



THE NEW SHOFAR

*God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit,
exist and act in perfect community and perfect love.*

Trinity

We believe in One God and three persons in that One God

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Blessed Trinity. It is one of those Sundays most preachers prefer to avoid and many Christians themselves wonder what on earth it is all about. We believe but do not understand. Despite that, the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most important teachings of the Church. The doctrine claims we have one God and only one God, in three persons. Should be simple! The difficulties come when we try to explain the fullness of the Trinity in human language.

There is our first problem: How can three equal one? In every other part of human knowledge, one plus one plus one equals three. But are not talking maths here, we are talking about God. We are reflecting on the way God has chosen to reveal His own self to humanity. And secondly, we are discussing the very nature of God.

The Fundamentals: The doctrine of the Trinity is clear in essence: God has revealed Himself to us as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. These are the three persons we name as the ***Godhead***. From each of these persons of the Trinity we learn something fundamental about God.

God is Father: From the revelation of God as Father we learn that there is one, and only one God, the God who is the creator of all heaven and earth. God the Father is the creator of all that we can see and all we cannot see. We also learn how God the Father created all things to be good. Everything emanating from God is essentially good. All creation is thus the work of a loving God who creates us, sustains, and directs us.

God is Son: God the Son is a second self-revelation by God. Through the Son, Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to see with our own eyes the only perfect image of the Father. To know the Son is to see the Father. How does that work? Two Gospel stories might help. We are all familiar with the parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus teaches this story and we learn something about God the Father. The father in the story sees his son returning after squandering his inheritance and living a hard and sinful life. Before the son can get home, the Father runs to him. The father grabs the son and gives him a huge

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hug. The son apologizes but there is no need. The father has already forgiven him. We learn from this parable about forgiveness. When we look at Jesus as God the Son we learn about the forgiveness of God the Father.

Then there is the second story. This one is about the last night Jesus will spend with his disciples. During this evening Jesus will wash their feet and share a final meal with his closest friends. Peter and Judas Iscariot are present. They will have their feet washed. They will also share in the final meal. Jesus knows and tells them he knows that one will betray him and another deny him.

These two men will hurt Jesus deeply. One will deny him three times. The other will perform the final act, betrayal, which sets the arrest, the trial and the crucifixion in motion. Yet, Jesus still washes their feet, and Jesus still eats with them. We learn from Jesus' example in this story that God is love. How else could Jesus wash their feet and eat with them if he didn't love them? As the perfect image of God the Father, Jesus teaches us the nature of God. The nature of God is love. So, when we look at the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, we see the perfect image of God the father. We see God the Father as forgiving and loving.

God is the Holy Spirit: Finally, God reveals Himself to us in the Third Person of the Trinity - the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is revealed to us as the giver of life, as the Lord who leads us into all truth, and as the one who enables us to grow in the likeness of Christ. The Holy Spirit works in the world, in us today, to achieve these goals. When we learn about God's love, we have witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit. When we love one another we have participated in the work of the Holy Spirit.

In three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God is revealed to us. As Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God exists.

Our general tendency is to see God as three different entities or three separate beings. Yet, our God is one. The unity of the Trinity, the way in which God exists as three persons in one is one of our greatest mysteries. We do not understand exactly how this works but we do have some clues. The clues lie in the nature of God.

The nature of God is love. The nature of God is perfect love. In this perfect love the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit exist. It is in this perfect love they exist in perfect community. In this perfect love, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have existed before the beginning of time. They were present and active in the creation of the universe. They were present and active in the creation of humanity. They are present and active in the creation today. They live and move and act in perfect love and perfect community. The actions of one person of the Trinity are the actions of all the persons.

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