



GOD

FATHER, SON, HOLY SPIRIT

The Divine Plan of Trinitarian Love

Texts from the

Catechism of the Catholic Church

GOD WILLS TO COMMUNICATE THE GLORY OF HIS BLESSED LIFE

The Most Holy Trinity is the mystery of God himself

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them.

The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit reveals himself to men and ‘reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin.’ (234)

A plan of Trinitarian love, conceived by the Father, which unfolds in creation, the history of salvation and the missions of the Son and the Spirit

“O blessed light, O Trinity and first Unity!” God is eternal blessedness, undying life, unfading light. God is love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life.

Such is the ‘plan of his loving kindness’, conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son: “He destined us in love to be his sons” and “to be conformed to the image of his Son”, through “the spirit of sonship”. (Eph 1:4-5; Rom 8:15, 29)

This plan is a “grace [which] was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”, stemming immediately from Trinitarian love. It unfolds in the work of creation, the whole history of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are continued in the mission of the Church. (257)

The ultimate end of the divine plan - the entry of God’s creatures into the life of the Blessed Trinity

The ultimate end of the whole divine plan is the entry of God’s creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed Trinity. But even now we are called to be a dwelling for the Most Holy Trinity: “If a man loves me”, says the Lord, “he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him”. (260)

CREATION - WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

God the Father creates by the Son and the Holy Spirit

The Old Testament suggests, and the New Testament reveals, the creative action of the Son and the Spirit, inseparably one with that of the Father. This creative co-operation is clearly affirmed in the Church’s rule of faith: “There exists but one God...he is the Father, God, the Creator, the author, the giver of order. He made all things by himself, that is by his Word and by his Wisdom”, “by the Son and the Spirit” who, so to speak, are “his hands”. (St Irenaeus) (292)

THE INCARNATION - JESUS CHRIST REVEALS THE HOLY TRINITY

Only Jesus Christ the Son of God can lead us to the Father and the Holy Spirit

“At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.” To catechise is “to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfilment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ’s actions and words and of the signs worked by him.”

Catechesis aims at putting “people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.” (John Paul II) (426)

THE RESURRECTION - WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The Father raised up Christ his Son through the working of the Holy Spirit

Christ’s Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history. In it the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics.

The Father’s power ‘raised up’ Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son’s humanity, including his body into the Trinity. Jesus is conclusively revealed as “Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his Resurrection from the dead”. (Rom 1:3-4) St Paul insists on the manifestation of God’s power through the working of the Spirit who gave life to Jesus’ dead humanity and called it to the glorious state of Lordship. (648)

THE CHURCH IS ONE - HER SOURCE IS THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the formation of the Church

The Church is one because of her source: “The highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The Church is one because of her founder. For “the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross,...restoring the unity of all in one people and one body.”

The Church is one because of ‘her soul’. It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church’s unity.”

Unity is of the essence of the Church: “What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the universe, one Logos of the universe, and also one Holy Spirit, everywhere one and the same; there is also one virgin become mother, and I should like to call her ‘Church’.” (St Clement of Alexandria) (813)

THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS

The Liturgy - Work of the Holy Trinity

In the Church’s liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and end of the all the blessings of creation and salvation. In his Word who became incarnate, died and rose for us, he fills us with his blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit. (1082)

In the liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all blessings of creation and salvation with which he has blessed us in his Son, in order to give us the Spirit of filial adoption. (1110)

The Eucharist and the Blessed Trinity

We must therefore consider the Eucharist as:

- thanksgiving and praise to the Father;
- the sacrificial memorial of Christ and his Body;
- the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his Spirit. (1358)

PRAYER - BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE THRICE-HOLY GOD

A living relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the one God

In the New Testament, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is “the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity...with the human spirit”. (St Gregory Nazianzan)

Thus the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. Prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ’s love. (2565)

IN BRIEF

- **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. (261)**
- **The Incarnation of God’s Son reveals that God is the eternal Father and that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, which means that, in the Father and with the Father, the Son is one and the same God. (262)**
- **The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (Jn 14:26) and by the Son ‘from the Father’ (Jn 15:26), reveals that, with them, the Spirit is one and the same God. ‘With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified’. (Nicene Creed) (263)**
- **By the grace of Baptism ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’, we are called to share in the life of the Blessed Trinity, here on earth in the obscurity of faith, and after death in eternal light. (265)**
- **“Hence the universal Church is seen to be ‘a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’.” (St Cyprian) (810)**

THE TRINITY IS THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY IN THE CATECHISM

The following comment on the main theme of the Catechism is taken from *Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, who was General Editor of the Catechism:

“...At the Synod of Bishops in 1985, Cardinal Bernard Law launched the idea of a Catechism emanating from Vatican II... ‘We have to teach the faith in a world that becomes more and more a global village’....Unity is the essential feature of the Christian Faith. This vision of one faith in one world...became the driving force of discussions about the idea of a catechism...Looking for the basic principles underlying the Catechism, this principle of unity seems to be the most important of all. CCC 11 states: ‘This Catechism aims at presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic Doctrine as regards both faith and morals.’ What is said here holds (or should hold) good for every catechism. A catechism is a synthesis of the essentials of the faith. The very idea of a catechism depends upon the assumption that such a synthesis is possible. From the very first paragraph, the Trinitarian dimension is central to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Trinity is the overall perspective of the Catechism because it is the centre of the Christian faith...

“All that needs to be said about the Christian faith and life is directed to this centre: communion in the blessed life of the Most Holy Trinity (CCC 260)...this Trinitarian view runs like a thread through the book...the divine missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit continue through the mission of the Church...the work of creation is the common work of the Blessed Trinity, the same is true of the divine work of redemption and sanctification...and the Resurrection....The Church is a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit...the liturgy is seen as the work of the Holy Trinity, especially the Eucharist...”