

Trinity; the who and what of knowing the true God.

1. We can not have a relationship with what we do not know. We can discover that there must be an eternal creator God just from reason and from observing nature. What we know about this God comes mostly from what He deliberately revealed to His people.
2. By the teachings that have come down to us through the Church from the Old Testament prophets and New Testament Apostles, we know that God revealed Himself as Trinity.
3. Mainline Christians know Jesus as eternal God from eternity to eternity. Jesus did not *become* God. He is an essential fullness of who God is. If Jesus were not 100% God and also 100% human we could not be saved. All sin is an infinite offense separating us from God. Only a human can atone for us but it would take infinite satisfaction that only infinite God can provide.
4. God is Love. Love cannot exist without an object. Before anything came to be, Jesus already was the object of the Father's love.
5. Jesus is not a second God. Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, are one undivided God. The very essence of this One God is that He is Three distinct persons who relate to each other in infinite detail, completely and perfectly. Threeness is at the core of being for our one true God.
6. God as Trinity is a mystery our limited human thought processes cannot fully comprehend. We believe it on faith because God Himself has revealed it to us. We can, however, understand more about it than most us expect. God the Holy Spirit will personally teach us when we prayerfully allow Him. We look to the living memory of the one true Church to find what Jesus revealed to His apostles. We can always learn more about the mystery of the Trinity but we can never come to the full end of it because God is infinite; endless.
7. The Bible tells us Jesus is the perfect reflection of the Father. God the Father is all perfect and all knowing. His self knowledge results in a *self-understanding-image* that is so complete and perfect it becomes another person in itself. We call this person, God the Son. This did not happen in time but is an essential characteristic of who our one God is and always had to be.
8. Deliberate, conscious activity indicates personhood. God is love. There is an absolutely perfect and complete love relationship between the Father and the Son. Love requires knowledge and understanding of its object. This all-knowing message of love within God is so absolutely complete and all-powerful it becomes another person. We call this third person the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the active love between Father and Son that binds the Trinity-Community together completely into

One God. Because this unity in the Holy Spirit is so intimate and complete the three persons are absolutely one single God. The Father is the lover. Jesus is the beloved. The Holy Spirit is the infinitely perfect living love eternally between them.

9. This is what God has revealed to us about who He is. This comes comparatively close to the limits of what we humans can understand about the mystery of our Divine Creator. The mystery is infinite. Our minds are finite. We need to understand that everything we can know about God is an incomplete blur compared to His reality. We can think only in terms of created things. God is **uncreated** and totally other from His creation. All creation comes from God but He did not create Himself. God is eternal and timeless. We created beings think only in terms of created things. Everything we can possibly think about our uncreated God is by that very fact only an imperfect hint of the reality.
10. Contrary to what some suppose, God does not want to hide from His people. He has revealed all we are capable of knowing. He is so totally awesome that if He ever exposed to much of Himself we would literally explode and die of awe.
11. God is mystery and what we know about God we believe because He tells us so. We call this faith. We are dealing with the ultimate reality here and faith in our Creator serves us best. This faith must ultimately agree with science and reason but is not dependent on such. Faith goes beyond human science.
12. Through Moses God revealed Himself as Yahweh, This translates roughly as “I Am,” or “He-Who-Is.” Through Jesus, God revealed that, Trinity is who, “He-Who-Is,” is.
13. This teaching is handed down to us from the Apostles, through the living memory of our Church, instituted by Jesus. It is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. Later in early Church history when this teaching was disputed by some, it was confirmed and formally defined in a discernment process called by the emperor and approved by the pope, under the protection of this Holy Spirit. Such a gathering for discernment is called an Ecumenical Council. The councils that confirmed the Apostolic Tradition about God as Trinity were the Council of Nicaea in the year 325, and the great Council of Ephesus in 431AD. Please note that neither pope nor Church councils can initiate new doctrine. They can only define, after study and prayer, what was there from the beginning.
14. Trinity is not three modes or functions of the one God but essentially three distinct persons in only one God. We can, however, associate certain ministries to persons of the Trinity. The Father has the ministry of source and authority, without being more important. Jesus, the Son, equal to the Father, has the ministry of incarnation and relating to physical creation. The Holy Spirit, in every way equal to the Father and Son, has the ministries of empowerment and unity, and spiritual activity in our souls and the non-physical part of creation. These ministries of persons, however, must not lead us to define Trinity as simply modes or functions of our one God. Trinity is about who God is and not about what He does or how He does it.

15. Note also that Jesus is and always was, and always will be, 100% true God. In Time He entered His Creation as a 100% human like us. He is not a human who in time became God; He is true God who in time became human through the virgin womb of Mary. Mary is truly the mother of God alive among us. She gave flesh to the God who created her. She bore God in her womb. She gave birth and nurtured Him. He got His human genetics through her. Through Mary, Jesus is truly human.

16. Remember all revelation is complete in Jesus. He entrusted this revelation to His Church through His Apostles. He founded His Church to spread and hand down His truth to all nations and all generations. Jesus did not hand us a Bible. He gave us a Church to guard and minister His message. The early Church through the Holy Spirit gave us the Bible, not as a substitute for the deposit of revealed faith, but as inerrant support and confirmation of the faith of the Church. "Bible only," is not a teaching of the Church nor of the Bible.

God as Trinity is accepted by all main line Christians and has been the universal teaching from the beginning, yet the word, "Trinity," is not in the Bible. For people of faith, however, the Bible strongly confirms and supports the Apostolic and continuous teaching that God is Trinity. **Trinity is who the one and only God is.** It can be no other way. God Himself told us so in JESUS.

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Some questions for discussion or meditation.

1. How can we learn from the world around us that there is a God? What can we know about God that we cannot discover from nature? Where does such other information come from?
2. In our popular American culture, what are some false ideas about who God is that you have heard?
3. Explain why an eternal God, who is love itself, necessarily has to be a community of persons?
4. Why must Trinity be three persons and not just three functions or modes of the one true God?
5. Write and/or orally explain in your own words how God is one God only, yet necessarily three distinct persons? How would you explain this to an unbeliever?
6. What is a mystery? Why and when is it reasonable to believe a mystery?
7. Where in the Bible do you find support and confirmation about the Apostolic teaching that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are and always have been God?
8. Why do you suppose some people prefer not to know God as He truly is?
9. Why do we need prayer and meditation and the help of the Holy Spirit to digest what we read about God?
10. What does the new Catechism say about Trinity? About the divinity and humanity of Jesus?

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Trinity

is who

God is

a Sheepgate tract by Howard Mondloch.

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