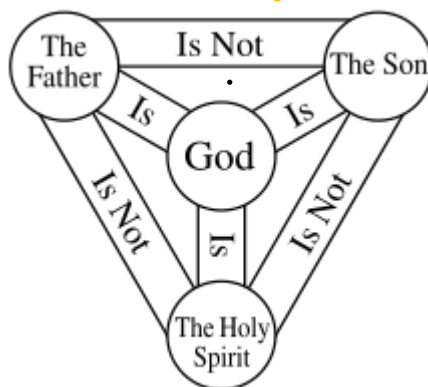


**ctkAlive! Scripture Study**  
**Feast of the Holy Trinity**  
**2023—A Cycle**



**What do I see?**

*As I study the above “is”/“is not” diagram, what is my first thought? In what ways do I find the diagram helpful in my feeble attempt to grasp this greatest of all mysteries?*

Image found at “Trinity” on [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity)

**Opening Prayer**

*(edited and abridged for use here)*

**Prayer to the Holy Trinity**

O most Holy Trinity,  
who dwell in my soul by your grace.  
Sanctify me more and more.  
Help me to *love* you more.  
Abide with me forever...  
as my true and lasting joy...  
in this life and the next.  
Amen

Source: Prayers to the Most Holy Trinity found at [iBreviary](https://www.breviary.com/)

**Introduction to the Feast of the Holy Trinity**

Our puny brains come close to exploding when we try to make sense of three distinct persons within the one God. The reality behind the human understanding of a trinity of persons exceeds the limits of our human minds. We prefer, instead, to isolate each “person,” hoping to make it easier to wrap our minds and hearts around the mystery. Wrestling with the nature of God becomes more “manageable,” when we isolate each person—Father... Son... Holy Spirit. If it’s any comfort, as far as we know, Jesus never sat his disciples down to explain the intricacies of the Trinity. He spoke of the Father and Holy Spirit as fact, letting his followers experience each person at different times—as we do. The most powerful manifestation of Spirit occurred during the Pentecost phenomenon after his ascension.

We will never fully grasp the spiritual “mechanics” of a trinity of persons within one divine reality. So, we fall back on reducing the mystery to a manageable form small enough to fit inside our human minds. The Trinitarian image at the top of this page encapsulates in its simplest human format the indefinable meaning of a Godhead of persons. It expresses what the Trinity *is*... and *is not*.

### Scripture Readings

Exodus 34: 4-6, 8-9 “The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed his name, ‘Lord.’”

Responsorial: Daniel 3: 52-55 “Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.”

2 Corinthians 13: 11-13 “Mend your ways. Encourage one another.”

John 3: 16-18 “God so love the world that he gave his only Son.”

### A Reading from the Book of Exodus (34: 4-9)

“Moses cut out two tablets of stone like the first [*which he had smashed*]. Early in the morning he went up to Mount Sinai, just as the Lord had commanded him and took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

“The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the Lord by name. The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed: ‘[I am] Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children and children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.’

“Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshiped, ‘If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for we are a stiff-necked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.’”

### Personal Reflection

In the generations that followed Moses, there was not just one set of ten commandments. Rather several sets existed at varied times and places in Israel’s history. Each expressed the requirements of the Covenant with Yahweh and the rules of life and behavior laid down by Moses. We find the best-known version in Exodus 20. This weekend’s reading presents another and more ancient set. Chapter 34 includes a version that prioritizes justice, liturgical rites, and feast days. These helped the Israelites maintain their religious identity, surrounded as they were by foreign nations who worshipped pagan gods.

In this moment of ultimate revelation, Moses’ generosity shone forth. He could not hoard this moment of intimate revelation. He begged Yahweh, ‘If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for we are a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.’”

“If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord....”

— Knowing how fickle I am at times in my relationship with God, how do I feel about being an object of God's "endless favor"? How hard is it for me to accept this biblical statement as true and unique to "little old me"?

### Responsorial: The Book of Daniel (3: 52-55)

*Glory and praise forever!*

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our fathers,  
be praised and exalted forever.

Blessed is your holy and glorious name,  
celebrated and exalted forever.

*Glory and praise forever!*

Blessed are you in the temple of your sacred glory;  
your praises are sung forever.

Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom;  
honored and glorified forever.

*Glory and praise forever!*

Blessed are you who fathom the depths,  
who are enthroned on the cherubim;  
praised and exalted forever.

Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven;  
praised and glorified forever.

*Glory and praise forever!*

### Personal Reflection

It's rare that a responsorial song does not come from the Book of Psalms. This is one of those times.

Around the year 200 BC/BCE, ultra-conservative Jewish traditionalists "circled the wagons." They saw that as the only way to hold fast to their ancient faith and traditions against creeping [Hellenization](#). In preserving the "old ways," traditionalists became rigid, dedicated to keeping any "modern" ways of understanding Yahweh from emerging.

The Book of Daniel dates from ca. 165 BC/BCE. It appears that author favored the ultraconservative [Hasidean movement](#) and its social and political theocracy led by Jewish priests. Members of this sect tried to keep the past alive amid growing Greek influence. Hasidean Jews emphasized Moses, the laws, and a style of religion that controlled every detail of the temple and its liturgies.

Counter to the Hasideans stood a younger generation of Jews, including priests. Their traditional Israelite heritage seemed passé and no longer in harmony with their spiritual and social needs. Without surrendering their native traditions, they looked for something more in accord with best of Greek culture, including the arts and international relations.

- Which among all the “blessed” lines in this reading/song resonates my heart?
- What primary message(s) will I take away from reflecting on these psalm-like verses?

### **A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (13: 11-13)**

“Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice, set things right, be encouraged, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ... and the love of God [*the Father*]... and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

#### Personal Reflection

This is one of very few passages in the New Testament that clearly speaks of God as *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*.

Toward the end of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul expressed a desire to revisit the community. When his life circumstances made this impossible, the community felt slighted. Paul had to confront “Judaizing” preachers—those insufficiently committed to Christ—who undermined his authority in the community at Corinth. Paul sent a messenger, but they treated him badly and rebelled against the apostle. Paul demanded the community’s submission to Christ alone. Titus, one of Paul’s most trusted assistants, later delivered this second letter and concluded his mission successfully. Upon Titus’ return, Paul felt reassured.

The basic content of this second letter? Paul expressed how he felt about the wavering community and what he had suffered from their lack of understanding and support. He prayed that his converts and all fellow Christians might share his love for the Trinity of Persons. Paul’s words of love and faith in Second Corinthians had a positive effect on the community at Corinth.

All in all, scholars believe that Paul may have written three or four letters to the Corinthians, with only two surviving.

- How hard is it for me to “keep hope alive” amid the challenges brought by each new day? How do I meet those challenges? What or whom do I rely on when my hope for better life circumstances begins to weaken?

### **The Gospel According to John (3: 16- 18)**

(Jesus said) “God loved the world. He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.”

#### Personal Reflection

[Fr. John Bartunek, LC](#) (Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ ) writes of this

passage: “You never really know someone until you know what’s in their heart—what motivates them, what they’re looking for, why they do what they do. ...Jesus lays bare the heart of God.

“The history of salvation, from the fall of Adam and Eve until the final judgment, revolves around the coming of Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Son of God. Why did he come? Because the Father sent him. Why did the Father send him? Because he ‘loved the world so much.’ He simply couldn’t bear to see us perish in our sins; he longed to share with us his everlasting life. God cares. And Jesus Christ is the definitive proof that he cares. He cares so much that he is willing to sacrifice his only Son to atone for the sins that have separated [us] from God, the source of all good things. We need look no further to find the very core of the gospel.... No hidden agenda, no selfish undertones—pure generosity. This is the heart of God, of the Lord who longs for our friendship.”

— Found online at [Catholic Exchange](#)

“God cares,” says Fr. Bartunek.

— *How deep is my conviction that God really cares about me and will not abandon me on my darkest days, when I can see no way forward?*

— *When did I suffer a prolonged period of absence from intimacy with God? Was it through family disruption? Physical pain? Emotional imbalance? Doubt about God’s existence... God’s love for me? When and how did restoration of spiritual equilibrium and faith return?*

## For Inspirational Listening/Viewing

### Listen

“[O Triune God](#),” a song to the Holy Trinity composed by [Ken Canedo](#) and performed by the [Sunday 7pm Choir](#)

“[Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty](#)” sung by [Audrey Assad](#), composed by [John Bacchus Dykes](#) (1823-1873)

“[You Are Loved \(Don't Give Up\)](#)” composed by [Tawgs Salter](#) and sung by [Josh Groban](#)

### Watch

Bishop [Robert Barron](#) on the [Meaning of the Trinity](#) (10 min)

The best “description” of the Trinity anywhere. Watch him (as the saying goes) “unscrew the inscrutable.”

### Journaling Prompts

Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do TODAY regarding...

(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships... and

(2) my life as an emissary of Christ, committed to bringing God’s love to the people

with whom I interact in person and on social media?

*Who needs to receive from me this week a moment of laughter and personal concern?  
Why do I hesitate?*

In light of this weekend's Scriptures, take time to write about events occurring in your life this week and what you see happening in the world.

### **Preview of Next Weekend's Scriptures**

Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Deuteronomy 8: 2-3, 14-16 "Do not forget the Lord your God."

Psalms 147: 1-4 "Praise your God, O Zion.... He has blessed your children within you."

I Corinthians 10: 16-17 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?"

John 6: 51-58 "I am the living bread that came down from heaven."

### **Closing Prayer**

*(adapted and abridged for use here)*

#### **A Prayer of Surrender to the Divine Will**

Most holy Trinity, Godhead indivisible,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
our first beginning and our last end...  
you have made me in your own image and likeness.

Grant that every thought of my mind,  
every word I speak,  
every affection of my heart,  
and all the actions of my being  
may conform to your holy will.

Having seen you veiled in appearance  
here below by means of faith...  
may I arrive at last to contemplate you face-to-face...  
in perfect and eternal vision... in heaven.  
Amen.

Source: Prayers to the Most Holy Trinity found at [iBreviary](#)



**Note:** Some internet links endure online; others come and go. If a link fails, the owner of the site may have taken it down.

**Gender usage in these reflections:** We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection..

The Sunday readings are from the New English Translation (NET)  
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