

# The Holy Trinity

Servants Prep Class

St. Mina, Holmdel

Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015

# Intro

- Getting to know someone...
- It's a mystery
- It's revelation

$$1 \times 1 \times 1 = ?$$

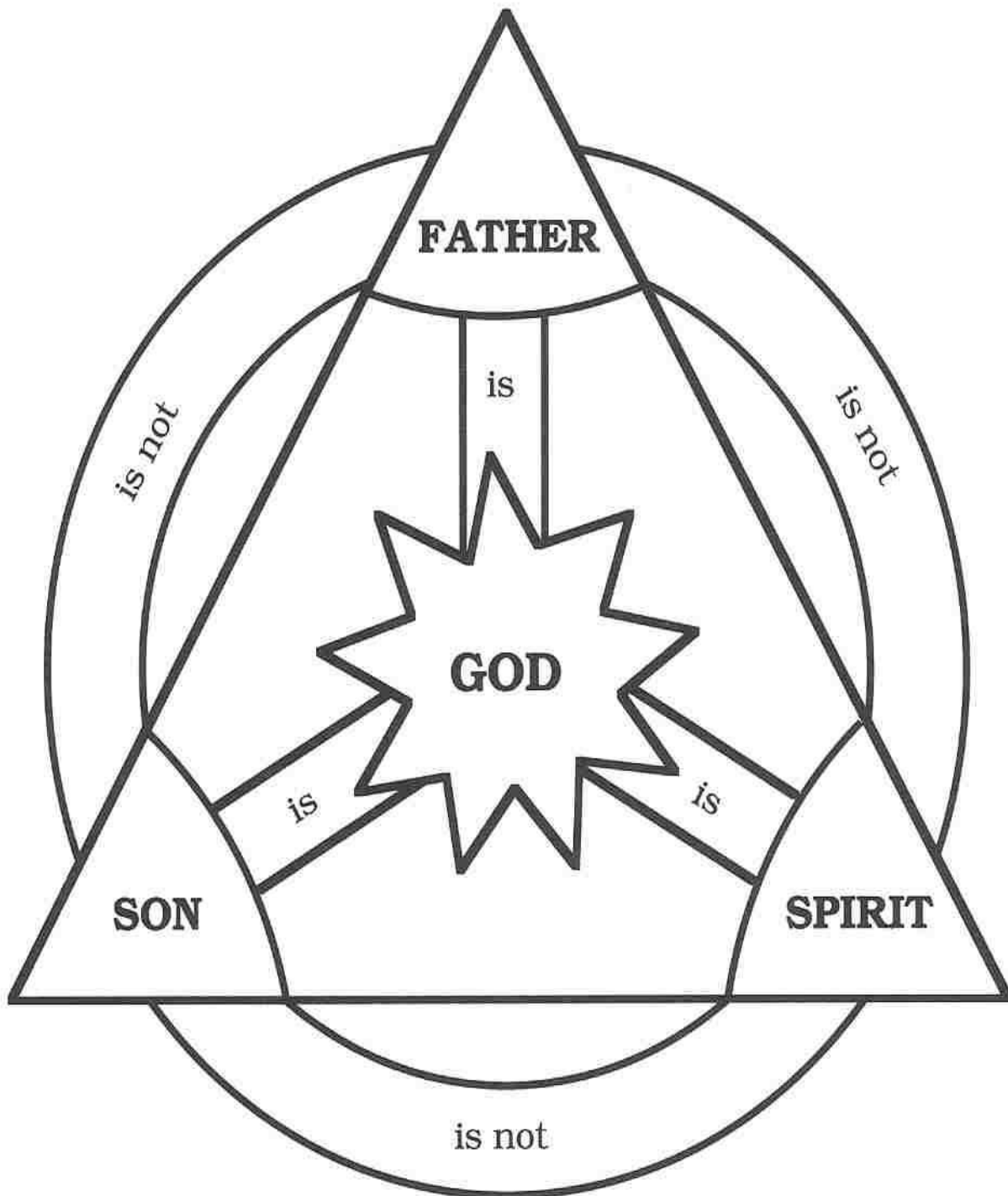
$$1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$$

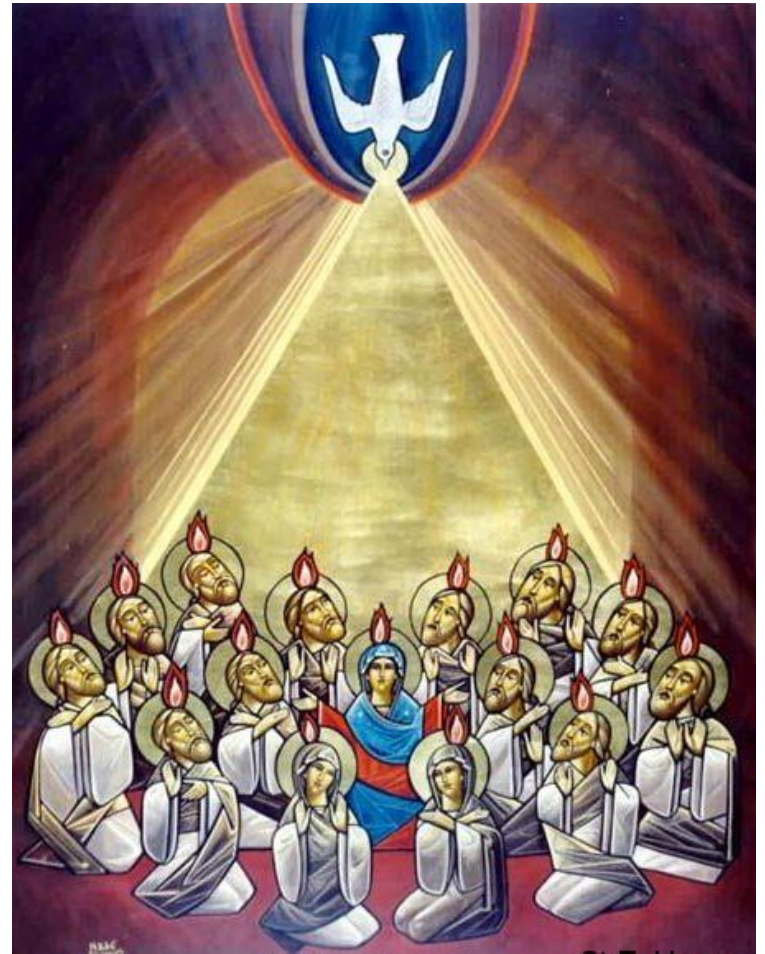
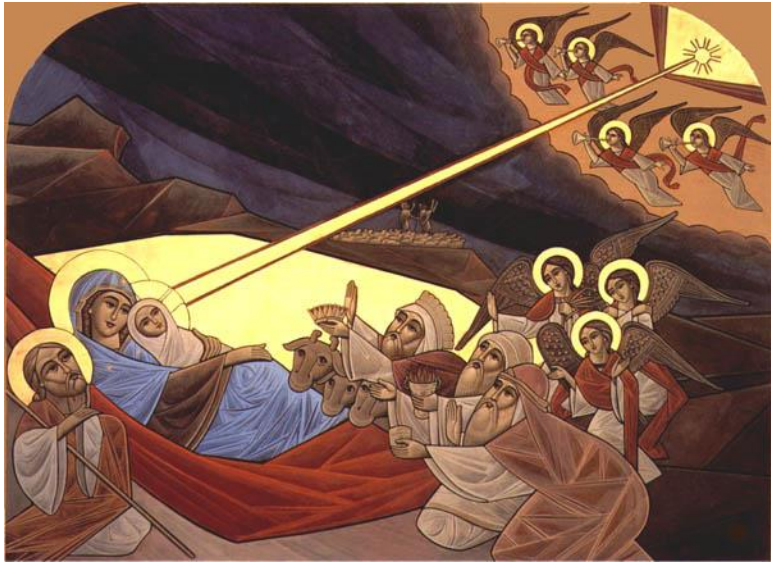
- $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$

- $1 = 1 = 1$

“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”

1 John 5:7





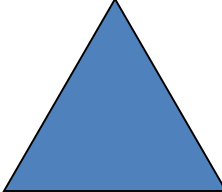
# **TRINITY ANALOGIES**



- “To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?” (Is 40:18)
- “To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike?” (Is 46:5)
- St. Cyril of Alexandria once said, *‘when things concerning God are expressed in language used of men, we ought not to think of anything base, but to remember that the wealth of divine Glory is being mirrored in the poverty of human expression.’*

- Human Being 

- Fire 

- Equilateral triangle 

- Tree 

- Fountain 

Even though St. Gregory of Nazianzus used some of the above analogies to explain the relation between the Father and the Son, he said:

“I have very carefully considered this matter in my own mind, and have looked at it in every point of view, in order to find some illustration of this most important subject, but I have been unable to discover anything on earth with which to compare The Nature of The Godhead. For even if I did happen upon some tiny likeness it escaped me for the most part, and left me down below with my example. I picture to myself an eye, a fountain, a river, as others have done before, to see if they first might be analogous to The Father, the second to The Son, and the third to The Holy Spirit. For in these there is no distinction in time, nor are they torn away from their connection with each other, though they seem to be parted by three personalities. But I was afraid in the first place that I should present a flow in The Godhead, incapable of standing still; and secondly that by this figure a numerical unity would be introduced.

For the eye and the spring and the river are numerically one, though in different forms. Again I thought of the sun and a ray and light. But here again there was a fear lest people should get an idea of composition in the Uncompounded Nature, such as there is in the sun and the things that are in the sun. And the second place lest we should give Essence to The Father but deny Personality to the others, and make Them only Powers of God, existing in Him and not Personal. For neither the ray nor the light is a sun, but they are only effulgence [radiance] from the sun, and qualities of its essence. And lest we should thus, as far as the illustration goes, attribute both Being and Not-being to God, which is even more monstrous.”

(Adapted from the 5th Theological Oration on The Holy Spirit, Articles XXXI and XXXII)

# **TRINITARIAN HERESIES**

# Modalism

- **Sabellianism** - the notion that the One Unique God manifested Himself in three different modes or stages. Sabellianism maintains that the Singular God appeared initially as the Father (Creator and Lawgiver) in the Old Testament. God then manifested Himself in the four Holy Gospels as the Son (Redeemer), meanwhile ceased to exist as the Father. Beginning with the Day of Pentecost, God began to manifest Himself as the Holy Spirit (Giver of Grace), and is therefore no longer either the Father or the Son.
- There is no difference, save the appearance and chronological manifestation among the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity; there are thus three names for the same Person.

# Modalism

- Sabellianism therefore denies the Eternal coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It teaches that God is Three Persons only in relation to the world in so many “manifestations” or “modes.”
- Present day groups that hold to this heresy are the United Pentecostal and United Apostolic denominations.
- Patripassianism (Latin: patris “father”; passus “to suffer”), which became another label for Modalism. Patripassianism is the teaching that it was the Father who became incarnate, was borne of a virgin, and who suffered and died on the cross.
- Ice – Water – Gas

# Unitarianism

- One God (Father)
  - So the Son & Spirit must be created



# Adoptionism

- This heresy is associated with **Paul Samosata**, Bishop of Antioch. It maintains that only the Father is genuinely God, and thus, that neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit can properly be accorded the same rank of Deity as the Father. Hence, Adoptionism tend to believe that Lord Jesus Christ was merely a man upon whom the Father conferred special favor or status that he never genuinely possessed. To them the Son was appointed, adopted, or elevated to a god during his baptism, but certainly never is in the same way in which the Father is God. Further, proponents of Adoptionism also deny that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person or Hypostasis within the Godhead, but is instead merely a manifestation of the Father's grace.

# Arianism

- This heresy bears some resemblance to Adoptianism; it denies both the Eternality and the Absolute Deity of the Son.
- This heresy holds that the Son is not of the same Divine Essence as the Father. Arianism teaches that the Son had been begotten at some point in time. Hence by extension, as a common Arian expression asserts, “There was a time when The Son was not!”
- Present day groups that hold to this heresy are Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Adventists.
- The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the distinctive mark of the Christian religion setting it apart from all other religions of the world. Therefore, any group that does not believe in the Holy Trinity is not worthy to be called Christian even though it may introduce itself as such.

- “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”

Mt 28:19

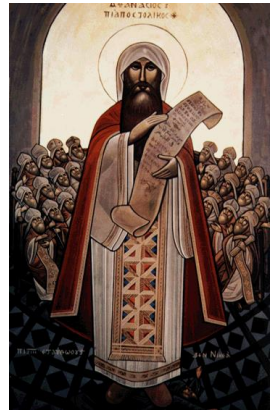


# What do the Fathers Say ?



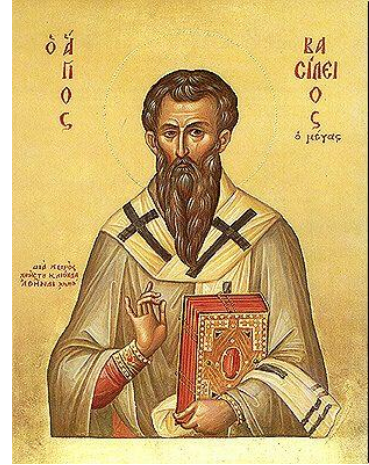
# Proof of Divinity of the Holy Spirit

- The Spirit comes from God, bestows sanctification and life, and is immutable, omnipresent and unique.
- The Triad is eternal, homogeneous and indivisible, and the Spirit is a member of the Triad, then He must be consubstantial with Father and Son.
- The Holy Spirit makes us all "partakers of God [*1 Cor 3:16*] ... If the Holy Spirit were a creature, we should have no participation in God through Him; we should be united to a creature and alien from the divine nature ... If the Holy Spirit makes men divine, His nature must undoubtedly be that of God."
  - St. Athanasius – “Concerning the Holy Spirit”



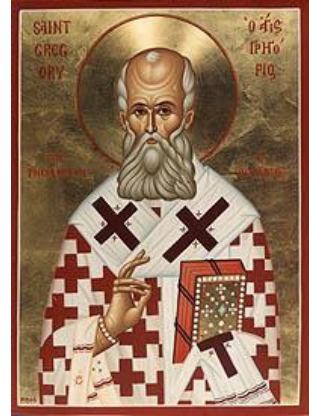
- All three Persons, moreover, are possessed of one and the same activity (*energeia*), so that "the Father accomplishes all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit". Whatever the Father effects in the way of creation, or government of the universe, or redemption, He effects through His Word; and whatever the Word carries out, He carries out through the Spirit.
- "The holy and blessed Triad is indivisible and one in Itself. When mention is made of the Father, the Word is also included, as also the Spirit Who is in the Son. If the Son is named, the Father is in the Son, and Spirit is not outside the Word. For there is a single grace which is fulfilled from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit."
  - St. Athanasius – “Concerning the Holy Spirit”

# St. Basil



- The essence of their doctrine is that the one Godhead exists simultaneously in three modes of being, or hypostases. So Basil remarks,
- "Everything that the Father is, is seen in the Son, and everything that the Son is belongs to the Father. The Son in His entirety abides in the Father, and in return possesses the Father in entirety in Himself. Thus the hypostasis of the Son is, so to speak, the form and presentation by which the Father is known, and the Father's hypostasis is recognized in the form of the Son".
- The Godhead can be said to exist "undivided... in divided Persons", and there is an "identity of nature" in the three hypostases.

# St. Gregory of Nazianzen



- The Three have one nature. God, the ground of unity being the Father, out of Whom and towards Whom the subsequent Persons are reckoned". While all subordinationism is excluded, the Father remains in the eyes of the Cappadocians the source, fountain-head or principle of the Godhead. Their thought is that He imparts His being to the two other Persons, and so He can be said to cause Them. So Gregory of Nyssa speaks of "one and the same Person (*prosopon*) of the Father, out of Whom the Son is begotten and the Spirit proceeds",
- The distinction of the Persons is grounded in their origin and mutual relationship