

## **HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY [A] READINGS EXPLAINED**

**Ex 34:4b-6, 8-9; II Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18**

### **# 1: Simplified explanations by Saints Patrick, Cyril and Jean-Marie Vianney:**

Since the Holy Trinity is a mystery, all these examples are only the shadows of the shadows of the Truth. The shamrock, a kind of clover, is a leguminous herb that grows in marshy places. St. Patrick, the missionary patron saint of Ireland, it is said, used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity. The story goes that one day his friends asked Patrick to explain the Mystery of the Trinity. He looked at the ground and saw shamrocks growing amid the grass at his feet. He picked one up one of its trifoliate leaves and asked if it were one leaf or three. Patrick's friends couldn't answer – the shamrock leaf looked like one but it clearly had three parts. Patrick explained to them: *"The mystery of the Holy Trinity – one God in Three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - is like this, but more complex and less intelligible."* As the story goes, St. Cyril, the teacher of the Slavs, used the sun to give a hint of the Mystery of Three-In-One Nature of the the Most Holy Trinity. He said, *"God the Father is that blazing sun. God the Son is its light and God the Holy Spirit is its heat — but there is only one sun. So, there are three Persons in the Holy Trinity but God is One and indivisible."* St. Jean-Marie Vianney offered visual comparisons to illustrate, at a great distance, the Mystery of the Unity of Persons in the TriUnity God IS, that is the Holy Trinity. The Cure of Ars used lighted candles, roses on the altar, and water in the cruets. *"The flame has color, warmth and shape. But these are expressions of one flame. Similarly, the rose has color, fragrance and shape. But these are expressions of one reality, namely, rose. Water, steam and ice are three distinct expressions of one reality. In the same way, one God revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit."*

**# 2: Mystery of man created by a mysterious TriUne God:** How complex and mind-boggling is our physical construction – with the major number of its parts invisible to the naked eye. Chemically, the body is unequalled for complexity. Each one of its 30 trillion cells is a mini chemical factory that performs about 10,000 chemical functions. With its 206 bones, 639 muscles, 4 million pain sensors in the skin, 750 million air

sacs in the lungs, 16 million nerve cells and 30 trillion cells in total, the human body is remarkably designed for life. And the brain! The human brain with the nervous system is the most complex arrangement of matter anywhere in the universe. One scientist estimated that our brain, on the average, processes over 10,000 thoughts and concepts each day. The three billion DNA pairs in a fertilized egg [which IS a child into whom God has already breathed an immortal, spiritual soul let us not forget!] control all human activities, 30,000 genes making 90,000 proteins in the body. Bill Bryson in his book, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, says it is a miracle that we even exist. Trillions of atoms come together for approximately 650,000 hours (74 years calculated as the average span of human life), and then begin to silently disassemble and go off to other things. There never was something like us before and there never will be something like us again. But for 650,000 hours the miracle or mystery that is uniquely us, exists here on earth. -- One could spend years just dealing with the marvelous intricacies and majesty of God's creation. We are, as the Psalmist states "*fearfully and wonderfully made.*" No wonder we cannot understand the mystery of the TriUne God Who created us!

**# 3: The mystery of the magnitude of the universe:** The universe has around 100–1000 billion galaxies. Our galaxy is called the Milky Way. The Milky Way contains 100–400 billion stars with their planets, including the sun and its planets, and our earth is one of its tiny planets. This means that our Sun is just one star among the hundreds of billions of stars in our Milky Way Galaxy. The diameter of the observable universe is about 93 billion light years, and a light-year is a unit of length equal to 6 trillion miles. The number and size of galaxies and stars and planets in the universe remain mind-baffling mysteries in spite of all our latest astronomical discoveries and studies, and we have been able to send astronomers only to our earth's sole natural satellite, the moon. -- If the universe is so mysterious, no wonder the nature of the TriUne God Who created it, remains a mystery and why we have to accept the mystery of the TriUne God as revealed by God Himself in Holy Scripture!

( [https://youtu.be/hTuJby2\\_97E](https://youtu.be/hTuJby2_97E)) ( <https://youtu.be/9DsQ-FrEJxo>).

**# 4: "But that is impossible, my dear child:"** There is a very old and much-repeated story about **St. Augustine of Hippo** (in Africa), one of the intellectual giants of the Church. He was walking by the seashore one day, attempting to conceive of an intelligible explanation for the mystery of the Trinity. As he walked along, he saw a small boy on the beach, pouring seawater from a shell into a small hole in the sand. *"What are you doing, my child?"* asked Augustine. *"I am emptying the sea into this hole,"* the boy answered with an innocent smile. *"But that is impossible, my dear child,"* said Augustine. The boy stood up, looked straight into the eyes of Augustine and replied, *"What you are trying to do - comprehend the immensity of God with your small head - is even more impossible."* Then he vanished. -- The child was an angel sent by God to teach Augustine a lesson. Later, Augustine wrote: *"You see the Trinity, if you see love."* According to him, the Father is the lover, the Son is the loved one and the Holy Spirit is the personification of the very act of loving. This means that we can understand something of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity more readily with the believing heart than with our feeble mind. **Evagrius of Pontus**, a Greek monk of the 4th century who came from what is now Turkey in Asia and later lived out his vocation in Egypt, said: *"God cannot be grasped by the mind. If God could be grasped, God would not be God."*

**Introduction:** Today's feast invites us to live in the awareness of the presence of the TriUne God within us: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The mystery of the Holy Trinity, a doctrine enunciated by the ecumenical councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, is one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and the greatest mystery of our Faith, namely, that there are Three Divine Persons, sharing the same Divine Nature in one God. *"There is one God, who has three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each Person is God, yet there is still only one God"* (CCC #234, #253-256). We can attribute certain activities to each of the Three Persons – the Father as Creator, the Son as the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier, the Counselor – but the Whole TriUne God is, in reality, responsible for all God's works. The doctrine of Three Persons in one God, co-equal and co-eternal in Divinity yet distinct in Person, is not explicitly spelt out in the Bible. Even the very word "Trinity" is not found in the

Bible, but the doctrine of the Trinity underlies all major Christian feasts, including Christmas, the Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, the Ascension, and Pentecost. All the official prayers of the Church, including the Holy Mass and the Sacraments, begin with an address to the Holy Trinity: “*In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” We are baptized, absolved of our sins, and anointed in the name of the Blessed Trinity. Throughout the world, when Church bells ring three times a day, for the Angelus (or the Regina Coeli in Eastertide) Christians are being invited to pray to God the Father (the Provider); God the Son (the Savior); and God the Holy Spirit (the Sanctifier), giving glory to the Triune God for the Incarnation of the Son and our Redemption through His suffering and His death and rising. We bless ourselves with the Sign of the Cross, invoking the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and we conclude our prayers glorifying the Holy Trinity, saying “*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...*” Today’s readings convey the fundamental mystery that **the Triune God** reaches out to all people with love, seeking deepest communion with them!

**The first reading explained:** Today’s first reading, taken from the book of Exodus, describes how God revealed His name to Moses as “*Yahweh,*” which means, “*I am Who am.*” But Orthodox Jews in absolute reverence, never used that most sacred Name name. They addressed God by calling Him, *Elohim* (God, the common Name) or Lord (*Adonai*). The passage is also as close as the Bible comes to giving a definition of God. The Lord God says of Himself, “*The Lord, the Lord [is] a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.*” Every part of that statement stresses God in relationship to humankind, and it emphasizes especially God’s great love for us. The revelation of God’s nature as Triune was made by Jesus. In fact, the very word “*Trinity,*” referring to Three Persons in One God -- one in Godhead yet distinct in Person -- is not explicitly spelled out in the Bible. Although the doctrine on Trinity is mentioned about forty times in the New Testament, the term “*Trinity*” never appears. Rather, the early Church arrived at the doctrine of the Trinity when, guided by the Holy Spirit, she reflected on the Revelation which she had received from Jesus in Faith.

**Today's second reading explained:** Taken from St. Paul's second Letter to the Corinthians, today's second reading contains the ancient apostolic blessing in the name of the Holy Trinity: *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."* Paul reminds the people of the Father's love, the grace that comes through Jesus Christ and the fellowship or the unifying power of the Holy Spirit. The word "*grace*" in a theological context refers to Divine favor. In Christ, the Incarnate Second Person of the Trinity, God has shown favor toward us humans, a special care for us, and a desire that through Jesus' life, death and Resurrection we might find and enjoy a right relationship with God. We often use the phrase "*the love of God*" to describe our response to God and our duty to love God. That is both correct and appropriate. But what comes first is God's love for us. The Scriptures emphasize that God has loved us first and that our love for God is only a fitting response. *And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit:* The Holy Spirit shapes and animates the life of the Christian community. In other words, we live our Christian lives in the fellowship, or *koinonia*, formed by the Holy Spirit because it is He who guides, empowers and teaches us in Christ's place and brings us together in Faith, Love, and Hope. In the story of salvation, we usually attribute Creation to the Father, Redemption to the Son, and Sanctification to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, though they are distinct as Persons, neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Spirit ever exists in separation or acts in isolation from the other Two Persons of the Godhead. The inner relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is such that each of them is fully God, yet These Divine Persons are not three Gods but One. This is not comprehensible by the human mind. This is a Mystery, He has revealed to us so that we may worship Him thus, in Faith and loving gratitude.

**Today's Gospel comes** from the story of Jesus' night-time encounter with Nicodemus. Jesus was speaking to the seeking Pharisee about the Father Who had sent Jesus (the Son). Then, after the Last Supper, He told the Apostles about the about the Holy Spirit Who would be sent to them as a comforter and Advocate by the Father at Jesus' request AFTER His death and rising. Further, Jesus assures the Apostles that the Father has given him (the Son) all that He has and that Jesus, in

turn, has given to the Holy Spirit all that he has received from the Father. In this we see the unity of purpose among the Three Persons of the Trinity.

**Frank Sheed's explanation of the Holy Trinity:** The great apologist **Frank Sheed** used to give a very **interesting** explanation of the Most Holy Trinity. He started by thinking about our **own** human nature. Each one of us **exists**, but since we are **spiritual**, we also have an **idea** of ourselves. We can **think about** ourselves, **reflect** on ourselves, and **know** ourselves. This is why human beings are the only animals on earth who **write diaries**.

That's similar to what happens in the **relationship** between God the **Father** and God the **Son**. God the Father is **spiritual**, able to know Himself. He has an **Idea of Himself**. But, since His knowledge is **limitless**, unlike ours, that Idea of Himself is **perfect** and **perfectly complete**. But to be perfect, the Idea, or the Word, has to **share** in God's own **existence**; the Word actually has to **be** a Divine Person. And so, God the Father, from all eternity, knowing Himself, eternally **engenders the Son**, the perfect Image of the Father. And then, of course, since both the Father and the Son are **Infinitely Good and Beautiful**, as soon as They **know** Each Other, They also **love** Each Other. Even we, when we **think** about ourselves, begin to **know** our selves as we really are (a life-long process), and then to **love** ourselves that way, we **want the best** for ourselves. We are **glad** that we exist. But God's Love, like his Knowledge, is limitless, Infinite, and so this Love, too, has to be Infinite and so **intense** and so full that it shares **fully** in the Divine existence; this Love is a Divine Person - the **Holy Spirit**. We who are creatures of matter and spirit speak of God's Mystery in terms of time --- before, after, later, sooner -- and separate events, but in God there is no change and all simply IS. We and the angels are equally finite creatures, though they are pure spirits who will never change or die, and we, on the other hand, being matter and immortal spirit are conceived, born, live and then must die (only once!) and face the Personal Judgement Jesus will pass on each of us at that final moment. If we choose to fail that Judgment, reject God and hate Him, we are driven into the Hell we have freely, persistently chosen. If we pass that Judgment, some of us will go next to purgation to remove any slightest stain of attachment to sin that remains in us, before we join the Righteous and enter the Heaven of everlasting life. This is the mystery we

profess **each week** when we affirm our belief in the Son of God, who is "*consubstantial* [one in Being] *with the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God*" and in the Holy Spirit, who "*with the Father and the Son is **worshipped and glorified.***" (E- Priest) -- (**Holy Trinity:** Our God is far beyond the grasp of our intellect. All we can say is: God, the Father, our Father, is Omnipresent, and so I live in Him because the universe exists in Him. The Son, Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us -- and so He is always with me; I live with Him. The Holy Spirit is the One Who inspires us all from within us, and so The Holy Spirit lives in my heart. *There is only one God. We live in Him; He lives with us and He lives in us. Yahweh - "I am Who am" - He is all* (Joe Vempeny) --- The great 20th-century Catholic Theologian *Father Karl Rahner, SJ*, was allegedly asked once by a priest friend how he should explain the Holy Trinity when preaching. Father Rahner's reply was simple: "*Don't!*" The mystery we celebrate in today's feast defies not only explanation but also finite created intellectual comprehension (OSV)

### **Exegetical notes 1) The development of the Trinitarian doctrine in the**

**Church.** The oldest doctrinal formulation of the Church's belief in the Trinity is found in the **Apostles' Creed** which has served both as the basis of instruction for catechumens and as the Baptismal confession of Faith since the second century. Later, the **Nicene Creed**, originating at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), stated the doctrine more explicitly. This creed was introduced into our Western liturgy by the regional council of Toledo in AD 589. God has revealed to us three separate functions that are attributed to the Three Persons. He has told us that it is proper to attribute to God the Father the work of Creation, to God the Son the work of Redemption, and to God the Holy Spirit the work of Sanctification. Our knowledge of God as Trinity is made possible *by God*, Who has chosen to reveal Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As Father, God has brought forth the created universe, including our own being, through the Father's Only-begotten Son (Who was later made Incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and named Jesus). In Jesus, God **is** made known **as** One Who hears our cries, Who cares, Who counts the hairs on our head, and Who loves us so passionately that He became one of us in order to suffer for our sins, and even to die for us. As Spirit, God remains with

us and within us.

**2) The Triune God as seen in the Old Testament:** Since *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, was careful to protect His Chosen People from the pagan practice of worshipping several gods, the Old Testament books give only indirect and passing references to the Trinity, and the Jewish rabbis never understood them as references to the Holy Trinity. **Gn 1:26** presents God speaking to Himself: *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."* **Gn 18:2** describes how Yahweh visited Abraham under the appearance of three men, an event that the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates as the *"Trinitarian Experience of Abraham."* In **Gn 11:7**, before punishing the proud builders of the Tower of Babel, God says, *"Come, let Us go down among them and confuse their language."* These passages imply, rather than state, the doctrine of the Trinity.

**3) Clear doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament.**

- a) The Annunciation (**Lk 1:26-38**), describes how God the Father sends the Archangel Gabriel to Mary to announce to her that God the Holy Spirit, will *"come upon" her, that "the power the Most High will overshadow" her, that the Son will be made flesh in her womb: "Therefore, the Child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."*
- b) During the baptism of Jesus (**Mt 3:16-17**), the Holy Spirit is shown descending on Jesus in the form of a Dove, while the Voice of God the Father is heard from the clouds, saying, *"You are My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased"* (**Lk 4:22**).
- c) John (**Chapters 15 through 18**) presents the detailed teaching of Jesus on the Persons of the Holy Trinity.
- d) In the preaching mission given by the risen Lord to the disciples, Jesus commanded them to baptize people *"in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* (Confer also Mt 28:19; Jn 10:30).

**Trinitarian heresies:** It became necessary for the Church to define the mystery of the Holy Trinity more fully to counter certain heresies like the belief in three gods (**Tritheism**) or that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit referred not to real distinction within the Godhead but to different ways in which God relates to us (the heresies of **Monarchianism**, **Sabellianism**, **Atripassianism** and **Modalism**). The most grievous heresy that threatened the Church was **Arianism**, the view that only the Father is God while Jesus is a human creature, who, although superior to other humans in a relationship with the Father, was inferior to the Father. The Church called 4<sup>th</sup> century Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) to combat the Arian heresy and to produce creeds that defined the nature and relationship of the Trinity. We affirm our belief in the Trinity in the **Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople** which the congregation professes aloud just after the Gospel and Homily, in the liturgy of the Sunday Mass.

**The dogma of the Trinity, as defined by the Catholic Church**, is composed of three crucial elements: 1) God is **one substance** or being and **three Persons**. 2) The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are **three distinct Persons** within the Godhead. With regard to the **Trinity**, the word "Person" is a technical term that designates the **three distinct subsistent relations within the Trinity**: the Father (paternity), the Son (filiation), and the Holy Spirit (passive spiration). These three relations are rooted in the two "processions" of the inner life of the Trinity: The Father eternally begets the Son and The Holy Spirit proceeds (spirates) from the Father and the Son. The conclusion is that the three Persons of the Trinity are, therefore, differentiated from one another by virtue of the different relations they have to one another. (See [CCC 232, 234, 244, 237-38, 251, 261, 684, 732](#) and the [www.agapebiblestudy.com](http://www.agapebiblestudy.com) document "[Monotheism and the Mystery of the Triune God](#)").

**Life messages: 1) We need to respect ourselves and respect others**. Our living belief in the presence of the Triune God within us should help us to esteem ourselves as God's holy dwelling place, to behave well in His holy presence, and to lead purer and holier lives, practicing acts of justice and charity. This Triune Presence should also encourage us to respect and honor others as "*Temples of the Holy Spirit*."

**2. We need to be aware of God as the Source of our strength and courage.** Our awareness and conviction of the presence of God within us give us the strength to face the manifold problems of life with Christian courage. It was such a conviction that prompted the early Christian martyrs being taken to their execution to shout the heroic prayer of Faith from the Psalms: *"The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge "* (Ps 46:7,11).

3) **We need to see the Trinity as the model for our Christian families:** We are created in love to be a community of loving persons, just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One in Love. From the day of our Baptism, we have belonged to the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How privileged we are to grow up in such a beautiful Family! Hence, let us turn to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in prayer every day. We belong to the Family of the Triune God. The love, unity, and joy in the relationship among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should be the supreme model of our relationships within our Christian families. Our families become truly Christian when we live in a relationship of love with God and with others.

4) **We are called to become more like the Triune God through all our relationships.** We are made in God's image and likeness. Just as God is God only in a Trinitarian relationship, so we can be fully human only as one member of a relationship of three partners. The self needs to be in a horizontal relationship with all other people and in a vertical relationship with God. In that way our life becomes Trinitarian like that of God. Modern society follows the so-called "*I-and-I*" principle of unbridled individualism and the resulting consumerism. But the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity challenges us to adopt an "*I-and-God-and-neighbor*" principle: "*I am a Christian insofar as I live in a relationship of love with God and other people.*" Like God the Father, we are called upon to be productive and creative persons by contributing to the building up of the fabric of life and love in our family, our Church, our community, and our nation. Like God the Son, we are called to a life of sacrificial love and service so that we may help Him to reconcile others to Him, to be peacemakers among our families, in our workplaces, our communities and our schools, to put back

together that which has been broken, and to restore what has been shattered. Like God the Holy Spirit, we are called, with His help, to uncover and teach Truth and to dispel ignorance not in anger but in love. (***Trinitarian spirituality***: *The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that it belongs to God's very Nature to be committed to humanity and its history, that God's Covenant with us is irrevocable, that God's Face is immutably turned toward us in love, that God's Presence to us is utterly reliable and constant.... Trinitarian spirituality is one of solidarity between and among persons. It is a way of living the Gospel attentive to the requirements of justice, understood as rightly ordered relationships between and among persons.*" Dictionary of Spirituality)

**St. Francis Xavier's** favorite prayer was: "Most Holy Trinity, Who live in me, I praise You, I worship You, I adore You, and I love You." May the Son lead us to the Father through the Spirit, to live with the Triune God forever and ever. Amen.

### **JOKES OF THE WEEK:**

**1) Trinitarian Love, the essence of family life:** One day, while he was walking with God in the Garden of Eden Adam said, "Excuse me God, can I ask you a few questions?" God replied, "Go on Adam, but be quick. I have a world to create." So, Adam says, "When you created Eve, why did you make her body so curved and tender unlike mine?" "I did that, Adam, so that you could love her." "Oh, well then, why did you give her long, shiny, beautiful hair?" "I did that Adam so that you could love her." "Oh, well then, why did you make her so stupid? Is that too because I should love her?" "Well, Adam, no. I did that so that she could love you."

**# 2: Wisdom from child's mouth:** A priest went into a second-grade classroom of the parish school and asked, "Who can tell me what the Blessed Trinity means?" A little girl lisped, "The Blethed Twinity meanth there are thwee perthonth in one God." The priest, taken aback by the lisp, said, "Would you say that again? I don't understand what you said." The little girl answered, "Y'not thuppothed to underthtand; 't'rh a myhtewy." (Another version: **At confirmation, the Archbishop asked the children for a definition of the Holy Trinity. A girl answered very softly - "The Holy Trinity is three persons in one God."** The Archbishop, who was rather old and almost deaf, replied, "I

**didn't understand what you said."** And the young theologian standing in front of him replied: **"Well, Your Excellency, you are not supposed to. The Trinity is a mystery. Nobody understands it.)"**

**# 4: Trinitarian pastor:** One parishioner said, *"The mystery of the Trinitarian God is a lot like our pastor. I don't see him through the week, and I don't understand him on Sunday."*

**5) God Is Everywhere:** A pastor was trying to explain to a little Sunday school child that God is calling people everywhere in the world to believe in him. *"God is much bigger than we imagine him to be and God can use all of us in lots of different ways to do his work everywhere,"* the pastor said. *"God is everywhere!" "Everywhere?"* asked the little boy. *"Everywhere!"* said the pastor. The boy went home and told his mother, said the mother. *"God is everywhere! The pastor said so." "Yes, I know," "You mean He is even in the cupboard?" "Yes,"* said the mother. *"In the refrigerator -- even when we close the door and the light goes out?" "Yes,"* said the mother. *"Even in the sugar bowl?"* the lad asked as he took the lid off. *"Yes,"* said the mother, *"even in the sugar bowl."* The boy slammed down the lid and said, *"Now I've got Him."*

### **31 Additional anecdotes:**

**1) Trinity prayer of Tolstoy's hermits:** Three Russian monks lived on a faraway Island. Nobody ever went there. However, one day their Bishop decided to make a pastoral visit to learn more about their religious life. But when he arrived, he discovered that they did not know even the Lord's Prayer. So, he spent all his time and energy teaching them the Our Father and then left them, satisfied with his pastoral visit. But when his small ship had left the island and was back in the open sea, he suddenly noticed the three monks walking on the water – in fact they were running after the ship. When they approached it, they cried out, *"Dear Bishop we have forgotten the Lord's Prayer you taught us!"* The Bishop, overwhelmed by what he was seeing and hearing asked them, *"But dear brothers, how then do you pray?"* They

answered, “*We just say, there are three of us and there are three of you, have mercy on us.*” The bishop, awestruck by their sanctity and simplicity said, “*Go back to your island and be at peace.*” [Adapted from Leo Tolstoy- ***The Three Hermits***” (Russian: Три Старца), a short story by Russian author Leo Tolstoy (Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy), was written in 1885 and first published in 1886 in the weekly periodical *Niva* (*нива*).]

**2) The world’s biggest mysteries scientists still can’t solve:** Ghost ships, alien contact, and technology, all built thousands of years before their time, still remain mysteries, unexplained by modern science. Ten such mysteries are the 1) Baghdad, or Parthian, Battery, date ca. 2000 years ago, capable of generating electric charge. 2) Terrifying SOS message about the death of all crew members from a from a Dutch freighter, the *SS Ourang Medan*. 3) The Dancing Plague of 1518 which made 400 women hysterically dance themselves to death. 3) Man, with no identity: A man who would soon adopt the name Benjamin Kyle woke up in 2004 outside of a Burger King in Georgia without any clothes, any ID, or any memories. 4) The WOW! Signal received by Jerry Ehman, a volunteer for SETI, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence from within the Sagittarius constellation near a star called Tau Sagittarii, 120 light years away. 5) The Voynich Manuscript: The writing is composed of over 170,000 characters written in patterns that resemble natural language. The sections appear to describe different topics of herbal, astronomical, biological, cosmological, and pharmaceutical nature. 6) Oak Island Money Pit: Oak Island is the home of what is informally known as the “Money Pit,” of Nova Scotia in eastern Canada. It is an incredibly deep hole of incredibly elaborate construction discovered in 1795. 7) The Antikythera mechanism is an incredibly intricate analogue computer found in a shipwreck near Greece in the year 1900. The device was used to determine the positions of celestial bodies using a mind-bogglingly complex series of bronze gears. 8) “Sea Peoples” — a technologically inferior, unaffiliated group of seafaring warriors who raided the lands and are often credited with the collapse of once-great civilizations in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean regions. 9) Turkey’s Göbekli Tepe is composed of more than 200 pillars, up to 20 feet in height and weighing up to 20 tonnes, arranged in roughly 20 circles, built more than 13,000 years ago, predating Stonehenge by more than 8,000 years. 10) The Confederate Treasury. The year was

1865, and the American Civil War was drawing to a close. As the Union army marched the final path to victory, the Confederate Secretary of the Treasury George Trenholm made one last effort to preserve the South's assets by liquefying all gold and silver and burying them in untraceable places along with jewels.

(<http://www.news.com.au/technology/science/archaeology/the-worlds-biggest-mysteries-scientists-still-cant-solve/news-story/aac87ed0bc09d5cd4dfba0d49f613334>) -- But these are no mysteries in comparison with the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

**3) Human mystery confronting divine mystery:** The story is told that Franklin D. Roosevelt and one of his close friends, Bernard Baruch, talked late into the night one evening at the White House. At last, President Roosevelt suggested that they go out into the Rose Garden and look at the stars before going to bed. They went out and looked into the sky for several minutes, peering at a nebula with thousands of stars. Then the President said, "*All right, I think we feel small enough now to go in and go to sleep.*" -- The wonder of the power and wisdom of God puts things in perspective for us humans. Creation was not an accident, but the result of a Divine Plan; planets, stars, plants, birds, fish, and animals were all created by God. And the climax of God's creation was humanity. (Fr. Kayala).

**4) Aggressively selfish child:** A report some years ago, allegedly by the Minnesota Crime Commission, painted a dark picture of human nature indeed, particularly with regard to small children. I quote: "*Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it – his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toy, his uncle's watch. Deny him these once, and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He is, in fact dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. This means that all children not just certain children are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free rein to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal a thief, a killer, or a rapist.*" [Cited in R. Scott Richards, *Myths the World Taught Me* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), p. 39.] -- It is to transform this self-centered human nature into a

selfless, loving, God-centered one that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity took human form as described in today's Gospel.

5) **"You ask me a riddle?"** Richard, Cardinal Cushing (d. 11/2/1970; Archbishop of Boston, MA), told of an occasion when he was administering last rites to a man who had collapsed in a general store. Following his usual custom, he knelt by the man and asked, *"Do you believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?"* The Cardinal said the man roused a little bit, opened an eye, looked at him and said, *"Here I am, dying, and you ask me a riddle?"* -- Call them riddles. Call them Mysteries. There are things about life and Faith we do not understand, but I am not going to suggest that you resign your effort to understand.

6) **"The undertaker!"** There is an old story about a henpecked husband who went to a psychologist. He was tired of being dominated by his wife. The psychologist told him, *"You do not have to accept your wife's bullying. You need to go home right now and let her know that you're your own boss."* The husband decided to take the doctor's advice. He went home and slammed the door on the way in. He confronted his wife and said, *"From now on you'll do what I say. Get my supper, then go upstairs and lay out my clothes. After I eat, I'm going out with the boys while you stay home. By the way, do you know who is going to tie my tie for me?"* *"I sure do,"* said his wife calmly, *"the undertaker!"* -- Some marriages are filled with conflict. So are some offices. Unfortunately, some Churches are filled with conflict as well. The feast of the Holy Trinity challenges us to cultivate the Trinitarian relationship of love and unity in our families and offices, parishes, and classrooms.

7) **"Bad things always come in threes."** An old adage warns, *"Bad things always come in threes."* Have you found this true in your own experience? That bad things (and good things), like to happen in community, in bunches? You say: we invent this connection by suddenly realizing that we got a flat tire on the same day that a computer glitch devoured our hard drive, shortly after our last contact lens just slid down the drain. I say: there seems to be something significant about the power of three. – On this Sunday, *"Trinity Sunday,"* the Church celebrates the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, affirming the Truth that good things also come in threes.

We recognize God as Creator (the Father), God as Redeemer (the Son), and God as Sanctifier (the Holy Spirit).

8) ***“But the machine can't ask me about my arthritis.”*** This true story is told of a woman named Mamie who made frequent trips to the branch post office. One day she confronted a long line of people who were waiting for service from the postal clerk. Mamie only needed stamps, so a helpful observer asked her, *“Why don't you just use the stamp machine? You can get all the stamps you need and you won't have to wait in line.”* Mamie said, *“I know, but the machine can't ask me about my arthritis.”* -- That's part of the wisdom of Christ's coming to our earth to live among us as described in John's Gospel (Jn 3: 16-18). He can relate to us in all of our daily needs. As we try to walk in Jesus' steps, we might do well to pray the ancient Irish poem set to an Irish ballad tune, which says,

*Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;*

*I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;*

*Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,*

*Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.*

9) ***A dumb debate on God:*** The following imagined debate for mute and deaf scholars is a warning to our pastors who think that they have explained Holy Trinity well to their flock on Trinity Sunday. The Jews and the Catholics are having a debate about God and decide that they will each send one representative to prove that their side is right. The only rule is that words are not allowed to speak. They decide on their representatives. The Vatican decides to send their best brain – Cardinal Ratzinger, the head of the Congregation on Faith and Morals – while the Jews pick one of their best rabbis to represent them. As a sign of respect, the Jews allow the debate to be held at the local cathedral. The time for the debate comes and the rabbi walks into the cathedral and up to the cardinal. The cardinal waves his hand towards the sky. The rabbi responds by slamming his fist into his palm. The cardinal holds up three fingers. The rabbi responds by holding up his middle finger. The cardinal then pulls out bread

and wine. The rabbi then reaches into a bag and pulls out two fish. At this point the cardinal holds up his hands and walks away.

After the debate the cardinal heads back to the *Vatican to talk it over with the pope and the other cardinals.* "Man, those Jews have it all figured out. First, I said to him, 'God is everywhere,' and he responded, 'God is right here.' I was taken aback. So, I held up three fingers representing the Holy Trinity, and he responded, 'We all worship the same one God.' I didn't know what to do so I showed him bread and wine representing the sacrifice of Jesus, and he responded with two fish, representing that God provides.

The Rabbi headed back to the synagogue to tell the others his version what had happened. "Man, you wouldn't believe those Catholics. The moment I walked in this guy with a weird hat gestures at me 'No Jews Allowed.' I said 'I'm staying right here.' Then he said, 'You have three minutes.' I said, 'Get lost.' Then he pulled out his lunch, so I showed him mine."

#### **10) "Why Isn't the Whole West Coast Included?"**

A woman wrote to *Reader's Digest* about an experience that she had when she took a young girl from India to Church with her. It was the eleven-year-old girl's first exposure to a Christian worship service. The young lady's parents were traveling on business and had left her in the care of their American friends. The little Hindu girl decided on her own to go with the family to Church one Sunday. After the service was over, they went out to lunch. --- The little girl had some questions. She said, "I don't understand! Why isn't the West Coast included, too?" Her Christian friends were puzzled and asked, "What do you mean?" She responded, "You know. I kept hearing the people say, 'In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the whole East Coast.'"

**11) "God Is Everywhere:"** A pastor was trying to explain to a little Sunday school child that God is calling people everywhere in the world to believe in Him. "God is much bigger than we imagine Him to be, and God can use all of us in lots of different ways to do His work everywhere," the pastor said. "God is everywhere!" "Everywhere?" asked the little boy. "Everywhere!" said the pastor. The boy went home and told his

mother, *"God is everywhere! The pastor said so."* "Yes, I know," said the mother. *"You mean He is even in the cupboard?"* "Yes," said the mother. *"In the refrigerator -- even when we close the door and the light goes out?"* "Yes," said the mother. *"Even in the sugar bowl?"* the lad asked as he took the lid off. "Yes," said the mother, *"even in the sugar bowl."* The boy slammed down the lid and said, *"Now I've got Him."*

**12) "What?"** Jesus said, *"Who do men say that I am?"* And his disciples answered and said, *"Some say you are John the Baptist returned from the dead; others say Elijah, or other of the old prophets."* And Jesus answered and said, *"But who do you say that I am?"* Peter answered and said, *"Thou art the Logos of the Father, the Son Whom the Father loved from eternity and Whom the Holy Spirit, the eternal Personification of the love between the Father and the Son, begot on the Virgin Mary."* And Jesus answering, said, *"What?"*

**13) "I'm surprised at you!"** An English teacher of a 21-sophomore high school class put a small chalk dot on the blackboard. He then asked the class what it was. A few seconds passed and then someone said, *"That is a chalk dot on the blackboard."* The rest of the class seemed relieved that the obvious had been stated, and no one else had anything to say. *"I'm surprised at you,"* the teacher told the class. *"I did the same exercise yesterday with a group of kindergartners and they thought of 50 different things the chalk mark could be: an owl's eye, a cigar butt, the top of a telephone pole, a star, a pebble, a squashed bug, a rotten egg, a bird's eye, and so on."* -- The older students had learned how to find a right answer but had lost the ability to look for more than one right answer. The Holy Spirit helps us, in His wonderful Wisdom, to see more than we might have seen by ourselves. The Spirit's vision allows us wonderful options for expansion and new possibilities. It is the Spirit's Wisdom that reveals the Word to us. It is also the Wisdom of the Spirit that shows us our sin, which guides us, which instructs us, and which leads us in the way to Life Everlasting.

**14) Trinitarian design for medieval cathedrals:** When the architect and engineer Aldo Spirito was commissioned to design a cathedral for the Archdiocese of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, West Africa, he used a number of architectural elements, as was the tradition of the builders of the medieval cathedrals, to reinforce the truths of our

Faith. Among those elements is the fact that the basic structure of his cathedral is triangular, so as to state dramatically the fundamental truth of Christian Faith: *God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

**15) The Sundial:** A missionary from Africa, on his home-leave, came across a beautiful sundial. He thought to himself, *“That sundial would be ideal for my villagers in Africa. I could use it to teach them to tell the time of the day.”* The missionary bought the sundial, crated it and took it back to Africa. When the village chief saw it, he insisted that it be set up in the centre of the village. The villagers were thrilled with the sundial. They had never seen something so beautiful in their lives. They were even more thrilled when they learned how it worked. The missionary was delighted by everyone’s response to his sundial. He was totally unprepared for what happened a few days later. The people of the village got together and built a roof over the sundial to protect it from the rain and the sun! -- Well, I think the sundial is a lot like the Holy Trinity, and we Christians are a lot like the African villagers. The most beautiful revelation of our Faith is the teaching about the Holy Trinity, namely, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. But instead of putting the teaching to work in our daily lives, we have built a roof over it, just as the villagers did over their sundial. For many of us the Trinity seems of little practical value, when it comes to our daily lives. We treat it more like an ornament of our Faith. (Mark Link in *Sunday Homilies*; quoted by Fr. Botelho).

**16) Jesus’ brother, Isukiri, died in Jesus’ place on the cross and Jesus went to Japan :** While visiting one of the members of one of the congregations I served some years ago I was offered a cup of coffee, and while I sat in the lounge waiting, I noticed something unusual. On a table there was what appeared to be a shrine. Inside was a Buddha statue with candles and flowers and food and other symbols. As we sipped coffee, I asked about the display on the table expecting to hear a story about an overseas trip and souvenirs. Instead, I heard a story about this person’s involvement in the cultic Japanese religion Mahikari and how she felt that what she was learning through this religion complemented and supported her Christian Faith. She told me how it taught her about karma, reincarnation, ancestor worship, and making food offerings to the spirits of the departed, and so on. She told me that Jesus’ brother, Isukiri, died in Jesus’ place on the cross, that Jesus went to Japan when he was 37

and he died there when he 106. The amazing thing about all this, is that this person saw no conflict between what she confessed on Sunday mornings when she said the Apostles' Creed with us and what she did the rest of the week as she prayed before the shrine in her lounge. This reminds me of the young man who asked if he could go into the Church to pray. Before the pastor could respond, he quickly added, *"By the way, what kind of Church is this? Not that it makes any difference. I don't follow any particular religion. Whenever I pass a Church or a mosque, I go in say a prayer and plug into the Divine. Any God will do!"* -- *"Plug into the Divine,"* as if it were magic, a kind of pill that will keep us safe and sound! Today's feast reminds us that our God is a Triune God, one God in Three Persons. (Rev. Gerhardy).

**17) Exploring the mystery of Holy Trinity:** Explorers and the pioneer families did solve the mystery of what was out there beyond the coastal strip. In fact, people have been exploring the mysteries of our world on many fronts – medicine, technology, and what is out there in space. Where there is any kind of a mystery, people will try to solve it. But there are some Mysteries that will always be Mysteries. Today, Trinity Sunday, we come up against one of those Mysteries - God. Who is God? Where is God? What is God? I can't touch Him. I can't say how big He is. I can't see Him. The early Christians started talking about a Triune God. This wasn't to make God more logical and understandable and acceptable to human ways of thinking. In fact, the idea of the Trinity intensified the Mystery and awesomeness of God. They observed that Jesus had a unique relationship with the Father and that the Holy Spirit had a unique relationship with the Father and the Son. Against all sorts of odds, against all human logic, and in the face of mounting opposition, the Church maintained that Jesus Christ is true God, equal with the Father, and that the Holy Spirit is God, equal with the Father and the Son. Who is God? He is our Heavenly Father Who made us, takes cares of us and calls us His dear children. Who is God? He is Jesus Christ Who gave His life on the cross to re-establish our relationship with God. He reveals the way to God and to eternal life. Who is God? God is the Holy Spirit in us giving us Faith in God and guiding us in our daily walk as a Christian. -- Faith in the TriUne God acknowledges the might and majesty of God but, at the same time, trusts in His care and intimate knowledge of our needs and of what is happening in our lives. *"O LORD,*

our Lord, the majesty of Your Name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens”(Ps 8:1). Let us make this our prayer: "Lord God, in spite of our unbelief and lack of understanding of Who You are, show us Your new way of living. Amen." (Rev. Gerhardy).

### **18) Holy Trinity prayer (Fr. De Mello version of Tolstoy's *The Three***

**Hermits**: When the Bishop's ship stopped at a remote island for a day, he decided to use the time as profitably as possible. He strolled along the seashore and came across three fishermen mending their nets. In Pidgin English they explained to him that, centuries ago, they had been Christianized by missionaries. "We, Christians!" they said, proudly pointing to themselves. The bishop was impressed. Did they know the Lord's Prayer? They had *never heard* of it. The bishop was shocked. How could these men claim to be Christians when they did not know something as elementary as the Lord's Prayer? "What do you say, then, when you pray?" the bishop asked. "We lift eyes in heaven. We pray, 'We are three, You are three, have mercy on us.'" The bishop was appalled at the primitive, downright heretical nature of their prayer. So he spent the whole day teaching them to say the Lord's Prayer, and he succeeded although the fishermen were slow learners.

Months later the bishop's ship happened to pass by those islands, and the bishop, as he paced the deck saying his evening prayers, recalled with pleasure the fact that on that distant island were three fishermen who were now able to pray correctly, thanks to his patient efforts. While he was lost in thought he happened to look up and noticed a *spot of light* in the east. The light kept *approaching* the ship and, as the bishop gazed in wonder, he saw three figures walking on the surface of the water towards the boat. The captain stopped the ship and all the sailors leaned over the rails to see this amazing sight. When they were within speaking distance, the bishop recognized his three friends, the fishermen. "Bishop!" they exclaimed, "*we are so glad meet you! We heard your boat go past island and came hurry, hurry to meet you.*" "What do you want?" asked the bishop filled with wonder seeing them walking on water as Jesus did. "Bishop," they said, "*we so sorry. We forgot that lovely prayer you taught us. We remember only this much: 'Our Father in Heaven, holy be your name, your kingdom come' . . .the rest we forgot. Please teach us whole prayer again.*" The bishop felt

humbled. "Go back to your homes, my good men," he said, "and each time you pray, say your Holy Trinity prayer, 'We are three, You are three, have mercy on us!'" (Fr. Anthony de Mello S.J., *The Song of the Bird*, adapted from Tolstoy's original story, *The Three Hermits*).

**19) "Welcome!"** There is a beautiful Russian icon of the Blessed Trinity painted by a monk named Rublev. The monk, Andrei Rublev (c. 1360 – 1430), was a medieval Russian who painted Orthodox icons and frescoes. His *Trinity* icon is considered the greatest of its kind, and one of the finest works of religious art ever created, depicting a wordless conversation among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is based on an earlier icon known as the "*Hospitality of Abraham*" illustrating Genesis 18 which depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (see Gn 18:1-15) sitting around a table. The painting is full of symbolism and is often interpreted as an icon of the Holy Trinity. A dish of food lies on the table. But the thing that immediately strikes you is the fact that at the front of the table there is a vacant place. The vacant place is meant to convey openness, hospitality and welcome towards the stranger and outsider. --- That vacant place is meant for each one of us, and for all the human family. It signifies God's invitation to us to share in the life of the Trinity. God doesn't exclude us. He invites us to come in and sit at His table. He wants to share His life with us. (Flor McCarthy in *New Sunday & Holy Day Liturgies*; quoted by Fr. Botelho).

**20) We don't need to understand God to allow Him to take over our lives**

Thomas Edison, the inventor, once remarked: "*We don't know what water is. We don't know what light is. We don't know what electricity is. We don't know what heat is. We have a lot of hypotheses about these things, but that is all. But we don't let our ignorance about these things deprive us of their use.*" -- The truth of that statement is real. Most of us do not know how an electric light works, how a telephone or a TV works, but this does not prevent us from using them. Let us try to apply the same common sense to our Faith in the doctrine of the Trinity. (John Pichappily in *The Table of the Word*; quoted by Fr. Botelho).

21) **"Holy, Holy, Holy":** Today's "signature" Hymn is familiar to all of us. It begins,

***Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!***

***Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;***

***Holy, Holy, holy, merciful and mighty,***

***God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity.***

22) **Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity Becomes a House of God:** No one understood this better than Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity. She grew up in France in the late eighteenth century, the daughter of a successful military officer who died of a heart attack while she was still only a girl. She was an extremely strong-willed and temperamental child. Her frequent fits of rage were almost uncontrollable, and she was known as the "little devil." This began to change after her first Communion, when she was eleven. That afternoon she met for the first time the prioress of the nearby Carmelite convent. The nun explained that the girl's name, Elizabeth, meant "house of God," and wrote her a note that said: "Your blessed name hides a mystery, accomplished on this great day. Child. Your heart is the House of God on earth, of the God of love." From then on, recognizing that God had taken up residence in her soul, she waged a holy war against her violent temper. She didn't win overnight, but she did win, eventually, and she also discovered her vocation to become a Carmelite herself. Her mother didn't like the idea, however, and made her wait until she was twenty-one. She won friends of all ages during those years of waiting, singing in the parish choirs, arranging parish day-care service for families that worked in the local tobacco factory, and also winning several prizes for her skill at the piano. She died only five years after entering the convent, at the age of 26, after having suffered horribly for months from an extremely painful disease of the kidneys. But her realization that the Blessed Trinity dwelt within her enabled her to suffer with patience and even with joy. As she wrote to her mother: "The bride belongs to the Bridegroom, and mine has taken me. [Jesus] wants me to be another humanity for him in which he can still suffer for the glory of his Father, to help the needs of his Church:

*this thought has done me so much good.*" -- Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity had discovered the intimate, loving presence of God that He so eagerly wants to reveal to all of us. (*E-Priest*).

**23) "As there is fire and water in this brick"** According to Tradition, when St. Spyridon of Trimithund was asked at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) how three can simultaneously be one, he responded (with a little Divine help!) by taking up a brick and squeezing it. From the now-soft clay in his hands, a flame flared up, while simultaneously water flowed downward. *"As there is fire and water, and clay in this brick,"* said St. Spyridon, *"in the same way there are three persons in the one Godhead."* (The great 20th-century Catholic theologian Father Karl Rahner, SJ, was supposedly asked once by a priest friend how he should explain the Holy Trinity when preaching. Father Rahner's reply was simple: *"Don't!"*) -- The mystery we celebrate in today's feast defies not only explanation but also created intellectual comprehension. The preacher is left to reaffirm our core belief that God, remaining One, is somehow also Three in that Oneness – TriUne. The preacher is further challenged to help his congregants (and himself) understand why that truth might matter in their daily lives.) <https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/DailyTake/Article/TabId/736/ArtMID/13645/ArticleID/22072/June-11-2017-The-Incomprehensible-Mystery-of-the-Trinity.aspx>.

**24) The universal testimony:** A good illustration of the Trinity comes from world-renowned scientist Dr. Henry Morris. He notes that the entire universe is Trinitarian by design. The universe consists of three things: matter, space, and time. Take away any one of those three and the universe would cease to exist. But each one of those is itself a trinity. Matter = mass + energy + motion. Space = length + height + breadth. Time = past + present + future. Thus, the whole universe witnesses to the character of the God who made it (cf. Psalm 19:1).

**25) Another simple explanation:** *"St. John of Damascus, a great Eastern theologian of the eighth century, said we should think 'of the Father as a root, the Son as a branch, and of the Spirit as a fruit, for the substance of these three is one.'* He also said, *'Think of the Father as a Spring of Life, begetting the Son like a River and the Holy Ghost like a sea, for the spring, the river and the sea are all one nature.'*" (<https://anastpaul.com>)

**26) A Divine Mystery in our world of mysteries:** The world, we live in, is not as simple as it might seem to be. It is full of unexplained mysteries that raise several questions that remain to be answered even today. There are many such mysterious phenomena, which find no satisfactory explanation in science. Many of the mysteries keep us wondering, asking questions, and striving to learn more about our world; others are simply amusing. They have perplexed individuals all throughout history. The Bermuda Triangle is believed to possess certain supernatural powers due to which aircraft and ships coming in its vicinity disappear. Moreover, researchers have never been able to find the exact cause of the disappearing of vessels and aircraft, neither have they been able to trace the lost objects. The Bermuda Triangle remains an unexplained mystery. Unidentified objects, abbreviated as UFOs, are disk-like objects seen in the night sky. Some of them glow and have lights. People claim to have seen them float in sky or fly across speedily. It is said that they could be spaceships or vehicles of the aliens traveling to Earth. Archaeologists have found about thirteen crystal skulls in parts of Mexico as well as Central and South America. They are 5000 to 36000-year-old human like skulls made out of milky crystal rock. Long years of research might be able to find answers to some of them while many will remain being unresolved for generations to come. -- If there are so many things that cannot be explained in this world, how can we expect to explain the mysteries relating to the Creator of this world? Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. It is a mystery that cannot be comprehended by the human beings. (Fr. Bobby Jose).

**27) The “Dogmatic” Sarcophagus**, also known as the "*Trinity Sarcophagus*" is an early Christian sarcophagus dating to 320–350,<sup>[2]</sup> now in the Vatican Museums (Vatican 104).<sup>[1]</sup> The three persons of the Trinity are portrayed as three bearded males, in the act of creating Eve while Adam lies nearby in a deep sleep. It was discovered in the 19th century during rebuilding works at the Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura, (Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Wall), in Rome, Italy. Together with the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, it one of the most important examples of Christian-Roman sculpture of the Constantinian era. It draws its name from its clear references to the dogmas of the Council of Nicaea (325), in particular to Christ being consubstantial with God the Father, as shown (for example) by the scene of a figure

with the appearance of Jesus between Adam and Eve, though whether the figure is to be understood as Christ or God the Father is less clear – the dogmatic point works either way. (Sanchez Archives & Wikipedia).

**28) Icon of the Trinity by Andrei Rublev:** In 1425 AD, Andrew Rublev, a Russian monk, painted an icon of the Trinity in which three angelic figures are seated around a small table, engaged in intimate conversation. On the table is a chalice, in the background is a tree. The trio of figures and the tree are reminiscent of the visit which angelic messengers paid to Sarah and Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. As they enjoyed the generous welcome of Sarah and Abraham, the messengers announced the unexpected birth of Isaac (Gn 18) whom Abraham would later be willing to sacrifice if God willed it (Gn 22). -- From his knowledge of iconography, Henri Nouwen has suggested that Rublev intended this angelic appearance to prefigure the Divine Incarnation by which God sends the unexpected gift of His Son, who sacrifices himself for sin and gives new life through the Spirit. Rublev wished that his icon would offer his fellow monks a way to keep their hearts centered on God, Father, Son and Spirit, despite the chaotic world of political unrest in which they lived. (Sanchez Archives).

29) **The Most Holy Trinity:** During his third voyage to the Americas, Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) landed on an island in the South Caribbean Sea on July 31, 1498. He called this island **Trinidad** to honor the Most Holy Trinity. Later, when Spanish explorer Alonso De Leon (1639-1691) established a Spanish mission in Texas, he gave the name **Trinity** to the 550-mile-long river that flows through Texas from north to south. Like Columbus and De Leon, we continue to honor the Most Holy Trinity by giving the name **Trinity** to some churches and educational institutions. Also, once a year, we celebrate the feast of the **Most Holy Trinity** to remember and honor the three persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is the story of a wealthy Jewish man who was also a militant atheist. He had a son he sent to **Trinity School** to get a good education. After attending the school for a few days, the son said to his father casually, *“Dad, now I know what Trinity means.H”* *“What does it mean?”* the father asked him with a suspicious look on his face. *“It means there are three persons in God,”* the boy replied, *“the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”* Alarmed at the prospect of his son becoming a believer, he said, *“Son, I am going to tell*

*you something now, and I want you to remember it always. Forget the Trinity. There is only one God, and we don't even believe in Him.*" -- This militant atheist was not an atheist. However, he had a tough time understanding the mystery of the Holy Trinity. That is why he was so vehement in his denial of the reality of the Holy Trinity. We cannot blame him for his lack of understanding of the Holy Trinity because we don't really understand this mystery either. Yes, we don't really understand this mystery. However, we genuinely believe in it because it has been revealed to us through the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, in our personal lives, we continue to experience the love of our heavenly Father, the saving grace of the Son, and the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. Our faith, as well as our personal experience, assure us that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Fr. Jose P CMI).

**30) “Encourage one another”** Richard G. E. Beemer, in a recent article on the International Special Olympics, told a touching story about the power of encouragement. The “*Special Olympics*,” of course, are athletic contests for people old and young who are physically or mentally handicapped. It was Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the sister of President John F. Kennedy, who launched these “*Olympic*” contests in 1963 as a builder of morale among the disadvantaged. Perhaps many people are unaware that one of the late President’s sisters suffered a mental handicap. Hence, Mrs. Shriver’s particular interest.) In 1979, the Special Olympics, previously participated in only by Americans, were declared international. Held that year at Brockport, New York, they attracted contestants and “fans” from several nations. In these contests, as in earlier ones, winning was not the aim; finishing was. Everybody who finished was cheered and hugged just for making the effort. One of the events at Brockport was a wheelchair race. A thunderstorm broke out during the race, but the racers reached their goal anyhow. With one exception. The slowest of the “wheelers” had an accident. He hit some wet ground and fell out of his chair. What did the audience do? “*No one went to his aid,*” Beemer reported. “*Instead, the crowd cheered wildly for him to get back into his wheelchair, and after what seemed a very long time, he finally struggled back onto the wheelchair and finished the race.*” One of the spectators noticed that a coach sitting in the sidelines was crying. “*Are you all right?*” he asked him. The trainer answered wiping away his tears, “*I’ve been coaching and*

*working with that boy for over two years, trying to teach him to climb back onto his chair should he ever fall out. This is the first time he's ever made it.*" The coach was crying for joy, not for sorrow. Encouragement had turned the trick. Father George Farrell, a Jesuit priest who took part in the Baton Rouge I.S.O. of 1983, had this comment: *"These kids need the sense of accomplishment, the sense of self-worth. It gives you a great thrill knowing you've helped them to do something important."* -- When St. Paul told the Corinthians to "encourage one another," (today's second reading), he did not have only "special" people in mind. Specials are not the only ones helped by cheering. All of us need a pat on the back. All of us "love to be loved." -Father Robert F. McNamara.

**31) Holy Trinity in art:** The earliest known representation of the Trinity is preserved on the "Dogmatic Sarcophagus", an art work from the mid-fourth century C.E. which can now be seen in the Lateran Museum in Rome. The three persons of the Trinity are portrayed as three bearded males, in the act of creating Eve while Adam lies nearby in a deep sleep.

Paintings from the early tenth century C.E. depict the popular legend that Patrick, apostle to Ireland (ca 389 C.E.- ca. 461 C.E.), used a shamrock in order to teach the Trinity to those he proselytized.

A tenth century artist rendered the Trinity as three virtually identical figures, each wearing a cruciform nimbus. This work is on display in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris whereas another late fifteenth century C.E. painting exhibited in the Louvre Museum in Paris images the Father as an elderly figure, the Son as the risen Christ, emerging from the tomb, with the Spirit being breathed forth from their lips as a dove.

Rarely represented in North American folk art, the triune persons of the One God were depicted by *David Bixler (1828 C.E.) as present and active in the heart of a pious person.*

In 1425 C.E., Andrew Rublev, a Russian monk painted an icon of the Trinity in which three angelic figures are seated around a small table, engaged in intimate

conversation. On the table is a chalice, in the background is a tree. The trio of figures and the tree are reminiscent of the visit which angelic messengers paid to Sarah and Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. As they enjoyed the generous welcome of Sarah and Abraham, the messengers announced the unexpected birth of Isaac (Genesis 18) whom Abraham would later be willing to sacrifice if God willed it (Genesis 22). From his knowledge of iconography, Henri Nouwen has suggested that Rublev intended this angelic appearance to prefigure the Divine Incarnation by which God sends us the unexpected gift of his son, who sacrifices himself for sin and gives new life through the Spirit. Rublev wished that his icon would offer his fellow monks a way to keep their hearts centered on God -- Father, Son and Spirit, -- despite the chaotic world of political unrest in which they lived. He wished that those who contemplated his icon would hear its gentle invitation to join the Holy Trio in their intimate conversation and to recognize that *“the movement from the Father toward the Son and the movement of both Son and Spirit toward the Father becomes a movement in which the one who prays is lifted up and held secure.”* (Henri Nouwen, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord, Praying With Jesus*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana: 1988). -- Underlying each of these pictorial renderings of the Trinity is one common factor: the human experience of the mystery of God who has chosen to reveal himself as triune. (Sanchez Files).

## **FR. TONY KADAVIL**

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