

I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD: THE HOLY TRINITY
SESSION 9

Prayer: The Creed

Closing Prayer: CCC 260 Elizabeth of the Holy Trinity

Image: Rublev's Holy Trinity

Homework: Litany of Thanksgiving

Meeting at Randy and Donna's on Dec. 2nd

IMPLICATIONS OF BELIEF IN ONE GOD (CCC 222-227)

Knowing God's greatness and majesty

Living in Thanksgiving: because all comes from one God

Knowing the unity and equal dignity of all men: because all are made in the Image of the same God.

Making good use of created things: Things find their good in being used toward God, or in a way that brings us closer to Him. Consider briefly how adopting this approach to discernment may change how you use things.

Trusting in God in every circumstance

REVELATION OF THE NAME OF GOD

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

Although not a name of God, this represents the first recognition of God by any thing other than "God" or "Lord" in the written tradition. It is significant that God made Himself known through a relationship to people and that He establishes Himself as a personal God. He is also not simply the God of Abraham who changes with each generation, but is one God who is the same for each generation.

I AM WHO AM, or the tetragrammaton is the first name ascribed to God, or better said, the first name that He revealed to humanity. Looking back, with the benefit of the revelation of Christ and the Holy Trinity, we can see that this name is full of mystery, almost as if to suggest: you are not yet ready to understand me more fully (because the time of the revelation of the Son has not yet come), but to know that I am the God who is, is as complete of a description as can be understood. I am the only One and only thing that is because I am and everything else, all creation depend on my existence. This is the first step in God revealing Himself again to His people, as though to say: Know that I am the one God who is. All other gods are false and empty creations. Once you have seen that I am and have come closer to me, then your hearts will be ready and I can reveal Who I AM to you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit is revealed in Christ, both in his person as he is the Son of God in flesh, and through his teachings as he revealed both the Father and the Holy Spirit.

CCC 234: The Holy Trinity is the central Mystery of the Christian faith. According to the Catechism, it is the source of all other Mysteries, such that what we understand of the Holy Trinity helps shed light on all other aspects of the faith, and at the same time, all of these aspects and other Mysteries lead the faithful toward a greater knowledge, in the divine sense, and understanding of the Holy Trinity. To know the Holy Trinity is to know God.

TO KNOW GOD AND KNOW HUMANITY:

THE TRINITY REVEALS GOD:

CCC 240: THE FATHER IS REVEALED IN THE SON.

In the Gospel of John, Christ tells us: He who knows the Father knows the Son. And the one who has seen the Son has seen the Father, as well as, no one knows the Father except for the Son and the one to whom he has revealed Him. If it were not for the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, the union of One God in Three persons, we could not claim to know God, or that Jesus Christ was the fullness of the revelation of that God. It is only because of the consubstantial unity of the Father and the Son that Jesus could say, and we can remain confident that the one who has seen the Son, has seen the Father.

CCC 244: BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE REVEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

More than simply saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, which we say in the Nicene Creed, there are concrete ways in which the Holy Spirit has worked to reveal the Father and the Son in both a general way, that is, revelation given to the Church as a whole, and in a particular way in communion and relationship to individuals through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and inner stirrings which prompt activities of faith.

BASIC TENETS OF DOGMA ON THE HOLY TRINITY:

CCC 253: THE TRINITY IS ONE.

There is no division or separation between the persons of the Holy Trinity, nor can it be suggested that they represent three equally divine gods. While this has been an exceedingly hard concept for us to comprehend--how can three distinct things actually be one?--and one that appears to defy ordinary logic, it should rather, lead us in how we consider what unity and oneness is. If the Trinity is One, then our understanding of unity is revealed in the Holy Trinity. True union does not result in the dissolution of differences or distinctions, but persists through them. That the Holy Trinity is One also means that there can never be disagreement or discord in the Trinity. There is no difference between the Will of the Father or the Holy Spirit so one would never have to choose between following either member of the Holy Trinity.

CCC 254: THE PERSONS OF THE HOLY TRINITY ARE DISTINCT

Several years ago, a popular movie *Superman*, who was originally created as an allegory for Christ, featured a line "The Father becomes the son, so the son becomes the father." This played on a clever way of connecting one generation to the next as Superman himself became a father, however, it is not the way that the Holy Trinity works. There have been numerous heresies and controversies throughout the history of the Faith that have sought to undermine the distinction of the Persons of the Trinity, such as contending that the One God, who is the Father, appeared for a time on earth as the Son so that God could interact with humanity and when the time for the Son to leave came, God presents Himself at times in the form of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit becomes not a Person, but an experience of God and the Son is not eternal, but a historical appearance. You may be able to begin to see how such a diluted understanding of the Trinity can effect other tenets of the faith: the Real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the waters of baptism and continued presence of the Spirit in the baptized are but two quick examples.

CCC 255: THE PERSONS OF THE HOLY TRINITY ARE RELATIVE TO ONE ANOTHER.

The tradition speaks of *four relations*

1 Nature

2 Processions

3 Persons

4 Relations

The Father generates the Son, which defines Him as Father

The Son is generated by the Father, which defines Him as Son

The Holy Spirit actively proceeds between the Father and the Son, constituting the relationship between the Father and the Son

The Holy Spirit is passively spirated from both the Father and the Son which constitutes the person of the Holy Spirit.

We can also think in terms of more common, or ordinary, relationships:

The Father cannot be the Father without there being a Son

The Son cannot be the Son without having a Father

The Holy Spirit is the communication of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father

Yet another way is through the allegory of Love:

The Father is the one who Loves

The Son is the one who is Loved

The Holy Spirit is the Love between the Lover and the Beloved

****Therefore, the Holy Trinity reveals that there is no God without relationship**

THE TRINITY REVEALS HUMANITY

RECALL FROM GENESIS: GOD SAID "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE AND LIKENESS."

Therefore, man who was created in the Image and Likeness of God, was created in the image of the Holy Trinity. He is, by nature and by a single nature, trinitarian in being. He is not three persons, but one person with three identities. Recall the commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your mind, with all your heart and with all your strength. Is there a correlation between the Father (mind), the Son (heart) and the Holy Spirit (strength)? We also often speak of our humanity in terms of spirit, soul and body. Unfortunately, most of these conversations have put these against one another, or at least the spirit against the body. If, however, we are created in the image of the Holy Trinity, then spirit, soul and body were not created in opposition to one another, but destined toward unity that we do not fully understand. This is the fulfillment and unity that is experienced in the Resurrection of the Body.

Lastly, we may also consider that if man was created in the image of God, for whom relationship is an intrinsic reality, then not only is being in relationship, intrinsic and essential to our humanity, but that our own identity, that is, who I am as a person, is founded on how I am in relationship to others. It is not in hair color, clothing, profession, talents, sexual preferences, but how one is as a son/daughter of God, son/daughter, mother/father, husband/wife, servant, friend, etc. that our real identity lies. There will be more in this in a few weeks when we discuss "Man Created in the Image of God"

THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father
almighty, maker of heaven
and earth, of all things visible
and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all
ages. God from God, Light
from Light, true God from
true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were
made. For us men and for our
salvation he came down from
heaven, and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate, he suffered death
and was buried, and rose again

on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures. He ascended
into heaven and is seated at the
right hand of the Father. He will
come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead and his
kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Lord, the giver of life, who
proceeds from the Father and the
Son, who with the Father and the
Son is adored and glorified, who
has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church. I confess one
Baptism for the forgiveness of
sins and I look forward to the
resurrection of the dead and the
life of the world to come. Amen.