

*The Catholic Company presents*



## **Is the hymn, “Holy, Holy Holy” Catholic?**

Did you know that the popular hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!” was written by an Anglican?

If you grew up going to Mass every week, you are probably familiar with the hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”

*Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:  
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.*

In his book *The Stories of Hymns: The History Behind 100 of Christianity’s Greatest Hymns*, Fr. George William Rutler unpacks the most prevalent hymns sung in Catholic and Protestant churches and the history behind these familiar songs.

According to Fr. Rutler, “Holy, Holy, Holy” was written by Reginald Heber, an Anglican, who intended this hymn to be sung on Trinity Sunday. The first public record of this song was featured in the third edition of the *Selection of Psalms and Hymns for the Parish Church of Banbury* in 1826, not too long after Heber’s death. The words and music then officially appeared in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861. This song was inspired by the Sanctus hymn, which Fr. Rutler notes is “as old as the seraphim (see Isa. 6:3), who are ageless.”

Both “Holy, Holy, Holy” and the Sanctus sing of God’s divinity and His oneness in three Persons. Fr. Rutler reminds us that Trinitarianism proved the falseness of Arianism at the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325, bringing a deeper unity to the Church by affirming the truth of the Trinity.

While it is true that our Protestant brethren are outside the Catholic Church and do not have the fullness of the Faith, when we sing “Holy, Holy, Holy,” we can remember what unites us as Christians: belief in the Trinity and belief in the divinity of Christ.

For more commentary on the hymns we know and love today, [check out Fr. George William Rutler's \*The Stories of Hymns\*, sold here.](#)