

The Most Holy Trinity
June 15, 2025
Year of the Holy Spirit

“From the very fact that God is the self-subsisting Being, it likewise follows that He is absolutely immutable, with an immutability not of inertia but of supreme perfection, which belongs to God alone.”
(Rev. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., The One God, p.268)

As we take time to honor the Blessed Trinity this weekend, I would like to take us back in time to the 1,200's. Christianity, even at this time, is still grappling with providing reasoned answers to questions concerning God and His Perfections. As we are all aware, Jesus did not leave an “Idiot's Guide to All Things Christian” as He departed on the Ascension. Christian scholars, guided by the Holy Ghost, would slowly come to interpret, define and explain truths of our Faith. One such scholar to do this was the great doctor of theology, Saint Thomas Aquinas (died 1274). Saint Thomas, a Dominican priest, lived in this period of the 1,200's proposing explanations to many of the questions which plagued Christians. One of these concerned the immutability of the Trinity.

Let us begin by defining immutability. Simply, immutability means unchangeable. We say a thing is unable to change, cannot be changed or will never change even with the onset of time. You might be thinking, “How does this statement of the immutability of the Trinity apply to my life in 2025?” That is a good question and one Saint Thomas sought to provide an answer because Christians in his time asked many of the same questions we ask in our day. How can we explain the statement, God Loves You, to a person who sees themselves separated from the Love of God through their sinful choices? How can God love me when I so often fail to love Him? Christians struggled, as we struggle, with statements such as these.

Saint Thomas proposed three statements to explain the immutability (unchangingness) of God. Ever so briefly, I would like to summarize his explanations. It was necessary that he began first stating (1) God is a pure Act. By this, Saint Thomas meant things that change have the potential to change. The Holy Trinity does not possess any potentiality to change. We profess the Holy Trinity to be uncreated; therefore, Saint Thomas wrote God only acts as a complete and perfect Being. If the Trinity was not the first Being, then there would need to be some form of growth. Saint Thomas offered a second point stating (2) God is absolutely simple. Each thing that has the potential to change is a composite being. You and I are composite beings; meaning as we change, some part of us must decrease or die. We use the statement, “Dying to self,” as a way to express the change that occurs within ourselves as we grow closer to God. My wants, which I see as good, are put aside for a greater good which I understand as a need. The Trinity, being absolute simplicity, does not need for this to occur. Perfect simplicity cannot become more perfectly simple. Finally, Saint Thomas stated (3) the Most Holy Trinity cannot be perfected or seek to become more perfect. In the Trinity we find the fullness of all things. Therefore, God cannot acquire more nor can God lose even a little. God is self-subsisting; He cannot evolve into anything greater or more than what He is now.

Returning to the statement, God Loves You, we can now understand those three words to mean: the Holy Trinity loves me perfectly, simply and absolutely because these three perfections exist within God. For God to change His Love for me, would be impossible for God. The Holy Trinity has eternally loved me. This Love is not dependent upon you or I and how well we live a Christian life. It eternally exists for the most Holy Trinity exists eternally.