



The Trinity: Dynamic Community of Love

What the Small Communities Need to Know

1. We are plunged into the life and love of the Trinity through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist (sacraments of Christian initiation). In the power of the Holy Spirit we are sent by the Father to continue Jesus Christ's evangelizing mission to the world. It is the same Holy Spirit who led Jesus to preach, to serve, and to surrender himself in sacrifice. It is this same Spirit that Jesus sends upon all who are baptized in his name. We, in turn, are called to discipleship and to bring the Good News.¹
2. One can participate in the divine love of the Trinity only as one feels loved and lovable. Participation in small Christian communities is integral to showing each person how unique and lovable he or she is. Large, impersonal parishes can often lead to an anonymity that is detrimental to a healthy faith life and may cause one to feel alienated. In order to establish a healthy and growing community, each person must be addressed, respected, and welcomed. In this way, the Church is able to bring out the best in each person, which will inevitably strengthen the overall parish.
3. We need to stress the relevance of Trinitarian doctrine for all aspects of Christian life and worship. Not only do we encounter a Trinitarian structure in our personal and liturgical prayer, but also we see a reflection of the Trinity in the loving communities of which we are a part. A proper understanding of the Church's teaching on Trinity will emphasize the immediate relevance of Trinitarian faith in the life of every Christian. We reflect the life and love of the Trinity by fostering and building up healthy relationships and community in all aspects of our life.
4. By fostering human dignity in a communion of loving relationships, small Christian communities can serve as a primary vehicle for witnessing to the Trinitarian nature of community. Prior to any task or function to which a small group may be entrusted, there should be the primary goal of becoming more intentional about its witness to God's love. To foster this, it is important to make prayer, reflection, and dialogue not an agenda item, but the very core and basis of every small group gathering. In addition to RENEW's online faith sharing materials, the RENEW Impact series of faith sharing booklets provide solid resources for nourishing your group in this way.
5. Trinitarian teaching has far-reaching implications for the Christian moral and societal life. As the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are by nature relational, so are we who are made in God's image and likeness. It is imperative that we not only accept this about ourselves, but also extend this awareness to others. All our ethical decisions must take into account that we are related to all other people and all of creation. We never act in isolation from others and can never separate our actions from the effects they will have (directly or indirectly) on others.

¹ See U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States* (November 1992), p. 10.