

## **A Mystery to Embrace**

At the end of March I retired from my secular job. Father Frank offered me a position as his Liturgical Coordinator. I have office hours two days a week and the other five I am merely at his beck and call.

Part of my duties is the scheduling of all priests, deacons and liturgical ministers. Last Sunday evening Father asked me to let the deacons know that he was changing our week to preach from the last Sunday of the month to this Sunday. The immediate response from my brother deacons was the question: “Did the fact that this Sunday is Trinity Sunday have anything to do with Father’s decision?” I told them that Father had a duty to challenge us from time to time but I asked myself the same question.

[I even offering Father Brian the opportunity to preach today but he too felt I needed a challenge.]

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We all know that the Trinity is a mystery. We also know that the word Trinity is not found in the Bible. So I went to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and looked up the definition of the Trinity. In part it said, “The mystery of the Trinity in itself is inaccessible to the human mind.” Not much help there.

So when all else fails I turn to the Baltimore Catechism. Question 181: Can we find an example to fully illustrate the mystery of the Blessed Trinity? Answer: No because the mysteries of our holy religion are beyond comparison.

At that point I remembered the only advice that Father Frank gave me before my ordination. Keep your homilies short, he told me. For a moment I contemplated only saying the Trinity is a mystery and sitting back down. But that might have been too short even for Father Frank.

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Let's look at what we know about the Trinity. There is only one God. God is divine so God has a divine nature. That divine nature has three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son also took on a human nature to live among us. The Son proceeds from the Father, and Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

That makes four relations: the Father, the Son (human and divine) and the Holy Spirit, three persons of God, two processions and one God....and, of course, no proof.

This leads us to two questions: 1) why does God have mysteries and 2) what does the mystery of the Trinity mean to us.

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First, why does God have mysteries? Returning to the Baltimore Catechism: Question 201, why does a divine religion have mysteries? Answer: A divine religion must have mysteries because it must have supernatural truths and God himself must teach them. A religion that only has natural truths, such as man can know by reason alone, fully understand and teach, is only a human religion.

If we understood all that God can do, we wouldn't need God. Man would be God. Many atheists tout the advances of our scientific knowledge to show that there is no need for God. Evolutionists are excited that they are growing closer to proving that evolution was the process by which man arose, after the mystical big bang that is. But if you ask them who created the big bang, they get flustered and mumble answers such as nature caused it or it was an accident. Christians believe that God created the world and all that is in it. God was the creator of the big bang.

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Humans are not able to understand the divine mysteries. And just as importantly God does not mock us by revealing things that we cannot comprehend. But God does promise that when our day of salvation occurs that all will be understood. We simply have to wait with hope filled patience.

The second question is what does the mystery of the Trinity mean to us? This is a very complex question. On the one hand, the mystery of the Trinity is the starting point of all revealed truth, the fountain from which proceeds supernatural life, and the promise of eternal salvation that we all desire. We are the children of the Father, the brother and sisters and co-heirs with the Son, and continually sanctified by the Holy Spirit to make us ever more resemble Christ. Accepting and believing in the Trinity is the first step in our spiritual life. Without this belief we are not Christians.

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We must truly see the Trinity as a mystery, not a contradiction. We cannot doubt that a single divine nature can be shared, not divided, by the three persons of God. Each person of God can do all that the divine nature allows.

To those who do not love God, they see a major contradiction in a God who reaches out to us in love yet also gives us the free will to reject that love. They think as humans think, not as God thinks. God does not require our love to be whole. He created us out of nothing and can return us to nothing. God is always whole but our love for Him pleases Him.

The Trinity also proves to us that our God is not a distant God. He sent His Son to live among us and to die for us. As the Gospel tells us today, “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world may be saved through Him.

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Yes, we must believe in the Trinity and have the faith that at salvation this mystery will become clear to us. Yet in a very real way, the **mystery of the Trinity** has little relevance to our day to day spiritual life. Once we accept the trinity through faith, we no longer have to worry about why we cannot understand it. When we pray we do not have to wonder whether we have prayed equally to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God does not require equal time for each of the persons of the Trinity. God wants us to love Him as he loves us. If we find that love through the Father that's fine. If it's through the Son, great. If it's through the Holy Spirit, thanks be to God.

The same goes for the call to holiness. If we find our inspiration to be holy through one or all of the persons of the Trinity, it is a time for great celebration.

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Now as we prepare for the celebration of the Eucharist, a mystery that Father Frank will explain next week, let us lovingly take Jesus into our very being so that by knowing Him we too can know the Father and be open to the gifts and the call to holiness of the Holy Spirit.

Let us embrace the words of John Henry Newman.

Firmly I believe and truly  
God is three and God is one;  
And I next acknowledge duly  
Manhood taken by the Son.

And I trust and hope most fully  
In that manhood crucified;  
And I love supremely, solely,  
Christ who for my sins has died

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And I hold in veneration,  
For the love of him alone,  
Holy Church as his creation,  
And her teachings as his own.

Praise and thanks be given  
With and through the angel host,  
To the God of earth and heaven,  
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

This week, my brothers and sisters, repeat over and over again to yourselves, that you are God's and God is yours.