



**SUMMER-TIME
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**
Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
September 20, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

TO KNOW GOD

You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.

Mark 1:11

READ Mark 1:9-11

On a visit to Ireland, I was overwhelmed by the abundance of decorative shamrocks. The little green, three-leaved plant could be found in every store on seemingly everything—clothing, hats, jewelry, and more!

More than just a prolific plant across Ireland, the shamrock was embraced for generations as a simple way to explain the Trinity, the historic Christian belief that God is One essence who eternally exists in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. While all human explanations of the Trinity are inadequate, the shamrock is a helpful symbol because it's one plant made of the same substance with three distinct leaves.

The word Trinity isn't found in Scripture, but it summarizes the theological truth we see explicit in passages where all three persons of the Trinity are present at the same time. When Jesus, God the Son, is baptized, God the Spirit is seen coming down from heaven "like a dove," and God the Father's voice is heard saying, "You are my Son" (Mark 1:10–11).

Irish believers in Jesus used the shamrock because they wanted to help people know God. As we more fully understand the beauty of the Trinity, it helps us know God and deepens our ability to worship Him "in the Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

By **Lisa M. Samra**

PRAY & REFLECT

I worship You, Father, Son, and Spirit, as one God acting together to extend love and salvation to all people. Amen

What symbols help you understand the Trinity? Why is it essential to believe God is one?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

All four gospels record Jesus' baptism by John (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34). Matthew provides generous details of conversation and motivation. Mark and Luke's accounts are a sparse telling limited to the facts of the occasion. John's account gives a slightly different perspective.

Matthew and Mark both share the words spoken from heaven; the only difference is to whom the remarks are made. Matthew records the heavenly voice as addressing the crowds watching: "This is my Son, whom I love" (3:17). In Mark's account, the voice is speaking directly to Jesus: "You are my Son, whom I love" (1:11). Interestingly, the word "*agapētos*" - translated "whom I love" - can have the nuance of "only" when applied to a child, making its use here doubly appropriate in describing Jesus. – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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