

Trinity Sunday 2023

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

Rev. 4.1-11 St. John 3.1-14 Hymn 266



Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! Perfect in power, in love and purity. We join with all your angels and saints to adore you. You were, you are and you always will be. God in three persons...blessed Trinity.

Hymns teach us a lot. The quintessential Trinity Sunday hymn we sang this morning was written by Reginald Heber and first published in 1826. Heber was an Anglican priest who later became the Bishop of Calcutta.

The hymn-tune *Nicaea* was composed by another Anglican priest, John Dykes, in 1861. It gets its name from the Nicene Council, 325 AD, which clearly defined the nature of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity...Father, Son and Holy Spirit...Three in One...One in Three.

When it comes to trying to explain the Holy Trinity in a way we can understand and say we finally get it...theologians have been trying to do just that for centuries. We need to leave well enough alone...the Holy Trinity cannot be explained in a way we can fully understand. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are to be experienced...no explained.

Trinity Sunday is the one Sunday in the Church Year we don't talk about an event in the life of Jesus or one of the Saints who have feast days in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Trinity Sunday is about the Christian Doctrine that states God exists as Three Persons...One God.

The best we can say about the Holy Trinity is the Three Person...One God...are in a constant love relationship with each other. Because we are member of the Church...the Body of Christ...we get caught up in that love relationship in a mysterious and inexplicable way.

The *Book of Common Prayer* is unique in the way it calls out the Sundays after Pentecost, naming them "Sundays after Trinity". We learn from this just how important the Holy Trinity in our lives. We experience the love of the Holy Trinity in our corporate prayers at Mass and in our private prayers.

We begin our love relationship with the Holy Trinity when we are baptized. In the Gospel Jesus told Nicodemus we must be born again by water and the Spirit. We were baptized with water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. When we were confirmed, the bishop made the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads with oil, asking God to increase the Holy Spirit in us and make us stronger.

We call on the Name of the Trinity in Collect for Purity at the beginning of Mass. The priest asks God to open our hearts and to make them clean by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we may give to God the same kind of perfect love he and Jesus have for each other.

We hear about God's love for us in the Epistle and Gospel readings and we ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand and let what we have heard change our lives. We say together the Nicene Creed..."I believe in one God the Father Almighty...and in one Lord Jesus Christ...and in the Holy Ghost". The sign of the cross is a visible sign...and action in which we acknowledge the Holy Trinity is present in our lives.

The Holy Trinity is with us cradle to grave and beyond. At the conclusion of a Requiem Mass, we pray that the dead person who was "sealed with the sign of the Trinity" at his baptism, will have everlasting rest and be welcomed into heaven by the Angels and Saints. Our love relationship with the Trinity extends beyond the life we have here on earth. It is a love that lasts forever.

We call the Holy Trinity a mystery...but the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are at work in our lives. Jesus told Nicodemus he would know that God's Holy Spirit was at work because he would see the results. We don't see the wind, but we know it's there, because we see trees and other things moving. We see the positive effects of the Trinity in our lives and the lives of this Parish and the Church throughout the world.

The Holy Trinity is a dynamic love relationship we are caught up in a mysterious way. We experience the Holy Trinity in our lives and those around us. We don't try to explain the Holy Trinity...no explanation is possible. And we believe!

