

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
Trinity Sunday
June 15, 2025
rmcneely+

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost

Today, it is the task of the Clergy to preach on the subject of the Trinity.

A pure doctrinal idea.

An essential Christian Doctrine

No less, than the essence of God, Himself.

You won't find the word "Trinity" anywhere in Holy Scripture.

Not in the King James or

In any of the many subsequent translations.

Not in the Old Testament

Not in the New Testament

Not in the Epistles of Paul, no where.

So where did this fundamental concept of Christian God come from?

It all began in the misty earliest days of the Church.

As the Gospels were written and became disseminated throughout

The Christian World

People began to digest and understand them.

People of devotion and learning

Pious and righteous people

Read, studied and read some more.

They particularly immersed themselves in the words of Jesus

Seeking meaning and guidance.

By the third Century, an idea was born:

The only way to make sense of it all

Was that there must be three aspects to Our God:

The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.
But there was only One God.

As far back as the Creation Narratives of Genesis
All three were at work.

Throughout the Old Testament there are references to God, the
Messiah and the Holy Spirit.

Later, in the New Testament and in the words and life of Jesus
It was even more clear that there were all Three.

Even on the Day of Jesus' Baptism

There was at one time and in one place
Jesus coming up out of the Jordan

God's voice and the Holy Spirit descending as if a dove.

In His last words to the Apostles at His Ascension, Jesus told them
To teach all nations and baptize in the Name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

All three.

It slowly started to come together.

Let's go back to the 4th Century

To what is today, the shores of Algeria.

There we meet Augustine of Hippo.

A brilliant theologian and writer.

Augustine spent almost a lifetime, 30 years

Thinking about and writing about the Trinity

And he became one of the most celebrated thinkers
on the subject of his or any later time.

He wrote about the Trinity

And wrote and wrote and wrote.

In the end, it was a 30-volume work.

When he died he might have told you
that it was not completed.

Augustine later quipped:

that if we deny the Trinity we can lose our soul
but if we try to understand it we can lose our minds.

He would tell you this story

Of the time in the course of his writings when he was
mentally fatigued

and physically exhausted
writers' block we might call it today

He decided that the best thing to do was to leave the Trinity Book

And take a stroll on the beach where he lived
to clear his mind and refresh his spirit.

The clear blue Mediterranean Sea lapped gently on the sand

And as he walked he saw in the distance a little girl

Who was running back and forth from the surf to the shore

As he approached he saw that she had a little seashell in her hand

And was carrying water from the sea to a little hole she had
dug in the sand.

He asked her what she was doing

And she answered as she ran back and forth
that she was putting the entire ocean
into the hole that she had dug.

Augustine said as kindly as he knew how

Sweetheart, how will the vastness of the ocean
Ever be contained in that little hole?

She stopped, put her hands on her little hips

Looked Augustine right in the eye and she said:

So what makes you think you can put the vastness and
majesty of the Holy Trinity into your little head

And then she, the seashell and the hole all vanished.

Augustine went back to work

And so shall we:

Let's go back further into the past.
 Travel back another hundred years to 325A.D.
 There is waging an epic theological battle
 Between two giants, two antagonists
 Both men of God
 Both striving for understanding
 The deacon Athanasius of Alexandria, Egypt
 And the Bishop Arius, also of Alexandria
 Locked in a good faith battle of intellect
 For over 10 years.
 We land in Nicea. Where there are gathered 318 bishops from all
 over Christendom.
 To Nicea a nice city in what is now Iznik, Turkey,
 We go to the Council of Nicea
 Where the Council is given the task to decide
 Whether to not to adopt the Trinity as the doctrine of the
 Church.

It took months but in the end, the 318 bishops gathered in Nicea
 agreed with Athanasius
 And the Trinity blazed to life and
 became the doctrine of the Christian Church.
 We see his victory today in the Nicene Creed.

In order to win the day,
 Athanasius had cleverly written, published and disseminated
 A Trinitarian Creed before the Council opened.

We still know it today as the "Athanasian Creed"
 One of the three creeds of the Anglican expression

It goes like this:
 "We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity
 Neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance

For there is one Person of the Father
Another of the Son
And another of the Holy Ghost

But the Godhead of the Father
Of the Son
And of the Holy Ghost
Is all one,
The glory equal
The majesty co-eternal

Such as the Father is
Such is the Son
And such is the Holy Ghost

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate and the Holy Ghost uncreate

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet, they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles,
Nor three uncreate
But one uncreate
And one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty
The Son almighty
And the Holy Ghost almighty.

And yet they are not three almighties but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords but one Lord

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to
 acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord;
 So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion
 to say there are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone
 Not made, nor created; but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son
 Neither made,
 Nor created,
 Nor begotten
 But proceeding

So there is one Father, not three Fathers

There is one Son

Not three Sons

One Holy Ghost, Not three Holy Ghosts

And in this Trinity none is afore or after another.

None is greater

Or less than another;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.

So that in all things as is aforesaid,
 The Unity in Trinity
 And the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.”

Athanasius had summarized the Trinity
 As accurately and
 As succinctly as possible.
 That is the Trinity.

So here we are 17 centuries later almost to the day.
 What are we to know about the Trinity for our soul's health?

The God we know consists of three Persons
 The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost

Yet, there is One God.
 Our God, the Three Persons
 Were not created, but existed before time itself.
 They stand outside of time, where for them, the past, the present
 and the future are all one.

Our God, the Three Persons
 Is/are eternal. They have always been in existence and will
 always exist.

The Father was made of none
 That is; He was neither created nor begotten.
 The Son is of the same substance as the Father
 But was not made or created
 He was begotten.
 The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son
 He is of the same substance as the Father and the Son.
 He was not created, not made and not begotten;

But He proceeded from the Father and the Son.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are co-equal
 No one of them is greater or lesser than the others.
 And no one of the Persons is more powerful than the others.

That is the core belief which as St Augustine said
 We must believe to save our souls.

For those who must pursue the “how” and the “why”:
 This is the part in which we can loose our minds;

Some wonder, how could the Father exist when there was nothing?
 If He was not created and He wasn't begotten
 How did He come into existence?

What happened to make the Son begotten?
 How did the Holy Ghost proceed from the Father and the Son?
 And how is it that none came before or after the other in time?
 How can I understand eternity and existence without time as
 we know it; running in a linear fashion one minute after the other
 into the future or one minute before the other into the past?

How is it that the Three are one?
 Shouldn't one plus one plus one equal three?

How are the Three Persons eternal?
 What is the state of existence in which past, present and
 future are all one? What does that look like? And how does it
 feel?

These and I am sure many other “imponderables” can consume us.
 And maybe God's plan is that we spend our entire lives
 contemplating them.
 For in the contemplation,

Sometimes we encounter many other aspects and facets of Christianity.

God has chosen to reveal the doctrine of the Trinity to us
In the inspired word of His Holy Scripture.
But He has not chosen to reveal the “how and the why”.

Can we let what He has not revealed to us
Somehow denigrate what He has revealed?

Perhaps in this life it is enough that we know the doctrine of the Trinity by faith alone.

And that we must be content to understand
more fully
the answers to the “how and why” questions
in the next life.

Or, perhaps the answers to the “how and the why” are in the little girl on St Augustine’s beach trying to put the entire ocean in a little hole in the sand.

What makes us think that we can fill our tiny brains
with the entire majesty and infinity of God?

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,
Amen.

