



The Trinity: Dynamic Community of Love

Reflection

The ways in which God is experienced are as varied and personal as there are people to experience the Lord. Yet, amidst the plurality of God's revelation, the most radical and definitive self-disclosure, by which all revelations can be measured, is in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Christians come to know God through knowing Jesus Christ. We encounter him in the Scriptures; through his presence in the sacraments; in and through the members of his body, the Church; and in the world around us. But, to know *about* Christ is not the same as *knowing* him. Anyone can know *about* him, but to actually *know* him, to be in a living relationship with him, involves a gift of faith that flows from the presence of the Spirit in our lives. And to know Christ is to know God the Father. Matthew's Gospel tells us, "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11:27). Our discussion of the Trinity must begin here, where we encounter God, through Christ, revealed by the Spirit in the midst of our lives.

If we want to be like Christ, we must live with him in the community of his disciples where he is in our midst. The more intentionally we do this, the more easily aware we will become of God's dynamic presence in our lives, shaping and molding us ever more deeply into the divine "image" and "likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Although we may not be fully aware of it, it is in this context of our faith community as Christians, that the Triune God already permeates our lives. To be Christian is to be Trinitarian. Revelation has shown us that there is no other way for Christians to be in relationship with God other than as God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

"John Paul II in his address to the U.S. bishops (September 17, 1987) declared that the notion of *communion* was 'at the heart of the Church's self-understanding.' This communion is 'primarily a sharing through grace in the life of the Father given us through Christ and in the Holy Spirit.'" ¹ As Church, then, we are not isolated individuals; rather we are communal human beings who are called to let go of our self-centeredness so that we may enter into communion with all of God's creation. Created in God's image, we, like God, have a nature that is essentially relational. Our wonderful journey toward meeting God is a journey with and in community. It is a journey that began with the dawn of humanity and yet must begin again every day in our own hearts.

In a community that reflects the love of the Trinity, we experience ourselves as valuable and loveable daughters and sons of God. The more we are able to experience and understand this, the more readily we will be able to see others and our relationships with them as a reflection of God's communing love. The first step toward communion is to put an end to alienation and move toward community. Our hope of heaven, the joy of salvation, can only consist in this: to live forever caught up in the communion of love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with whom we have become united in Christ. That communion begins here, each time we step out from behind fear, isolation, or self-centeredness into the light of God's love and further transform our world into the communion of right relationship that is God's kingdom.

If we truly believe in the Trinity, then, we will accept that mutual relationships are at the heart of our life together as human beings. We will strive to make equality between us and other people in the world a reality—and a reality of the highest priority. Our actions will proclaim the uniqueness of each person that is essential to our human existence. These are not distant images of a God who is somewhere "out there." These are mysteries and truths of the God who is very much present and active in our lives—not hidden from us, but revealed in a loving, life-giving way. ²

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- ¹ Excerpt from *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century, Revised and Updated* by Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness. Copyright © 1997 by RENEW International. Used by permission of Paulist Press. www.paulistpress.com, p. 21.
- ² RENEW International, *God, A Community of Love*, Faith Sharing Booklet A for Season I of RENEW 2000 (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 11.