

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church  
Trinity Sunday  
May 31, 2026  
rmcneely+

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

I have given myself a daunting task this morning.

I must preach the subject of the Trinity,  
A task in itself

But must do so in an abbreviated way  
to fit the time constraints  
imposed by the Memorial Day observance.

My apologies to anyone who finds this sermonette lacking  
Honestly, let me know and I can direct you to more in depth  
Treatments for your review.

In the years following the Ascension of Our Lord  
And as the writings of the Gospels and the Epistles of St Paul  
Became known and disseminated,  
Early Christians began asking questions about what they  
read.

In the early centuries great thinkers came to prominence  
Men such as Origen, Irinaeus, Terulian, Justin Martyr  
Ignatius, Clement, Athanasius, And Augustine.

They studied, digested and thought and analyzed and wrote.  
By the grace of God we have many of their writings.

One of the things that kept coming up  
Was the operation of the Holy Ghost, Jesus and God.

For example, the day that John, the Baptist met Jesus at the Jordan  
River and baptized Him.

Coming up out of the water  
The Holy Ghost appeared, like as a dove,

descending upon Jesus.  
 At the same moment, they heard the voice of God saying  
 “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

They thought, thought some more and began writing.  
 Here in this one instance were present not only Jesus, but God  
 And the Holy Ghost.  
 In one place and at one time.  
 There were three yet only one God.

Let's go back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century  
 To what is today, the shores of Algeria.  
 There we meet Augustine of Hippo.  
 A brilliant theologian and writer.  
 Augustine spent almost half 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.  
 Before he died he would 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 devoted men of God  
 Both striving for understanding  
 The deacon Athanasius of Alexandria, Egypt  
 And the Bishop Arius, also of Alexandria  
 Were 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 or not to adopt the Trinity as the doctrine of the Church.

It took weeks but in the end, the 318 bishops  
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.

There is not time this morning to read the Athanasian Creed.  
But I have printed out a few copies of it for anyone who would  
Like to spend time with it.

In summary it says this:  
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 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.

## The Athanasian Creed

“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.”

