

The Holy Trinity



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Printed in China CPSIA December 2016 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 LP

SAINT PATRICK

ST. Augustine never really gave up studying the Trinity, but from that day on he did realize that he would never fully understand it. That did not bother him, though, for at least he could learn more about it.

Sometimes with mysteries, the easier explanation is better than the longer and more complicated one. St. Patrick learned this when he tried to explain the Trinity. He was preaching the Gospel to the people of Ireland. They believed in many gods, and when St. Patrick said that we believe in only one God but that God was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they were confused.

St. Patrick knew that the people would never understand long and complicated arguments, so he was looking for a simple example of how something could be both three and one. He was walking out in the fields one day, praying on this problem, when he spotted a shamrock, which is a three leaf clover. At once, he knew that he had found the way to explain the Trinity to the people. The Irish see shamrocks every day of their lives. They all knew that it had three leaves, but that it was only one plant. And so from that day on St. Patrick always told the people to whom he preached that the Trinity was like the shamrock, three and yet one.



THE TRINITY IS ETERNAL

THE Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all exist from all eternity. We cannot say that one of them is older than the other, nor can we say that there was ever a time when one of them did not exist. Rather, the Trinity has always been, is now, and always will be. Sometimes people think that the Father existed in the Old Testament times, while the New Testament belongs to the Son and the Holy Spirit. Yet, when the holy authors wrote the Letters and the Gospels of the New Testament, they wrote that the Father, Jesus, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, were always God.

St. Paul, in fact, says this when he talks about the time the Israelites were living in the desert and in great need of water. God provided them with water, for He told Moses to strike a rock with his rod, and immediately water flowed out.

In the time of St. Paul, the rabbis, the teachers of the Jewish people, taught that whenever the Israelites changed camp, the rock followed them around. St. Paul took this one step further, for He says that this water provided life, and Jesus is the source of living water. Therefore, that rock must have been Jesus giving water to His people.