

**TRINITY SUNDAY 2014**  
**SERMON - CHRIST CHURCH PARISH**  
**FATHER CRAIG LOONEY**  
**REV. 4.1 ST. JOHN 3.1 THE NICENE CREED**

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What is the Holy Trinity? In the Nicene Creed we professed our belief in one God who we understand as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Trinity Sunday is the day on which we commemorate the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity that talks about Three Persons in One God. It is tempting for priests to want to try to explain how the Trinity works. But one Christian web-commentator writes that this is a problem because people want to stop the Trinity and start examining it. As soon as they do, it stops being the Trinity and being one God.

Doctrines are important in as much as they try to teach us something, but we cannot have a relationship with a doctrine and Christianity is all about relationships: We have relationship to the Holy Trinity...God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit...and we have a relationship with each other. Our relationship with the Trinity is both corporate and personal!

My colleague, Father Hobbs, said to me recently that the person of the Trinity we are mostly likely to relate to and identify with is Jesus. The profound truth in that statement cannot be overstated. Any decision we make about Jesus ultimately has to do with what we think about him as the Second Person of the Trinity and his relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In 325 AD, the Emperor Constantine called a council of all bishops of the Church to meet at Nicaea to hash out a major disagreement over the nature of Jesus. A brave deacon by the name of Athanasius said that there is one God who has always existed in the three Persons of the Trinity...who exists now...and who will exist forever. The three persons of the Trinity are made up of the same stuff...Godness!

Athanasius' chief opponent was a popular and well-educated priest from Alexandria named Arius who taught that Jesus had not always existed but was created by and subordinate to God the Father. According to Arius' way of thinking, Jesus was not made of the same stuff as God the Father...he was not Godness...he was not begotten of the Father as we say in the Nicene Creed...he was something else.

At the conclusion of the Council of Nicaea all but two of the bishop sided with Athanasius. They signed their names to the document that became known as the Nicene Creed and which we just said together. The Nicene Creed occupies the place of importance it has in the Liturgy because what it teaches has been believed by Catholic Christians everywhere and at all times!

The Liturgical bookends of Catholic Christianity are baptisms and funerals. The Holy Trinity is present throughout the Sacramental Life of the Church from the moment we are baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit until the moment the prayer is said by the priest at the end of a Requiem Mass asking God to give eternal rest to the dead person, who while he was alive was sealed with the sign of the Holy Trinity.

Every time we make the Sign of the Cross during the Mass we are making one of the most powerful and affirmative statements about our belief in the Holy Trinity...present and active in every aspect of our lives. Sometimes when we talk about the Holy Trinity we will say it is a mystery...and a mystery is a truth that we can only know by revelation and may not be able to fully understand during this lifetime.

Many inspired theologians over the centuries have come up with complex formulas that try to explain in ways we can understand the mechanics of the Holy Trinity...the "how" of the Holy Trinity. It's better if we try to see the affects of the Holy Trinity in the positive life changing events we experience in our lives and the lives of those around us...and especially in the life and the work of the Church.

What people write is important and shouldn't be dismissed as just so much theological jargon. But the same web-commentator who cautions against examining the Holy Trinity goes on to write that if we stop the Trinity from being the Trinity, and we try to understand it too hard, we end up with a mess.

What is the Holy Trinity? It is one God who we understand as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Any other questions we might have about the Holy Trinity...God will answer them later!

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