



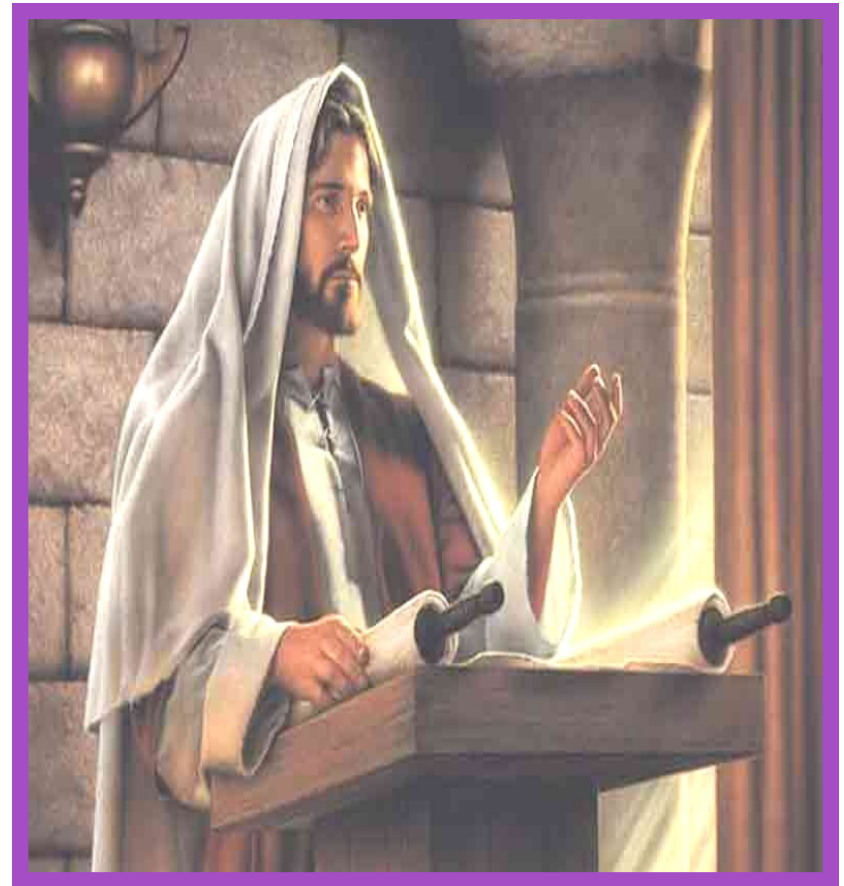
### **Consecration to the Holy Trinity**

O everlasting and Triune God,  
I consecrate myself wholly to you today.  
Let all my days offer you ceaseless praise,  
My hands move to the rhythm of your impulses,  
My feet be swift in your service,  
My voice sing constantly of you,  
My lips proclaim your message,  
My eyes perceive you everywhere,  
And my ears be attuned to your inspirations.  
May my intellect be filled with your wisdom,  
My will be moved by your beauty,  
My heart be enraptured with your love,  
And my soul be flooded with your grace.  
Grant that every action of mine be done  
For your greater glory  
And the advancement of my salvation.  
Amen.



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## **SERMON ON PROOF OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH # 170 - 1**



**JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!**

**CONSECRATION TO THE HOLY TRINITY**

## Proof of the Doctrines of the Church

### The Church Fathers

In this section we shall show that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity has from the earliest times been taught by the Catholic Church and professed by her members. As none deny this for any period subsequent to the Arian and Macedonian controversies, it will be sufficient if we here consider the faith of the first four centuries only. An argument of very great weight is provided in the liturgical forms of the Church. The highest probative force must necessarily attach to these, since they express not the private opinion of a single individual, but the public belief of the whole body of the faithful. Nor can it be objected that the notions of Christians on the subject were vague and confused, and that their liturgical forms reflect this frame of mind. On such a point vagueness was impossible. Any Christian might be called on to seal with his blood his belief that there is but One God. The answer of Saint Maximus (c. A.D. 250) to the command of the proconsul that he should sacrifice to the gods, "I offer no sacrifice save to the One True God," is typical of many such replies in the Acts of the martyrs. It is out of the question to suppose that men who were prepared to give their lives on behalf of this fundamental truth were in point of fact in so great confusion in regard to it that they were unaware whether their creed was monotheistic, ditheistic, or tritheistic. Moreover, we know that their instruction regarding the doctrines of their religion was solid. The writers of that age bear witness that even the unlettered were thoroughly familiar with the truths of faith (cf. Justin, *First Apology* 60; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III.4.2).

### Baptismal formulas

We may notice first the baptismal formula which all acknowledge to be primitive. It has already been shown that the words as pre-scribed by Christ (Matthew 28:19) clearly express the Godhead of the Three Persons as well as their distinction, but another consideration may here be added. Baptism, with its formal renunciation of Satan and his works, was understood to be the rejection of the idolatry of paganism and the solemn consecration of the baptized to the one true God (Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 4; Justin, *First Apology* 4). The act of consecration was the invocation over them of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The supposition that they regarded the Second and Third Persons as created beings, and were in fact consecrating themselves to the service of creatures, is manifestly absurd. St. Hippolytus has expressed the faith of the Church in the clearest terms: "He who descends into this laver of regeneration with faith forsakes the Evil One and engages himself to

Christ, renounces the enemy and confesses that Christ is God . . . he returns from the font a son of God and a coheir of Christ. To Whom with the all holy, the good and life giving Spirit be glory now and always, forever and ever. Amen" (*Sermon on Theophany* 10).

### The Doxologies

The witness of the doxologies is no less striking. The form now universal, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," so clearly expresses the Trinitarian dogma that the Arians found it necessary to deny that it had been in use previous to the time of Flavian of Antioch (Philostorgius, "Hist. eccl.", III, xiii). It is true that up to the period of the Arian controversy another form, "Glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit," had been more common (cf. *Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians* 58-59; Justin, *First Apology* 67). This latter form is indeed perfectly consistent with Trinitarian belief: it, however, expresses not the co-equality of the Three Persons, but their operation in regard to man. We live in the Spirit, and through Him we are made partakers in Christ (Galatians 5:25; Romans 8:9); and it is through Christ, as His members, that we are worthy to offer praise to God (Hebrews 13:15). But there are many passages in the ante-Nicene Fathers which show that the form, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to [with] the Holy Spirit," was also in use.

- In the narrative of St. Polycarp's martyrdom we read: "With Whom to Thee and the Holy Spirit be glory now and for the ages to come" (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14; cf. 22).
- Clement of Alexandria bids men "give thanks and praise to the only Father and Son, to the Son and Father with the Holy Spirit" (*The Pedagogue* III.12).
- St. Hippolytus closes his work against Noetus with the words: "To Him be glory and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit in Holy Church now and always for ever and ever. Amen" (*Against Noetus* 18).
- Denis of Alexandria uses almost the same words: "To God the Father and to His Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit be honour and glory forever and ever, Amen" (in St. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 29.72). St. Basil further tells us that it was an immemorial custom among Christians when they lit the evening lamp to give thanks to God with prayer: *Ainoumen Patera kai Gion kai Hagion Pneuma Theou* ("We praise the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit of God").