

The Fatherhood of God

*The Father is my ultimate end
In Jesus I move
In the Holy Spirit I evolve
Till time and history dissolve*

The Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the divine revelation of divine love, and the inner movement of this love:

- Love has one foundation and that is what is common
- Love moves to share what is distinct.
- Love is preserved by uniting what is different.

Ten Reasons for Accepting and Believing the Holy Trinity

1. The Holy Trinity is the only doctrine of God which reveals the inner life of God. Any other doctrine of God does not tell us anything about the inner life of God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are relations in the Godhead. It is a relation of love which we are called to enter and share.
2. The Holy Trinity is the model and the only model of a communicated love which is first revealed as the inner life of God, who is love, and is communicated to humans through the Son and the Holy Spirit.
3. Love demands from us to consider three things, the lover, the beloved and the love. In love the lover is also beloved and the beloved is also a lover and it is the love exchanged between the two, the lover and the beloved, which unites and moves the two to inter-penetrate the being of each other. The Father is both lover and beloved, so also are the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father loves us and sends his beloved Son; the Son loves us and sends the beloved Holy Spirit as the Divine Gift of love. The Holy Spirit loves us and brings to our being not only himself but also the Father and the Son. We do not know any doctrine of God which has something similar to this dynamic love relationship in the life of God which is communicated to humanity by God himself.
4. We also use the term 'one' for the unity and for the co-equality of the Three Persons. God is one which means that all his work and every relationship in God and revelation of God is of the one God who is living and acting in the Three. The word one here, for the first time in human history, loses its mathematical value when it is applied to God. It is no longer a term used for negation of the old error of polytheism but a positive term which guides the human life to unity.
5. The Holy Trinity is a model of co-equality. In the Godhead there are Three co-equals who work and share life as Three in one. The word three, like the word one, has no mathematical value because numbers are the worst terms we use for God. Here 'three' is used for the unique life of Three Co-equals who are also one and who are so

united that any work or activity comes from the Father, in the Son through the Holy Spirit. God stands facing the whole creation as the model not only of love but also of the Community of the Three; He reveals perfect life and cooperation and gives the whole creation that revelation which brings all together, to participate in that communal life.

6. The Holy Trinity is the divine revelation which brings humanity to full growth and maturity by calling humanity to assimilate through the Son and the Holy Spirit the most important two aspects of life, the divine and the human. The divine is through the Gift of adoption of every human to be the child of God called to be like his Son. The human is that unique revelation of the Son of the Father in our humanity who by uniting himself to our humanity led us humans to that relationship which conquers death and sin, and elevated us to his immortal life. When the Son became human, he brought to that plan of our salvation the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the unique relationship which is in the Godhead and to show us how the Three work and act as One, and put an end to the divisions which death and sin created. The Son was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was baptized, crucified, and risen in the Bosom of the Father, and was anointed by the Holy Spirit. We are called to share in all that the Son has been through in order to share with him his life in the Father and receive from him the Holy Spirit.
7. The Holy Trinity is the new spring of our eternal prayer. We pray in the Son incarnate by the Holy Spirit. Monotheism alone does not provide us with this dimension of eternal relationship of prayer since the One God who has no three persons in him is no more than a God to whom we pray, but in the Holy Trinity we have that unique relationship where one of the Three, the Son is our Leader in prayer and the second, the Holy Spirit, is the One who reveals to us the depth of the divine life and as our intercessor tells us what to say in our prayer. This takes place here and also in eternal life.
8. The Holy Trinity shapes our human community, being the model of co-equality, the true divine sacrificial life and the communion of love. This is what the church is all about as the community of co-equals but who are, at the same time, distinct. We should discover this in Baptism and in the Lord's Supper.
9. The Holy Trinity is the model of Truth in a world where words and relationships in our human life are always open to deception, lies and hidden evil. But the Holy and Divine Trinity offers to us, not just words, but words which come from communion; communion which comes from love; and love which springs from life. Hence, words of revelation were proved by actions; actions declared the quality and the uniqueness of the divine love. Communion was established by the Son taking our humanity forever and the Gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our being. This unique Christian doctrine of God speaks loudly by actions and is the antidote of all forms of deception.

10. Throughout Christian history, Christian writers expanded the doctrine of the Trinity. They used two words to guard truth and to halt false interpretation; these two words are Person and substance. Our experiences of life tell us that treating each other as less than persons opened the ditch of evil for both the predator and the victim. When a human is no longer a person, but a number as in detention centers, or an item as in Concentration Camps, life is no longer valued; differences are stamped on. The doctrine of one God, who has no differences or distinction of Persons in him, becomes like a mirror for human oppression and becomes the source of a religious ideology which destroys life and even gives this destruction a sanctity. In Islam, Moslems become like the one God who has no three persons in him where each one is different, but is just one. That kind of god has no inner self-love which is poured out to us - his creation.

What is a Heresy?

Corruptio optimi pessimum est (The corruption of the best is the worst)

Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than truth itself. (St Irenaeus against Heresies 1.2)

What is a heretic? The Greek word from which the English terms “heresy” and “heretic” are derived simply means an “act of choice” or an “attachment.” For a time, *hairesis* (Greek for heresy) merely meant “party” (from “part”) or “sect” (from the Latin verb “to cut”) and did not imply any disparagement. At an early date in the history of Christianity heresy became almost the worst offense in which a Christian could become involved; in the Middle Ages, heresy became a capital crime. Something similar has happened with the terms “orthodoxy” and “heresy.” “Orthodoxy” is derived from two Greek words meaning “right” and “honor.” Orthodox faith and orthodox doctrines are those that honor God rightly, something that ought to be desirable and good. In Christian usage, the term “heresy” refers to a false doctrine, i.e. one that is simply not true and that is, in addition, so important that those who believe it, whom the church calls heretics, must be considered to have abandoned the faith.

Christians believe that the church is not merely an assembly, an association, or a fellowship, but the very body of Christ. The church is not merely the product of faith, but it is to a degree an article of faith (In the Universal Creed of 325-381 I believe in one holy... Church). A heresy is a threat to the unity of the church. It is an election of articles of faith and a rejection of others which makes the message of salvation blurred.

The word “heresy,” as we have noted, is the English version of the Greek noun *hairesis*, originally meaning nothing more insidious than “party.” It is used in this neutral sense in Acts 5:17, 15:5, and 26:5. Early in the history of the first Christians, however, “heresy” came to be used to mean a separation or split resulting from a false faith (1 Cor. 11:19;

Gal. 5:20). It designated either a doctrine or the party holding the doctrine, a doctrine that was sufficiently intolerable to destroy the unity of the Christian church. In the early church, heresy did not refer to simply any doctrinal disagreement, but to something that seemed to undercut the very basis for Christian existence. Practically speaking, heresy involved the doctrine of God, the Trinity, Christology, and the Holy Spirit. This covers the period from the apostles (NT) to 451 the Council of Chalcedon.

During that period it was common for the majority of Christians to say with Vincent of Lernas (5th century):

“Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed:
Everywhere,
Always,
By all.

For that is truly and in the strictest sense ‘Catholic’ which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally: This rule we shall observe if we follow
Universality,
Antiquity,
Consent.

(Commentary chapter 2, PML Vol 50, 639)

Two Wrong Concepts of the Divine Life:

First, that God has a barren and non-fruitful nature - St. Athanasius of Alexandria, Against the Arians 1:19

“ If God be, and be called, the Fountain of wisdom and life— as He says by Jeremiah, 'They have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters ([Jeremiah 2:13](#));' and again, 'A [glorious](#) high throne from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary; O Lord, the Hope of [Israel](#), all that forsake You shall be ashamed, and they that depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain of living waters ;' — this implies that life and wisdom are not foreign to the Essence of the Fountain, but are proper to the Godhead, nor were at any time without [existence](#), but were always. Now the Son is all this, who says, 'I am the Life ([John 14:6](#)),' and, 'I Wisdom dwell with [prudence](#) ([Proverbs 8:12](#)).' Is it not then irreligious to say, 'Once the Son was not?' for it is all one with saying, 'Once the Fountain was dry, destitute of Life and Wisdom.' But a fountain it would then cease to be; for what begets not from itself, is not a fountain . What a load of extravagance! for God promises that those who do His [will](#) shall be as a fountain which the water fails not, saying by Isaiah the [prophet](#), 'And the Lord shall satisfy your [soul](#) in drought, and make your bones fat; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not ([Isaiah 58:11](#)).' And yet these, whereas God is called and is a Fountain of wisdom, dare to insult Him as barren and void of His proper Wisdom. But their doctrine is false; [truth](#) witnessing that God is the [eternal](#)

Fountain of His proper Wisdom; and, if the Fountain be [eternal](#), the Wisdom also must be [eternal](#). For in Godhead were all things made, as David says in the Psalm, 'In Wisdom have You made them all ;' and Solomon says, 'The Lord by Wisdom has formed the earth, by understanding has He established the heavens ([Proverbs 3:19](#)).' And this Wisdom is the Word, and by Him, as John says, 'all things were made,' and 'without Him was made not one thing.' And this Word is Christ; for 'there is One [God](#), the [Father](#), from whom are all things, and we for Him; and One Lord [Jesus Christ](#), through whom are all things, and we through Him ([1 Corinthians 8:6](#))'".

Second, that the Godhead is in a static state and lacks movement - St John of Damascus, The Orthodox faith 1:12

“The Father is ‘*arche*’ and ‘*pege*’ (spring) of everything in the Godhead; the Father generates the Son and sends the Holy Spirit.”

John of Damascus used a Greek word to describe this movement, “*Perichoresis*”. It comes from the verb *perichorew* which appears infrequently in ancient Greek literature and means to "go around." It appears in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) to refer to those who "dwell around" a town (Gen. 13:10), and one reference in the Gospel of Matthew (14:35) has that same meaning. Indeed, the word became known first in Christology and was used by St Gregory of Nazianzus for the union of the divine and the human in Christ.(Letter 101) So, *perichoresis* means " going about; a rotation." Then, St John of Damascus used it for the inter-penetration of the movement of the Three.

The Dynamic teaching of our Lord on the Fatherhood of God in the Gospels of Matthew and John

Before handing over the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught the goodness and the love of the Father, in (Matt 5:16, 45, 48) - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Theology is discovered by practice; to be the Son or the child of God, we have to live differently. Jesus taught us how to look at the Father; please note that Jesus does not speak of God, (Matt 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32)

1. Seek the heavenly reward "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”

What is the theological principle here?

2. In the Lord’s Prayer, we call God not our God but our Father: But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: *Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

3. Forgiveness is not an idea, but it is to be like the Father, and only then we can understand his Fatherhood: For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. **Was Jesus harsh when he said if you don't forgive your heavenly Father also will not forgive?**
4. Jesus appealed to creation to prove the Father's care: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"
5. Then in (Matt 7:11) Jesus appealed to the human nature itself. "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him." **What is the hidden teaching in this saying?**
6. What does (Matt 10:20) say about the Father? When we face persecution... for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." Please notice that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, and that He is the one who will guide the witness or the confession. Here, the Spirit is not given as a doctrine but as the One who speaks. Thus the Spirit is not only a power but is the third Person. **Why do you think that this work is given to the Spirit?**
7. The Father is not a title or even an attribute as some may think. Please read (Matt 10:21,29, 32,33) ... Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." **Is the Father an attribute of God or just a name? Please record three reasons for believing that God is the Father**
8. In (Matt 11:25, 26, 27 and Matt 12:50) Jesus gives thanks to the Father and gives three attributes to the Father. **In what way did Jesus know the Father? And if He knew the "will" of the Father, do you think that Jesus has a special relationship with the Father?** "At that time Jesus declared, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother."
9. From (Matt 13:43), we can say that Jesus saw the end of the life of the "righteous" in the "kingdom of their Father." **What made them get into the Kingdom of their**

Father and why the Father of Jesus is also is their Father? “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

10. The Father reveals the Son (Matt 16:17) - After Peter confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." **Why do you think that the Father has to reveal the Son and that is not how the human mind work it out?**
11. Jesus speaks of His second coming, but notice; “in the glory of his Father.” **Do you recall some words similar to that in the gospel of John? Does God have different kinds of glory?** Please read (Phil 2:6ff). For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done.
12. Jesus, while still in the human flesh, can still speak in this way (Matt 18:10,14)"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”
13. In (Matt 18:14, 19) Jesus not only knows the will of the Father but also tells us of the end result of prayers. “So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.
14. Among the verses which troubled the Arians and later Jehovah’s Witnesses is (Matt 24:36), but if we add (Matt 25:34) **what can you learn?** "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

The Gospel of John is the Gospel of the Fatherhood of God

1. The Son has a unique relationship with the Father, He is in the bosom of the Father” (Jn 1:18); because of that the Son made the Father known. He has made the Father known. The means of this revelation is the “Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (Jn1:14) Thus the Incarnation is a revelation of the Father and the Son.
2. In (Jn3:35) the Son says, “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.” **What is the basic quality of that kind of love that gives all things unto the hand of the Son?** Select one of the following words: Equality, Trust, or any other word you like. **Why do you think the Father gave all things to the Son?**
3. Jesus defines worship in his dialogue with the Samaritan woman in (Jn 4:12-23), “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in

spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.” **If you compare these statements with any statement about worship in the OT, would you ask yourself:**

A) What kind of authority did Jesus have?

B) Does this worship in spirit and in truth nullify both Jewish and Samaritan worship?

4. John chapter 5 has unique declarations:

- a. (5:17, 18, 19,20) But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working." This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God. Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel.
- b. In (5:21, 22, and 23), the sharing of the divine power; Father-Son have the same love: For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son”
- c. In (5:23) the Son is honored as the Father: “that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.
- d. The above is true because the Son has life in himself (5:26). **What is the meaning of these words?** “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself”. (Jn 6:37), “All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.”
- e. **Why did Jesus say:** But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. (5:36)?
- f. No one in the OT said that he comes in the name of Yahweh; here Jesus does not use the name Yahweh but the Father: I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. (5:43)

5. The Bread of eternal life which is sealed by the Father (Jn 6:27), “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal.” Then in (Jn 6:32) Jesus says that "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.”

In (Jn 6:49, 57, 58) “Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live

because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever." **Can we know the Father without participation in the Heavenly Bread? Why is this knowledge part of our communion?**

6. The Son gives eternal life because it is, 'the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' (6:40), compare (Jn 5:21-23)
7. **Why is it that no one can come to the Father unless the Son draws him?** (6:44), "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.
8. The two origins of humanity are: the biological from Adam/Abraham and the new one from God the Father. Jesus contrasts the two in (Jn 8:18 - 42), but the new relationship with God as Father does not take place before Jesus is crucified or lifted up (Jn 8:27).

I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me." They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also." They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did, You do what your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.

9. Born of the devil is a very strong statement (Jn 8:44), "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
10. Jesus did not glorify himself (Jn 8:53-54). the Jews told him, "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you claim to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God." **Why did Jesus refuse to have his own glory? Is self-glory compatible with true communion?**

The Good Shepherd (Jn 10)

In that unique illustration of “*mathal*” (Hebrew for parable), we should be able to see the NT terms that shaped the Nicene word “*Homo-ousios*” (one substance). Jesus used Biblical words such as:

The works I do in the Fathers name (10:25)

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one (10:29-30). One hand means one power, and one power means one life; in the culture of the 4th century is meant one “substance” or “one “*ousia*”. *Ousia* (*Οὐσία*) is an [Ancient Greek](#) noun formed on the feminine present participle of *εἶναι* (to be); it is analogous to the English participle, being. *Ousia* is often translated (sometimes incorrectly) to [Latin](#) as *substantia* and *essentia*, and to English as [substance](#) and [essence](#). This word was the only word at that time that was able to stop Arianism.

In (Jn 10:32-36) Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" Do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?