

God the Holy Trinity

3 persons in 1 nature/essence. Not 3 gods but 1 God in 3 persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Father = Fatherhood, Unbegottenness, Source.

Son = Sonship, Pre-eternal Begottenness (Because if there is a Father, he has to exist in relation to a Son).

Holy Spirit = Procession. Eternally proceeds from the Father.

The Trinity is three divine persons (*hypostases*) who share one essence. It is paradoxical to believe thus, but that is how God has revealed himself. All three persons are consubstantial with each other, that is, they are of one essence and coeternal. There never was a time when any of the persons of the Trinity did not exist.

Explanation of the Trinity

The source and unity of the Holy Trinity is the Father, from whom the Son is begotten and also from whom the Spirit proceeds. Thus, the Father is both the ground of unity of the Trinity and also of distinction. To try to comprehend unbegottenness (Father), begottenness (Son), or procession (Holy Spirit) leads to insanity, says St Gregory the Theologian, and so the Church approaches God in divine mystery, approaching God apophatically, being content to encounter God personally and yet realize the inadequacy of the human mind to comprehend Him.

The Trinity Related to Man

Since man is made in the image of God, man also has three natures. Both man and woman have three parts: body, soul, and spirit. God the Son is comparable to the body since the Son is God incarnate. God the Father is comparable to the soul, or mind, since he was the mind that created everything. The Holy Spirit is comparable to man's Spirit. As the body of man is the temple of our spirit, the body of Jesus Christ is the temple to the Holy Spirit which proceeds from the Father through (*dia*) the Son.

The Trinity Explained in the Creed

The primary statement of what the Church believes about God is to be found in the Creed.

Trinity in the Old Testament

The OT further specifies the nature of divine plurality by identifying the three persons of the Godhead. These three persons are all distinguished from each other, and yet, in various ways, are identified as God: the Father (e.g. Deuteronomy 32: 6; Isaiah 63: 16, 64: 8, Malachi 2: 10); the person variously designated as the Angel or Messenger of the LORD, Word, or Son of God (e.g. Genesis 16: 7 - 14, 21: 17 - 18, 22: 9 - 18, 28: 10 - 22 (cf. Genesis 31: 11 - 13), 32: 22 - 32 (cf. Hosea 12: 3 - 4); Exodus 3, 13: 21 (cf. 14: 19), 23: 20 - 22; Numbers 22: 21 - 41; Judges 2: 1 - 5, 6: 7 - 24, 13: 3 - 22, 2 Samuel 24: 16; Psalm 2, 109: 1, Isaiah 7: 14, 9: 6, 63: 9; Jeremiah 23: 5 - 6; Proverbs 30: 4; Zechariah 1: 10 - 11, 12: 8; Malachi 3: 1); and the Holy

Spirit or Spirit of God (e.g. Nehemiah 9: 20; Job 26: 13, 33: 4; Psalm 103: 30, 105: 32 - 33, 138: 1 - 24, 142: 10; 2 Samuel 23: 1 - 3; Isaiah 11: 2, 40: 13; Ezekiel 11: 5; Micah 2: 7).

Finally, in addition to the above passages that separately speak of one or another person of the Godhead, assigning to them the names, attributes, and prerogatives of God, there are many passages which mention all three persons together, assigning to each a role in the divine works of creation, providence, and redemption. For example: 1) Genesis 1: 1 - 3 mentions God creating all things by His Word and Spirit; 2) the same thing is reiterated in Psalm 32: 6; 3) Isaiah 42: 1 speaks of God, His Servant/Chosen One, and His Spirit, by which He will bring justice or righteousness to the world; 4) Isaiah 48: 12 - 16 has the First and the Last, i.e. the eternal God, speaking of a time when He is sent by the LORD God and His Spirit; 5) in Isaiah 61: 1, the person who is sent with the good news, i.e. the Gospel, says the LORD has anointed Him with His Holy Spirit, Who is upon Him; and 6) Isaiah 63 tells of the LORD, the Angel or Messenger of His Presence, and the Holy Spirit bringing about salvation.

Trinity in the New Testament

Jesus says just before His Ascension:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”– Matthew 28: 19

Each member of the Trinity is God:

The Father is God: John 6: 27; Romans 1: 7; 1 Peter 1: 2.

The Son is God: John 1: 1, 14; Romans 9: 5; Colossians 2: 9; Hebrews 1: 8; 1 John 5: 20.

The Holy Spirit is God: Acts 5: 3 - 4; 1 Corinthians 3: 16

Trinity revealed in the Baptism of Christ (Theophany. Matthew 3: 13 - 17; Mark 1: 9 - 11; Luke 3: 21 - 22), and Transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1 - 8, Mark 9: 2 - 9, Luke 9: 28 - 36, and 2 Peter 1: 16 - 19).

Christ alludes to the Trinity at His Ascension (Mark 16: 19; Luke 24: 50 – 51; Apostles 1: 9 - 12), and when the Holy Spirit comes to the Apostles at Pentecost (John 7: 37 – 52, 8: 12; Acts 2: 1 – 11).

Trinity in the Divine Services

Other than in the Feasts mentioned above:

Canons to the Holy Trinity
Midnight Office 8 tones

Conclusion

God’s actual nature, however, is forever and completely unknowable by us. This lies completely beyond all human ideas, thoughts and language in mystery, (Isaiah 55: 11). We do not, therefore, *think* about the Trinity, we worship the Trinity and it is in worship that we know and understand in a language deeper than the words that are used. Our language about the Trinity is, therefore, measured and humble before the great mystery that is the God of love.

Finally we should remark that the Trinity is a communion of persons (hypostases) not a solitary being. This communion is one of relational love, not a monolithic 'block' of unyielding divinity. The insistence that "God is Love" (1 John 4: 7 – 8) shows that God Himself is the *perfect* expression of Love and Love is of essence and action, relational. What He is in Himself, He is also toward us, an open communion of relational covenant love. Truly, there is no Christianity without the Trinity.

