

TRINITY SUNDAY 2016
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
REVELATION 4.1 ST. JOHN 3.1

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Trinity Sunday is the least favorite Sunday for many parish priests to preach on. Rectors like to be away on Trinity Sunday...leaving it up to the curates to come up with something witty and clever to say about the Holy Trinity. And therein lies the problem.

Many priests feel compelled to try to explain the Holy Trinity in language we can all relate to. The problem about Trinity Sunday is it is not about an historical event in the life of Jesus or one of the Saints. Trinity Sunday is the feast celebrating the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity...God exists in Three Persons...One God...Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Feast of the Holy Trinity was instituted by Bishop Stephen of Liege in the early part of the 10th Century. It was not an instant hit...popes even resisted the idea of a purely theological feast with no basis in historical events. It wasn't until 1334 when Pope John XXII directed the feast be observed throughout the Church.

From Advent Sunday through Pentecost...the first half of the Church year...we have been celebrating events in the life of Jesus...re-enacting through the Liturgy those events...in dramatic and visual ways. Every Mass is a celebration in honor of the Holy Trinity...we now take what we have learned from Jesus and start applying it to our lives.

When it comes to trying to explain the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity in concise terms...the less said the better. We say the *Mystery of the Holy Trinity* for good reason. One Christian web-commentator put it this way...the problem with trying to over-explain the Trinity is that it creates another 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.

Some mysteries cannot be solved...in fact when it comes to the Mystery of the Holy Trinity...just exactly how the three persons of the Trinity co-operate with each other will not be fully revealed to us until we see them face to face in heaven. That's OK...because we do get to experience their work in our lives now.

When it comes to the three persons of the Holy Trinity...we find it easier to relate to God the Father...he created us...and God the Son...he saved us. What about the Holy Spirit? He empowers us and gives us life. Jesus said in the Gospel we can't see the Holy Spirit any more than we can see the wind...we feel the affect of the Holy Spirit and can't live without him.

The Trinity is Russian iconographer Andre Rublev's most famous work and is on the cover of today's Order of Service. The icon depicts the visit of three angels to Abraham and Sarah to announce they would have a son as recorded in the 18th Chapter of Genesis. In Rublev's icon...the three angels represent the One God...Three Persons...of the Holy Trinity.

The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity defines who they are...God exists in Three Persons...One God...and they are all made of the same stuff...Godhood. Christianity is ultimately about relationships...our relationship with the Holy Trinity and our relationships with each other. God loves us...we love him...we should love each other all the time.

We carry the "mark" of the Holy Trinity from the moment we are baptized...in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity operates in our lives every day of our lives. At the conclusion of a Requiem Mass we ask God to forgive the sins of the person who has died...because while he was living he was "sealed with the sign of the Holy Trinity".

Theologians have been trying to explain the Holy Trinity for centuries so the *Mystery of the Holy Trinity* becomes less mysterious. The more we try to explain the Holy Trinity the more abstract they become in our lives. We need to let the Holy Trinity continue to work in our lives...and not stop them by trying to over-explain them.

What we can say about the Holy Trinity is simply this...Praise God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...now and forever. Amen.

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