



The Feast of the Most Holy Trinity
at Lancaster St Bernadette and Bremen St Mary

JUNE 11, 2017

St Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

stbernadetteparish.net

cover painting: **Adoration of the Trinity** (aka Laundauer Altarpiece), a large depiction (135 x 13 cm) in oil on poplar panel, painted (1511) by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

This crowded altarpiece depicts the Trinity, whose feast we celebrate today. God the Father holds a crucifix with a still-alive Jesus. Above them, in a cloud of light surrounded by cherubim, is the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. God the Father wears an imperial crown and a wide gilt cloak, lined in green and supported by angels. There is a host of saints of Heaven who are led by the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. Below, the human multitudes are divided between religious men and women (left, led by the pope), and laymen, led by the Holy Roman Emperor. The lower section is occupied by a large landscape with the dawn above a lake, among hills. There is also a self-portrait of Dürer holding a cartouche with the signature and date inscription.

our parishes

FATHER THOMAS KESSLER (614) 634-0499
pastor wmothomaskessler@icloud.com

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

<http://stbernadetteparish.net>

MARK SCARPITTI (740) 438-3970
deacon dcn.mark@frontier.com
JEFF CARPENTER (740) 681-9918
deacon carpenter.277@osu.edu
ANN ESSMAN (740) 653-9347
pastoral minister aessman001@att.net
STEVE HUBER (740) 654-3137
facilities coordinator shuber57@yahoo.com
LIZ LATORRE (740) 243-1872
liturgical music lizlаторre@gmail.com

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

BEN FACTOR
liturgical music b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us
TYNA FOX-SCHMELZER
religious education (614) 371-7702

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu.
602 Marietta St,
Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569-7929

AT BOTH PARISHES

STEPHEN KARNES (740) 654-1893
bookkeeper businessstparish@yahoo.com
KATHY KEHNAST (740) 654-1893
pastoral coordinator stbernparish@yahoo.com
ANGIE & KENT KERNS (740) 654-2588
religious education kwkerns@gmail.com
JULIE & CHASE STALFORD (740) 808-7294
youth ministry maristellaspirt@gmail.com

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

PAM ELTRINGHAM peltring@cdeducation.org
principal
BARB HUBER bhuber@cdeducation.org
secretary

Saint Bernadette School is located at
1325 Wheeling Rd, (740) 654-3137
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
www.stbernadetteschool.com
stbernlan@cdeducation.org

St Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

sacramental life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnst will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. Try to take the class before the child is born. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; those parents are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Catholics. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic), there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession.** The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOINTING AND CARE OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age. We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation.

Remember, Catholics who marry outside the Church have left the sacramental life and need to change that situation before receiving the other sacraments.

The Church wishes to support couples **through the years** of their married life. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.



praying with the Church

at Mass today

God our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race your wondrous mystery, grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith, we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

with the pope in june : for national leaders

That national leaders may firmly commit themselves to ending the arms trade, which victimizes so many innocent people.

God's word ... at sunday Mass

<i>Sunday, June 11,</i>	Exodus 34:4-9	Daniel 3		
<i>Holy Trinity</i>	2 Corinthians 13:11-13	John 3:16-18		
<i>Sunday, June 18,</i>	Deuteronomy 8:2-16	Psalms 147		
<i>Corpus Christi</i>	1 Corinthians 10:16-17	John 6:51-58		
	... during the week			
<i>Mon, June 12</i>	2 Cor 1:1-7	Ps 34	Matt	5: 1-12
<i>Tues, June 13</i>	2 Cor 1:18-22	Ps 119	Matt	5:13-16
<i>Weds, June 14</i>	2 Cor 3:4-11	Ps 99	Matt	5:17-19
<i>Thurs, June 15</i>	2 Cor 3:15-4:6	Ps 85	Matt	5: 20-26
<i>Fri, June 16</i>	2 Cor 4:7-15	Ps 116	Matt	5: 27-32
<i>Sat, June 17</i>	2 Cor 5:14-21	Ps 103	Matt	5:33-37

let us adore Him

Spend a **holy hour** with our Lord in the presence of his Blessed Sacrament in either of our parish churches. Or spend a **few holy minutes**. We try to keep both churches open all through the daylight hours. Anybody can come, any time. Perhaps you could.

a feast day this week

June 13 Saint **Anthony of Padua**, priest & doctor of the church

in both parishes

YDisciple

St Mary and St Bernadette parishes are kicking off a **new season of youth ministry this summer**. All current YDisciple youth and newly confirmed teens—and in fact any high school-aged youth in those parishes—are invited to attend an **ice cream social and welcome at the Mary Good Center at St Bernadette** today, Sunday, June 11, from 6:15-8:30 PM. In fact, they are urged to attend. What is YDisciple? It is an **amazing model of youth ministry for recently confirmed and high school students**. The mission is to lead **teens closer to Christ**. Each week there is something for them: teachings, socials, and issues. They learn about their faith, build long lasting spiritual friendships, and most importantly gain love for the Eucharist. We meet them where they are, and bring them back to the Way, Truth, and Love of Christ. For information, contact Milea Quaintance or Julie or Chase Stalford at (210) 781-0254.



parish family lunch

You and your family are invited to the St Bernadette and St Mary Parish Family Lunch on Sunday, June 25, **at noon behind St Bernadette Parish Hall to meet and share a meal with the members of our two parishes**. Our **Parish Family Lunch** begins right after the 11 AM Mass at St Bernadette. Arrive at Mass a little early to set up and reserve your place. Bring a tablecloth and table settings and a tent/canopy for shade, if you have one. If it rains, we'll go into the Parish Hall. Meat (hot dogs, brats, hamburgers), buns, and drinks (soft drinks, lemonade, ice tea, water) will be provided. Please bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share. Sign-up sheets are located on the tables in the school hallway at St Bernadette and in the front vestibule at St Mary. For information, to reserve your spot, or to sign up to bring a dish to pass, contact Kathy at St Mary at (740) 569-7929 or at St Bernadette at (740) 654-1893. See you there!

christian initiation

Please be thinking now about **who you are going to invite to join the Church in the coming year**.

baby bottles

Participate in the PDHC's **Baby Bottle Campaign** by collecting your loose change **from Mother's Day to Father's Day** to help local parents and would-be parents in need. Spare change from baby bottles goes a long way to continue offering free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, material assistance and life-affirming programs to strengthen families. Grab a bottle and bring it back on Father's Day. Let us give thanks to our father and mother for choosing life and help a local family do the same.

strengthening the church at home

Thank you for your generous support of the Catholic Home Missions Appeal collection last week. Today over 40 percent of dioceses in the US are considered home missions because they are **unable to fund essential pastoral work needed in their communities**. Your support of this appeal helps ease the struggle of these dioceses. Information can be found at www.usccb.org/home-missions.

take a fresh look at your marriage

Treat yourselves to a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend and enrich your lives together. Marriage Encounter is 44 hours where married couples can get away from jobs, kids, chores, and phones—and focus only on each other. The next weekend is Sept 15-17 in central Ohio. For information or to apply, contact Paul & Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmwecolumbus.org.

envelopes for youth

Children and youth have a **responsibility to support the Church**. Most of them don't have access to much money (or do they?), so their contributions are necessarily small. But this is the time to teach them their responsibility. Contribution envelopes are ready to be picked up in the school vestibule at St Bernadette and the main entry vestibule of St Mary.

vacation church school

St Mary's Vacation Church School happens this summer at Schmelzer's Grove on the evenings of June 26-30. Catholic children from both parishes are invited, no make that urged, to attend. And so are any of their friends in other parishes. Anyone interested in helping should contact Angie Kerns at (740) 654-2588.

at st bernadette parish

friends forever

The friends forever group takes a road trip to Millstone Barbeque in Logan this Thursday, June 15 at 10:30 AM. Call Ann Essman at (740) 6541893 for details.

Mass intentions at st bernadette

Monday, June 12 8:20 AM deceased of the Sevigny family
 Wednesday, June 14 8:20 AM Margaret Kessler
 Thursday, June 15 6 PM Wilford & Loretta Beiter
 Friday, June 16 8:20 AM Leota Bontrager

The Church requires the pastor to offer Sunday Mass for good of the people of the parish.

ministry at Mass at st bernadette

	lector	Servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday, 4:00 PM	Sandy Landefeld	Mallory, Mason & Mitchell Ortiz	Bob & Angie Christy	Susan Garrett Marguerite Grimm	Brad Rider Craig Shaw
Sunday, June 11, 11:00 AM	Dennis Forquer	Collin & Emma McCrady, Diana Woo	Terry Carpenter Pat Dreyer	Pat Gins Nancy Griffith	John & Teresa Hartig
Monday, 8:20 AM	David Shonk	Kendall & Morgan Cox	Patricia Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast	
Wednesday, 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Mitchell Ortiz, Hyde O'Rielley	Angie Christy	Mary Jane Vajen	
Thursday, 6:00 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Gunner & Amelia Robertson	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan	
Friday, 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Diana & Sarah Woo	Jim & Rita Merk		
Saturday, 4:00 PM	Marguerite Grimm	Dominic & Emeline Neighbor, Cady Tipple	Jim & Becky Kuhn	Rosalie DeFillippo Lee Guinan	Kathy Kehnast Denise McGuire
Sunday, June 18, 11 AM	Teresa Carpenter	Jack Tencza, Brooke & Bryson Vogel	Jim & Rita Merk	Ben Peters Jean Robertson	Larry Sanford Anna Sevigny

at st mary parish

st vincent de paul at bremen

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Bremen takes up a **collection after Mass on the first Sunday** of every month. **New members** are always welcome. Call Angi Skinner at (740) 438-0027.

Mass intention at st mary

Tuesday morning Mass will be celebrated for David Stretton.

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your donation to the food pantry

The Bremen Food Pantry needs margarine or butter (among other things!). Place your donation in the refrigerator in the kitchen at St Mary parish hall. This will help the **Pantry Open House** in Bremen, on Saturday, June 24, from 9-11 AM, when any family in need can stop by to receive food assistance, with no prior registration or sign up needed.

summer square dances

Summer means square dancing at Schmelzer's Grove. Mark your calendars on the Sunday evenings of June 11, July 9, and Aug 13 from 7-9:30 PM. Admission is \$4 per person.

ministry at Mass at st mary

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday 8:30 AM	Barb Van Fossen-Cook	Reagan Conrad Alex Schmelzer	Neil Boch, Wyatt Borah, Barb VanFossen-Cook	John Schoenlaub family	Damian Schmelzer
next Sunday	Karen Wolfe	Caden & Cody Fyffe	Irene Kunkler, Leo Kunkler Sr, Karen Wolfe	Nick Schmelzer family	Nikki Schmelzer

in the deanery

deanery Corpus Christi celebration

AT BREMEN ST MARY

A deanery-wide Corpus Christi celebration will be held on the feast of Corpus Christi, next Sunday, Sunday, June 18, from 1-4 PM **at St Mary Church, Bremen**. The deacons of the deanery and St Mary Parish invite everyone to attend this celebration of the most generous gift God has given to his Church. The program is simple: exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, readings and reflections, with a Eucharistic procession, rosary, and Benediction. Please be sure to pray with us for some or all of that Sunday afternoon.

lay people meet religious life

Do you desire a stronger sense of community and prayer? Do you find yourself asking how you can develop **more of a consistent quiet time with God**? Can you have more of a monastic way of life and keep your day job? What is **the difference between a lay Franciscan, Benedictine, Dominican, Cistercian and Carmelite** anyway? **How does God desire you and your family to order your lives**? Come and **learn about the opportunities** to join lay associates and oblates from the Columbus and Lancaster area. Discover if God may be drawing you to him through a deeper connection with one of these lay orders. This presentation will be held from 7-9 PM on Wednesday, June 21, at the Spirit Center of St Mary Parish in Lancaster. Refreshments will be provided. Contact Lisa for information at lmreshad@gmail.com.

in the diocese of columbus

project DAWN

It is no secret that there has been an overwhelming surge in opiate overdoses and fatalities within our communities. Mount Carmel Outreach and the Mount Carmel Mobile Medical Coach have joined forces with Project **DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone)**, a community-based overdose education and Narcan (naloxone) distribution program. The Project DAWN program provides Narcan kits free-of-charge to those without health insurance and limited financial means. Narcan is **a safe medication that can reverse an overdose caused by prescription pain medication or heroin** and save lives. For information, call (614) 546-4200.

face forward

Developed for the **Vocations Office** of the Columbus Diocese, Face Forward app contains valuable information for Catholics right at their fingertips. It includes such features as the **verse of the day, pray for priests, care for the common home, saint of the day and the Face Forward blog**. Face Forward give young folks something meaningful to read when they power up. Discerning what God is calling you to do can be a long journey full of many questions. Having **easily accessible information is invaluable to the discernment process**. This new app provides just that. Face Forward will continue to add fresh and relevant content to the app daily with the goal of getting users to come back each day for new offerings. With the repeat visits and usage of the app, the hope is that users will gain more love, knowledge and understanding about the Catholic faith and **clarity about what God is calling them to do**. Face Forward is a program of the Office of Vocations that allows for interaction with the youth in the Columbus Diocese and provides platforms for communication, events and opportunities to learn more about the Catholic faith and a life in vocations. There are currently over 12,000 people within the Face Forward community. For information about the Face Forward App, contact Anne Harkin at (614) 787-2377 or anne.harkin@mj2marketing.com.

marriage preparation volunteers

Looking for a way to serve in 2017? Engaged couples in our diocese need your help. Volunteer to serve on the diocesan **Marriage Preparation Team** as a speaker and presenter. Present virtues-based topics to engaged couples preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. **If you are currently married, and have wisdom and experience to share**, you already qualify. For information, contact Kathleen Hall at khall@columbuscatholic.org or (614) 241-2560.

bulletin deadline

Bulletin notices must be given to the parish office by 9 AM on the Friday that is one week prior to the Sunday you wish a notice to appear. For example, bulletin notices for the June 18 bulletin are due by 9 AM on Friday, June 9.

Mass announcements (when these are really necessary!) must be given to the parish office by 9 AM on Friday.



jubilee of anniversaries 2017

This celebration will be Sunday, June 25, at St Matthew Parish in Gahanna. Bishop Campbell will celebrate Mass at 2:30 PM, and an informal reception will follow. Parishioners celebrating **significant wedding anniversaries** (25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, 55th, 60th, and any year thereafter) are invited. For questions, call the Marriage & Family Life Office at (614) 241-2560. RSVP by June 16.

the bishop's annual appeal

bishop's annual appeal 2017

"LIVING THE GOSPEL IN FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY"

The Bishop's Annual Appeal **has begun at St Bernadette and at St Mary**. It's time for us to do what we can to support the programs and ministries that benefit both our parishes and the wider community.

The Appeal **supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help**.

Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year's appeal a success. Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our parishes to benefit our communities directly. Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate of \$4,947 from the diocese. So we know we can do this if, after thoughtful consideration and prayer, every one of us gives according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others.

Here are the results at our parishes after five weeks (four weeks for the diocesan totals).

	St Bernadette	% of goal	Bremen St Mary	% of goal	Diocese of Columbus	% of goal
<i>total households</i>	452		130			
<i>households participating</i>	114	25%	45	35%		
<i>amount pledged</i>	\$ 32,880	78%	\$ 15,226	122%	\$ 4,567,416	70%
<i>average gift</i>	\$ 288		\$ 338			
<i>total paid</i>	\$ 14,410	34%	\$ 5,231	42%		
<i>BAA goal</i>	\$ 42,210		\$ 12,443		\$ 6,500,000	

baa prayer

Heavenly Father, we are always thankful for all you have given us. We are especially grateful that you have sent to us your Son to be our Savior. That is the true Good News: that you love us and call us to yourself. Help us to live this Good News, this Gospel, in Faith, Hope, and Charity. Help us to respond generously to your love by sharing our material blessings for the good of all in our diocese. Send your Spirit to dwell in our hearts, so that all we do may give praise and honor to your name. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby

These times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!

	<i>Bremen St Mary</i>	<i>Lancaster St Bernadette</i>	<i>Lancaster St Mary</i>	<i>Lancaster St Mark</i>	<i>Sugar Grove St Joseph</i>	<i>Circleville St Joseph</i>	<i>Logan St John</i>
Monday		8:20 AM	7 AM	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
Tuesday	8:20 AM		9 AM	8 AM	NOON	7 AM	8 AM
Wednesday		8:20 AM	7 AM	6 PM	6:30 PM	9 AM	9 AM
Thursday			6 PM	9 AM	8 AM	NOON	
Friday		8:20 AM		8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
Saturday		1 st Saturday only 9 AM Mass				10 AM	9 AM
confessions	Sunday @ 8AM	Thursday @ 5:30 PM Saturday @ 3 PM & @ 8:30 AM on 1st Saturday only	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 5:30 PM	½ hour before Mass	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 4 PM

more things to think about

why marriage matters

Marriage does matter. After all, **we're all in this together**. As members of society, we count on each other every day to keep our commitments. We feel more secure when we can depend on others. Although marriage has changed a great deal, the benefits of marriage endure. Social science research confirms that marriage is an important social good that brings a wide range of positive outcomes for adults and children alike. At www.foryourmarriage.org you will discover that:

- On average, married people are better off financially.
- Marriage is associated with better health, sex, and safety for men and women.
- Children do better when they live with their own two married parents.

attend Mass wherever you go

Times and locations of Masses in Catholic churches in the United States may be obtained from www.masstimes.org or contact the parish office for assistance. With a bit of planning you can fulfill your Sunday obligation when you are on the road.

safe environment reminder

A complete copy of the **parish safe environment policies and procedures**, including the diocesan policies and guidelines for parish youth ministry is available by calling either parish office. All adults who have not previously attended a **Protecting God's Children training session sponsored by the diocese of Columbus** are urged to do so. A schedule of training sessions can be found at www.virtus.org.

Articles on **sexual abuse prevention** are available at www.virtus.org. All adults are encouraged to access this website monthly and read the articles.

Contact information for reporting suspected abuse of minors is from the parish office.

has your address changed?

Soon from our web site you will be able to inform the St Bernadette or Bremen St Mary parish office when your home, mailing, or email address changes. If you are a new parishioner to either parish you will be able to fill out a **New Parishioner Registration** form online. These are just few of the new features to be provided for your convenience.

the act of contrition

O my GOD, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.
Why not memorize it?

plan your family naturally

Natural Family Planning (NFP) uses modern scientific knowledge of fertility to allow married couples to safely and effectively achieve or postpone pregnancy. Today's NFP is up to 99% effective and completely natural. The benefits of NFP go beyond family planning; for articles and to read one couple's story visit www.ForYourMarriage.org. For information about NFP or to register for a diocesan NFP workshop, contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at 614/241-2560 or FLOMailbox@colsdioec.org.

fortnight for freedom

Fortnight for Freedom: **Our First, Most Cherished Liberty**, June 21 to July 4, a time when our liturgical calendar celebrates a series of **great martyrs who remained faithful in the face of persecution by political power**: St Thomas More and St. John Fisher, St John the Baptist, SS Peter and Paul, and the First Martyrs of the Church of Rome. Visit www.fortnight4freedom.org. As part of the national Fortnight for Freedom, a Mass and **Holy Hour for Religious Freedom** will be celebrated on Wednesday, June 28, at 5:15 PM, at Saint Joseph Cathedral. The Holy Hour will begin with a Rosary for Religious Freedom and Liberty, followed by silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and concluding with Benediction. All are invited. For information, contact the Cathedral at (614) 224-1295. Elevator access to the Cathedral is available via the west entrance (in the courtyard) from E Broad St.

ohio state budget

The Catholic Conference of Ohio encourages the Ohio General Assembly to be mindful of the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable in its deliberations for the two-year state budget. The conference also encourages support for issues related to Catholic Schools. Finally, the CCO is advocating for protections of unborn children and a prohibition of the death penalty for persons with severe mental illness. To read issue backgrounders, visit <https://www.ohiocathconf.org/Issues/category/legislative-action-alerts>.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit !

Catholics begin their prayers and conclude them with those words. When they say them they trace the Cross of Jesus, the Son, on their head, heart, and shoulders. They conclude public prayers, addressed to God the Father, sometimes saying “through Christ our Lord,” and sometimes “through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.”

I remember the day I realized that I didn’t know what this was all about. I was young, so I thought that if I couldn’t make sense of something it must not make sense. It seemed like a holdover to me, **a holdover from what** I couldn’t say, but it must have been something long since extinct. It wasn’t enough for me to say that “It’s the way we have always done it.” After all I was an adolescent, and, anyway, the whole world seemed to be asking adolescents’ questions in the early to mid 1960s. Our motto (or mine in any case) was “When in doubt, drop it or change it.”

But I was given the grace of asking myself why did wise and generous people I knew do the deepest thing they did—praying—in this peculiar way. So I didn’t give it up. The more I studied and the more I prayed, the more I began to figure out two things, that I would never be able completely to figure out **this Trinitarian attitude to prayer**, and that it was based on the teaching of Jesus and had something very rich to say about who God is ... and who I am.

Christianity teaches that God is one and yet he is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, that these are three distinct persons, equal in dignity, equally to be adored. This is at the heart of Christianity. So what?

The way the teaching was unfolded for humanity is, I learned, itself a big part of the story: God revealed himself to the Hebrew people, letting them in on the secret that the One, is all-creative, all powerful, unlimited, always was and always will be. This teaching of the Old Testament was a wonderful advance over the pagan myths of multiple gods who came and went, who were peevish and, well, sometimes, downright petty. Those other gods were about as real as Superman or Paul Bunyan. They were made in the image of mankind. The God of Israel was the maker who **made mankind in his image**. And this God was so awesome, so beyond anything we could imagine that his people needed to worship him, that they could not make any image of him, that even his name must be spoken in no other way but with respect.

Then along came Jesus. And he spoke to us of “**my Father**.” That sounded like a disrespectful way of speaking about God except to people who understood that he was **his only-and eternally-begotten Son**. God was more than just a power, a maker, a ruler; he was Jesus’ Dad! Jesus was eternally related to this Father and lived with him in utter love.

Jesus taught his disciples that they could know the Father too — and they could come into the life of love that Jesus and the Father had with each other. The Father brought us into being in an unfathomable act of love. He knows that we are in a distinctly inferior class—he’s the maker and Lord, we’re not. But for reasons we can’t begin to understand, he wants us human beings to be involved with him as family. This isn’t only poetry. It is the most fundamental reality. The Father sent his Son among us: **he humbled himself to share our humanity** so that we could be **exalted to share his divinity**.

The Son let us listen in as he was praying to his Father. He said that he prayed for us, that we might be one, as he is in the Father and the Father is in him. Fine, but how is the Son one in the Father and how is the Father one in the Son? Jesus unfolds the answer to that, too: **One in the Holy Spirit**. That Spirit is his life, the fire of his love. And that Spirit came forth from the Father and the Son and was poured out upon his people, the Church. So we have for our bond of unity with one another and with the very life of God, the bond of unity between Father and Son.

I am not a Muslim or a Jew. These other two “religions of the book” have many commendable things to say about their **awe** and their **duty to obey the one God**. But they are shocked at the notion that there are three persons in God. It is not that we are any better people than they. Only that we have been blessed with a fuller revelation of God, a fulfilling and eye-opening revelation that God, who is Lord, is **not simply Lord**; he is **the vigorous, dynamic movement of love among three Persons**. And amazingly enough, he wants for me not simply that I be his obedient servant, but that I become involved in that life of love. He wants me to be a participant in that divine life of his. He wants that for you, too.

It took a while to grow into this Trinitarian faith in God. I am glad that God has been patient with me. He lets all of us grow in the awareness of what he has to tell us.

Trinity Sunday, **the Feast of God**, is a day to rejoice in his revelation and to express our gratitude for what he has revealed to us about himself—and about his plan for us.

—Father Kessler

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