

Living The Trinity

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INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX
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What is pure prayer? Prayer which is brief in words but abundant in actions. For if your actions do not exceed your petitions, then your prayers are mere words, and the seed of the hands is not in them.

— The Sayings of the Desert Fathers

If prayer is to be transmuted into action, then this Trinitarian faith which informs all our praying must also be manifest in our daily life. Immediately before reciting the Creed in the Eucharistic Liturgy, we say these words: “Let us love one another, so that we may with one mind confess Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided.”

Note the words “so that”. A genuine confession of faith in the Triune God can be made only by those who, after the likeness of the Trinity, show love mutually towards each other. There is an integral connection between our love for one another and our faith in the Trinity: the first is a precondition for the second, and in its turn the second gives full strength and meaning to the first.

*We glorify not three Gods but one Godhead.
We honor the persons that are truly three,
The Father unbegotten,
The Son begotten from the Father;
The Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father;
One God in three:
And with true faith and glory we
ascribe to each the title God.*

— From the Lenten Triodion

So far from being pushed into the corner and treated as a piece of abstruse theologizing of interest only to specialists, the doctrine of the Trinity ought to have upon our daily life an effect that is nothing less than revolutionary. Made after the image of God the Trinity, human beings are called to reproduce on earth the mystery of mutual love that the Trinity lives in heaven.

How can we make Christ come and dwell in our hearts? How else, except through love?

— Fr. Theoklitos of Dionysiou



In medieval Russia St. Sergius of Radonezh dedicated his newly founded monastery to the Holy Trinity, precisely because he intended that his monks should show toward one another day by day the same love as passes between the three divine persons. And such is the vocation not only of monks but of everyone.

Each social unit – the family, the school, the workshop, the parish, the Church universal – is to be made an ikon of the Triunity. Because we know that God is three in one, each of us is committed to living sacrificially in and for the other; each is committed irrevocably to a life of practical service, of active compassion.

*The way to God lies through
love of other people,
and there is no other way.
At the Last Judgment I shall not be asked if
I was successful in my ascetic exercises or
how many prostrations I made
in the course of my prayers.
I shall be asked, did I feed the hungry,
clothe the naked, visit the sick and
prisoners: that is all I shall be asked.*

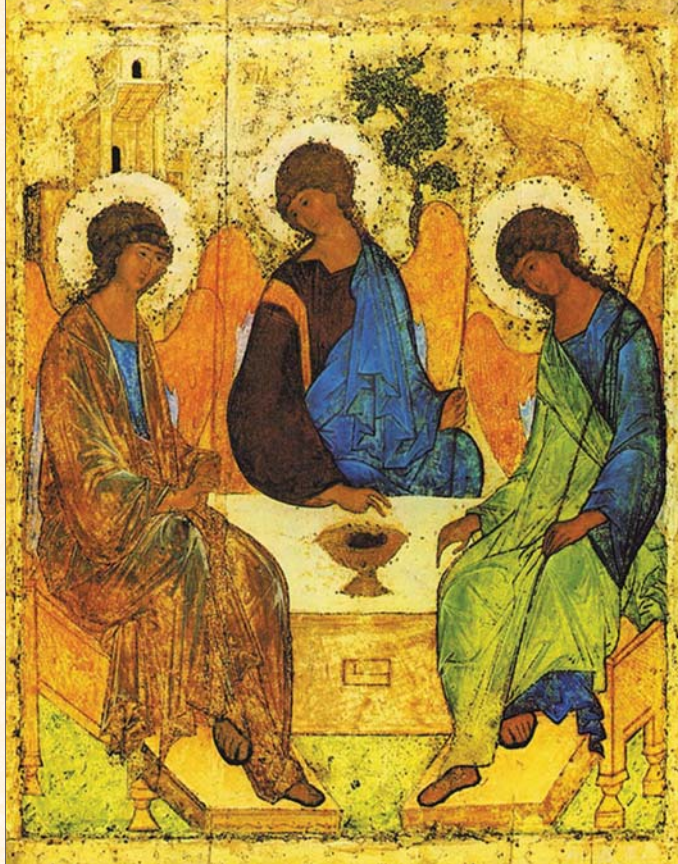
— Mother Maria of Paris

Our faith in the Trinity puts us under an obligation to struggle at every level, from the strictly personal to the highly organized, against all forms of oppression, injustice and exploitation. In our combat for social righteousness and “human rights”, we are acting specifically in the name of the Holy Trinity.

*O Trinity supreme in being,
O unity without beginning,
The hosts of angels sing thy praises,
trembling before thee.
Heaven, earth and the depths stand in awe
Of thee, all-holy Trinity:
Men bless thee,
Fire is thy servant,
All things created obey thee in fear.*

— From the Festal Menaion

“The most perfect rule of Christianity, its exact definition, its highest summit, is this: to seek what is for the benefit of all,” states St. John Chrysostom. “...I cannot believe that it is possible for someone to be saved if he does not labor for the salvation of his neighbor.” Such are the practical implications of the dogma of the Trinity. That is what is meant to live the Trinity.



*When we have reached love,
we have reached God and our
journey is complete.
We have crossed over to the island
which lies beyond the world, where are
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:
to whom be glory and dominion.
May God make us worthy to love
and fear him. Amen.*

— St. Isaac the Syrian

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