



Faith Formation Conference 2025
Archdiocese of San Francisco



The Trinity and the Image of God

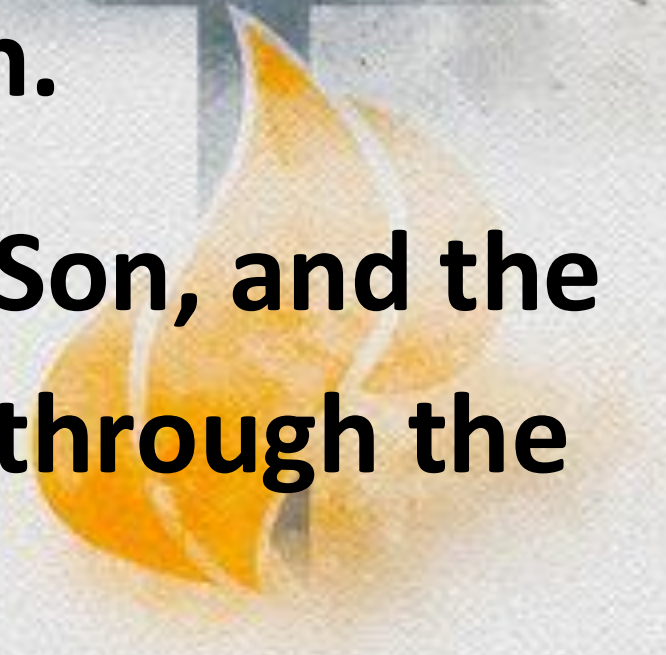
“God is love.” – 1 John 4:8

Oliver G. Meneses, PhD
November 8, 2025

PRAYER

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May their souls rest in peace. Amen.**

**Together: May the Father, and the Son, and the
Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the
Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.**



The Trinity & the Image of God

Topics

- Opening & Introduction
- The Trinity: One God in Three Persons
- Saint Augustine's Reflections
- Saint Aquinas' Insights
- The Image of God in Us
- Takeaways

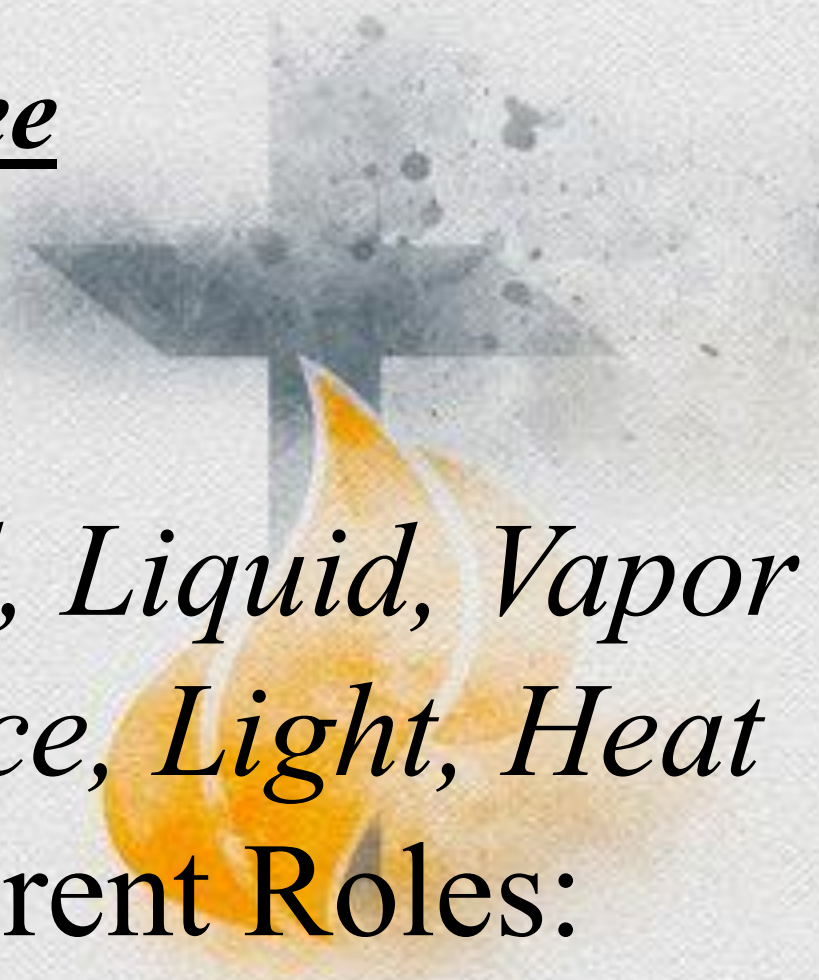


Opening & Introduction

“How can something be one and three at the same time?”



- **Water** (H_2O) = *Solid, Liquid, Vapor*
- **Sun** = *Source, Light, Heat*
- **Yourself** = *Different Roles:
child, friend, parent*



The Trinity: One God in Three Persons

What Christians Believe?

- One God in three divine Persons:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Co-equal, co-eternal, perfectly united in love.



The Trinity: One God in Three Persons

Scripture Roots

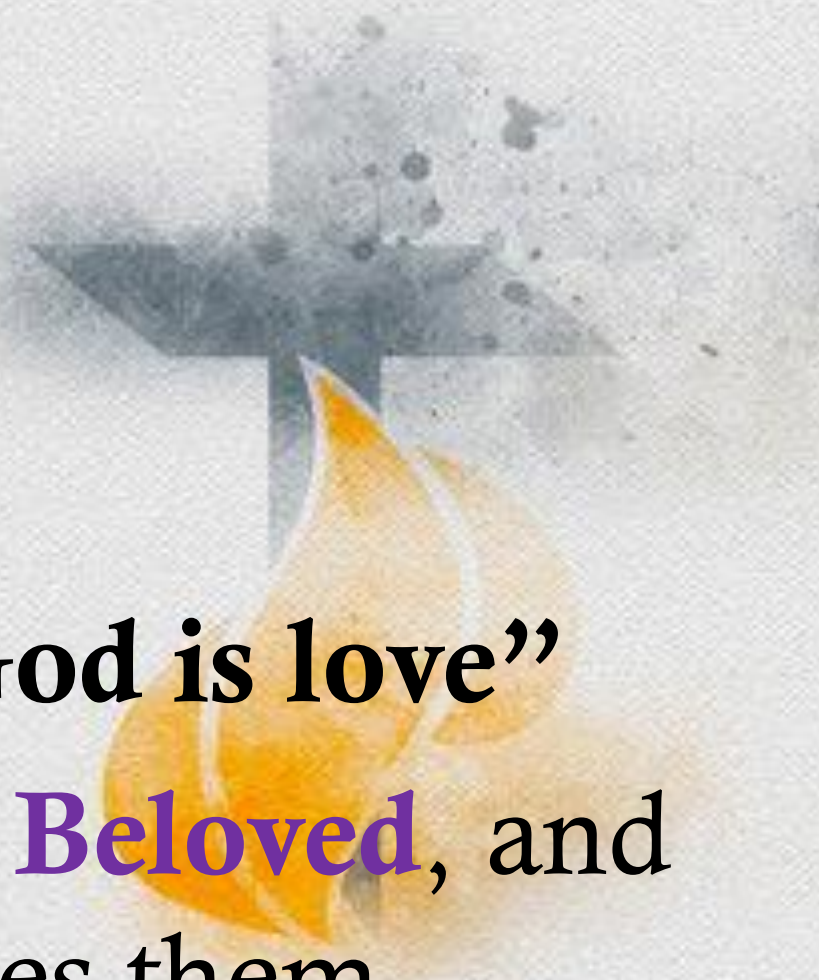
- **Genesis 1:26** - “Let us make man in our image...”
- **Matthew 28:19** - “Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- **John 14:10–11** - “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”
- **2 Corinthians 13:14** - “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

The Trinity: One God in Three Persons



Analogy of Love

St. Augustine: “**God is love**”
— the **Lover**, the **Beloved**, and
the **Love** that unites them.



Saint Augustine's Reflection on the Trinity



Who is Augustine?

- Born in Tagaste, what is now Algeria, North Africa.
- Raised by his devout Christian mother and a pagan father who later converted
- He studied rhetoric and, as a young man, led a life of worldly pleasure and followed various philosophical and religious path
- Converted through the influenced by his mother's prayers and the preaching of Saint Ambrose
- A Christian philosopher & theologian (354–430 AD)
- Wrote books like the *Confessions*, *The City of God*, & *De Trinitate (On the Trinity)*

Saint Augustine's Reflection on the Trinity

Augustine's Analogy on the Trinity?

The Trinity reflected in the **human mind**:

Memory/Knowing - (Father)

Understanding - (Son)

Love (Will) - (Holy Spirit)

All three are distinct faculties,
yet **one mind**.

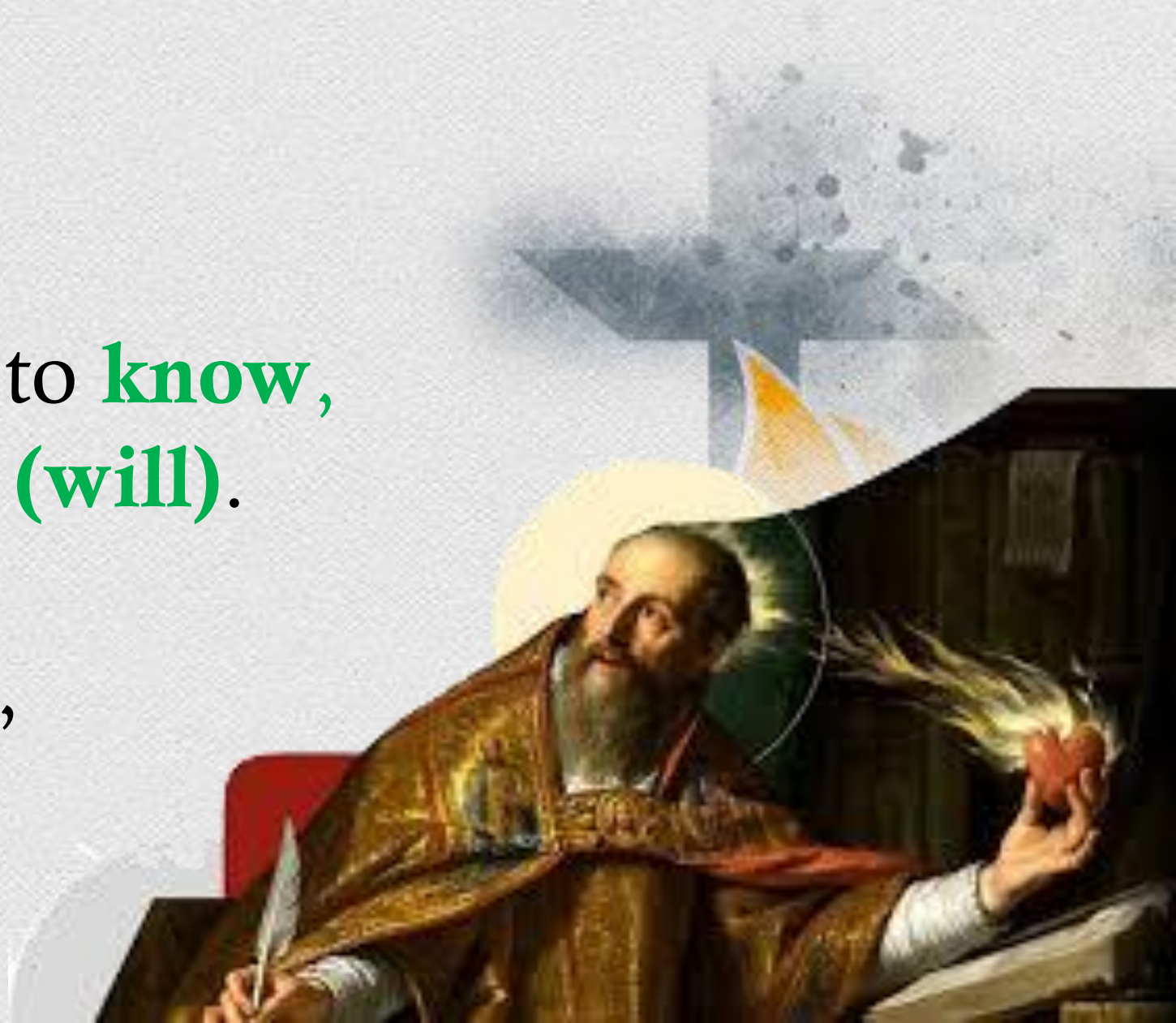


Saint Augustine's Reflection on the Trinity

The Trinity...

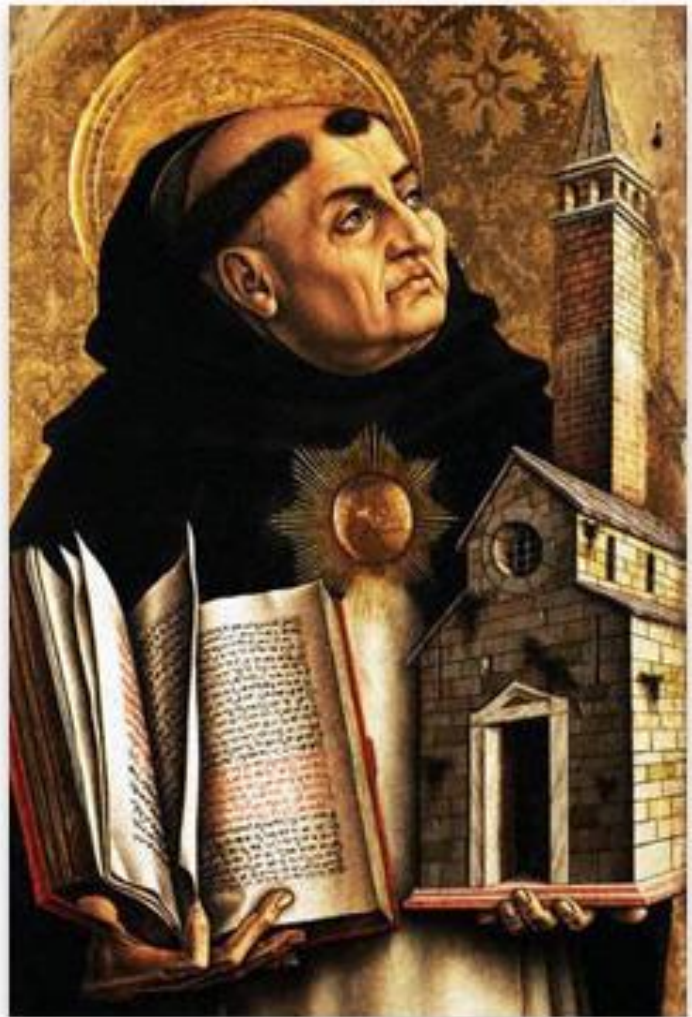
reflects our capacity to **know**,
remember, and **love (will)**.

All three are distinct,
yet **one mind**.



Saint Thomas Aquinas' Insight on the Trinity

Who is Thomas Aquinas?



- Born in Naples, Italy
- Joined the Dominican order despite his family's objections.
- He studied under Saint Albert the Great and became a distinguished theologian and professor
- Known for the following:
 - ***Compatibility of Faith and Reason:*** Reason is a divine gift and can lead one closer to God
 - ***The Five Ways:*** Arguments for the existence of God
 - ***Summa Theologica:*** A comprehensive summary of Christian theology by addressing questions about God, creation, morality, and salvation.

Saint Thomas Aquinas' Insight on the Trinity

God as Pure Act of Being and Perfect Love

- The Father eternally generates the Son (the Word).
- The Holy Spirit proceeds from their shared love.



Saint Thomas Aquinas' Insight on the Trinity

Analogy of the Mind

- God **knows** Himself perfectly (*the Son* = the Word).
- God **loves** Himself perfectly (*the Holy Spirit* = Love).

Our intellect and will reflect this divine image.



Saint Thomas Aquinas' Insight on the Trinity

Key Insight:

In Knowing and Loving,
we reflect the Trinity.



The Trinity (Gist)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97aEQBw1-DI>

The *Image of God* in Us

“God created man in His own image... male and female He created them.” – Genesis 1:27

The “**imago Dei**” in us is the **SOUL**.

- . **Eternal**
- . **The core of the person’s identity**
- . **The seat of consciousness, emotion, and morality**



The *Image of God* in Us

“God created man in His own image... male and female He created them.” – Genesis 1:27

We reflect God’s image when we:

- . **Think truthfully** (use our **mind**)
- . **Choose love** (use our **will**)
- . **Live in family & community** (reflect **relationship**)



The *Image of God* in Us

“God created man in His own image... male and female He created them.” – Genesis 1:27

Everyday Examples:

- **Friendship** → reflects diversity of persons.
- **Family** → unity in love, the communion of the Trinity.
- **Acts of kindness** → reflections of divine love.



The Trinity & the Image of God

- . The Trinity shows God (Father, Son, Spirit) as relational & loving.
- . Being made in God's image means we're relational and loving beings.
- . **Augustine & Aquinas:**
Our mind/soul reflects God's structure – knowledge, love, and will.

Therefore, we participate in God's life through our **decisions, love, and relationships.**

Key Takeaways:

- God is one essence, three Persons (Trinity).
- Humans are made in God's image (Imago Dei) through mind, love, will.
- Augustine & Aquinas help us see how our inner life mirrors the Trinity.
- We are relational beings, capable of knowing, loving, and making responsible choices.



PRAYER

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May their souls rest in peace. Amen.**

**Together: Glory be to the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is
now, and ever shall be world without end.**

Amen.



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THANK YOU!

“God loves You.”

Oliver G. Meneses, PhD
November 8, 2025