

“Heavenly Things”
Trinity Sunday–May 31, AD 2026
Revelation 4:1-11 & St. John 3:1-15

Today the Church celebrates our Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Trinity Sunday is a wonderful occasion for reflecting on how God the Father has spoken through the Spirit-filled Word Made Flesh, calling us to be reconciled in perfect love as adopted sons and daughters of God through the power of the Holy Ghost. We only need to recall the recent major feast days we’ve celebrated to see what “heavenly things” of everlasting importance have happened through the awesome and mighty power of the Blessed Holy Trinity.

- God Incarnate in Jesus Christ atones for our sins on the Cross of Calvary.
- The sinless Man and Divine Savior rises from the dead on Easter with the promise of eternal life for all believers.
- Prophecies found in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms are fulfilled and explained in our Lord’s post-resurrection appearances.
- The risen Christ is taken up into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, there to reign in co-equal and co-eternal glory and power, and to serve as our great High Priest interceding for us at the Father’s side.
- God the Holy Ghost comes to the disciples and others to give birth to Christ’s One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and guide it into all truth—the truth of “heavenly things.”

These “heavenly things” are not ethereal things of no earthly importance but rather directly affect how we live our lives every day. But of course, our understanding and worship of the Holy

Trinity must be apprehended primarily through the Spirit. It is the Spirit that leads us to “heavenly things.” This is what Jesus is trying to teach Nicodemus in today’s Gospel lesson. Our Lord tells Nicodemus that entry into the kingdom of God requires being “*born of water and of the Spirit.*” “*Water*” here suggests the purifying waters of Baptism. While both flesh and Spirit are distinct things, as our Lord then states, the context and implication is clear that both are present in the earthly life of mankind, and therefore, both are necessary to be born again. One is not “born again” to some disembodied spiritual netherworld, but rather we live out that new life here in this fleshly life, and then into eternity, by the grace of God. And it is by the grace of God that such things happen, as Jesus indicates when He says:

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

The literal-minded Nicodemous asks, “*How can these things be?*” Jesus presses the case for belief in Him and His Word by responding “*If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*” As our Lord suggests next, “*heavenly things*” pertain to the great mysteries of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father, His eternal existence before all time, God’s plan of salvation for the world, and the procession of the Holy Spirit into our lives. It is the Incarnate

Son of Man who has come down from heaven and is also in heaven that connects us to these transcendent realities. Like Moses lifting up the image of a serpent to cure Israelites from the bites of deadly snakes [Numbers 21:4-9], believers beholding the crucified Christ in faith experience a miraculous transformation – a new birth – as sin and death are overthrown in them.

The Spirit-guided Church from early apostolic times has held that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the only possible conclusion from the evidence given in Holy Scripture. As a revelation from God, it is a divine mystery that cannot be totally apprehended by reason alone. Yet the Church has used reason to clarify and defend it from heresies, relying on symbolic language that points our finite minds to the Infinite. And so, every Sunday we are directed to sacred truths when we recite the Nicene Creed. An even deeper spiritual connection with our Triune God is made possible at every celebration of the Eucharist as we experience the Real Presence of Jesus Christ. Here at Christ's altar, through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can catch a glimpse of what heaven is like.

What glorious "heavenly things" are given in Chapter 4 of the Revelation of St. John the Divine. If you listen closely, the Holy Trinity is there. The trumpet calling St. John is Jesus Christ, as was noted in Chapter 1 of Revelation. The Holy Spirit is there, immediately enveloping St. John in order to give him the vision he is

relating. The seven *“lamps of fire burning before the throne”* are also symbolic of the Holy Spirit, which echoes Zechariah 4: 2-6 where seven lamps are equated with the one Spirit. The One who sits on the throne is God the Father Almighty. St. John’s vision conveys images of the Godhead’s magnificence and holiness through an appearance like precious stones, and the lightning and peals of thunder convey God’s majesty and glory, as does the lion. The other living creatures convey God’s faithfulness (the ox), intelligence (the man), and sovereignty (the eagle). The 24 elders surrounding the throne most likely represent the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles, together symbolic of all of God’s redeemed people, both Jews and Gentiles, in the fullness of both old and new covenants. What are they doing? Prostrating themselves before God’s throne as the angelic beings praise the Lord God Almighty with the thrice holy hymn—*“Holy, Holy, Holy!”* You can hear these voices joined with ours in our liturgy today.

Yes, the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity is a joyful celebration that encapsulates the revelation of the Father as Creator, Son as Redeemer, and Holy Ghost as Sanctifier in the unity of the Godhead. It also propels us forward into Trinitytide where we learn more about God’s glorious plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, and how our lives should be a witness to others of God’s righteousness and love through the power of the Holy Ghost. The door of heaven is open.

The trumpet of Christ is sounding with his bride, the Church, ever calling out to spiritually parched souls. In the words of St. John the Divine:

*“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” [Rev. 22:17] **Amen.***

And now unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all might, majesty, honor, and dominion, as is most justly due this day, both now and forever, Amen.