

St. George Newsletter

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Come, O ye People, let us worship the Godhead in Three Persons

St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco

God is a Holy Trinity. A Trinity Consubstantial! and indivisible. Cons substantial, i.e., one essence, one nature. A Trinity indivisible: the Son has never been divided from the Father, nor the Holy Spirit from the Father or the Son, and never will be divided.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three gods, but one God, since they have one nature, but not merely because of this. People also have one nature, one essence. But with people one cannot say that two or three people are one person, no matter how close to one another and harmonious they may be. People not only have separate bodies, but each one also has his own will, his own tastes, his own moods. No matter how similar people may be in body and character, it still never happens that everything is in common or that everything is the same.

With the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity everything is in union. The boundless love of the Father for the Son, of the Son for the Father, and the same love between Them and the Holy Spirit make Their will and all of Their actions to be common. They have one will, and They do everything together. Whatever pleases the Father also pleases the Son and the Holy Spirit. Whatever displeases the Holy Spirit also displeases the Father. Whatever the Son loves, the Father and Holy Spirit love also.

Everything is accomplished jointly by the Holy Trinity. At the creation of the world it says in the Bible: And God said, 'Let there be light: and there was light' (Gen. 1:3). What does "said" mean? It means that God the Father created by His Word, by that Word of which the Gospel says, In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1) and which is the Only-begotten Son of God.

God the Father created everything by His Word; in other words, He accomplished everything through His Son. The Father does not create anything without the Son, just as the Son does not create anything without the Father, and the Father and the Son always assist the Holy Spirit. It is said in the Bible about the creation of the world: And the Spirit of God moved over the waters (Gen. 1:2). It "moved" over creation, but did not merely move over it — not having exactly the corresponding expression in Slavonic, the word in the Hebrew original signifies "to cover," "to warm," similar to a hen sitting on her eggs, giving life to them by her warmth, so that a living creature might come forth.

By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth (Ps. 32:6). All that exists was created by God the Father through the Son and was brought to life by the Holy Spirit. In other words, everything which the Father wanted or wants, was or is immediately fulfilled by the Son and is animated by the Holy Spirit. Thus was the world created, thus was all accomplished by the providence of God concerning the world and mankind.

In order to save man, who through sin had fallen away from God and become mortal, the Son of God in accordance with the pre-eternal counsel of the Holy Trinity, obeying the will of the Father, came down to earth, was born of the Ever-Virgin Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed to the people the True God the Father and His divine will, taught the true worship of God, suffered for our sins, descended in soul to hades, having freed the souls of the dead, rose from the dead.

Even before His suffering, Christ promised His apostles, chosen by Him from among His disciples, to give them the power to loose and to bind - to remit people's sins or to leave them in them. After His Resurrection the Lord did not bestow this grace-filled gift on each one of the apostles, but on all of them together: He established His Church, the repository of that grace, uniting in Her all those who believe in Him and love Him

Having promised His apostles to invest them with power from on high, having sent them the Holy Spirit, having accomplished all for which He came to earth, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, receiving in His humanity that glory and honor which He had before creation of the world as the Son of God.

Having descended upon the disciples of Christ according to the promise, the Holy Spirit strengthened them in the faith of Christ and His grace poured upon them the gifts of God. He strengthened them for the preaching and fulfillment in life of the teachings of Christ for the building up of the Church founded by Christ and brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The Church, standing on Her foundation on earth and headed by the son of God seated at the right hand of the Father, is mysteriously guided by the Holy Spirit. She internally links Her children and unites them with God. Through the Church God's gifts of grace are poured out on those who strive to follow the way of Christ, sanctifying all good in them, cleansing them from sin and all impurity, making them able to become receptacles of the radiance of the glory and power of God.

Through the Church man is made a partaker of the divine nature, he enters into the closest relationship with the Holy Trinity. Not only the soul, but also the body of man is sanctified and with God by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, through which he is united with the entire Holy Trinity. Through divine grace, with the participation of his own will and powers, man

becomes a new creature, a participant in the eternal kingdom of God.

Nature is being prepared for that coming Kingdom of God, for the imminent cleansing by fire of the consequences of the sin of mankind and the curse that lies on it. She receives the first fruits of sanctification through the descent on her of the Holy Spirit at Theophany in the blessing of the waters and in many other Church services, so that she may later become a new earth and a new heaven.

This will be accomplished at the time appointed by God the Father, and the Son of God will come in glory to pronounce judgment on the world. Then those who have loved God and have been united with Him will shine with the rays of divine light and will eternally delight in the uncreated light of the Triune Godhead of the Consubstantial, Life-giving, and Indivisible Trinity.

To God, our Creator and Saviour, be glory, honor, and worship unto eternal ages:

Come, O ye people, let us worship the Godhead in Three Persons: the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit; for the Father before all time begat the Son Co-ever-existing and Co-enthroned, and the Holy Spirit was in the Father, glorified together with the Son; One Might, One Substance, One Godhead. In worshipping Whom let us all say: O Holy God, Who madest all things by the Son, through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit; Holy Mighty, through Whom we have known the Father, and through Whom the Holy Spirit came into the world; Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit, Who proceedest from the Father, and restest in the Son: O HOLY TRINITY, GLORY TO THEE. (Dogmaticon of Great Vespers of Pentecost)

History of the Old Testament Trinity Icon

The most famous of the works of Andrei Rublev - the famous "Trinity" - is kept in the Tretyakov Gallery. Made at the end of his creative period, the icon is the peak of the artist's work. In the days of Andrei Rublev, the theme of the Trinity

was also taken as a symbol of the times -- a symbol of spiritual unity, peace, concord, mutual love and humility, willingness to offer oneself as a sacrifice for the common good. Sergius of Radonezh founded a monastery not far from Moscow whose main church was dedicated to the Trinity, firmly believing that "looking on the Holy Trinity, fear before the hate of this world is defeated".

In the twenties of the 15th century, a guild of masters led by Andrei Rublev and Daniil the Black painted the icons and frescos of the Trinity cathedral in St. Sergius' monastery, which was build over the saint's tomb. Among these icons was the greatly-prized church icon "Trinity", but in the traditional place on the lower tier to the right of the royal doors. A 17th century source testifies that the monastery's abbot Nikon commissioned Andrei Rublev to "paint an icon of the holy Trinity in praise of our holy father Sergius". In Rublev's icon, attention is drawn to three angels and their states. They are depicted seated around a table, in the center of which is a liturgical vessel containing the head of a sacrificed calf, symbolizing the New Testament lamb, that is, Christ. The meaning of this depiction is sacrificial love.

The angel on the left, symbolizing God the Father, blesses the vessel with His right hand. The central angel (the Son), is depicted in the traditional attire of Jesus Christ, with his hand on the table with His fingers in a symbolic gesture, symbolizing submission to the Father's will and willingness to sacrifice Himself out of love for mankind. The gesture of the angel on the right completes the symbolic conversation of the Father and the Son, confirming the elevated meaning of sacrificial love, and comforts the One doomed to suffer. Thus, the image of the Old Testament Trinity (that is, an image based on the Old Testament subject) becomes an image of the Eucharist (which means good sacrifice), symbolically bringing out the meaning of the mystical supper of the Gospels and the sacrament founded thereon (the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ).

Researchers underscore the symbolic cosmic significance of the background against which

the image is represented, laconically and naturally. In the background are seen ideas of the universe, peace, unity, and the cosmos that unifies all these things in itself. In trying to absorb the content of "Trinity", it is important to understand its multifacetedness. The symbolism and plurality of meanings of the symbols of "Trinity" belong to ancient times. In most civilizations, such ideas (and images) as trees, vessels, tables, homes (temples), mountains, circles had symbolic significance. The depth of Andrei Rublev's acquaintance with these ancient symbolic images and their meanings, his ability to combine their meanings with the contents of Christian dogmatics demonstrate a high level of education, characteristic of the enlightened society of the time, and in particular, of Andrei's likely circle of companions.

The symbolism of "Trinity" is concordant with its artistic-stylistic properties. Among them, color has the greatest significance. The artist with the help of paint endeavors to pass on elevated heavenly beauty that has been revealed to earthly view. The artwork of Andrei Rublev, especially of the Zvenigorod period is marked by its particular purity of color, the dignity of tonal variations, the ability to use color to convey the shining of light. Light does not only shine in golden rays, in artistic ornaments, but in the warm glow of the bright faces and in the clean shadows and ochres. The peaceful-bright light blue, rose, and green tones of the angels' clothing. The symbolic coloring of the icon is especially felt in the special dark-light blue hue that is known as "Rublev blue". Entering into the beauty and depth of composition, comparing the meaning of "Trinity" with the ideas expressed by Sergius of Radonezh of contemplation, moral perfection, peace, concord, we can touch the internal world of Andrei Rublev, his thoughts expressed in this work.

The icon remained in the Trinity Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Monastery, which later became a Lavra, until the twenties of the twentieth century. In this time, the icon was restored several times. In 1904-1905, the first complete restoration of "Trinity" from its latest accretions was undertaken. The later paints were removed, but

the original traces remained against a new primer. Using the methods of restoration of those days, the restorers traced out lost images, but did not touch the remains of the author's work. In 1918-1919 and again in 1926, the top masters of the central government restoration studios made the final restoration of the work. In 1929, "Trinity", as a leading example of ancient Russian painting, was brought to the Tretyakov Gallery.

Foundation Stone for a New Church Laid in Salt Lake City

On May 5 and 6, His Eminence Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America visited the mission parish of the Great-martyr and Trophy-bearer George in Salt Lake City, Utah on the occasion of the parish feastday. The celebration was especially festive this year, as the community laid the foundation stone for a new church. The Vigil service on Saturday, served by His Eminence Archbishop Kyrill together with the parish priest Fr. Michael van Opstall and Deacon Andrei Garine, was held in the open air on the site of the future church. After the reading of the Matins Gospel, Vladika blessed the foundation stone, which was subsequently buried with a capsule commemorating the founders of the church. On Sunday, the Liturgy was followed by a festal moleben, at which the parishioners prayed again to their heavenly protector for his aid in the completion of the forthcoming construction.

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