

# The Mystery of Faith: The Holy Trinity

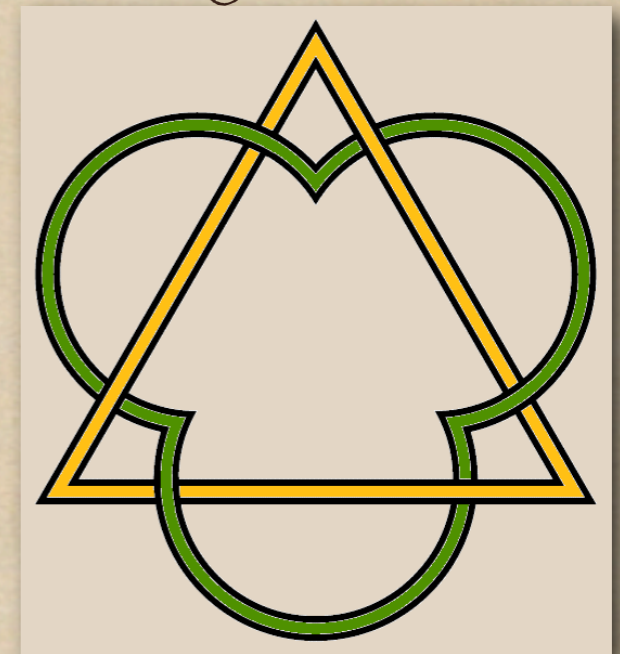
Holy Trinity Adult Forum  
March 15-29, 2009





# What is the Trinity?

- ◆ Historically, the “central dogma” of Christianity
  - ◆ Roman Catholicism
  - ◆ Eastern Orthodoxy
  - ◆ Anglicanism
  - ◆ Mainstream Protestantism
- ◆ But the term ‘Trinity’ does not appear in the Bible
- ◆ What is its meaning for Christians?

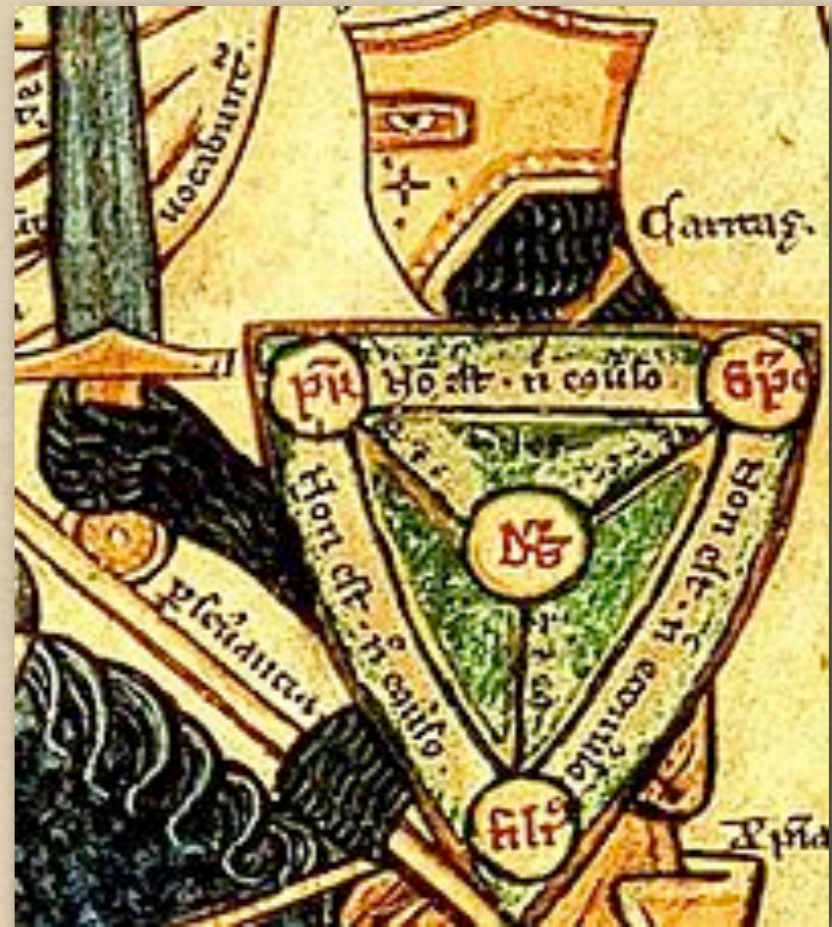




# Defining the Trinity

- ◆ “One God
- ◆ existing in three persons,
- ◆ of one substance
- ◆ Father,
- ◆ Son,
- ◆ and Holy Spirit.”

--(Oxford Dictionary of the  
Christian Church)

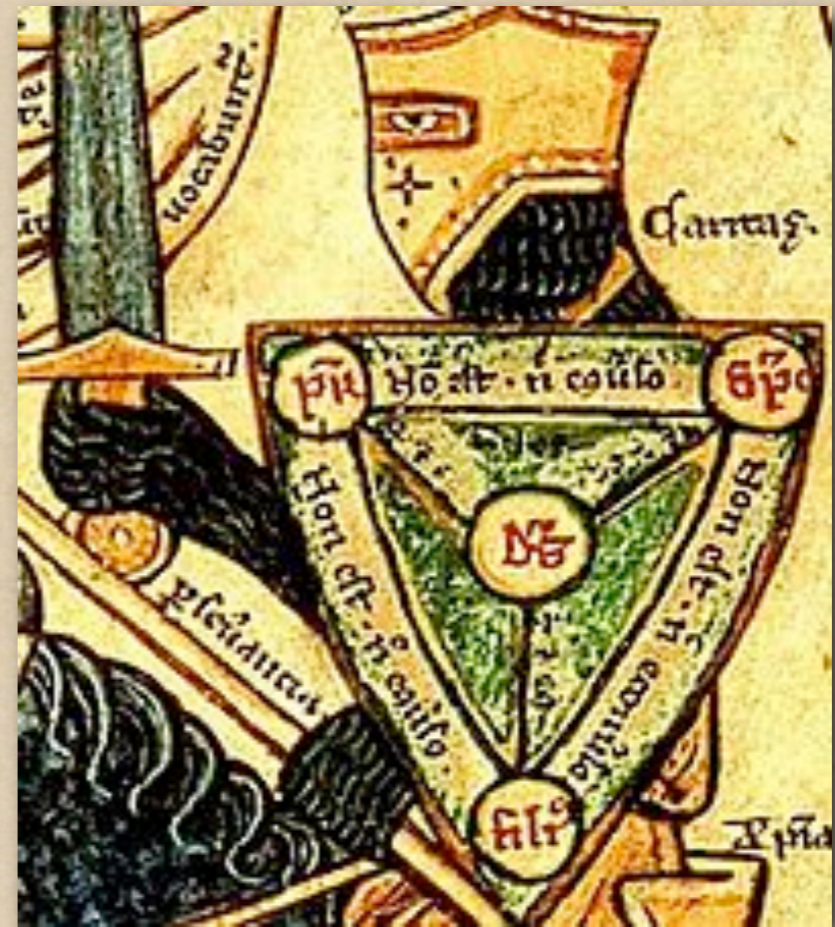




# Defining the Trinity

- ◆ “One God
- ◆ existing in three persons,  
[hypostases]
- ◆ of one substance  
[homoousios]
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--(Oxford Dictionary of the  
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# Biblical references, I

- ◆ 3 strangers appearing to Abraham
- ◆ Baptism of Jesus
- ◆ “In the beginning was the Word . . .”  
(John 1:1-18)
- ◆ Stephen’s vision in Acts 7
- ◆ Heavenly acclamation “Holy, Holy, Holy”  
in Revelation





# Biblical references, II

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

(Matthew 28:19)

- ◆ “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

(2 Corinthians 13:14)





# 1. Father/Creator, I

- ◆ We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.





# I. Father/Creator, II

- ◆ Origin of God as masculine
- ◆ Identification of 1st person
- ◆ The problem of evil
- ◆ Is the Father/Creator “first among equals”?





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# I. Father/Creator, II

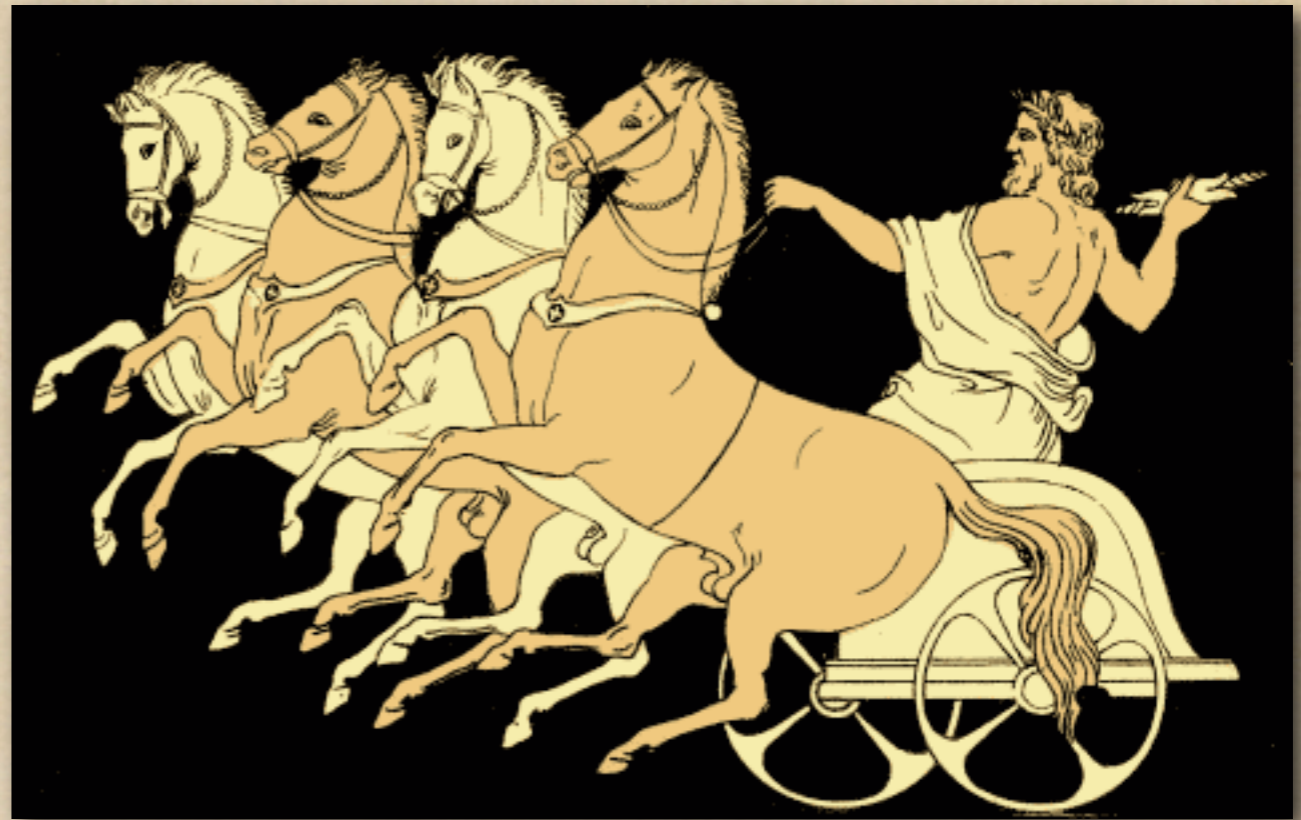
- ◆ Female deities in the ancient world?
  - ◆ Fertility figures
  - ◆ Agricultural societies





# I. Father/Creator, II

- ◆ Male deities in the ancient world?
  - ◆ Power figures
  - ◆ Nomadic societies
  - ◆ Thunder, sky, horses





# II. Son/Redeemer

- ◆ We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin  
Mary, and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.





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**of one being with the Father [homoousios]**  
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# the Paradox of the Orthodox

Less than God  
(or the Father)

Arianism  
Adoptionism

Truly God  
and  
Truly Human

Greater than  
Human

Gnosticism  
Modalism



# Christ triumphant

Processional  
cross of El Cid  
(11th century)



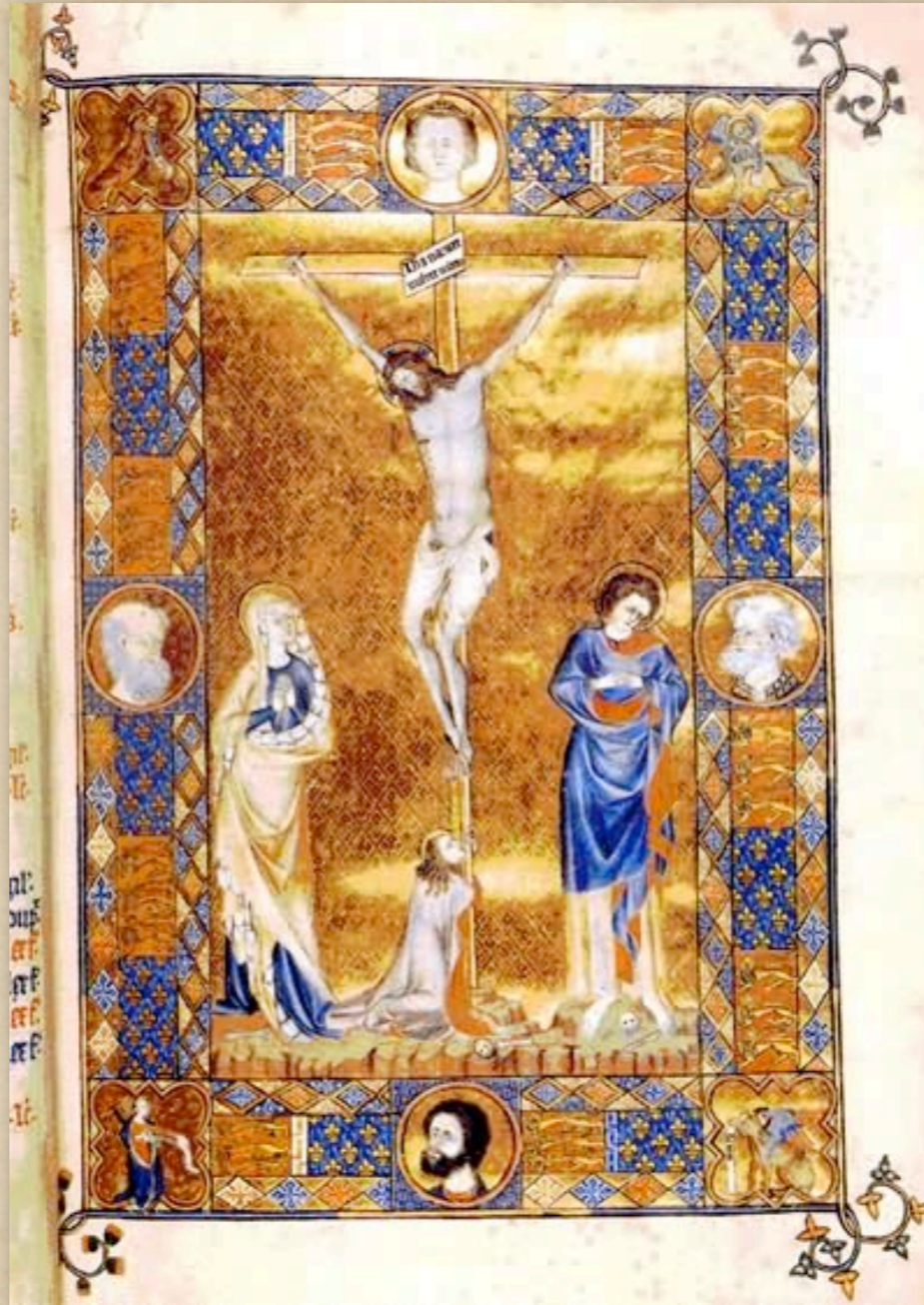
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# How many nails?

Gorleston  
psalter



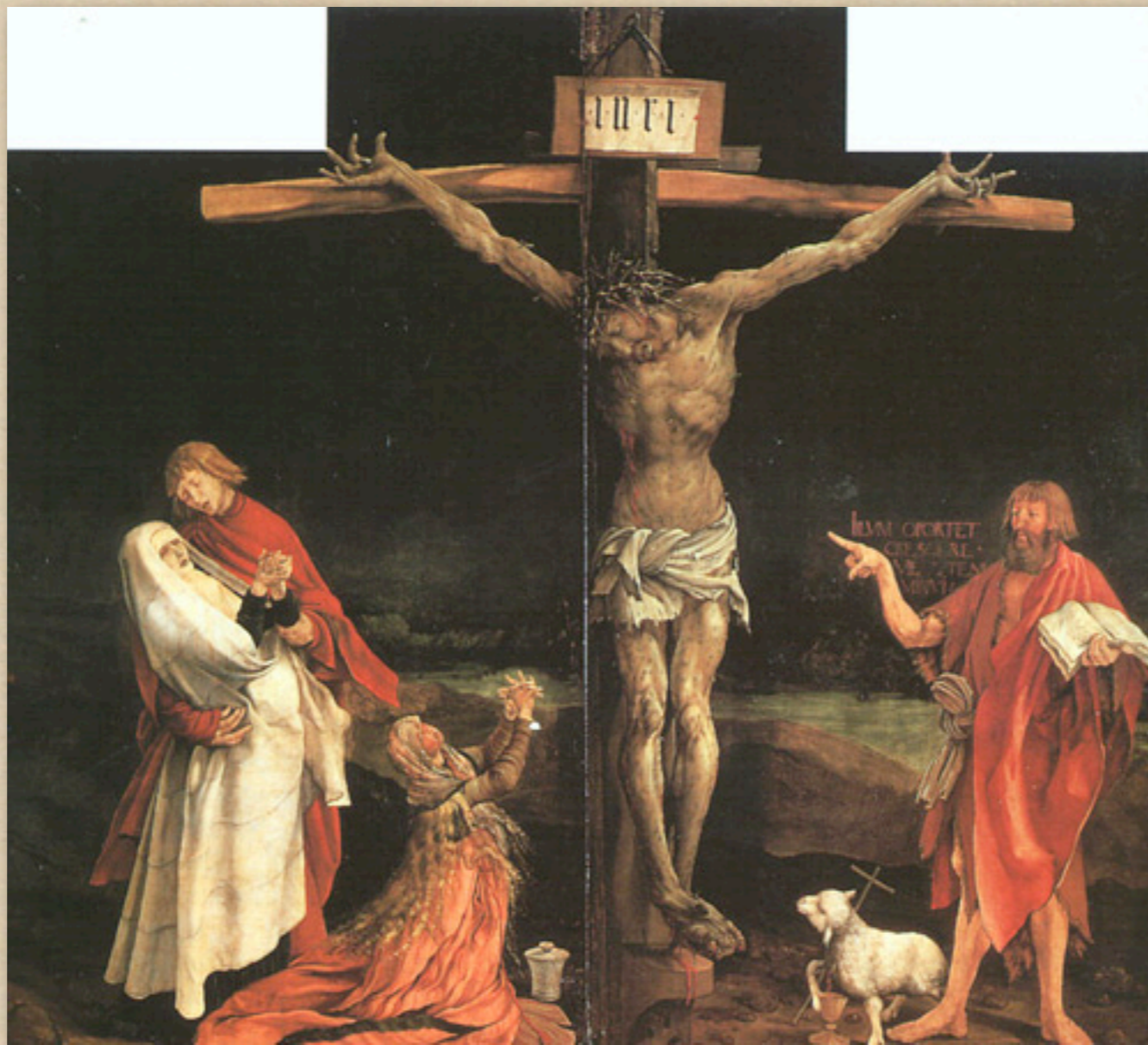
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# Jesus agonistes

Eisenheim  
altarpiece  
(Matthias  
Grünewald,  
1512-1516)



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# Jesus agonistes

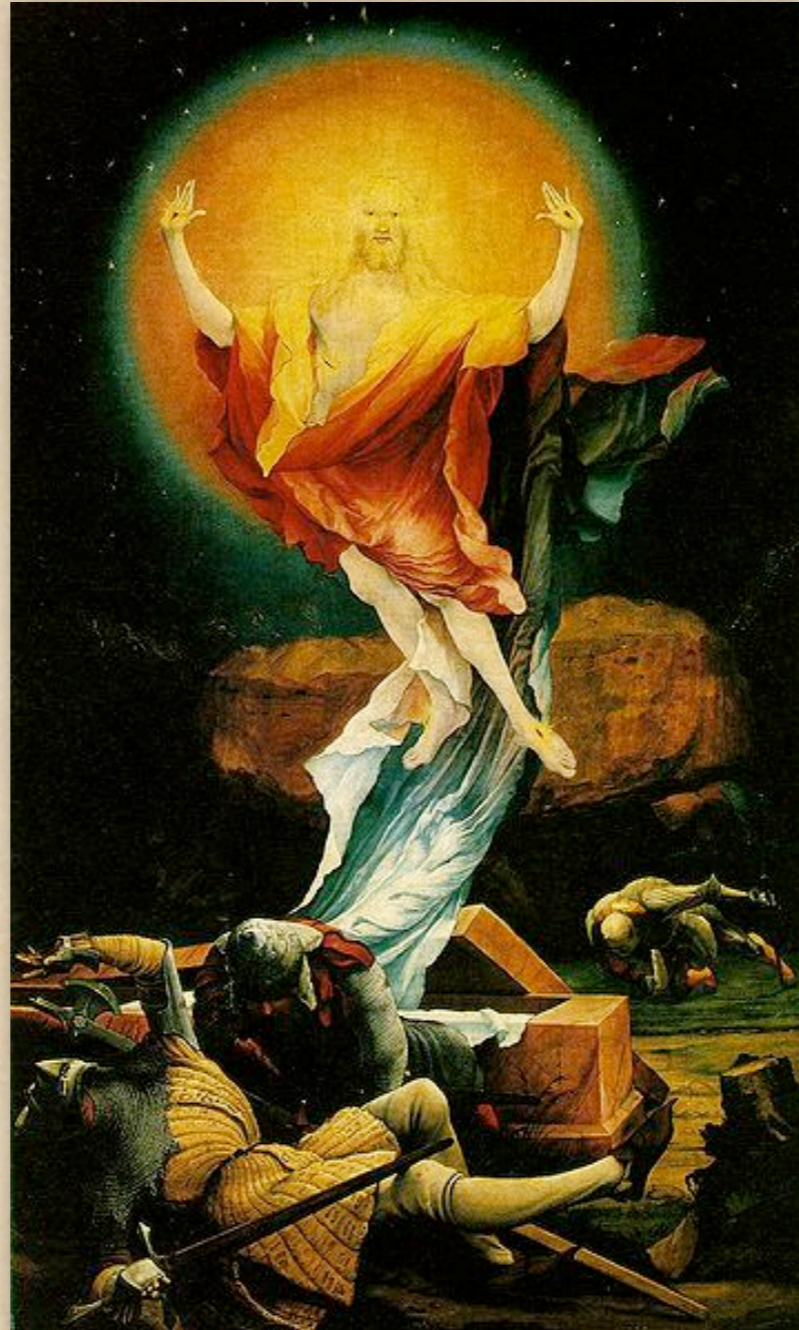


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# The risen Christ



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# III. Holy Spirit/Sustainer

- ◆ We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

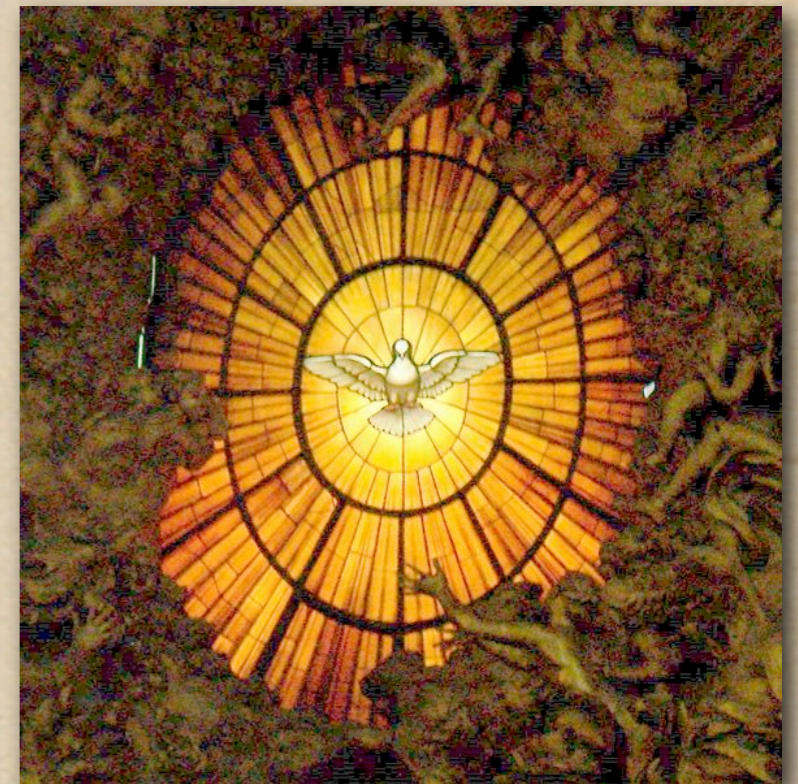
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.





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# Biblical references

- ◆ “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

--John 14:26

- ◆ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

--John 20:22

- ◆ “For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

--Acts 1:5





# The Paraclete

- ◆ Advocate
- ◆ Counselor
- ◆ Helper
- ◆ Comforter

