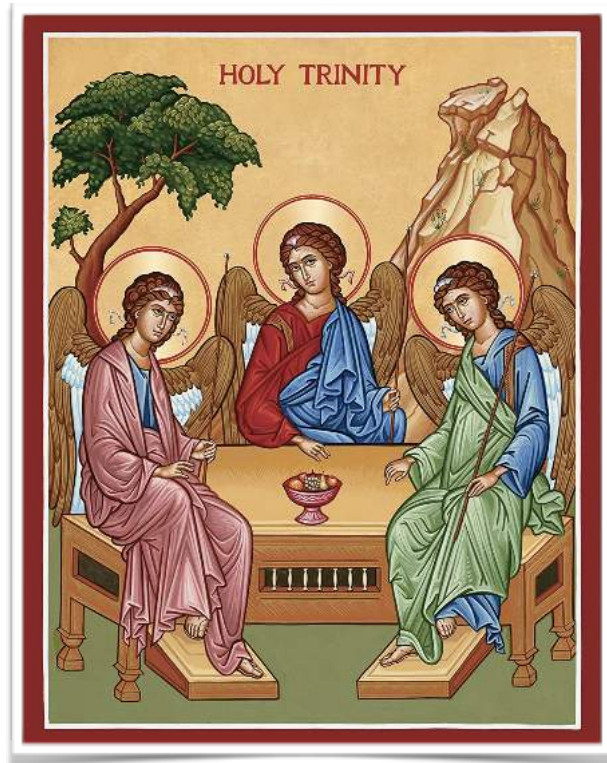


Community of Love

*O Most Holy Trinity, Undivided
Unity; Holy God, Mighty God,
God Immortal, be adored!*



The Holy Trinity offers us a precious gift of relationship, a grounded connection with God, self, others and the world. We are invited to be in relationship with Jesus; it awakened us to a way of living, loving and relating. We are invited to be like the Holy Trinity, living in absolute relatedness.

During this pandemic, we are all together in a web of mutual interdependence. When we recognise this on a spiritual level, we call it love. We know it is through Love, we come to know God. As Christians we believe that God is revealed to us as a Triune God, three persons who are who they are because of how they love one another. It is in God's nature to love, to reach out to all. When we speak of God as Holy Trinity, three persons and one essence, we always risk saying more than we really know or can ever know. That is the risk today on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. It is the temptation for every preacher. It is because the deepest and the most important things of our life can rarely, if ever, be talked about. They can only ever be experienced.

Our being made for
communion with God makes
perfect sense since God has
revealed Himself to be
communion - a Trinitarian
Communion: Father, Son and
Holy Spirit.

Define love and list the reasons why we love that one person above all others. We will find that words fail. No list is long enough and after a while the reasons begin to sound hollow, empty. How can we describe the most beautiful day of our life? Maybe it was sitting in the silence of a sunset or the day your child was born. The colours and feelings, though real, sound trite compared to the reality of that beauty. What about the deepest joy or tragedy of our life. Narrate the story. The facts may be accurate but words can never contain the fullness of that joy or tragedy. At most they point to it.



How can we relate this mystery in our own lives? We are created to live in a community of love, as the saying goes, *“No man is an island”*. God created us for relationships. When it comes to speaking about the most profound, meaningful, and life-changing things or events in our lives, words fall flat. When we try to describe the Holy Trinity, words only seem to trivialise. Perhaps that is why Jesus does not explain or define the Holy Trinity. Instead He speaks of relationship and participation. Human beings, all nations, the entire world, are to be baptised, plunged, washed, immersed in the name, that is, the qualities and characteristics, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul describes these as grace, love, and communion. At the end of his second letter he entrusts the Corinthians not so much to what God does but to how God is. God’s being is the eternal Triune God. That being is the basis for God’s doing. This is true for us as well.



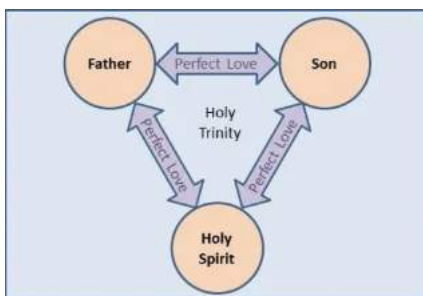
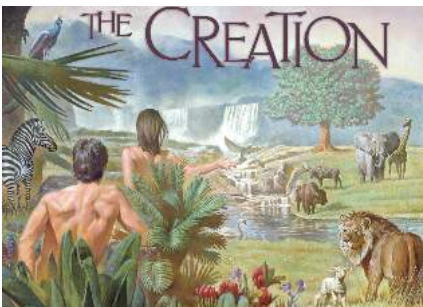
We were created to participate in and share the life of the Holy Trinity. It is our spiritual DNA. *“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness’”* (Genesis. 1:26). Trinitarian life is the pattern from which we were created. It is both the basis and destination of our lives. The Trinitarian life is a choreography of love; three equal persons, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each one dwelling in the other by virtue of an unceasing movement of mutual love.

Trinitarian Relationships

Our lives, marriages, families, schools, workplaces, parishes, are to become images, icons, of the Triune God. We are invited to join this **dance of mutuality and love**. Whenever we see the world through another’s eyes, whenever the joys and sorrows of another become our own, whenever we completely give ourselves to another holding nothing back, whenever we open ourselves to receive without condition the life of another, whenever we both lose and find our life in the life of another then we are most like God. Then we have moved from being created in the image, the pattern, of God and we have begun living like God. Some rare married couples live and love as one without ever losing their distinct uniqueness as two persons. Together they manifest divine love and reveal God’s life in this world. Ultimately, Trinitarian life is not about numbers. It’s not a quantity but, rather, a quality, a way of being. It’s that kind of relationship with another that allows us to say, *“I love, therefore I am.”* This way of life is one of practical service and active compassion. There is no subordination within Trinitarian relationships. The Triune God is manifest in our struggles against injustice, oppression, and exploitation. It is the basis for living sacrificially in and for the life of another.



“So God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them”. And then, “God blessed them” (Genesis 1:27-28).



A child who cares for an aging parent with love, compassion, and self-giving demonstrates Triune love. Similarly, the Holy Trinity reveals what true parenthood looks like. The Triune God shows the way to find unity with others, not in spite of our diversity and multiplicity, but through and because of our diversity and multiplicity. The image of God in humanity is Trinitarian. It is in every one of us. The divine image offers a life with God and others that is relational, personal, participatory, communal, and loving. This is the life for which we were created. It is the truest pattern of who we are and how we are to live. To turn away from another, to withdraw our life from another, to live in isolation, to exclude another declaring that we have no need of them are the most unnatural and un-godly things we do. Our love for one another and our faith in the Holy Trinity is integrally related. We cannot have one without the other. A genuine confession of faith in the Triune God can only be made by those who show mutual love to one another. Our love for one another is the precondition for a Trinitarian faith and this is what completes and gives meaning to our love for another.

Beware, however. This is not easy. It's dangerous to live a Trinitarian faith. It means love, vulnerability, openness to another, self-giving, sharing and participating in one another's lives such that we become one in communion. That is how Christ lived and died. That is the resurrected, ascended, and "pentecosted" life Christ reveals and offers us. It is how we are to be and live. Our culture neither recognises nor rewards this kind of life. To the world it looks like weakness and dependency. In God's world, however, it looks like holiness. Humanity is most authentically itself when it participates in and manifests the divine life. *"The glory of God is man fully alive,"* said St. Irenaeus in the second century. Every Sunday in the Nicene Creed we confess our belief in God, the Holy Trinity. We confess the oneness of God as well as the uniqueness of the three persons. This may be what we believe but is it how we live? If our belief in God as three and one is not manifested in and determinative of our relationships can we really claim belief in the Triune God? Every moment, every circumstance, every relationship is one in which we can make real and visible the divine life and love of the Holy Trinity. That is the human vocation. It is what we were created to do. It is the most natural and godlike thing we ever do.

Mystery. The fact that the Holy Trinity is a mystery should not scare us; it should not even amaze us. So let's never doubt it. The Holy Trinity is not a mystery because it doesn't exist. After all, it's not the only mystery that exists. Don't we realise we are surrounded by mystery? We are a mystery to ourselves and we are a mystery to each other. No matter how long you have been married, you will always be a mystery to your spouse and visa-versa. Mums and dads do not be taken aback when your child comes up to you and screams, "YOU DON'T KNOW ME!!!!" They are right. You don't know them. And neither do they know you.

Discussion/ Reflection Questions

1. Is the Holy Trinity a meaningful and important element of your faith? Why or why not?
2. How is the image of the trinitarian dance helpful or unhelpful to you?
3. Salvation is described here as being enfolded into the life and communion of the Trinity. Discuss how that can be experienced in our lives today.
4. How is the Trinity the "heartbeat of worship," the "dynamism of the sacraments," and the "assurance of prayer"?



They do not know your deepest fears, your deepest pains, your greatest desires or your worst fears and nightmares. They don't know the joy you experience or the sadness you experience. They don't know because they can't live what you live. So much of who we are will remain a mystery. We can spend an entire lifetime revealing ourselves but we will never be able to reveal it all.

But Christ showed us the way. He revealed how to reveal oneself: *"Love your neighbour as yourself"* (Matthew 22:35-40, Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:27). The more you love, the more you reveal who you truly are. But the more you sin, the more you hide who you really are. So then why does God remain a mystery? When it comes to the mystery of God, it's a little different. God remains a mystery not because the Lord sins or because He does not love. The reason why the Lord remains a mystery is because His love overwhelms us. Yes, how He can love us so much is more than remarkable; it is incomprehensible. And yet, we know that God is LOVE and God continues to love us, unconditionally.

In John's gospel, before His death Jesus prays to his Father, *"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them, even as you have loved me"* (John 17:22-23).

Jesus makes the astounding claim that the Triune God's ultimate purpose is to include us in this **eternal Trinitarian dance of love**. The Father sends the Son to be one of us. By faith and baptism we are included in His relationship with the Father. By the gift of the Holy Spirit, we cry, *"Abba, Father!"* (Galatians 4:6). We are in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and we come to share in this eternal community of love through the Holy Spirit.

Once we begin to grasp how central the Holy Trinity is to our faith, it shows up everywhere. It's the beating heart of worship. It's the dynamism of the sacraments. It's the backbone of our creeds, and it's the assurance of our prayers. The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the original and eternal community of love out of which we were created, and this One Holy Trinity is our true and eternal home.