

Sunday The Holy Trinity

Sunday is the day when we offer God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—our praise, adoration, and thanksgiving by giving our Lord our time and prayer at Mass and by keeping holy the Sabbath day in the Third Commandment.

What is the Holy Trinity? The short answer is that the Holy Trinity is a **mystery**! Okay, okay! The Holy Trinity is a bit more complicated than that. We believe in ONE God, Creator of heaven and earth. We also believe that the one, true God is a **triune** God, meaning that there are THREE Persons in ONE Being (God): God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are coeternal (always existing together forever) and consubstantial (having the same substance or essence).

Confused? Take a look at this image (to the right) to get a better idea:

As you can see, God the Father IS God, but is neither God the Son nor God the Holy Spirit. Likewise, God the Son IS God, but He is not God the Father nor God the Holy Spirit. Also, God the Holy Spirit IS God, but is not God the Father nor God the Son.

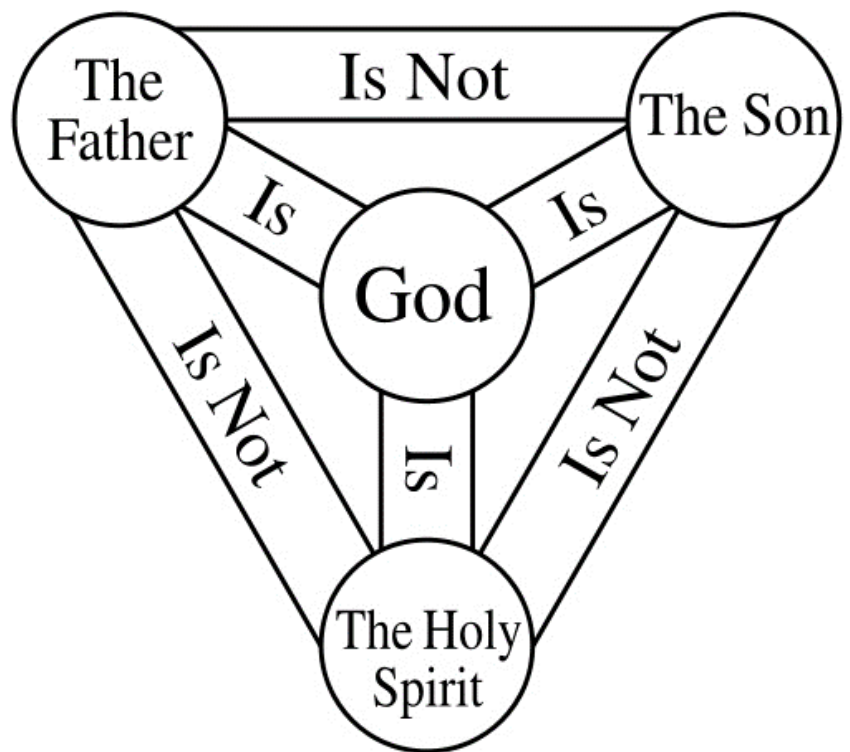
Often in traditional art you will see the Holy Trinity depicted as an old man (God the Father), a young man (God the Son) and a dove (God the Holy Ghost). It is difficult for us to wrap our minds around a God that is ONE, but with three distinct Divine Persons, hence why the Holy Trinity is a mystery!

In fact, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines Trinity as: “the mystery of one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The

revealed truth of the Holy Trinity is at the very root of the Church’s living faith as expressed in the Creed. The mystery of the Trinity in itself **is inaccessible to the human mind** and the object of faith only because it was revealed by Jesus Christ, the divine Son of the eternal Father.” (CCC, p. 902)

In the old calendar (Extraordinary Form) there is the Feast of the Holy Trinity on the first Sunday after Pentecost. There is also a Votive Mass of the Most Holy Trinity, typically said on Mondays, though not restricted to only Mondays.

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. Amen.”



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WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT THE HOLY TRINITY?

The *Catechism* says a lot about the Holy Trinity, but here is the In Brief:

261 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

266 “Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son’s is another, the Holy Spirit’s another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal” (Athanasian Creed: DS 75; ND 16).

267 Inseparable in what they are, the divine persons are also inseparable in what they do. But within the single divine operation each shows forth what is proper to him in the Trinity, especially in the divine missions of the Son’s Incarnation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.



WHAT ARE SOME COMMON HERESIES ABOUT THE HOLY TRINITY?

While there are many, many heresies about the Holy Trinity, here are just a few of the most common ones that creep up from time to time. Keep in mind that these are **NOT** what the Holy Trinity is:

Arianism: the heresy that denied the Divinity of Christ; originated from the Priest Arius.

Modalism: the idea that the persons of the Trinity represent only three modes (like liquid water, ice, and steam are all “modes” of water) or aspects of the divine revelation, not distinct and coexisting persons in the divine nature.

Partialism: the heresy that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each a part of God.

Tritheism: the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three independent and distinct divine beings as opposed to three persons of one being and one essence.