

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity - Lectionary: 164

Reading 1 - Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Early in the morning Moses went up Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.

Having come down in a cloud, the LORD stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, "LORD." Thus the LORD passed before him and cried out, "The LORD, the LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship. Then he said, "If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."

Responsorial Psalm - Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56 R. (52b) Glory and praise for ever!

Reading 2 - 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Brothers and sisters, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the holy ones greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Gospel - John 3:16-18

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.



Summary:

The doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith, serving as the source from which all other theological mysteries flow. Rather than a mere abstract concept, the Trinity is defined as a "communion of persons" bonded by eternal, self-giving love. This divine nature directly informs human identity and purpose; because humans are created in the image and likeness of a relational God, the fundamental human vocation is to love through a sincere gift of self. The homily emphasizes that fulfillment and "original happiness" are found not in selfishness or consumption, but in participating in the divine life—a participation facilitated by the sacraments, modeled in marriage, and expressed through a commitment to the inherent dignity of every person.

Conclusion:

The homily concludes that the end goal is the "beatific vision" and full unity with God. In the interim, the Christian is called to "live fully who you are meant to be by God's design." This involves a constant hunger for the pure love of God and an effort to make one's life a sincere gift to others, thereby reflecting the glory of the Trinity in the world.

Original Innocence, Holiness, & Happiness

That the one true and living God is a trinity of persons is the most essential teaching in the hierarchy of faith and life and the source of all other mysteries of our faith.¹ The mystery of the Trinity is the mystery from which all other mysteries flow. In our first reading, God gives a self-description as gracious, merciful, faithful, and kind; which is to say that God's very nature is loving faithfulness itself. This loving faithfulness is self-giving, like the communion of the Trinity. And so, Saint John, in the Gospel reading today, can speak of the God's deep love for us. The Father gives His only Son, who comes so that we may have eternal life through the Holy Spirit. Salvation is a Trinitarian act of self-giving love. God is a communion of Persons bonded by self-giving love.

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992. § 234. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

Although Catholic tradition reads Genesis 1:26 as an initial veiled / implicit indication of the Trinity pointing toward the plurality of persons while preserving the unity of God,² the Trinitarian nature of God can only be revealed by God and known fully through God's revelation in Christ.³ The Catechism teaches us that God created human beings out of love, in the image and likeness of God - from God's very self, and calls us to love as our fundamental vocation. The human person is not made for selfishness or mere survival, but for a genuine gift of self, since the human being is made with a real responsibility and capacity to love, in communion, as sharers in the divine life. We are meant to see, in marriage, the purest and fullest manifestation of this core feature of our nature. *"Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man."*⁴

This truth of our nature, identity, and sacredness helps us to better understand that *"Man, being the only creature created for his own sake, finds himself only in a sincere gift of himself."*⁵ The Catechism links this love to freedom and truth, we cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love, and grave sin ruptures love of God and neighbor because it separates us from the divine life, which is literally a disintegration within our being. To live in this state is to live in discord.⁶ God's own inner communion is the horizon toward which believers are drawn, and we must choose to follow. In contemplation of these truths, we better understand the actions of the three men in fiery furnace described in today's Psalm. Even in the face of death, they remained steadfast in their faith and sang praises, giving glory to God.

*"Original happiness speaks to us of the beginning of man, who emerged from love and initiated love."*⁷ The love that scripture and church teaching is calling us to — is to see every human person as loved by God, as created for their own sake, as possessing dignity. Every person is sacred. We are made to interact with others according to our sacredness. To look out for what is best for them. To make our lives a sincere gift to them. To sacrifice for them. To put selfishness aside. To put love into *action*. This is what it means to live the authentically human life; the fullest, deepest dimension of human life, which is determined by grace, that is, by participation in the interior life of God himself, in his holiness. As God loves so too, we are called to love them all — to live what Walker Percy called *"the scandal of the dignity of every human person."* Our happiness then, is rooted in self-gift. To love as God loves.

Jesus calls every disciple, of whatever rank or status, to be awake to our identity and therefore to pursue holiness, to seek the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. *"He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: 'Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect'."* We are made holy by God's grace: through baptism we became sons and daughters *"of God and sharers in the divine nature,"* and thus are really made holy. We must hold on to and complete the holiness received, daily praying for mercy and living as "God's chosen ones."⁸

What then, with reference to relevance in daily life, does this truth of our faith mean for a Christian? First and foremost, the Trinity shapes how a Christian prays. Christian prayer is directed to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. This is therefore true as well in the liturgy: Christian worship is not simply "about God" in the abstract, but worship of the Father through Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The ancient

² Augustine. "The Confessions." In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 0400.
<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1101.htm>.

³ "God's Trinitarian nature means that one God exists eternally as three distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who share one and the same divine nature. The Church calls this the "central mystery" of the Christian faith because it is known only through God's self-revelation." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992. § 261. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992. § 1604. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

⁵ https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html #24

⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992. § 1033. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

⁷ https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1980/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800130.html

⁸ Vatican Council II. *Lumen Gentium*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1964. #40
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

formula *Ad Patrem, per Filium, in Spiritu Sancto* is not decorative language; it names the shape of Christian life before God.⁹ The Church's worship normally addresses the Father, invokes Christ's mediation, and calls upon the Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic Prayer, the epiclesis, the doxology, and the sign of the Cross all express the life of the Trinity made visible in worship.¹⁰ The Trinity also shapes the sacraments. The Catechism says the sacraments "manifest and communicate... the mystery of communion with the God who is love, One in three persons." In other words, the sacraments are not only rituals; they are encounters with the triune God.¹¹ Sacramental communion with Jesus Christ is sacramental communion with God, and the Holy Spirit can open us to God and introduce us into divine life through sacramental signs only because the Holy Spirit is truly God.¹²

The doctrine also matters because it reveals what a human person is and how a Christian ought to live with others. The International Theological Commission teaches that personal identity is founded essentially on the Trinity of divine Persons, and that no person is simply alone in the universe; each is constituted with others and summoned to form community with them.¹³ Trinitarian faith affects forgiveness, patience, service, charity, family life, social responsibility, and the way a Christian sees every human being. If God is eternal communion of self-giving love, then a Christian cannot live as if selfishness, isolation, or domination were normal.¹⁴

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Ad Patrem, per Filium, in Spiritu Sancto	The ancient liturgical formula meaning "To the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit," defining the shape of Christian worship.
Beatific Vision	The ultimate goal of human life involving full perfection and unity with God in the next life.
Communion of Persons	The nature of the Trinity as a never-ending circle of self-giving love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Dis-integration	The internal falling apart or discord of a human being that occurs when they are separated from the divine life through sin.
Divine Life	The interior life and holiness of God which humans are invited to participate in through grace and the Holy Spirit.
Epiclesis	A part of the Eucharistic Prayer that invokes the Holy Spirit, expressing the Trinitarian nature of the liturgy.
Fundamental Vocation	The essential calling of every human person to love, based on being created in the image and likeness of God.
Grace	The participation in the interior life of God that determines the fullest dimension of human life and aids in holiness.
Original Happiness	The state of humanity emerging from and initiating love, rooted in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:26).

⁹ Institute, Pontifical Liturgical. *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: The Eucharist (Volume I)*. vol. Volume I. Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999.

¹⁰ Ibid; pages 17, 18, 84

¹¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992. § 1118. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

¹² Commission, International Theological. *The Reciprocity between Faith and Sacraments in the Sacramental Economy*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2020. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20200303_reciprocita-fede-sacramenti_en.html

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ <https://www.communio-icr.com/articles/view/jesus-christ-the-one-savior-of-the-world>

Sacrament	A transformative ritual that manifests and communicates the mystery of communion with the Triune God.
Self-Giving Love	The voluntary sacrifice of oneself for the sake of another; the bond that unites the Trinity and the primary requirement for human flourishing.
The Trinity	The central mystery of Christian faith: one true and living God who is a trinity of three distinct persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).