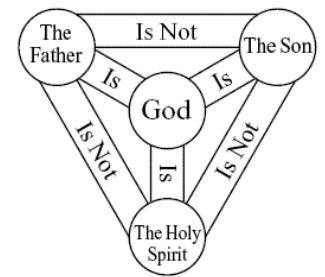


# Scripture Study

## Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity– Cycle A



### Opening prayer

Exodus 34:4b-6,8-9

([Psalm] Daniel 3:52-56)

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

**John 3:16-18**

### Overview of the Gospel:

- Today's gospel comes right after a conversation Jesus had with a certain Jew named Nicodemus (John 3:1-15). Nicodemus is described as a teacher, or rabbi (verse 10), and a Pharisee (verse 1), a member of a strict religious party of the time. He was probably also a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews (verse 1).
- Jesus has just finished explaining to Nicodemus the necessity of being born again (or from above) by water and the Holy Spirit, i.e., by baptism (verse 5). Nicodemus has a hard time grasping the concept since he continues to think in earthly terms (verses 4 and 9). Jesus invites him to see God's plan through heavenly eyes.
- In a veiled manner, Jesus further reveals to him that as part of that plan, Christ will be "lifted up" (on the Cross and into heaven) so that Nicodemus and all who believe in Jesus can have eternal life.

### Questions:

- Where do you see the Persons (or the actions of the Persons) of the Most Holy Trinity in this Sunday's readings? What is the effect of each Person of the Trinity?
- Did God send his Son to judge or to save (John 3:17; Rom 5:8; CCC 734)? What kind of love is this (Ephesians 4:2-5; John 15:13; CCC 218-21, 604-5)? What is God (1 John 4:8)? How was this manifested to us (1 John 4:9-10; CCC 457-58)? What should be our response?
- From this reading, what stands out to you about God? About what he wants you to do? About how a person is saved? About how a person is condemned? What does it mean to "believe" (verses 15-21, 36)?
- What does Jesus mean when he talks about eternal life? What does it call to mind for you? What does eternal life mean to you in regards to duration? Quality? Activity?
- What does it mean to be "saved? From what? For what? What is the alternative? When did you begin to see God as saving you, rather than condemning you?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 232-267, 219, 444, 458, 679**

### Closing Prayer

**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!**

*Our Lord does not come down from Heaven every day to lie in a golden ciborium. He comes to find another heaven which is infinitely dearer to Him - the heaven of our souls, created in His Image, the living temples of the Adorable Trinity. -St. Therese of Lisieux*

# "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son"

**Scripture:** *John 3:16-18*

**Meditation:** What is the true nature of love? True love costs dearly! God is the perfect lover because he treats us as his beloved and he gives us the most perfect gift of all. *"To ransom a slave God gave his Son"* (ancient prayer from the Easter vigil liturgy). God sent his Son into the world to free us from slavery to sin and the power of death. Jesus willingly laid down his life for our sake and salvation. His death on the cross of Calvary was both an offering to God and the atoning sacrifice for our sin and the sin of the world. Perfect love holds nothing back but gives all. Jesus gave himself completely out of love for his Father and for us sinners.

John tells us that God's love knows no bounds (John 3:16). His love is not limited to a few or to a single nation. His love both embraces the whole world and is personally directed to every person created in "his image and likeness". God is a loving Father who cannot rest until his wandering children have returned home to him. Saint Augustine says, *God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love.* God gives us the freedom to choose whom and what we will love. Jesus shows us the paradox of love and judgment. We can love the darkness of sin and unbelief or we can love the light of God's truth, beauty, and goodness. If our love is guided by what is true, and good and beautiful then we will choose for God and love him above all else. What we love shows what we prefer. Do you love God above all else? Does he take first place in your life, in your thoughts, and actions?



Jesus revealed to his disciples the great mystery of our faith – the triune nature of God and the inseparable union of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus' mission is to reveal the glory of God to us – a Trinity of persons – God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and to unite us with God in a community of love. The ultimate end, the purpose for which God created us, is the entry of God's creatures into the perfect unity of the blessed Trinity. The Jews understood God as Creator and Father of all that he made (Deuteronomy 32:6) and they understood the nation of Israel as God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). Jesus reveals the Father in an unheard of sense. He is eternally Father by his relationship to his only Son, who, reciprocally, is Son only in relation to his Father (see Matthew 11:27). The Spirit, likewise, is inseparably one with the Father and the Son. The mission of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit are the same. That is why Jesus tells his disciples that the Spirit will reveal the glory of the Father and the Son and will speak what is true. Before his Passover, Jesus revealed the Holy Spirit as the "Paraclete" and Helper who will be with Jesus' disciples to

teach and guide them "into all the truth" (John 14:17,26; 16:13). In baptism we are called to share in the life of the Holy Trinity here on earth in faith and after death in eternal light.

Clement of Alexandria, a third century church father, wrote: *"What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the universe, one Logos (Word) of the universe, and also one Holy Spirit, everywhere one and the same; there is also one virgin become mother, and I should like to call her 'Church'."* How can we personally know the Father and his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ? It is the Holy Spirit who reveals the Father and the Son to us and who gives us the gift of faith to know and understand the truth of God's word. Through the Holy Spirit, we proclaim our ancient faith in the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ until he comes again. The Lord gives us his Holy Spirit as our divine Teacher and Helper that we may grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God. Do you seek the wisdom that comes from above and do you willingly obey God's word?

*"May the Lord Jesus put his hands on our eyes also, for then we too shall begin to look not at what is seen but at what is not seen. May he open the eyes that are concerned not with the present but with what is yet to come, may he unseal the heart's vision, that we may gaze on God in the Spirit, through the same Lord, Jesus Christ, whose glory and power will endure throughout the unending succession of ages."* (prayer of Origin, c. 185-254)

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