

Frank Sheed was one of the outstanding Catholic laymen of the last century. He was an author of many books, the CEO of a publishing house bearing his name, "Sheed and Ward, and a lay preacher of the faith. One could make the argument that he was one of the great Catholic apologists in the post war years dating back to 1920. Mr. Sheed is perhaps best remembered for mounting a soap box at the Speaker's Corner in London's fabled Hyde Park, and defending the truths of the Catholic faith. For years, he was subjected to verbal abuse by hecklers, skeptics and scoffers. He showed no fear in debating atheists, fundamentalists, communists, free-thinkers and anti-Catholics.

One of his favorite topics was the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. When speaking on this supreme mystery of the Christian faith, he never failed to draw a large crowd. Not only was Mr. Sheed informative, he was also entertaining.

The word "Trinity", is a combination of two Latin words, "trias" and "unitas" meaning three and unity. It is a revealed truth. Only God himself could reveal to us the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Human reason alone could never have discovered this truth unaided. The most sublime gift we have from heaven is God's revelation of His inner life. It is a mystery. In the words of Mr. Sheed, "a mystery does not mean a truth we can know nothing about but a truth we cannot know everything about".

How does the Church define the Trinity?

There is one God;

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is each God; and

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not the same.

In the days of my youth there was a popular song recorded by the band "Three Dog Night". It reached the top of the Billboard charts. The song's title: "One". The words, "One is the loneliest number" is repeated several times. But in terms of our Christian faith, "one" does not mean loneliness. God, the One, is at the same time, in Himself, relation. He lives in communion.

There was an ancient opinion voiced by the pagan philosopher, Aristotle that God was perhaps lonely, that he had no friends. God did not have what seemed to be the most lofty in human experience. It took divine revelation to answer the loneliness problem.

God is Trinity. He is not alone, solitary.

Each one of us bears the divine image in our souls. Recall the words from the creation account in the Book of Genesis: "Then God said: Let us make human beings in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (Gen 1:26). We are persons created for friendship and community. . Even the language used to define us in conversation speaks of relation, such as father aunt and mother, sister and brother, child and friend.

We are baptized in the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We begin each mass by making the sign of the Cross.

In today's epistle, St. Paul greets the Christian community of Corinth in Trinitarian language. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:13)

In Ireland, a once proud Catholic country, the shamrock, a three leaf clover, is the national emblem. Centuries ago, St. Patrick used the shamrock as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity. The constitution of Ireland begins, "In the name of the Most Holy Trinity from Whom is all authority and to whom as our final end, all actions both of men and states must be referred". Today, the Emerald Isle is awash in secularism. Mass attendance has plummeted, abortion legalized, suicide rates skyrocketing and mental illness alarmingly high.

When the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy spirit, is ignored, the consequences can be far-reaching and painful.

In closing let me quote the words of a great saint and scholar, Saint Pope John Paul II.

"God in his deepest mystery is not a solitude, but a family, since he has in Himself Fatherhood, Sonship and the essence of the family, which is love.