

TRINITY SUNDAY 2010
SERMON - CHRIST CHURCH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
ST. JOHN 3.1



The Holy Trinity, wrote the fifth century theologian Saint Augustine of Hippo, is an Act of Love. He defined the love God the Father and God the Son have for each other as so perfect and strong it is the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

Trinity Sunday is the one Sunday in the Church Year that doesn't talk about an event in the life of Jesus or one of the Saints. Trinity Sunday is about the Christian Doctrine that states God exists as three persons, one God.

Augustine tried to explain how the Holy Trinity operates in a way he thought most of us could understand. Some people find his explanation helpful; most of us don't. That doesn't mean we lack Faith. We believe in the Holy Trinity...three persons, one God...and at the same time call the Holy Trinity a mystery we won't fully understand until we see God face-to-face in heaven.

Augustine talks about the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a perfect relationship of pure unconditional love. Christianity is all about relationships, our relationship with God and each other. Jesus tells us he loves us just as much as the Father loves him. The Holy Spirit helps us to recognize God's love for us and to share that love with others.

Our Prayer Book is unique in the way it calls out the Sundays after Pentecost, naming them "Sundays after Trinity". That tells us something about the importance of the Trinity in our lives. The Prayer Book gives us a way to act out and act on the love relationship we have with the Trinity.

Our love relationship with the Holy Trinity begins the moment we are baptized and continues until the day we die and beyond. In the Gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus we must be born again by water and the Spirit. We were baptized with water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. We began our new lives as members of the Church, the Body of Christ. At our Confirmations the bishop made the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads with oil, asking God to increase the Holy Spirit in us and make us stronger.

The Holy Trinity is present throughout the Mass. The Mass is our real-time experience of God's love for us. The Collect for Purity sets the stage. The priest asks God to open

his heart and the hearts of everyone present, to make them clean by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we may give to God the same kind of perfect love he and Jesus have for each other.

We hear about God's love for us in the Epistle and Gospel readings and we ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand and let what we have heard change our lives. We say together the Nicene Creed..."I believe in one God the Father Almighty...and in one Lord Jesus Christ...and in the Holy Ghost". Many of us then make the Sign of the Cross, which is a visible sign of our belief in the Trinity, and a reminder our worship of God is active and not passive...actions and not just words.

The Holy Trinity is present in the Prayer for the Church, in which we ask God to give grace to the bishops, priests and deacons of the Church who have been called to serve and to the people so they too will live lives of service. The Holy Trinity is present in the Confession, Absolution, and Prayer of Consecration. We receive the gift Jesus himself gives us, his Body and Blood. And we are blessed in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Now we go out and do the work of love we just committed ourselves to.

At the conclusion of a Requiem Mass, we pray that the dead person who was "sealed with the sign of the Trinity" at his baptism, will have everlasting rest and be welcomed into heaven by the Angels and Saints. Our love relationship with the Trinity extends beyond the life we have here on earth.

We call the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity a mystery, and it is. One thing is certain. The operation of the Holy Trinity in our daily lives in not. Jesus told Nicodemus he would know that God's Holy Spirit was at work because he would see the results. We don't see the wind, but we know it's there, because we see trees and other things moving. We see the positive effects of the Trinity in our lives and the lives of this Parish and the Church throughout the world. And we believe!

Trinity Sunday is about unconditional LOVE. God the Father loves Jesus. Jesus loves the Father. And because Jesus loves us, the Father loves us too. And the Holy Spirit helps us to know that love more perfectly every day of our lives.

