

TRINITY SUNDAY

Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9

2Cor 13:11-13

Jn 3:16-18

The Holy Trinity is a mystery and mysteries cannot be explained, but as the astronaut Neil Armstrong observed, mysteries create wonder and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand. Mysteries must be experienced because they cannot be explained.

In common with Jews, Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholic Christians believe that God is One. However, Catholics believe that God is a community of three equal persons who form a complete unity. Throughout the history of the Church imagery has been offered to help explain the Christian belief in the Trinity. Among them is St Patrick's image of the three leafed clover. Icons such as Rublev's Holy Trinity are also revealing but in the end no image is satisfactory. Scripture gives us hints such as the Baptism of Jesus when the Father declares Jesus to be his beloved Son, who is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit.

Rather than try to achieve the unachievable we need to explore how the mystery of the Trinity can be experienced by us in our lives. We humans identify ourselves as Body, Mind and Spirit, and these aspects are intended to be in unity and harmony with each other.

In an article posted in 2018 (National Catholic Register, 01/06/2018), Fr Longenecker ponders whether Jesus' claim to be the Way, the Truth and the Life is the key to our ability to experience the life of the Holy Trinity. He suggests that the Way is our physical being – our body. It is the life we lead and the actions we choose to take. The Truth can be seen as our mental and intellectual aspect. It is what we believe and the principles we follow. It is our thoughts, decisions and teachings we follow. The Life can be understood as our spiritual and emotional aspects. It is the way we relate, the compassion we express and the love we feel and share. It's the heart.

We are little trinities of Body, Mind and Spirit, with and intended unity between these aspects. At times, our self-centred nature causes these three to be out of whack with each other and we are dysfunctional. Yet on our Christian journey we are looking to be the complete, whole and balanced person we are intended to be. Our destiny is to be like God and to join the company of saints when our three aspects, through God's grace are in perfect unity and balance.

Jesus says he is the Way, the Truth and the Life. His human aspects are in harmony with each other. He shows us the end goal, and we journey there with him. All we need to become like God is found in and through Jesus Christ and what he has given us. On our journey to becoming harmonious trinities Fr Longenecker suggests that through grace and through the Church because through the Church we have the sacraments that minister to our Body; we have its doctrinal teaching which ministers to our mind, and we have the sign and seal of the Holy Spirit given through baptism and confirmation who redeems our spirit.

Jesus became fully human, begotten of the Father and born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Way, the Truth and the Life, Jesus is **the** physical, mental and spiritual aspect of humankind, and is therefore Son and Holy Spirit, a perfect three in one. The English Spiritual writer of the Cloud of Unknowing reminds us that all this is our achievable goal because Jesus is not only the doorkeeper, but the Doorway: he is doorkeeper because he is fully divine and the door because he is fully human. Jesus wants to give us the gift of 'union' with God, so we must be totally committed to him rather than engaging in fleeting encounters with him.

We cannot explain the Trinity, but we can experience the unity of three in one in ourselves and realise that this enables us to understand that our destiny is to share in the life of the Most Holy Undivided Trinity.

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