

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Every year when Trinity Sunday rolls around preachers are reminded that it is almost impossible to preach about the Holy Trinity without lapsing into heresy. This is because the Doctrine of the Trinity is so nuanced and complex, and in efforts to explain the Trinity using examples and illustrations, we invariably make minor mistakes and foster misunderstandings.

I prefer, therefore to rely on a favorite definition about “mystery”—and that is “a mystery is something that can be experienced even if it cannot be explained.” So, for example, love is a mystery. How would you explain “love” to an alien from outer space? Would you say, “It is a warm feeling inside” and they would say, “You mean like when you drink hot chocolate?” Or you might say, “It is a close bond with another person.” and they might say, “You mean like superglue?” You get my point. Love, like every mystery, is something that can be experienced even though it cannot be explained.

Likewise with the Trinity. We experience the Trinity all around us. The whole world is structured on the Trinity. Elements have three forms: solid, gas and liquid. Music has three basic components: melody, harmony and rhythm. There are three primary colors that combine to form a vast array of colors. The examples from the world around us can be multiplied by using our powers of observation and imagination.

The Trinity we experience most simply and profoundly is the trinity of our body, mind and spirit. Like the three persons of the Holy Trinity our body, mind and spirit are distinct and yet not distinct. Body is one with Spirit and Mind. Mind is one with Body and Spirit. Spirit is one with Body and Mind.

We are healthy and whole as we experience balance and unity in Body, Mind and Spirit. We are out of balance, wounded and disordered when sin disrupts the unity and balance that God desires to build within us.

The life of faith is a life that is ordered in our Body, Mind and Spirit in an intimate, sacramental union with God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is why the invocation of the Holy Trinity is woven into the liturgy of the church. We begin in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and end with the Trinitarian blessing. The liturgy is structured in three parts: Opening, Ministry of the Word, and Ministry of the Eucharist. We echo the trinity in the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, and the Creed itself follows a Trinitarian structure.

Therefore, if the Trinity is “a mystery that can be experienced even if it cannot be explained” then the primary way we enter into that experience is by opening our minds and hearts to the deep truths embedded in the liturgy. If the Trinity seems remote and confusing why not set aside the quest to explain, and enter instead the quest to experience?

Your Pastor,  
Fr. Longenecker