

CATHOLIC HOMILY

Homily Transcript

May 31, 2026

So today we celebrate yet another of the great feast days, the great solemnities within the Church. And we have several more coming up, pretty much all of June, it seems like every weekend we have another solemnity that we're celebrating. But today, last week was Pentecost, the great feast of Pentecost, a week before that was Ascension. Today we have the Feast of the Holy Trinity. And this feast or this, the Holy Trinity itself was what the Catechism describes as the central mystery of the Christian faith. This is the central teaching, the central dogma. The Trinity itself is what sets Christians apart from any other religion, any other practice or belief.

It's the Trinity that is the absolute core, the heart of what we believe as a Christian people. It's the Trinity. And so there's, I mean, there's all kinds of other religions out there. Most of them will either have like a pantheon and going all the way back to ancient Greece or Rome, where they had Zeus and Athena and, you know, whoever their various gods were. And they basically had this big pantheon, a panel of gods, and they would get together and they would argue back and forth whether or not they wanted to do this or do that. And if you wanted a good crop, you prayed to this god. And if you wanted to have a baby, you prayed to that god and so on and so on. And that exists today in various forms as well.

There are very other, there's multiple religions today that still have a pantheon of gods. And among them would be Hindus, for example. And Hinduism, they believe that Jesus is God. And if you, sometimes I've heard of Hindus who will say that, yeah, Jesus is one of my favorite gods. Ah, not quite, not quite, right? So Jesus isn't one of the gods, one of the boys. We believe that God is the only God. We are monotheists. And we're not alone in that either. There are other religions out there that are monotheistic, like Judaism, from which Christianity has grown. Or Islam also only believes in one god. But what sets Christians apart from those two religions is the Trinity.

And the Jews, you can't really blame them the fact that they didn't know the revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that did not come until Jesus. It was Jesus himself who revealed the nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That all came with the New Testament. Previous to that, they knew God and there was hints in the Old Testament, but it wasn't fully revealed until Jesus himself. But even within the Trinity, like I heard a priest one time describe the Trinity as the largest heresy minefield in the church. And it's true. Like there's lots of ways, there are probably more ways to get it wrong with the Trinity than there are to get it right, if we're being honest.

And the first, I don't know, probably 400 years, solid 400 years it took the church to really wrestle and sometimes physically duke it out over the nature of the Trinity. What is the relationship between the Father and the Son? What's the Holy Spirit? And I talked about that a little bit at Ascension and at Pentecost where we believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, that the Father and the Son together send the Holy Spirit upon us, but they are all God. Not three individual gods, but they are all God. Three individual persons.

So, with this understanding, there's, I don't know, some of the most ancient heresies that have been explicitly condemned in the church and helped us to kind of define what we believe today. Probably the biggest one is modalism, and it's still alive and well today. As a matter of fact, I hate to say it, but the St. Patrick Shamrock, the three leaves, and one clover, that's actually modalism. But anyway, so it's not the perfect description of God, but it gets us at least thinking about that.

But essentially what modalism is, and this was very much, bishops were teaching this in the first couple hundred, 300 years, essentially saying that there's one God, so monotheistic, but basically that one God was the God of the Old Testament, and he would show up and he was angry, and he would, ah, I'm God, and so he would, that's the God of the Old Testament, why he would tell them, you know, strike down your enemies and all that kind of stuff. But that God, that God, he basically went into the dressing room, and he changed his outfit, and he came out and said, hey, I'm Jesus now, and I'm friendly.

And so that God, then he appeared as Jesus, but then he went back, and he went to the dressing room, and now he shows up at the Holy Spirit, and that's how he proceeds forth from now on is the Holy Spirit. One God, but basically just kind of, you know, changing his costume, so to speak. That was, like I said, that was officially taught as a doctrine of the Church, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three different manifestations explicitly condemned. That is a heresy. God the Father is his own person, distinct. God the Son is his own person, distinct. God the Holy Spirit, his own person, distinct. All of them distinct persons, but they are one God. There's another heresy along the same lines.

Well, there's quite a few of them, actually, but I'm not going to jump into all of them. But, ah, there's Pelagianism and Nestorianism, and, oh my gosh, now I'm blanking on the last one. The one I really wanted to talk about. Arianism. There we go. Arianism. That was, that, oh gosh, that was, that was this whole thing. And by the way, Arianism is still alive and well today. And there's a lot of, you watch these TikTok preachers of various denominations, and you listen to them, and if you know what Arianism is, you're like, oh my gosh, there it is. It's, they didn't figure it out 1700 years ago. And so here we are, rent cycle and repeating, preaching Arianism.

But essentially what that is, is that the Father is over the Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is one nature, Jesus is another nature. And so the Father, essentially, he's like the boss in control, and he sends Jesus and the Holy Spirit out, and Jesus is lesser than. Okay, so that was also condemned. As a matter of fact, you know who one of the big champions fighting against Arianism was? St. Nicholas. He

literally punched Arian in the face, like ho ho ho heretic, you know. Anyways, so that'll change how you think of Santa Claus. But, right, so there's, maybe that's not a big deal to us.

I don't know if any of us have gotten to a fistfight over the debating the Trinity, but the first three, four hundred years, they didn't have the creed until 325. The creed that you and I say at Mass, they didn't, that, it wasn't codified until 325. And then, you know, even then there was some, some tweaking that they had to do. And so there was a lot that they had to, to understand and develop and take the text from Scripture and say, well, you're interpreting it this way, and we're interpreting it this way, what's the truth in this? And again, I think a lot of us just kind of take it for granted, but they had to work through all those things theologically. But even St.

Augustine, the great doctor of the church, one of the greatest minds in the 2000 year history of the church, St. Augustine, he wrote a 1300 page treatise called De Trinitate on the Trinity, and he was probably about a thousand pages into this 1300 page, and he kind of got stuck. And he's sitting there getting frustrated, and he's like, you know what, I just need to go for a walk. I don't, I can't wrap my mind around this. So he's out going for a walk on the beach, and he noticed this little kid running to the ocean with a little spoon or a cup or something and scooping up some water and running back and dumping into a hole. And they run to the ocean and scoop it up again and run back and dump into a hole.

And then Augustine watched this kid for a while going back and forth, back and forth, and finally interrupted him. He's like, what are you doing? And the kid said, oh, I'm going to dump the ocean into this hole. I'm going to drain the ocean and that hole over there. And Augustine said, kid, you're not going to, you can't do that. It's not going to work. You're not going to do that. And the kid, the story goes, the kid responded, well, I will fit the ocean into that hole before you comprehend the Trinity and then disappeared. And it's the central mystery because, why do we call it a mystery? Because we cannot fully comprehend all the aspects of it, not for eternity.

We will contemplate it for eternity, but we will never fully comprehend and encompass an infinite and sign up a finite little brain. But that doesn't mean we can't know or understand the nature of the Trinity. Something, if it's central, that means it's supposed to be the most important thing, right? Central thing, that's the most important thing. But how often do we talk about the Trinity? How often is that in our mindset? How often do we discuss that? And this is the, this is the dividing line for us and our Protestant brothers and sisters, why we can say we are, we are in unity with, with Methodists and Lutherans and Presbyterians because we profess a Trinity.

Now, there's plenty of other theological differences we have, whether it be the Pope, whether it be saints or yada, yada. But the creed and our understanding of the Trinity, that is the point of, of unity for any Christian, it boils down to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now, last week I preached about this on Pentecost, but the Holy Spirit is what, what is the Trinity? The Father perfectly loving the Son for

all eternity, consubstantial from the same substance to persons eternally loving each other so perfectly that the love between them is the Holy Spirit. That is what we believe.

And why, why is a single God, a monotheistic, single God who's just God and he pops up with this costume at this time and this costume at that time, why is that different than a Trinity? And why is a Trinity different than a pantheon or a panel of three different gods that come together and make decisions and choices? It boils down, brothers and sisters, this is the central truth. It boils down to relationship. The Christian understanding of relationship is completely based on the Trinity. And if we miss that, we will miss the whole point of relationship. That's why it's central. It's the core.

And you can see, if you look at, you, you really dig, get into the weeds of other religions, you know, if you have a pantheon of gods, if you go back to the Greeks and earth is created out of violence and out of this God, you know, taking advantage of this God or this God, splitting that God open and ripping its guts out and now you have different planets and that is so different than the eternity of love, of relationship, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who desires out of love to create. And if that's the starting point, if you start off over here in left field or over here, you cannot end up in a place of true faith in relationship with the Lord. You can't do it.

I guess the last thing I would leave you with, and I think there's a reason why the church gives us this gospel today, John 3 16 through 18, sums up, I think, probably all of Christian dogma in just a couple of verses. John 3 16, you all have heard it before, Tim Tebow and the whole, you know, face paint, God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. That's it. God so loved the world that he gave his only son. Now, probably the single most profound moment of prayer my entire life, and I've had some real blessings of prayer, came from this gospel passage.

On retreat many years ago, we were given this gospel passage and somebody gave me a piece of advice that I applied is that in this verse, read through this verse again and replace the world with your name and then read it through like that. For God so loved Curtis that he gave his only son so that if Curtis believes in him, he might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn Curtis, but that Curtis might be saved through him. And maybe that doesn't seem terribly profound to you, but praying through that, there is a shift that happened in my heart.

When I took this into my holy hour and I prayed with this, it's like a light bulb finally clicked and went off that relationship. God does not love me the way a chicken farmer loves a chicken farm. I have a million chickens and I love my chickens because they lay eggs and make me money. God does not love us collectively. He loves us individually. God loves me. And the day that that truth actually was impressed upon me was a day my faith completely transformed. And I can tell you, I can draw a definitive line in the sand before and after accepting or realizing that truth, embracing that truth, that God actually loves me.

And I don't accept it perfectly and there are days I still kind of wrestle with that, but that is the truth of our faith. And unless and until that truth becomes reality for you, your faith is always going to be weak. The faith of knowing that God loves you. This trinity has invited you inside of this perfect cycle of love. That is what sets Christians apart from anybody else. No other religion even attempts to claim that. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.