

Savoring the Trinity

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Daniel 3:52-56

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

Jesus said to His disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Word, begotten of the Father, not made; in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit, a member of the Trinity, coequal with every other member, and acting inseparably with one another and interpenetrating each other, with only an economic subordination with the Father, yet causing no division which might make your substance no longer simple.” And Jesus responded, “Say what?”

Explaining the Holy Trinity is impossible because the Trinity is a mystery. For centuries, countless priests and deacons have dreaded preaching on the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity because as men we have a habit of wanting to figure things out so that we can control things. However, the Trinity is a mystery, which we cannot figure out and cannot control. We’ve tried though!

There are countless analogies that people have come up with trying to explain the Holy Trinity. While it’s important for theologians to come up with analogies that express various aspects of the Trinity and other religious mysteries, ultimately every analogy comes up short. So, rather than trying to intellectually figure it out, the mystery of the Trinity invites us to move from the head to the heart, and simply *savor the mystery*.

Ignatius of Loyola offered a very beautiful way to savor various aspects of our faith. He had a prayer practice that he called the “colloquy,” which invites us to savor those things that we cannot fully understand. The basic practice of the colloquy is to take whatever is stirring in our hearts through prayer and have individual conversations—colloquies—with the Father, the Son, and Mary about it. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we ask for God the Father’s viewpoint and understanding about what we are experiencing in prayer. Then, we do the same for the Son. This, in and of itself, is a beautiful savoring of the Mystery and beauty of the Holy Trinity. Then, we have a colloquy with Mary.

The reason why Saint Ignatius includes Mary in the colloquy is not because he thinks she is part of the Trinity, but rather, because Mary is the most perfect *icon* of the Trinity. An icon is an image that presents the essence of what it depicts. Just so, in Mary we see clearly the work of the Holy Trinity. In the Gospel of Luke we read, “And the angel said to [Mary] in reply, ‘The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God’” (Luke 1:35). This one verse reflects the presence of the Trinity in the life of Mary—the *Holy Spirit* descended upon her, the power of the *Father* overshadowed her and the *Son of God* was conceived in her!

The Triple Colloquy can be adapted so that the three conversations are with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well. Regardless, the point of the colloquy is to deepen our awareness of what God is doing in our life and in our prayer. By doing this, we approach the Trinity with our hearts rather than trying to figure it out with our heads. The triple colloquy is a beautiful way for us to savor the reality of the Holy Trinity.

SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISES:

- ✚ What is God doing right now in your life? Take time to have three separate conversations with the Father, the Son, and Mary about what God has been doing recently in your life. Begin your prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to lead your speaking and your listening.