” be “God” and be more than one
- Spirit led Jesus into the desert (Mark 1:12, Matthew 4:1)

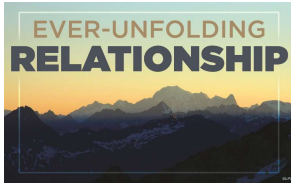
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Relationship of the Three

- St. Patrick and the Shamrock
- Ice, water, steam



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The Three Work Together (as we should)

John 16:12-15

“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. **He will not speak on his own**, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”

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Praying is not just offering a list of requests

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church, 534

“Christian prayer is the personal and living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is infinitely good, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts.”

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- Prayer involves relationship
 - Trinity shows God is relational
 - We are created in God's image → we are relational
 - Vs. current society focus on self
- We can change which person of the Trinity we focus on in our personal prayer

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“Homework”

During this webinar, I asked, “Which Person of the Trinity Do You Relate To In Your Own Prayer?” Have you always prayed to the same person in the Trinity? Does it ever change?

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The slide handouts for this presentation will be available on my website tomorrow at www.renewaloffaith.org/trinity

For more on the Holy Spirit see my presentation, *The Holy Spirit* at <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/video---holy-spirit.html>

For more on the Creed and the Trinity, see parts 3-5 of my series, *We Profess, We Believe* at <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/the-creed.html>

For more videos and articles on our Catholic faith check out Fr. Jeff's website at www.renewaloffaith.org

An evaluation should come up after we end.

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Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. USCCB, 2006.

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Resources cont'd

Singer-Towns, Brian. *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth.* St. Mary's Press, Canada, 2004.

St. Joseph Edition of The New American Bible Revised Edition. New Jersey, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. 2010.

*New American Bible Revised Edition also available online at www.biblegateway.com (be sure and select this translation)

USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.* Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006.

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