

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**COMPASS, PA**

May 31, 2026 – TRINITY SUNDAY, YR. A

The Rev. Dr. Nina George-Hacker

Homily: “*A Mystery of Divine Love*”

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|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Genesis 1:1-2:4a       | (God created the earth and everything on it)          |
| Canticle 13            | (Praise to the Holy Trinity)                          |
| 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 | (The Lord is exalted, yet mindful of us)              |
| St. Matthew 28:16-20   | (All authority in heaven and earth is given to Jesus) |

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Today, we celebrate the greatest mystery of our faith: How God can be three distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in one Divine Nature. For that matter, what does the word “mystery” mean? When we’re talking about a mystery of faith, it doesn’t mean a detective story or one filled with suspense. A mystery of faith is something we believe in but can always understand more deeply, something we can never reach the end of, something that never gets old.

Theologians have been grappling with this mystery since the time of Christ. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, St. Augustine of Hippo offered the following description of the triune God: “Each of the divine persons possesses the divine nature in a particular manner. It is a three-ness of relations: Of begetting (the Father); of being begotten (the Son); and of proceeding (the Holy Spirit). In other words, the Father is the Source of all Life. The Son receives life from the Father, and the love between the Father and the Son is so perfect, that love is a Person—the Spirit.

*We* try to make sense of the mystery of the Holy Trinity using symbols, such as the Irish Shamrock—a clover-like plant with leaves in groups of three. St. Patrick used the Shamrock to talk about the Trinity to the Irish people. Tertullian, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century theologian who was the first to write about the Trinity in Latin, imagined the triune God as a plant with the Father as the root, the Son as the shoot breaking forth into the world, and the Spirit as that which fills the world with flowers and fruit.

The acclaimed spiritual author and poet, Kathleen Norris, recounts another representation from a female Episcopal priest who said in a homily she had never felt as close to the Trinity as when she learned she was pregnant with twins. For her, it was a perfect image of three-in-one. And yet, *none of these symbols* accurately conveys the mystery of the Trinity, because all involve *separate entities* that are simply related. But God is not separated in *any way*. God is and ever shall be One—albeit Three in One.

Trinity Sunday is a celebration of the good news that God has given us a starting point to discover Him, to know Him, and to be united with Him. God is so different than anything we could possibly grasp that without His help we could not even begin to describe Him. God is not some *really big thing*. He’s not like a gas that gets into the nooks and crannies of everything. He is not nature or the universe. We know God is the Creator of the universe because the universe exists, and *nothing else in the universe* is capable of creating the universe.

So it’s true that God exists and we exist, but even God’s way of existing is different than ours because God is uncreated, eternal, omniscient, and all-powerful. At this point, you are probably scratching your head or thinking about next week’s grocery list. But if we didn’t have help understanding God, that’s all we would be able to do—scratch our heads. Fortunately, God *has* given us a way to understand this mystery, even to begin moving away from *our* way of being into *His* way of being. The Gospel of John (3:16) tells us how: “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Note that John describes the Father as *giving*. What does a Father give? Today we might say that a father passes on—gives—his genes or features to a child. Before anything else, what a father gives his offspring is his own self. Sometimes we express the idea with the phrase, “He’s a chip off the old block.” When we speak of God as “Father and Son,” those words imply a relationship of self-giving. And what’s in a relationship of self-giving? *Love*. So when we say God, we also mean *love*—the Bible (1 John 4:8 & 16) even says “God is love.” So when we talk about God we are speaking of the love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for each other, and for the world.

Another way of putting it: the Trinity, composed of the abundant love of the Father for humanity and for all of Creation is expressed as the courageous, loving commitment of the Son who gave His life for us, and is further manifested in the inspiring, enlightening guidance of the Holy Spirit who loves us enough to equip us for mission and ministry.

While we have never seen God the Father as such, we have encountered God in Jesus, and we experience God through the work of the Holy Spirit within us. Even so, the mystery of the Trinity is infinite and we can always try to delve deeper into this mystery. But homilies are not meant to be infinite, and trying to understand the Trinity tends to give a headache.

So, just remember that what we are celebrating today is that God has given us a way to know and to talk about Him which He Himself has revealed to us: That God is forever One, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And through faith, this mystery gives us an entry into the Divine love and a life that is undivided, infinite, and eternal—a life that will be forever with the God who loves us beyond measure.

So, on this day let us exclaim with all the angels and saints:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
 Praise God, all creatures here below;  
 Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” *Amen!* \*

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\* Sources: Max Oliva SJ, “Trinity Sunday,” 7 June 2020, [JesuitsWest.org](https://www.jesuitswest.org/spirituality/spirituality-and-ethics/homilies/holy-trinity-sunday/) < <https://www.jesuitswest.org/spirituality/spirituality-and-ethics/homilies/holy-trinity-sunday/> > 26 May 2026; Tony Lusvardi, SJ, “Homilies, Holy Trinity Sunday,” 1 June 2023, <<https://tonylusvardisj.com/2023/06/01/trinity-homily/>> 26 May 2026.