



Collect ***The Most Holy Trinity***

God our Father, who by sending into the world
the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification
made known to the human race your wondrous mystery,
grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith,
we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory
and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.

1. acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory
2. adore your Unity

Interpretation of the Text

A number of things need to be clarified about this English Collect.⁴⁷
The wording of the petition could be theologically misleading, if it is not
carefully explained. The following is a literal translation of the Latin
Collect:

God the Father, who by sending into the world
the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification
revealed to the human race your wondrous mystery,
grant us, in the confession of the true faith,
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity
and to adore the Unity in the power of majesty.

It should be pointed out that the Latin text does not say “acknowledge
the Trinity of eternal glory” but “acknowledge the glory of the eternal

Trinity.” The object of the verb *agnoscere* (to acknowledge) is the glory of the Trinity, not the Trinity whom we adore, not merely acknowledge. The wording of the English oration should be explained with great care to steer clear of doctrinal inaccuracy.

Somewhat more disturbing from a theological standpoint is the second petition “and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.” How is the Latin text formulated? To begin with, it has no possessive pronoun (your). The insertion of “your” is what causes the problem in the English translation. The Latin text simply states “adore the Unity in the power of majesty.”

It is useful to remember that the one addressed in this prayer is God the Father, not the holy Trinity. In the new English translation the phrase “your Unity” would seem to refer to the Father, unless by the application of some elliptical device we complete the statement so that it would read as follows: “Father, we adore your Unity with the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification.” As the English version stands, we are given the wrong impression that we adore the Unity of God the Father. This is certainly not an insignificant theological issue. The passage is inaccurate and should be rectified by deleting the possessive pronoun “your.” What the Latin text says is “We adore the Unity [of the three Divine Persons] in the power of majesty.”

We are familiar with the expression “adore the Holy Trinity,” not “adore the Holy Unity.” When we explain the Collect of the Holy Trinity, it might help to remember what these statements mean. We adore the Godhead in a Trinity of Persons; we adore the same Godhead in the Unity of the three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It can be argued that the phrase “your Unity” means the mystery of the holy Trinity, which God the Father had kept hidden and finally revealed through Christ and the Holy Spirit. But that is not a convincing justification for adding “your” to the text.

The sense of the Collect is “When we make the profession of faith, we acknowledge the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit whom we adore as three Persons united in one divine majesty.”