

SOLEMNITY OF MOST HOLY TRINITY  
THE MYSTERY OF ONE GOD, THREE PERSONS

*“But when the Spirit of truth comes ... He will glorify Me since all He tells you will be taken from what is Mine. Everything that the Father has is Mine; that is why I said: All He tells you will be taken from what is Mine” (John 16: 13, 14-15)*

**The Trinity Sunday:** Some years ago, I was working in a rural parish community in Nigeria. The rectory was surrounded by over ninety-eight tall strong palm trees that were like the “cedars of Lebanon.” The silhouette was a delight to watch as they gradually crossed the long driveway when the sun went down in the evening. However, this beauty could be the cause of some nightmarish experiences in the fullness of the night. It could be scary – even for the priest! One morning I returned from Mass to see a bicycle-driven man, dressed a bit beyond the standard of my poor community waiting for me. He introduced himself as a pastor of a Church in the next village. I welcomed him but before I could say “Jack!” he asked me how I lived alone amid such dark and frightening environment. My response was a surprise to him: “I don’t live alone” I said. “There are four of us here” I explained. “Oh, are you married then?” he asked. I answered with the most unexpected: “No, I am not married. The other occupants are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” He was lost of words. And then our conversation went on other details. My dear friends, as we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity today, I love to remind us that we are never alone. God in Three Persons is always with us. “When Jesus said: “I am with you always, He meant us to understand that when He is with us, God the Father is with us; God the Son is with us; and God the Holy Spirit is with us. All at one and the same time.

**The Dogma of the Trinity:** The Trinity is primarily, not a concept to be understood, but a mystery to be affirmed by faith. In other words, it is a reality beyond human comprehension. An article of faith – to be accepted as certain even though we cannot see (Hebrews 11: 1). Of its incomprehensibility, the Catechism of the Catholic Church has this to say: “The Trinity is a mystery of faith in the strict sense, one of the mysteries that are hidden in God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God.” It goes on to say: God’s “inmost Being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s faith before the Incarnation of God’s Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit” (CCC. 237). Basically, the dogma of the Trinity teaches that God is “Three Persons in One.” That God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit Are

Three Distinct Persons, equal in Being, eternally existent but not three different God(s).

***The Trinity in the Scriptures:*** There are traces of the Trinitarian nature of God through His work in the Scripture. In Genesis, the creation narrative reveals God the Father, Who creates, God the Son, Who is the Spoken Word, and God the Holy Spirit hovering over the water (Genesis 1: 1ff) renewing the face of the earth. The Evangelist John later affirms this understanding: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made ... And the Word became flesh and dwelled among us” (John 1: 1-3, 14). The three angels who visited Abraham and promised the birth of Isaac (Genesis 18: 1-15) is often understood as the visitation of God in His Trinitarian nature. More self-revelation of God in His Trinitarian nature are found in the New Testament: when, at the Baptism of Jesus, the Son of God, God the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, descended as a dove (Matthew 3: 13-17; Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3: 21- 22; John 1: 32-34)); at the Transfiguration, when the Son was transfigured, the Spirit manifested in the cloud and God the Father spoke: “This is My Beloved Son” (Matthew 17: 1-13; Mark 9: 2-13; Luke 9: 28-36). The clearest revelation of the Trinitarian nature of God, as recorded in the Gospel of John, is made by Jesus. Revealing the eternal and reciprocal God-Son Relationship He has with the Father, Jesus says: “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone the Son chooses to reveal Him” (Matthew 11: 27). Similarly, Jesus attests in John 14: 9: “To have seen Me is to have seen the Father.” He confirms His oneness with the Father when He said in John 10: 30, “I and the Father are one.” Jesus identified His Person, Words, works and mission with the Father (John 6: 38; 12: 49; 14: 10).

***The Relationship or Unity of the Persons:*** The Fathers of the Church used two illustrations to demonstrate the unity of the Three Persons of the Trinity: as oil cannot be separated from the skin once it is rubbed in, so the Spirit and the Son cannot be separated. As one cannot speak without uttering one’s breath, so the Son cannot proceed from the father without the Spirit. Jesus articulated this relationship on many occasions in the Gospels. While they were at supper, Jesus revealed and promised another “Advocate” Who will be with the apostles, teach them, remind them, and lead them to “all truth” (John 15: 26-27; 16: 7-11; 13-15). The Holy Spirit is revealed as a Divine Person Who proceeds from the Father (John 15: 26), who will lead the apostles to “complete truth (John 16: 13). Like

Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, speaks not His Own words but hears from the Father and the Son.” Then Jesus lucidly captures the unified relatedness of the Trinity in the Gospel Reading (John 16: 12-15) as follows: “He (The Holy Spirit) will glorify Me since all He tells you will be taken from what is Mine. Everything that the Father has is Mine; that is why I said: All He tells you will be taken from what is Mine.”

***How Does This relate to Us?*** The first image that comes to mind is that of the family. The Trinity of Persons can be likened to the family in its nuclear form – the Father, Mother, and children, where the children are the physical manifestation of the love between the husband and the wife. From here we can draw some lessons for nurturing the family. The divine bond of the Trinity is sustained by perfect love and obedience. The family should be a sanctuary of love and obedience exhibited in the loving obedience between the spouses, flowing down to the children, and flowing back from the children to the parents. The equality of the Persons of the Trinity offers a significant challenge to our world, the Church, families, and individuals; calling us to respect the dignity of each other. For we are all created in “the image and likeness of God” (Gen. 1: 26). The many complex divisions, intolerance, and discriminations in every facet of our society cries out for bridge building to connect humanity instead of wall of divisions. On various occasions, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are seen to be at work together, sharing the same project and mission. This turns our attention to collaborative ministry, division of labour, principle of solidarity, cooperation, and complementarity.

***My dear friends,*** The Triune God is our One God, Who never leaves us; Who invites us to live in love and harmony with each other to be able to achieve our common goal of loving as He loves us so that we can become citizens of heaven after the end of our lives here on earth. May God the Father bless us; may God the Son redeem us; and may God the Holy Spirit enlighten us. Amen.