

TRINITY SUNDAY May 31. 2026

Have you ever recited the prayer of the bored church go-er?
Now I lay me down to sleep;
The preacher's long, the subject deep.
If he ends before I wake,
I pray you, friend, give me a shake.

Today's feast of the Most Holy Trinity might induce sleep in many congregations. Scripture doesn't give us a great story, a captivating scene, to illuminate what the term Trinity might mean.

Lent and Easter seasons offered lots of those kind of stories: Jesus fasting for forty days in the desert, then wrestling with the Satan.

His entry into Jerusalem on the donkey, the crowds waving palm branches.

His overturning the counting tables of the money changers, as he declared the Temple a house of prayer for all nations, that they had turned into a den of thieves.

The trial and crucifixion, the resurrection appearances.

All wonderful scenes that focus the eyes of our minds and resonate in the depths of our hearts.

In contrast, the Feast of the Trinity seems to point to a more abstract, indeed abstruse, theological proposition, that God is Three yet One, Father, Son and Spirit, yet God undivided.

The formula may stimulate and excite your curiosity; I hope so; but it may equally drive you to contemplate the back of your eyelids.

St. Ignatius offers us an imaginative way into this Feast. He suggests we picture the Persons of the Trinity gazing upon Their creation:

with love for its goodness,
with dismay at the evil marring its beauty, and
with compassion for human beings—made in the divine image, yet enchained by the powers of violence and cruelty and death which they have unleashed by their sinful rejection of God.

And the Divine Persons decide to send the Son to save the world.

They decide to send the Son
to enter that world as one of us
and risk all that violence and cruelty and death,
and absorb it all into His own body,
so as to break the cycle of revenge and retaliation.

This decision, in human time, reveals the dynamism of the life of the Trinity outside of time and beyond time.

For all eternity, each person of the Trinity constantly pours Themself out and gives Themself back to the Others.

Eternally, the Father begets the Son, and from them eternally proceeds the Holy Spirit, who is Love Personified, the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father.

In time, God creates the cosmos through the Son, Who is the Wisdom and the Word of God; and They send the Spirit to hover over the waters of creation, to bring order out of chaos, life out of sterility.

And in the fulness of time, the Father sends the Spirit to overshadow the Virgin Mary, and sends the Son to become flesh of our flesh, Jesus.

And when Jesus has completed his work of teaching and healing and laying down His life, the Father sends the Spirit to raise Him up from Death.

And with His Ascension to the Father, Jesus the Risen Lord, Son of God and Son of Mary, inserts into the very life of the Trinity our humanity. His Ascension forever changes the very life of God, for now God's own nature includes our humanity.

That realization might keep you up at night!

The return of the Risen Christ to the Father inaugurates the outpouring of the Spirit, in whose power Christ fulfills His promise to be with us until the end of time.

As we celebrated last week at Pentecost, the Spirit completes the Son's mission to reconcile Heaven and earth.

And that is what brings us to this Feast of the Trinity.

When Jesus says---to His first disciples, to our beloved dead, to each of us---that in going to the Father, He is preparing a place for us, He means a dwelling place for each of us in the very heart of the Trinity.

Jesus is not a heavenly carpenter, building condos for us in the clouds. He is more like a mid-wife, leading us from the womb of this existence, through the birth-canal of death, and birthing us into the very life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

That's what is behind the imagery of Jesus' opening the gates of Paradise.

Jesus, the Risen Lord, from the right hand of the Father, pours out Their Spirit on all humanity.

That Holy Spirit enlivens men and women with God's own life, making them witnesses and disciples.

Jesus then leads them home to the Father, who chooses them as adopted sons and daughters and opens to them His home and his heart.

Filled with the Spirit of the Risen and Ascended and ever-present Lord, we participate in, we become one with, that love that flows between Father and Son. Our human nature becomes part of, and one with, the divine nature of the Trinity.

So, when we are gathered here, we are with the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, and with all our beloved dead who dwell now in the very heart of God. Their own risen humanity is integral to the very nature of God.

And their lives, and deaths, call to us, and remind us of our own absolute future, towards death, through death, beyond death, into God's own life.

With them, we eat and drink, and remember and anticipate:

We eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ, as they did;

We remember the command of Jesus, to do this in memory of Him, as they did;

And we anticipate sitting at the Supper of the Lamb, as they do now.

Our secular calendar last weekend set aside Memorial Day to remember, because it is so easy to forget our past and those who lived it with us.

But the Church calendar celebrates Trinity Sunday, and every liturgy, because it's also so easy to forget our future, and those with whom we will live it: the Community of Divine persons who so love one another that They are One, and who so love us that they will make us one with them and with all who dwell in the heart of God.

There, all of us will be forever caught up in love, wonder and awe.

There we will live the promise envisioned by the hymnist:

Now the silence,

Now the peace,

Now the empty hands uplifted;

Now the kneeling,

Now the plea,

Now the Father's arms in welcome;

Now the hearing,

Now the power,

Now the vessel brimmed for pouring;

Now the Body,

Now the Blood,

Now the joyful celebration;

Now, the wedding,

Now the songs,

Now the heart forgiven, leaping;

Now the Spirit's visitation,

Now the Son's epiphany,

Now the Father's blessing,

Now, Now, Now.

And the people of God said, Amen.