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## Father Cantalamessa on Trinity Sunday

### Pontifical Household Preacher on This Sunday's Gospel

ROME, JUNE 9, 2006 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of a commentary by Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Pontifical Household, on this Sunday's Gospel reading on the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

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#### A Close Mystery Trinity Sunday

Christian life develops completely in the sign and presence of the Trinity. At the dawn of life, we were baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and at the end, at our bedside, the words are recited: "Go forth from this world, O Christian soul, in the name of God, the Almighty Father who created you, in the name of Jesus Christ who redeemed you, and in the name of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you."

Between these two extreme moments, there are others called of "transition" that, for a Christian, are marked by the invocation of the Trinity. In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, spouses are united in marriage and priests are consecrated by a bishop. In the past, contracts, sentences and all important acts of civil and religious life began in the name of the Trinity.

It is not true, therefore, that the Trinity is a remote mystery, irrelevant to everyday life. On the contrary, they are the three most "intimate" persons in life: They are not outside of us, as a wife or husband is, but within us. "They make their home in us" (John 14:23); we are their "temple."

But, why do Christians believe in the Trinity? Isn't it already difficult enough to believe that God exists, and then we add that he is "one and triune"? Christians believe that God is one and triune because they believe that God is love! The revelation of God as love, made by Jesus, has "obliged" one to admit the Trinity. It is not a human invention.

If God is love, he has to love someone. There is no love "in the void," without an object. But, whom does God love to be defined love. Men? But men have existed only for thousands of years, no more. The cosmos? The universe? The universe has existed only for billions of years. Before, whom did God love, to be able to define himself love? We cannot say that he loved himself, because this would not be love but egoism and narcissism.

This is the answer of Christian revelation: God is love because from eternity he has "in his bosom" a son, the Word, the one he loves with an infinite love, that is, with the Holy Spirit. In every love there are always three realities or subjects: one who loves, one who is loved, and the love that unites them.

The Christian God is one and triune because he is communion of love. In love, unity and plurality are

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reconciled; love creates unity in diversity: unity of intentions, of thought, of will; diversity of subjects, of characteristics and, in the human realm, of sex. In this connection, the family is the least imperfect image of the Trinity. It was no accident that when creating the first human couple God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26-27).

According to modern atheists, God is no more than a projection that man makes of himself, as one who confuses with another person his own image reflected in a stream. This might be true in regard to any other idea of God, but not in regard to the Christian God. What need would man have to divide himself in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, if God is really no more than the projection that man makes of his own image? The doctrine of the Trinity is, on its own, the best antidote to modern atheism.

Do you find all this too difficult? Have you understood little? I will tell you not to worry. When one is on the shore of a lake or a sea, and wishes to know what is on the other side, what is most important is not to sharpen one's sight and try to scan the horizon, but to get into the boat that takes one to that shore.

With the Trinity, what is most important is not to ruminate on the mystery, but to remain in the faith of the Church, which is the boat that takes one to the Trinity.

[Translation and adaptation from the Italian by ZENIT]

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