

## **The Most Holy Trinity**

The Blessed Trinity. We begin and end the Mass with the names of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit on our lips.

The Trinity is a mystery to be celebrated with childlike love and trust.

God the Father invites us into a relationship of love through his Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are God's children. We rejoice and are glad.

### **Deuteronomy 4:32-34. 39-40**

The God of Israel has spoken a powerful word of love deep into the hearts of God's people.

### **Romans 8:14-17**

Through our baptism, the Holy Spirit makes us God's children, full of dignity and life.

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

Jesus sends his apostles out to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

“Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”



This is called the “Great Commission” Christ's sending out his disciples to baptise more disciples in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It summarises the three major themes of Matthew’s Gospel:

- (1) Supreme and universal authority has been given to Jesus by his heavenly Father; therefore, he far surpasses every other human being and deserves the exalted titles given to him.
- (2) The disciples are to share their faith with everyone, including non-Jews.
- (3) The promise of Jesus’ continuing presence with the disciples and their successors brings to fulfilment the name “Emmanuel” (“God with us”) given to Jesus at his conception. Jesus reassured his disciples that he would sustain them in their mission to preach the gospel to all nations. The Father and the Son are united in love, and this love is itself the divine

life of the Spirit, who continues to guide and protect the Church until the end of time.



### **Reflection**

The story is told of St Augustine. He was trying to think about the Blessed Trinity. He really wanted so much to understand how one God could be three persons. One day he was walking along the sea-side and thinking about this mystery. Suddenly, he saw a little child all alone on the shore. The child made a hole in the sand, ran to the sea with a little bucket, filled the bucket with sea water, ran up and emptied the bucket into the hole in the sand. Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, filling the bucket and emptying it into the hole in the sand. Augustine watched for a while and then said: "What are you doing?" The reply was: "I am emptying the sea into this hole." "Do you think," Augustine asked her, "that you can empty this immense ocean

into this tiny hole in the sand and with a tiny bucket?”

The child answered: “It’s easier to do that, than to fathom the depths of the immensity of the mystery of God?” And then the angel disappeared – because that is what the child was: an angel.

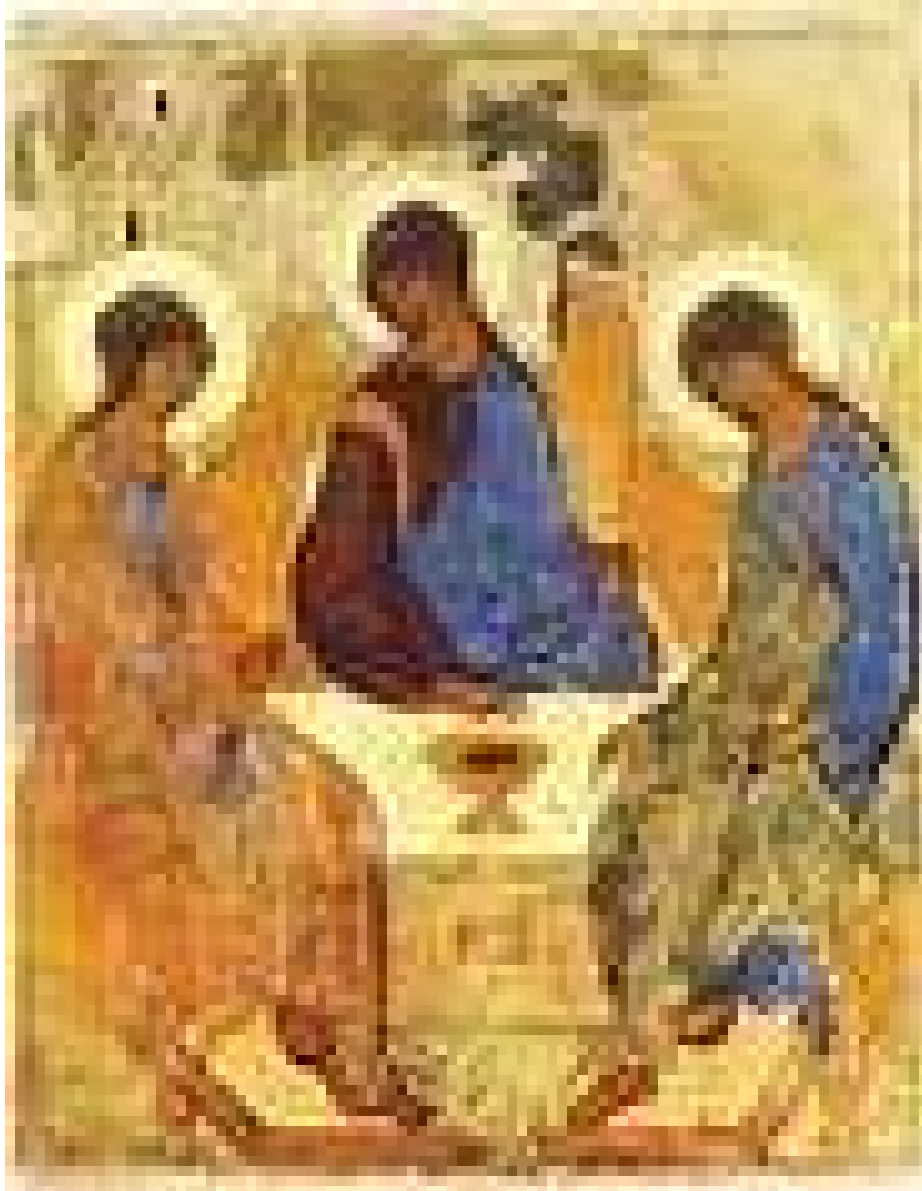
We find the Blessed Trinity hard to get our minds round. Just as hard to realise that that same God is coming to us today in Holy Communion. Both are mysteries.

We say we receive the **totality** of Christ, body and soul, humanity and divinity. We say that Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God, true man. Christ said this about himself when he was teaching here on earth. He said, “I and the Father are one. Who sees me sees the Father. As the Father has sent me, I also send you. Go therefore teach all nations, baptizing them [How? In my name? No. In the Father's name? No.] in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

The Blessed Trinity is the **heart and soul** of everything we believe in, everything we hope for, and everything we dearly love. And yet, the Trinity is so clothed in mystery that it’s almost impossible to talk about, or even to think about with cold logic. The best efforts of preachers on the Holy Trinity are rewarded by a glazed look on the faces of adults and fits of fidgeting in small children. It is a warning to us, like in Exodus: ‘Come no nearer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. And Moses covered his face, for he was afraid to look at God’ (Ex 3:5-6)

It’s a paradox that it is **precisely because** the Trinity is so obscure, profound and abstract, that we most need symbols, images, metaphors.

That’s why a triangle portraying the mystery of the Trinity, or a shamrock, as used by St. Patrick, can help us a bit.



For a great number of people the picture called **The Hospitality of Abraham**, (Pictured above), most exquisitely expresses the quiet joy of this sublime mystery of the Blessed Trinity. **It's by a Russian Monk Andrew Rublev.** Perhaps better than anything else this picture truly expresses the harmony and the unity of this relationship, which is beyond words.

The icon is based on the story of the three heavenly visitors that Abraham and Sarah welcomed to their tent by the Oak of Mamre. The Church has traditionally interpreted that scene in the Book of Genesis as a foreshadowing of the mystery of the Trinity.

First of all, in the picture the three faces resemble each other very closely. The icon emphasises their **unity** as well as their **distinctiveness**.

The figure on the left is usually identified as God the Father: his hand is open; it is a gesture of beginning, of originating, of sending. He is God the Father and Creator.

The central figure is usually identified as God the Son; he has a reddened cloak, stained with the blood of the redemption.

And the third figure (right) is acknowledged as God the Holy Spirit. The colours and folds of the garments of this figure seem to pour down like a cascade of water almost as if coming from an overflowing well. This symbolises the torrent of living water flowing from the Father through the open heart of Christ on the Cross. Above the figure of the Father you can just see a house; that reminds us of the tent of Abraham; and it symbolises the Church.

At the centre of the icon is a table; this is also very clearly also an altar. On the altar-table stands a cup with food inside. This obviously is the Eucharistic Cup and Bread. The hand of the Son is stretched out towards the cup, as though about to raise it and offer it to the Father. The gaze of the Spirit shows that he joins in the offering. This is a perfect pictorial representation of the words which end all the Eucharistic prayers: 'Through him (Jesus Christ our Lord), with him and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever.'

At the front of the altar there's a vacant place; it's as though it was waiting for a guest who's still to come; for us. The hand of the Spirit points downward, towards an opening in the centre of the altar. He is inviting us to enter into the heart of the combined mystery of the Eucharist and the Trinity. This is 'the still point at the centre of the turning world'. We can enter it as we gaze, in the silent, loving and prayer-filled wonder, seeking the hidden face of the thrice-holy God, Father, Son and Spirit.

### **TRINITY SUNDAY**

by George Herbert (1593-1633)

Lord, who hast formed me out of  
mud,  
And hast redeemed me through thy  
blood,  
And sanctified me to do good;

Purge all my sins done heretofore:  
For I confess my heavy score,  
And I will strive to sin no more.

Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in  
me,  
With faith, with hope, with charity;  
That I may run, rise, rest with thee.



*“Baptise them  
in the name of  
the Father and  
of the Son and  
of the Holy  
Spirit.”*

### TRINITY WORDSEARCH

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H	R	T	E	A	M	N	E	Y	E	EARTH	BAPTISE	NAME
H	C	A	E	T	E	E	T	L	N	HOLY	SPIRIT	TEACH
T	E	S	T	V	S	I	A	O	I	OBSERVE	COMMANDS	END
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