

Claim: The Trinity is Roman Catholic

In support of this claim, anti-Trinitarians quote from Catholic sources that state that the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic faith, and that upon it are based all of the other teachings of the Catholic church (e.g. *Handbook for Today's Catholic*, pg. 12).

However, we shall see that the claim that because the Trinity is central to Roman Catholic teachings the concept of the triune Godhead as understood by Seventh-day Adventists is therefore Catholic is not a justifiable conclusion.

Satan always has a counterfeit of every true and good thing of God. That the Roman Catholic church has a false concept of God that is at the foundation of their doctrinal system is consistent with how Satan operates in his attempts to counterfeit the truth of God in every way possible.

Let us examine a selection of statements from Catholic sources regarding the papal teachings on the Trinity:

"261 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by **revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**" - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Edition

"God the Father eternally knows Himself, and continues to know Himself, and thus continues to **bring forth the Son in a continual birth** . . ." - One God in Three Persons, *My Catholic Faith: A Manual of Religion*, Louis Laravoire Morrow, Bishop of Krishnager, p. 31

"From all eternity **the Father begets the Son, and the Son proceeds from the Father. The Father and Son breathe forth the Holy Ghost**, and He proceeds from Them, as from one Source" - Louis Laravoire Morrow, Bishop of Krishnagar, *One God in Three Persons*, My Catholic Faith: a Manual of Religion, pg. 30

"The Son is necessary to the completeness of the Godhead. The Son, we are told, is not external to the Father, does not accrue to the Father from without, but is **of the substance of the Father.**" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1963 edition, Vol. 22, pg. 479

"He [the Holy Spirit] proceeds, not by way of generation, but by way of **spiration from the Father and the Son together**, as from a single principle. Such is the belief that the Catholic faith demands." - *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1914 Edition, art, "Holy Spirit"

"**The Son proceeds from the Father** by an act of the intellect and this is termed 'Eternal Generation,' by which we mean not only that there never was a time when the Father existed without generating the Son, but also that the act of Generation is a continuous act." The manual teaches that **there could be no separation between the Father and the Son on earth**, since this would interrupt the act of generation. Thus the Son would not exist, which would mean that the Father would not exist. Since they are of one essence, **neither the Father nor the Son could exist separately from the other.**" - Alfred Mortimer, *Catholic Faith and Practice*

"**The Son proceeds from the Father by generation** (and generation means the process of begetting offspring, reproduction, or giving birth to)..." - Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., *The Convert's Catechism of*

Catholic Doctrine, pg. 31, September 16, 1957

"We confess that **the Holy Ghost proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son**, not as from two principles, but as from one principle, not by two spirations, but by one single spiration."- *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1914 Edition

The Father and the Son actively spirate the Holy Spirit in the one relation within the inner life of God that **does not constitute a person**. It does not do so because the Father and Son are already constituted as persons in relation to each other in the first two relations. This is why CCC 240 teaches, '[The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity] is Son only in relation to his Father.' **The Holy Spirit is passively spirated of the Father and the Son**, constituting the person of the Holy Spirit." - Tim Staples, *Explaining the Trinity*, catholic.com

These examples, and many others similar to these, all show that the Catholic concept of the Trinity involves the Son coming out of the Father sometime in the distant past ("eternal generation"), the Holy Spirit having no separate personality or existence from the Father and Son ("passively spiration"), and the physical unity of the three.

Although Catholic theologians talk about "three persons" in their Trinity, in actuality they do not teach three persons, but rather that there is one God apart from whom there is no eternal Christ and no Holy Spirit with a separate existence. The Catholic doctrine of the Trinity teaches a continual birth ("begetting") of the Son and a mystical "spiration" of the Holy Spirit produced from the Father and Son.

These teachings have nothing in common whatsoever with the doctrine of the Triune Godhead as taught by the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist church today, and it's not at all surprising that many SDA pioneers were concerned about the fact that the personality of the Father and Son were destroyed by these unscriptural papal teachings. The pioneers were reacting against a particular view of the Trinity called "modalism", which is the doctrine that only one supreme being exists, ruling out any notion that God consists of three distinct personal beings who are one in nature.

It is ironic that those who are opposed to the SDA understanding of the Triune Godhead are in fact themselves teaching the basic erroneous concept of the papal Trinity - that there is only one being that is the eternal God, and that apart from that one God there is no eternal Christ and no Holy Spirit with a separate existence. Anti-Trinitarians rightly say that the Catholic Trinity is false, and yet some of their own beliefs have uncanny semblance to positions held by the Roman Catholic Church.

We conclude that the Catholic teaching of the Trinity has nothing in common with the fundamental beliefs on the triune Godhead as taught by Seventh-day Adventists, and is actually nearly identical with anti-Trinitarian teachings. There is no merit to the claim that the SDA beliefs on the "heavenly trio" are Roman Catholic.