

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
(Year C)

<i>First Reading</i>	Proverbs 8:22-31
<i>Response</i>	O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
<i>Second Reading</i>	Romans 5:1-5
<i>Gospel Acclamation</i>	Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; to God who is, who was, and who is to come.
<i>Gospel</i>	John 16:12-15

Every year, after the great Season of Easter is brought to its completion with the Feast of Pentecost, the church moves back into Ordinary Time, or time through the year. And during this season of Ordinary Time, we have several great solemnities, several great feast days that mark particular mysteries of the faith. One of these feasts celebrates the central mystery of the Christian faith: The Mystery of the Holy Trinity. The mystery of the fact that God, the one God, is also three divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One substance but three persons; and so on that day, on this day, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, the church gives us certain readings to help open up this mystery of the most Holy Trinity, which is not just the central mystery of our faith, but also the most profound and the most difficult for us to grasp.

So before I get into this I just want to begin with a quick caveat here. Trinity Sunday, as it's called, is one of the most dreaded days by many preachers because it's really difficult to convey (and it's impossible for us to comprehend fully) this mystery of one God in three divine persons. How do we "square that circle" (so-to-speak)? But the Trinity isn't a math problem. It really is a divine mystery that God has revealed to us, that's central because it tells us not just what God has done (like all the other mysteries of faith: the Passion, the mystery of Eucharist, the mystery of our redemption; these are things that God has done, either in the order of creation or in the order of redemption), but the mystery of the Trinity tells us who God is from all eternity. And because Christianity is about entering into a relationship (a covenant) with this triune God, the Trinity stands at the very center. So we don't

want to trivialize it, we don't want to reduce it just to the level of a math problem, or its complexity or its difficulty. What we want to try to do is focus on the readings from sacred scripture and see what they reveal to us about this mystery and how they can help us to enter into it more deeply in our minds and in our hearts.

So, in order to begin the explanation of the mass readings for today, I just want to call to mind the language with which we approach this mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, especially through the Creed. So if you think about it, in the Creed, the history of the creeds of the Church, especially the Nicene Creed that we say almost every Sunday of the year, these creeds originated in the Church's struggle to defend and define the mystery of the triune God, the mystery of the Trinity. So for example, in the Creed we profess that we believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,. Then we say some interesting things. We say, "begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father." Where do we get this idea from? That he's begotten, but he's not made? And why do we have to profess that? Why do we have to confess that every time we say the Nicene Creed in mass?

Well, if you know the historical background to that creedal affirmation, you'll know that it goes back to the 4th Century and to debates within the early Church over a famous heresy known as the Arian heresy. And what Arius argued, was that the 2nd person of the Trinity, the Son, was not eternal, but that he was a creature, that he was created by the Father. The famous summary of Arius' position...by the way, Arius was a priest in the diocese of Alexandria in Egypt in the early 4th Century A.D. He was a very famous theologian, he was very popular, he was highly respected, he was regarded as devout, but he had this idea that the Son was not always the Son, that the Son was a creature, created by the Father. He was the highest of all creatures, but he was in fact created. So in response to that claim, that there was a time that the Son was not, great saints like Athanasius rose up to defend the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, that Jesus isn't just fully human, he's also fully divine, in the sense that he, as Son, has existed from all eternity. That he's equal to the Father in his substance, in his divine nature.

And all of this is swirling around behind the creed, in which we confess that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, only begotten Son. He's begotten, he's not made. He's not created, because he's of the same substance as the Father (in Latin, consubstantial). In Greek, *homoousios*, "of the same 'usios'", the same being, the same essence, the same substance as the Father. In other words, he's eternally the Son.

Now, you might think, “Okay Dr. Pitre, you’ve already lost me here”, but let me just put it this way, real briefly. This is why the first ecumenical council of Nicea came together. It’s because literally everything is at stake in whether Arius is right or if he’s wrong. Because see, if Arius is right, and there was a time when the Son was not, if the Son’s not eternal, then there is no Trinity. There is no triune God from all eternity. There’s just one God, who created a Son at some point in time. But if the Son was always the Son, then that means the Father was always the Father, and therefore, the relationship between the Father and the Son, the love between them (which is the spirit) is an eternal mystery. In other words, God is always triune, that’s who he is in his deepest essence from all eternity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — although the debate at that point focused mostly on the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son. So when Arius denies that the Son existed always, when he said that the Son was created, he’s in essence denying the Trinity. And when the Church defended the eternal Sonship of the Son, it was defending the eternal nature of the Trinity, that God has always been one God, three divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Now, that’s the background to the Creed. And if you don’t understand it, you’re really not going to understand the readings for today. So that’s why I had to lay that out first. So with that background in mind, now let’s go and we’ll look at the readings for Trinity Sunday in Year C, and ask ourselves what they reveal about the mystery of this triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So the gospel for today (we’ll start there) is from John 16:12-15. It’s a short passage, but if you know anything about the Gospel of John, you’ll know that of all four gospels, it is the one that’s most explicit about the mystery of the Trinity. That’s why in these debates in the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries about the Trinity (in the early Church), the Gospel of John was front and center; because John and John alone gives us Jesus’ final discourse to the Apostles in the upper room during the Last Supper. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us about the words of institution, but John gives us the discourses of Jesus to the Apostles in which he speaks very explicitly about the fact that after he goes away, he’s going to send the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to come to them and to lead them into all truth. And that’s the reading that we have for today, so listen to what John 16:12-15 says. Remember, this is Jesus talking to the Apostles at the Last Supper:

"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he

will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."¹

Now I have to feel a little bit of sympathy here for priests, deacons and bishops who have to preach on this particular text for Trinity Sunday, because it's kind of cryptic, isn't it? For one thing it's really short, and it's a little mysterious here. What is Jesus talking about? So let's just walk through it and break it down point-by-point to see if we can shed some light on it.

First, notice here, that Jesus is talking about mysteries. Not mystery novels, or that kind of mystery, but a mystery of something that is beyond our natural ability to perceive or to understand. Something "hidden" — that's what *mysterion* means — that is unveiled or revealed. So what Jesus says to the Apostles here is, "I've been with you for three years. I've taught you all kinds of things, but you know what? There are some things I haven't spoken to you yet about, because you can't handle them. You can't bear them now. You're not ready to grasp them." So, I think this is really important because sometimes in our day and time it's so easy to just think, "Oh yeah, I know Christianity, I got it. I've read the Catechism (maybe). I went to Catholic school, I understand Christianity, I've got it. And I'll either accept it or reject it." Well, no. Jesus is really clear that there are levels of understanding, that there are certain teachings that are more basic and accessible, like some of the things he says on the Sermon on the Mount (or the Ten Commandments), and then there are other aspects of Christianity that are much higher or deeper, more profound, more difficult to penetrate. They really are divine mysteries, and we can't even grasp them with our human intellect unaided by grace. We need to be led into the mysteries. We need someone to guide us into these mysteries of the Faith. And we would do well in contemporary times (both in evangelization and in catechesis) to recapture that sense. Not everybody can handle the mysteries of Christianity, that there's a kind of path (or pedagogy) to leading people into a deeper and deeper understanding of what the scriptures reveal. And so here he's saying to the Apostles, you're not ready for it yet. You can't handle the truth (so-to-speak).

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible citations/quotations herein are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994.

But, he's going to, secondly, send them the spirit of truth, who will enable them, who will equip them to understand these mysteries that at this point they don't quite grasp. So that's where he promises to send the Holy Spirit. So you can see here, this is why this reading is chosen for Trinity Sunday, because it's at the Last Supper that Jesus reveals the Holy Spirit, not just as a power (so-to-speak), but as a person who's going to come to the Apostles and guide them into all the truth. So that's the spirit's role. That's why Jesus calls him the Spirit of Truth. Elsewhere in John's gospel he'll call him the Paraclete, which means the advocate or the comforter or the counselor, you can translate it in any way, but here, it's as Spirit of Truth. So he focuses on the Holy Spirit's agency, the Holy Spirit's role in unveiling the mysteries, helping the apostles to understand things that they can't understand on their own.

Third, when the Holy Spirit comes, he is going to be an agent of revelation. Notice what the Holy Spirit's going to do. He's going to do two things. First, he's going to declare to you the things that are to come. In other words, he's going to (so-to-speak) reveal the future, this is prophecy; but he's also going to take what Jesus has said and declare it to the disciples. In other words, he's going to interpret the words of Christ for them that they couldn't understand during Jesus' public ministry, and he's going to open them up so that they now can grasp what they actually mean. So this is a fascinating aspect of the life of the Apostles. That during Jesus' public ministry, he's saying things to them that he knows they're not going to understand because they haven't yet received the gift of the spirit that will only come to them in Pentecost, after the Resurrection and Ascension into heaven. So he's planting seeds that will only flower and bear fruit later. I can't help but identify with this personally. Just in my own spiritual life, and I'm sure many people can attest to this, the first time you sit down and read the Bible, if you don't get it all, relax, okay? You're not supposed to. You're not going to and you're not supposed to. There is a pedagogy, a method of teaching, that Jesus himself uses, in which he starts with basics and then he leads his disciples into greater and greater and greater understanding of the truth. Now, on this side of the Resurrection and Ascension, we do have the grace of the fact that we've already received the Holy Spirit in Baptism and (hopefully) in Confirmation as well (the sacraments of initiation). So we're kind of one step ahead of the Apostles in that sense, but on the other hand, there still is a process of being lead into the truth.

The early Church referred to this process as mystagogy. When we talk about catechesis, catechesis means "to echo in the ear", that's the Greek, it's from *katēcheō*.

So we proclaim the good news and it echoes in our ears. Mystagogy was the other name for teaching the faith to people, and it means to “lead into the mysteries”. *Mysterion* in Greek means mystery. *Agō* in Greek means to lead. So the other idea is that we would lead people deeper and deeper into mysteries that they don’t yet understand. In my experience (at least), contemporary Catholic catechesis (with the exception of the RCIA program) has almost completely lost this idea of mystagogy, the idea that people need to be lead into the mysteries of the faith. A lot of people think, “well I went to Catholic school, so I understand Catholicism”, or “I took a couple of courses on religion in high school”, or (you know) “I just grew up Catholic, therefore I know”. Maybe, but maybe not. Have you been lead into the mysteries? We do need someone to lead us into them. If the Apostles needed it, certainly we do as well. And that person, the divine person who does that is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth whom Jesus is promising to the Apostles here.

A final aspect of this gospel, which is obviously short but quite rich, is the equality of the Son and the Father. Jesus implies it here when he says, “All that the Father has is mine.” Now think about that. The Father is the one who creates the universe. So what belongs to the Father? Literally, all things; all things visible and invisible, all things in Heaven and on earth. All earthly creatures as well as to the highest of the Seraphim; they all belong to the Father. And what does Jesus say to the Apostles? “Oh yeah, by the way, they belong to me too.” So he’s claiming there, an “equality” with the Father, it’s an implicit equality; which is another dimension of the mystery of the Trinity. It’s not just that the Son is eternal, it’s not just that there are three persons in one God, it also has to do with the equality of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God, the Son is God, the Father is God; equal in dignity. All things belong to the Father and to the Son as well. And again, I think that’s something that’s easy for us to overlook. In our day and time there’s a real emphasis put on Jesus’ humanity, on the fullness of his humanity. And that’s totally appropriate, because he is true man. At the same time, we tend to underemphasize (in our day and time) the equality of Jesus (as the eternal son) with the Father. That this man walking around in Galilee, falling asleep in a boat, getting tired by Jacob’s well (in the Gospel of John), also is the one to whom the entire universe belongs, because it comes into being through him, as the eternal Son. That’s pretty heavy. That’s what Jesus is revealing to the Apostles here in the upper room. “All that the Father has is mine, and you know what else? There’s another divine person, The Spirit of Truth. I’m going to send him to you, and he’ll lead you into all the truth so you can grasp this.”

So we see the implicit mystery of the Trinity in the gospel for today. Jesus speaks to the Father (number 1), he speaks of himself as equal in authority to the Father, and then he speaks of a third divine person, the Spirit of Truth, who will come and lead the Apostles into all truth, who will take what Jesus has given them and explain it to them after his death and his resurrection. So there's the Trinity in the gospel reading for today.

Now, you could just stop there, and maybe you might want to stop there, because it might be all anyone can handle, but I've got to do all the readings so we're going to go back to the first reading for today and we're going to look at the Old Testament text as well. Now, I have to confess to you as I turn back to Proverbs 8:22 and following, that I was a little disgruntled in preparing this video because the Church selected Proverbs 8 as the Old Testament reading. Now, why would I be disgruntled? Well, the reason is, if you know anything about the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, you'll know that Proverbs 8:22 and following (the text we're going to read today), was the passage that Arius himself, the great arch heretic, the priest of Egypt, who denied the eternal nature of the Son, this was the passage in the Old Testament that he went to. This was the go-to passage for the Arian heretics in arguing that the Son was created, and that there was a time when he did not exist. So with that in mind, I want you to read the passage with me and then I'll walk you through it and show what it means and what it doesn't mean. Now I'm reading the Revised Standard Version translation here, and there's a translation issue, so be aware that I'm just going to read the text and then I'll unpack it.

Proverbs 8, just to put it in context, is about the wisdom of God. And Proverbs is one of these books that scholars call the wisdom literature in the Old Testament. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, The Wisdom of Solomon, the Book of Sirach, these books belong to a particular literary genre, in that they are wisdom literature. They focus on growing in wisdom, growing in understanding. They're one of the easiest parts of the Old Testament to read because they're universal, in a sense of their significance and application. But in Proverbs 8, the book personifies the wisdom of God and describes the role that the wisdom of God had in the creation of the world. So let's read it together and then we'll see how Arius interpreted it, and we'll see how a Catholic would interpret it, in light of the trinity:

The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I [I, meaning Wisdom] was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when

there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth; before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the sons of men.

Who's speaking here? Well, the person speaking is "wisdom". In Hebrew, *hochmah*. In Greek, that gets translated as *sōphia*. So like "philosophy", "philo" "sofia", is "friendship with wisdom". Everybody says it's "love of wisdom", it's actually "friendship with wisdom". So, you can see here, if you know the book of Genesis, this sounds like the account of creation, God marking off the Heavens and the Earth, dividing the sky from the land and the waters. So this is the creation of the world which we usually think of as something that just God does, alone. But here, Proverbs is revealing that as God is creating the world, there's another agent of creation, who is working (so-to-speak) alongside him, and that is *hochmah* (wisdom, *sōphia*), the wisdom of God, through whom the world is made. Now, who is this person? Well, if you know from the New Testament, for example, 1st Corinthians 1:24, St. Paul tells us that Christ is the wisdom of God, he uses the exact same term here to describe Christ. So since ancient times, this text has been read as a reference to Christ. That Christ was present at the beginning of creation, and that the world did not come into being through the Father alone, but the Father and the Son operated together in bringing the universe into being. So that's a very ancient interpretation of this text, it goes all the way back to St. Paul (for example), saying that Christ is the wisdom of God. So when you see wisdom personified in the Old Testament, who is it referring to? Who is this other divine agent? Well, ancient Church Fathers would say, it's the Son. It's Christ, the wisdom of God. However, if you look at that first verse, Arius, the arch heretic, the heretic from the 4th Century that I mentioned at the beginning of the video, interpreted it differently. Although the New American Bible says "The Lord possessed me" at the beginning of his work, the Revised Standard Version says "The Lord created me". Now those are very different verbs, right? Did the Lord possess wisdom at the beginning of creation? Or did he create wisdom at the beginning of creation? Well, in order to

clarify this I'm going to have to do some Hebrew and Greek, so just bear with me for two seconds. I'll try to make this as clear as possible.

Let's start with the Greek. Although Proverbs wasn't written originally in Greek, it was being read in Greek at the time of Trinitarian debates in the 4th Century. Most ancient Christian writers, like Athanasius and Arius, were reading the Old Testament in Greek. It was a translation called The Septuagint. And in The Septuagint, Proverbs 8 there actually does say, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his works". The Greek verb there is *ktizō* and it means "to create". So you can see why Arius, reading this passage would say, aha, if this refers to the Son, through whom the world was made, well then that must mean he was created. He was a creature. And if he was created, then by definition it means that there was a time when the Son didn't exist, because all creatures (including angels) have a beginning point in time. And so they got into a large debate about that and many of the fathers, like St. Athanasius, said "well in context though, the word 'create' here seems to mean some different things. Like if you look there (it's later on, verse 25) it says "I was brought forth" and it seems as if all creation itself is coming into being through wisdom, so how can wisdom itself be a creature? So there's a large debate about that. And that's all very important, but what's fascinating for me is that if you go back to the original Hebrew of Proverbs 8, "create" is not a good translation of the original Hebrew term. Remember, Proverbs was written in Hebrew. So in Hebrew, it says (literally), "The Lord" (that's the name for God, "YHWH", the Lord) *qanah* (he *qanah'd* me at the beginning of his works). And the Hebrew word *qanah* literally means "to get" or "begot" or "beget". And you might say, "Well how do you know that, Dr. Pitre?" Well it's easy, just look at the first time it's used in the book of Genesis. If you go back to Genesis 4:1, you actually know this already even if you don't know Hebrew. In Genesis 4:1, it says Adam knew Eve, his wife. She conceived and bore Cain, saying 'I have *qanah*', I have "gotten" a man with the help of the Lord. So Cain's name in Hebrew is from the Hebrew word *qanah*. Hear the similarity? Cain, *qanah*? Which literally means "to get", or "beget". "I've gotten a Lord from man."

So the Hebrew word for create is *bara'*. You can hear it is a very different word. *Bara'*, *qanah*, they're not the same word. "Create" is used in Genesis 1, you know this one too: "In the beginning, God created (*bara'*) the Heavens and the Earth." So it's two very different verbs. One's used for the creation out of nothing in Genesis 1, the other one is used when Eve talks about having begotten a son, namely Cain. So if you go back to Proverbs, what's fascinating is, in its original Hebrew

language, there isn't really a problem like there is in the Greek translation of whether wisdom is created or uncreated, because the word "create" isn't used there, it's the word *qanah*. "The Lord begot me" or "got me" at the beginning of his work. Now, there's still some mystery there as to exactly what that means. But it's really important because it shows you a biblical foundation for the language of the Church in its Faith in describing the mystery of the Trinity. So, fast forward now to the creed, think about it for just a second. Think about the Gospel of John and think about the creed. What do we say about Jesus? The Gospel of John says that he is the only begotten son (*monogenēs*). It never calls him the "created" Son. And secondly, in the creed, the Church takes that language and says about the Son:

"we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, begotten of the Father from all ages (so notice, "begotten from all ages", so he's eternally begotten), God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten (that's the Catholic faith), not made (that's the Arian heresy).

So why do we say that every Sunday? Because we're confessing one thing and rejecting something else. So if he was made (or created), then there was a time when he didn't exist and he's just a creature, which means he's not true God. But if he's begotten from all eternity, before all ages, what does that mean? That means he is eternally being begotten of the Father. In other words, he's eternally (so-to-speak) "coming from the Father as a Son". So the Father is always Father and the Son is always Son, and they're both true God because they're both eternal, divine persons. That's what we're confessing in the creed. So, on further reflection, I actually love that the Church picks Proverbs 8 for the 1st reading for this Feast of the Trinity, because it gives us an opportunity to explain who Jesus is as the eternal wisdom, as the eternal Son, who is eternally begotten of the Father, that never began. Although in our experience a son is begotten in time (he has a beginning), in the triune God, that "begetting" takes place from all eternity. Now, can we wrap our brain around that? No, because we can't wrap our brain around eternity. But we can confess the truth of it, that there was never a time when he was not.

Secondly, this reveals to us that (this is really important) Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the eternal Son through whom the whole universe was created. He's the one through whom the world was made. He's equal with the Father. He's God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same substance, the divine eternal substance, as the Father. And of course we go on to

confess the Holy Spirit as well. That's the mystery of the Trinity. That's who Christ is. That's who he's revealing himself to be at the Last Supper, and that's who Proverbs (in signs and shadows) is anticipating him to be. We can't fully understand Proverbs until Jesus comes and explains to us what it means, but that's the reading for today.

Alright, okay. So, let me end with just a couple of quotes from the living tradition here. So, two great doctors of the Trinity, one of them Gregory Nazianzus. He was a 4th Century Church Father, he's actually called Gregory the Theologian. He's a Doctor of the Church, and he's usually regarded as the Doctor of the Trinity. And this is what he says about our reading for today. St. Gregory the Great. This is what he says:

Our Savior had some things that, he said, could not be borne at that time by his disciples... And again he said that all things should be taught by the Spirit when he would come to dwell among us. Of these things, one, I take it, was *the deity of the Spirit himself*, made clear later on when such knowledge should be seasonable and capable of being received after our Savior's restoration... For what greater thing than this did either he promise, or the Spirit teach?"²

If you want to read about the mystery of the Trinity, read the five Theological Orations of Gregory. They're considered to be a great summary of the Trinitarian faith. They're not easy, but they're awesome. So notice, what is Gregory saying here? Well what are these "things" that the disciples couldn't handle at that point? Well one of them, Gregory says, is the divinity of the spirit itself. Or should I say, the divinity of the spirit himself; the idea that the spirit is also a divine person. During his public ministry, Jesus had brought them into the mystery of his divinity, but they still had not yet received the mystery of the third divine person, which would be the Holy Spirit. So that's one of the things that Jesus hadn't yet revealed to them, that they wouldn't understand until Pentecost.

St. Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on John says something similar, when he writes:

So our Lord presented all matters of faith to his disciples, but not in the way he later revealed them, and especially not in the way they will pre-

² Gregory Nazianzus, *Theological Oration 5*(31).27; trans. NPNF 27:326

sented in eternal life. Accordingly, *what they could not bear then was the full knowledge of divine things, such as the knowledge of the equality of the Son and the Father* and other things of that sort which they did not then know.³

So what's Thomas saying there? Well, by the 13th Century, Thomas' time, the mystery of the Trinity is fully developed, but what he's clarifying here is that the Apostles didn't grasp all that at this point in Jesus' public ministry. They don't quite yet understand the divinity of the spirit; they also don't yet understand the full mystery of the Trinity. That's what the Holy Spirit's going to come and do, lead them into the mystery of the Triune God.

Last quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 237), why is that even necessary? Why is it so necessary for there to be this mystery? What's the big deal with the Trinity? Well I'll end with these words. This beautiful expression of what we mean when we say the Trinity is a mystery:

The Trinity is a mystery of faith in the strict sense, one of the “mysteries that are hidden in God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God.” To be sure, God has left traces of his Trinitarian being in his work of creation and in his Revelation throughout the Old Testament.

Think here of the Proverbs 8 passage we just read. There are traces of the Trinity there, but it's not all clarified yet. It's going to take the Church and the Holy Spirit to clarify that.

But his inmost Being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel's faith before the Incarnation of God's Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, we cannot access the mystery of the Trinity simply through reason alone. We can't get there just by being really smart and looking at the world around us. God has to reveal it to us directly and immediately through the person of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit. And that my brothers and sisters is what we receive in the gift of baptism. There's a reason that we're baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; because at your baptism, you were given the illumination, the gift, the revelation, of being able to grasp, not

³ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, no. 2101; trans. F. Larcher, O.P.

through your intellect's power alone, but through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the truth of the triune God. So if you believe that God is in fact one God in three divine persons, then say a prayer of thanksgiving, because it's not something you acquire through your own intellect or knowledge. It's something that was given to you as one of the graces of your baptism. And it's a gift and a grace you recall every single time you make the sign of the cross, where you express the mystery of our faith; not just the mystery of Calvary, it's not just a cross, but it's a Trinitarian cross; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.