

Charles Sanders Peirce was an American philosopher, logician, mathematician, and scientist; born in 1839, and worked for 30 years as a scientist.

For five years, he lectured in philosophy at Johns Hopkins University.

Peirce's philosophy is known for its unique metaphysics of categories.

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world that encompasses it.

Peirce's categories are three-fold ... and in explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world, he relies on what he called Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Other ways he explained these are: Ideas, Facts, Rules ... Vagueness, Uniqueness, Generality ... Icon, Index, Symbol.

Today is Trinity Sunday, and it is the Christian feast honoring the most fundamental of our beliefs ... namely, belief in the Holy Trinity. The Trinity is a mystery - something we may hold an understanding of, but which is beyond our total comprehension.

We began our liturgy with the Sign of the Cross - a brief symbol of Faith in the Trinity. We will shortly profess our faith in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed - a longer, more detailed symbol of Faith ... again, focusing mainly on the Trinity.

The simplest explanation of the Trinity, almost a definition, is that God is three Persons in one Nature. The three Persons of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are all equally God, and the three Persons are indivisible.

While the eternal and immutable essence of the Godhead may exist beyond our comprehension, the Fathers of the Church spoke of *vestigia trinitatis* ... vestiges ... traces ... fingerprints, if you will, of the Trinity scattered throughout creation.

Examples of this can be seen in fire ... which creates warmth and light. You cannot peel the flame away from its heat, nor can you separate the

light from the heat. These three aspects are indivisible ... you put out the fire, and the heat dissipates, and the light goes away.

In Botany, we can describe any plant or tree as having branch, root, and leaf. A fruit has a peel, the flesh, and the seed. The human soul has emotion, understanding, and will. In Physics, there are the three basic states of matter: solid, liquid, and gas.

The early Christian philosophers pointed to these three-fold aspects of nature as fingerprints of God's Triune nature.

But even more than an academic understanding of the Trinity, it is important that we embrace a relationship with all three Divine Persons. The Trinity is not one God in three ideas ... or one God in three concepts ... but rather, we worship one God in three Divine Persons.

God the Father has created us, and everything that the universe holds ... God the Son has redeemed creation and revealed to us the Father and His love and mercy and grace ... God the Holy Spirit renews creation, and empowers us, leading us to all Truth.

These are not mere functions, but instead point us to a relationship ... and like all relationships, we must foster and grow them through time spent in getting to know God, speaking in prayer to God, and by our actions worshipping the one true God in spirit and in truth.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us offer our own prayers and sacrifices in union with Him to the Father, and through Word and Sacrament may we be energized by and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.