

Trinity

(5/9/06 Topic of Discussion)

Presented by Fr. Ed Jocson

The Sign of the Cross: When Catholics pray together whether at Mass or in other gatherings, and even in private prayer, we often make the sign of the Cross. Also, when entering the Church, we dip our fingers in Holy Water and make the sign of the Cross. The prayer that accompanies this action (+) invites the presence of the 3-Persons of the TRINITY: “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

The Fourth Sunday of Easter (known as Good Shepherd Sunday): In the readings of the Fourth Sunday of Easter, we are made aware of the 3-Persons of the Trinity:

- the 1st Reading (Acts 4:8-12), we find Peter speaking as he is filled with the Holy Spirit,
- the 2nd Reading (1-John 3:1-2), makes us aware of being children of a God we call ‘Father’,
- the Gospel (John 10:11-18), Jesus, Who claims to be the “Good Shepherd”, states His clear relationship with the Father – ‘SON’.

Role of revelation in regard to the Triune God and The works of the Trinity experienced in Christian life: We know God only because He has gifted us by choosing to reveal Himself to humanity. This Self-revelation does not consist primarily of a series of ideas or propositions that come down to us from heaven. Rather it is the Self-disclosure of God’s being – the manifestation of God and as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Scripture describes the action of the Father in sending the Son, the relationship that existed between Jesus and His Father, and the power of the Holy Spirit experienced by individuals as well as the community of believers.

God does not reveal Himself as one God with 3 separate beings. There is one God, 3 persons in one God. The substance of the Divine Being (*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*) are distinct from one another. God reveals Himself first as a person. He relates to us as Father and we His children; He relates to us as Brother in Jesus; and He relates to us in the present in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus reveals the Father to us through the Holy Spirit. All Jesus did is made present to us now through the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit

strengthens us spiritually, emotionally, in sickness, etc.

Through the Sacraments we enter into a relationship with the One Triune God.

The Trinity is a Holy Mystery and the Church tries its best to explain this Mystery. But we never completely understand. The Mystery is accepted by faith. Many have tried to explain this Mystery. St. Patrick used the Shamrock... one stem with 3 leaves, each separate and distinct yet one. St. Augustine, while contemplating on the Mystery of the Trinity, had a vision of a boy on a beach who dug a hole and kept running to the water with a shell, gathering water in it and pouring the water onto the hole. When he asked the boy what he was doing, the boy said he was going to take all the water from the ocean and put it in the hole. St. Augustine told him that was impossible. And the boy told him that trying to understand the Trinity was just as impossible. Then the vision disappeared.

You can never comprehend the reality of God. You should try and study and strive to understand but know that you will never fully comprehend this mystery.

As Christians, we believe in only one God, with three Persons in this One God...

- the Father, the Creator. He made us. We are His children.**
- Jesus, the Son of God. He revealed the Father to us by showing Himself ... *if you know the Father, you know the Son. When we see Jesus, we see God the Father.***
- the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, the presence of Christ today and in the future.**

The intimate and total union between Father and Son, both persons sharing in the one Divine Nature, is also the grounds for the apostles' confession that Jesus Christ in the eternal Word (CCC 241). Christ is "*the image of the invisible God*" (Colossians 1:15). The Church expresses this in prayer, praising the Father saying, "*Your eternal Word (Jesus) has brought to the eyes of faith a new and radiant vision of your glory (the glory of the Father). In Christ we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see*". To embrace Jesus, to encounter Christ in faith, opens for believers the very mystery of God the Father. We do not believe that this opening is relegated to

the past. For beyond the historical event of Jesus, the promised Holy Spirit makes available to us the presence of Christ today and in the future. Thus, the Spirit is revealed to be another Divine Person with the Father and the Son. (CCC 243). This is why we profess in the Nicene Creed that the Holy Spirit is also “*the Lord, the giver of life*” (for through the Spirit we truly experience Jesus Christ) “*who proceeds from the Father and the Son*”.

God’s realm has no time ... He exists from all eternity. His awareness of Himself is the Son “*One in being with the Father*” (Creed) and their awareness of each other is the Holy Spirit “*who proceeds from the Father and the Son*” (Creed). He exists as one God. His substance is the only ‘*uncreated*’ in reality. Whatever He is composed of ... is the Trinity. He, as Trinity, is from all eternity. In history, we’ve learned of God’s Trinity little-by-little. Do not think that first there was God the Father, and later Jesus was born and then He sent the Holy Spirit. The Triune God was and is always. In terms of a time line only, we tend to see God the Father in the Old Testament, and then we see Jesus in the New Testament who sends the promised Holy Spirit. Jesus was not created nor did Jesus create the Holy Spirit. They always existed as Trinity. God the Father always revealed Himself to His people in the Old Testament; and He is only as a Father because He has a Son; and He is God Creator, creating as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Genesis creation story, “*...the wind (the Spirit) swept over the waters...*” (Gen 1:2) and when He created Adam, he blew “*...the breath of life (the Spirit)...*” into Him (Gen 2:7). And in the New Testament in the Gospel of John (John 1:2) it states, “*In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word (Jesus) was with God, and the Word (Jesus) was God. He was in the beginning...*” Know that the Triune God always was, is and will be.

All is a Mystery in faith; it is your belief in faith.

We will always strive to understand the Trinity but we will never understand it. God is the ultimate Reality, the most real of all realities. But we, in our incapacity, will never be able to explain or fully comprehend. It is a mystery...it is not meant to be understood but is meant to be experienced. Not just our intellect but also our whole being is needed for a relationship. Don’t get ‘stuck’ in trying to understand, just keep learning and growing in your relationship with the Lord.

Our whole Christian life is a communion with each of the Divine

Persons of the Blessed Trinity, without in any fashion separating them. When God acts in your life it is always as Father, Son and Holy Spirit ... no separation. The believer who glorifies the Father does so though the Son in the Spirit. Likewise, the believer who follows Christ does so because the Father draws us into this discipleship and the Spirit animates us in this following.

The Blessed Trinity (*the Father who Creates us, the Son who redeems us, the Holy Spirit who enlivens us*) fills us with faith, hope and love; forms us into one holy communion with all the saints; forgives our sins; and raises us up to new life...life everlasting.

Other discussions

Mary is the Mother of the human Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Question: "Why did God make me?" Answer from the original Catechism: "God made me to know him, to love him and to serve him in this life in order to be happy with him forever in the next."

God has put in each one's heart the desire to search for Him.

The strongest Force within us drives us to ask questions. Remember to remember that it is this Force within you that makes you long for answers.

When we search for something and we find it, that is the end. There is no reason to keep looking. But as long as we do not find it, we keep searching. We are not meant to understand the Trinity, we are meant to continue to search and learn.

**Submitted by
Mary Carrajat
Documenter**