

**“How undiscoverable His ways!”**  
***Rom 11:33 Knox***

So unfathomable, so unsearchable, so undiscoverable, so infinite is God Himself, and His ways, that we can know almost nothing about Him as a result of our own efforts. We can know *that* He exists by use of our own reason, as St Paul says elsewhere in the Letter to the Romans: “from the foundations of the world men have caught sight of His invisible nature, His eternal power and His divineness, as they are known through His creatures,” (1:20 Knox). In other words, seeing the order and the splendour of the material world we can reason that there must have been a Creator who put everything in its place. But once we have said that, there is very little else that we can say from our reason alone except, perhaps, that there is only one God and that He is immutable. After all, if there was more than one God then he would not be perfect because the *other* god would have something that God did not have or he would *be* something that God was not. Similarly, were God not immutable then it would suggest, once again, that He was not perfect because if God could change that would mean He could become something that He previously was not, or that He could add something to His nature or attributes that previously He did not have.

Even so, to extrapolate from the existence of a single and unchanging God to the existence of a Trinity is more than we can say. It is true that there are hints in the Old Testament of the existence of the Trinity, for example when God says in the Book of Genesis, “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (Gen 1:26). The use of the plural suggests that there is more than one person in the Godhead. Again and again throughout the Old Testament there is reference to God’s Spirit whilst the various prophecies about Wisdom Itself in the wisdom books, about the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, and about the coming of a Messiah in so many of the prophetic books all hint

at the existence of more than one Person in the Godhead. But it is only with the coming of Christ Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity-made-flesh, that we can truly know of the existence of the Blessed Trinity. The reason for this is simple, namely God is infinite which means that He and His ways are undiscoverable to the finite mind of a creature. We cannot even discover *that* there is a Trinity never mind what that Trinity consists of or what are the qualities or attributes of the Trinity. Our knowledge of the Trinity comes purely through revelation, comes purely as a result of God *choosing* to make Himself known to us. But what has He made known to us?

The first definitive revelation of the Holy Trinity comes at the baptism of Our Lord by St John the Baptist in the river Jordan. The Holy Spirit was seen to descend, in the form of a dove, upon the head of the Son of God whilst the voice of the Father was heard from Heaven. What that voice said is all important: “Thou art my beloved Son” (Lk 3:22). Those five words transformed our understanding of God, and continue to draw a sharp delineation between Christianity and all other religions.

So long as there was only one person in the Godhead then we might have been forgiven for supposing that God remained aloof, distant, transcendent, and wholly other. Indeed, we might insert into that list any other description which would leave God separate from us and somehow disconnected from His creatures, but when God revealed to us the presence of a Son, and not only a Son but a *beloved* Son, suddenly everything changed.

If there is only one God then any existence of a Son would mean that the Son shared the same nature as God, that they would both be divine and co-equal. And if God is unchanging then it would suggest that if God loves His Son then He has *always* loved His Son. And if God has always loved His Son then it means that it must be in the nature of God to love.

Moreover, with the presence of the Holy Spirit seeming to exist between the Father and the Son, as a *bond* between them, we can suddenly see that God Himself comprises a *community* of Persons, and that for each of the Persons involved the chief characteristic of His nature is *to love*.

In other words, with the Baptism of the Lord, we have not only the revelation of the existence of the Trinity but also the revelation of God's chief characteristic.

From all eternity it has been the nature of God to love. Before the creation, Father and Son loved each other perfectly within a bond which was in itself a living and breathing Love, namely the Holy Spirit. The creation of the material universe was, therefore, an act of a God whose nature it is to love. But God did not create us merely as a plaything nor even exclusively for us to be able to worship Him. God made us so that we might share in what He already is and has, namely Love.

Just as God is a community of Persons for whom the chief characteristic is love so we, too, were created and called to be a community of persons who each have love as our chief characteristic. Whether we live alone or with others the thing which binds us into the Mystical Body of Christ is God's love for us, and our love for Him and for each other. Without that love the bond begins to dissolve and finally to break and we cease to be members of that Body.

But *with* that bond of love we are drawn into the very heart of the magnificence of the Blessed Trinity Itself, into a share of all that is good and true and beautiful and holy.