

St. Michael's RCIA
Session notes – Wed. December 19
God the Son, God the Holy Spirit
Chapters 7-9 of United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

The Holy Trinity: God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Dec. 12 session - God the Father

God the Son

- What do we know about Jesus Christ from the Scriptures?
- Jesus as True God and True Man
- Jesus Christ as our savior
- The Paschal Mystery
- The resurrection and ascension of Jesus

God the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is revealed gradually (8 ways the Holy Spirit provides an experience with God)

God the Son

1. Jesus Christ the Redeemer

- Christ reveals God as his father and promises the Holy Spirit as our teacher, guide and comforter
- The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John provide us with the knowledge of Christ
- We ponder Christ's person and his earthly words and deeds in terms of mystery. Not mystery in terms of something that is unknown but something that is revealed over time.
- What we know of Christ from the Gospels:
 - Born in Bethlehem to a young virgin (Mary)
 - Lived in the town of Nazareth with Mary and Joseph (Christ's "foster father"), from whom Christ must've learned to be a carpenter
 - Public life/ministry began when he was around 30 years old. Spent last 5 years of his life traveling the lands of ancient Israel teaching the people of the kingdom of God and confirming his identity as the son of God through miracles and other wonders he performed
 - He gathered around him many disciples from whom he selected 12 who became the Apostles
 - He summoned others to accept, live in and share the kingdom of God:
 - God's presence among human beings calling them to a new way of life as individuals and as community
 - Salvation from sin and a sharing in divine life that that results in love, justice and mercy for the whole world

- Realized partially on earth and fully/permanently in heaven
 - Entered into through faith in Christ, baptized initiation into the Church and life in communion with all her members
 - The words of Jesus are calls to action to holiness through accepting his kingdom and salvation. He perfected the law of Sinai (commandments) by revealing its ultimate meaning and redeeming the transgressions against it
 - Miracles and other deeds of Jesus are acts of compassion and signs of the kingdom of salvation
 - Transfiguration of Christ – in the presence of two disciples, Jesus was *transfigured* upon a mountain ([Matthew 17:1-9](#), [Mark 9:1-8](#), [Luke 9:28-36](#)). Jesus becomes radiant, speaks with [Moses](#) and [Elijah](#), and is called "Son" by [God](#). The transfiguration put Jesus on par with the two preeminent figures of Judaism: Moses and Elijah. It also supports his identity as the Son of God.
 - “Paschal Mystery”: The saving passion, death and resurrection of Christ are when we participate most profoundly in the mystery of Christ. In Christ we die to self and sin. We rise to participate in his divine life through the resurrection. This is made possible for us through the sacraments.
- Our access to the Gospels is made possible by doing faith-filled reading of the sacred texts, by listening to them in the Church’s liturgy, and by witnessing their meaning in our lives and in the lives of others.

2. Jesus as True God and True Man

- [CCC #464](#)
- Christ became true man while remaining truly God
- If Jesus were not divine, he would have been just another good man whose death and resurrection would not have saved me. If the crucifixion and resurrection were events that involved God only, then we are not saved.
- The heresies are religious teachings that deny or contradict truths revealed by God.
 - Gnosticism – denied the humanity of Christ. It advocates that the body was an unworthy dwelling place for God and therefore the incarnation could not have happened
 - Arianism – claimed that Jesus was not God. They believed it was unfitting to even think that a human being could be God
 - Nestorianism – denied the unity of Christ as God and man. Argued that the divine son of God dwelled within the human Jesus but that they were not really one person

3. Jesus as our Savior

- We needed to be saved from sin and its damaging effects. God’s plan to save us involved having his son enter into this world to be like us in all things except sin.
- Jesus, Son of God, was sent by the Father to restore the harmony between Him and humanity that had been disrupted by sin. He came to teach and show us love.

- Jesus was without sin but in his human nature he was subject to all that human beings suffer – hatred from others, pain, and death itself
- Jesus proclaimed the coming of God’s kingdom by his words and deeds in obedience to the will of his Father. He showed the full meaning of all that had been revealed in the Old Testament.
- Some did not want to hear Christ’s message. They opposed him and turned him over to the administration of the Roman Empire in Palestine to be put to death
- On the cross, Jesus fully gave his life as a sacrifice.
 - This was an act of atonement – it makes us one again with God by the power of divine mercy extending to us the Father’s forgiveness of our sins.
 - This was also an act of satisfaction or reparation – by living out fully the Father’s call to human being to be faithful to God’s plan for them, then overcoming the power of sin.
 - And it was also an expiation for our sins – God taking initiative in bringing about reconciliation to himself
- After his death and burial, Jesus descended into hell (realm of the dead) from which he called out all the just people who had lived before him, to enter with him into the glory of the kingdom of Heaven.

4. Paschal Mystery – Christ’s passing through death into new life

- Christ’s death and resurrection are a visible sign of an invisible act of God
- For us it means that we can now die to sin and its dominion over our lives, and we pass over into the divine life here on earth and more completely in heaven. Death is conquered for even our bodies when we rise again at the end of times – the last judgment and the resurrection of the dead.

5. The Resurrection Accounts

- On the third day (Easter Sunday) after his death (Good Friday), Mary Magdalene becomes the first witness to the resurrection when she sees that Christ’s tomb is empty.
- Over the following weeks, Christ appears to his disciples on a few occasions reinforcing their belief and underlining their commission to bring the Gospel to the world
- The resurrection is both a historical event – witnesses die for their testimony – and a transcendent event – a mystery of faith that transcends history; the state of Christ’s risen body as glorified and not confined by space and time

6. Christ’s ascension into Heaven

- [CCC 665-667](#)
- Christ’s Ascension marks the definitive entrance of Jesus’ humanity into God’s heavenly domain
- “Christ, the head of the Church, precedes us into the Father’s glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him for ever.”

- In heaven Christ intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit – Paraclete

1. God the Holy Spirit:

- ... comes to us as teacher of the meaning and depth of revelation
- ... fills us with power, the grace to understand the Church’s teachings, and the wisdom to see how they apply to our own lives
- ... puts courage into our hearts so that we can witness what we believe to believers and unbelievers alike

Paraclete – describes the Holy Spirit as advocate and consoler who wants to fill us with inspiration and encouragement

2. The Holy Spirit is revealed gradually

- In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is hidden but at work ([CCC 702](#))
- Holy Spirit is working in the life and works of Christ
- The Spirit is revealed at Pentecost ([CCC 731](#)) – Pentecost is the “birthday” of the Church, when the Holy Trinity is fully revealed and the Kingdom is open to all who truly believe
- Acts of the Apostles and the other epistles give us evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the first-century Church
- We’re living in the time of the Holy Spirit now. God is revealed in the Old Testament, Christ in the New Testament, and Holy Spirit is now, part of our salvation history
- The Holy Spirit continues to give us knowledge of God, living and active in the Church. The 8 ways the Holy Spirit provides an experience of God ([CCC 688](#)):
 - When we pray and study the scripture
 - When we follow the lives of the saints, their teachings and witness
 - When we assent with obedience to the teachings of the Magisterium (teaching ministry of the church)
 - When we actively participate in the liturgies and sacraments of the Church
 - When we give ourselves over to prayer
 - When we offer ourselves to the various missionary/apostolic efforts of the Church or when we see signs of those efforts
 - When we recognize in the charisms (gifts) of the Church and the ministries which help build the Church
 - When we dwell on the great tradition of the Church, its marvelous history and its host of saintly witness