

TRINITY SUNDAY

June 7, 2020

Father Max Oliva, S.J.

We celebrate today the greatest mystery of our faith.
How can God be 3 DISTINCT Persons and one Divine Nature?

Father Son Holy Spirit

Theologians have been grappling with this mystery since the time of Christ.

The brilliant St. Augustine came up with the following description of the THREE:

“Each of the divine persons possesses the divine nature in a particular manner. It is a 3-ness of relations:

- ❖ Of begetting (the Father)
- ❖ Of being begotten (the Son)
- ❖ And of proceeding (the Holy Spirit)

In other words, the Father is the Source of Life.

The Son receives life from the Father.

The Spirit – the love between the Father and the Son is so perfect that It is a person.

II

How can we make some sense of the mystery of the Trinity? We can use symbols.

-  3 keys on a piano, each has its own sound but when played at the same time there is only one sound.
-  The Irish Shamrock – a clover like plant with leaflets in groups of three. St. Patrick used the Shamrock to talk about the Trinity to the Irish people.
-  An ancient by the name of Tertullian, who is thought to be the first theologian to mention the Trinity in Latin, imagined it as a plant with the Father as the root, the Son as the shoot breaking forth into the world, and the Spirit as that which fills the world with flower and fruit.
-  Spiritual author, Kathleen Norris recounts an interesting image from a woman priest of the Episcopal faith say in a homily that she never felt as close to the Trinity as when she learned she was pregnant with twins! A perfect image

of three – in - one.

PAGE TWO

Yet even with such intriguing images, the Trinity remains a mystery.

III

Drawing on Jesuit Scripture scholar Michael Simone's scholarship, we learn that the Trinitarian nature of God was clear to many early Christians. The Father was the transcendent creator, the awe-inspiring being who led Israel from slavery to freedom; the Son was Jesus Christ, the obedient servant, glorified and seated at the Father's right hand. He would return at some future time to judge the living and the dead; the Spirit was the Father's essence, literally, his "life-breath that spoke to Moses and who raised Jesus from the dead.

Further scholarship notes that the Trinity does not act merely for God's own glory but to form a people. Father Simone writes: "Christ draws his disciples into the Father's love only to send them forth in the Spirit to seek out the lost and call them home."

Another way of putting it: the Trinity is composed of the abundant love of the Father for humanity and all of creation; the courageous commitment of the Son who gave his life for us; and the inspiring, enlightening, guiding power of the Holy Spirit who missions us.

CONCLUSION

And so on this day we exclaim with all the angels and saints:

**All hail, adored Trinity;
All praise, eternal unity;
O God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, ever one.**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."**

AMEN

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