

Feast of the Most Holy Trinity

May 30, 2021

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. This uniquely Christian doctrine is based on truths about God that are found in the New Testament, namely that: (1) there is only one God (1 Timothy 2:5), but (2) the Father is God (Galatians 1:1), (3) the Son is God (Titus 2:13), (4) the Holy Spirit is God (1 Corinthians 3:16), and (5) each is distinct in relation to the others (Matthew 28:19). In other words, there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, “The mystery of the Holy Trinity is *the central mystery* of the Christian faith and of the Christian life” (#261).

Why is the mystery of the Holy Trinity so important? While there are many reasons, I just want to briefly mention a few.

First, this mystery is important because it reminds us that God is beyond human comprehension. We conceptualize God in human terms. While this is natural, in fact necessary, it is also fraught with danger. For we can convince ourselves that we know more about God than we actually do; reducing the infinite to the finite. And we have a tendency to want to make God in our own image. But God is infinitely beyond any conceptual box into which we try to put Him.

While Sacred Scripture reveals something about God, much more remains hidden. And the doctrine of the Holy Trinity highlights this fact. Our

reason could never have discovered it, and once revealed we still find ourselves straining to understand it.

Second, this mystery is important because God has called each of us into relationship with Him. And part of any relationship is getting to know each other. While, as I said, God is infinitely beyond our comprehension, yet that does not mean we can know nothing about Him. God can still give us insight into some things about Himself.

God wants us to know not just *what* He is but *who* He is. And so, God has revealed something of the mystery of His inner life. That God is a unity of persons; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This leads us to the third reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is important. If all we knew is that there is only one God, it could lead us to imagine Him as this distant solitary being, contentedly alone from all eternity; impenetrable, cold and aloof. Yet Scripture tells us “God is love” (1 John 4:8) but how can such a solitary being be love? The revelation of the Blessed Trinity lets us know how.

For by it we discover, as Benedict XVI once said, “the intimacy of God Himself, discovering that He is not infinite solitude, but communion of light and love, life given and received in an eternal dialogue between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit – lover, beloved and love.”

And this leads to our final point about why the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is important. Because if God is a communion of love, then to be created in His “image and likeness” means that we are intended for such a

communion as well. A communion of love that unites us with each other. This communion is manifested in marriage between husband and wife and the family they create; and in the Church which unites diverse peoples into one faith-family of mutual love and support.

But it also means that we are created ultimately for a communion of love with God, beginning in this life and brought to perfection in the next. And Jesus Christ is the one who has made this possible. For He has united our humanity with His divinity, forgiven our sins that separate us from God, and poured the life of God into our souls by the Holy Spirit. By divine grace we are led into divine communion.

And so, on this Feast of the Most Holy Trinity we confess “this God who is both one and three, is thrice holy, almighty, and infinity. He won't change, can't sin, and loves even me” (S. Michael Houdmann, Trinity Poem).