

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

A response to the Synodal Journey

This is a new initiative in response to your request to learn more about the teachings of the Catholic Church from the outcome of the Synodal Journey done recently. Each week an excerpt from the Catechism is selected along with a simple explanation. Copies are available at the back of Our Lady Star of the Sea RC Church, Ilfracombe.

If you would like to further explore the teachings of our faith there are several groups across the diocese that meet locally and online.

If you would like more information, please contact:

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It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk Department of Evangelisation and Catechesis.

Weeks 1 to 17

Week 1



DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

based on *Compendium of the Catechism*: paragraphs
33-38

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE “SYMBOLS OF FAITH” ARE? *(they may not be what you think)*

Answer: They are formulas, also called “professions of faith” or “creeds”. From the very beginning the Church used them to set forth and hand on her own faith in a language common to all the faithful.

The origin of the word “symbol” comes from the Greek: a “sumbolon” means a ‘mark’ or ‘token’, and in latin, the word “symbolum” means a symbol or a Creed (as the mark of a Christian). It is a statement that has power of Truth that you can touch and hold onto.

THE MOST ANCIENT SYMBOLS OF THE FAITH ARE: **The baptismal creeds**

THE MOST IMPORTANT SYMBOLS OF THE FAITH ARE:

The Apostles’ Creed, (the ancient baptismal creed of the Church of Rome) and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed which comes from the first 2 ecumenical Councils (Nicea in 325 AD, and Constantinople in 381 AD). Even now they are the same in all the great Churches of the East and the West.

WHY DO THE SYMBOLS OR CREEDS BEGIN WITH THE WORDS, “I BELIEVE IN GOD” ?

Because it is the most important truth. It is the source of all the other truths about man and about the world, and about the entire life of everyone who believes in God.

WHY DO WE SAY THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD ?

Because He has revealed Himself to the people of Israel and the ONLY ONE when he said “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4) and “there is no other” (Isaiah 45:22). Jesus Himself confirmed that God is “the One Lord” (Mark 12:29). To say that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also God and Lord does not introduce any division into the One God.

WITH WHAT NAME DOES GOD REVEAL HIMSELF ?

To Moses, God said He was the living God “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6). God also revealed to Moses His mysterious name

“I Am Who I Am” (In Hebrew it is known by 4 letters which we transcribe as YHWH – called the Tetragrammaton.)

WHAT DOES GOD’S NAME TELL US ?

He alone is from everlasting to everlasting. He made Heaven and Earth. He is the highest holiness, “rich in mercy” (Ephesians 2:4), always ready to forgive. He is the One who is spiritual, transcendent, omnipotent (all-powerful), eternal, personal and perfect. He is Truth and Love.

IN WHAT WAY IS GOD THE TRUTH?

God is Truth itself and as such He can neither deceive nor be deceived. He is “light and in Him there is no darkness” (1 John 1:5). The eternal Son of God, the incarnation of wisdom, was sent into the world “to bear witness to the Truth” (John 18:37).

IN WHAT WAY DOES GOD REVEAL THAT HE IS LOVE ?

God told Israel His love is stronger even than parent’s love for their children or husbands’ and wives’ love for their spouses. God “is love” (1 John 4:8,16). He gives Himself totally and gratuitously. He “so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16 – 17). By sending His Son and the Holy Spirit, God reveals that He Himself is an eternal exchange of Love.



The Holy Trinity by Andrei Rublev

Week 2



DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

from the *Compendium of the Catechism*: paragraphs 43 - 50

IF I SAY, “I BELIEVE IN ONLY ONE GOD”, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Well, to believe in the one and only God involves a process of coming to know his greatness and majesty. It also involves living in thanksgiving and trusting always in Him, even in adversity, and, among other things, it involves knowing the unity and true dignity of all human beings, created in His image.

WHAT IS THE CENTRAL MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE?

The mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is central to Christian faith and life. Christians are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

CAN THE MYSTERY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY BE KNOWN BY THE LIGHT OF HUMAN REASON ALONE?

God has left some traces of His Trinitarian Being in creation and in the Old Testament but His inmost Being as the Holy Trinity is a mystery which we cannot arrive at by reason alone. This mystery was revealed by Jesus Christ and it is the source of all the other mysteries.

WHAT DID JESUS CHRIST REVEAL TO US ABOUT THE MYSTERY OF THE FATHER?

Jesus Christ revealed to us that God is “Father” not only because He created the universe and mankind, but above all, because he eternally generated in his bosom the Son who is His Word, “the radiance of the glory of God and the very stamp of His nature” (Hebrews 1:3).

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED TO US BY JESUS CHRIST?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Most Blessed Trinity. He is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son. He “proceeds from the Father” (John 15:26) who is the principle without a principle and the origin of all Trinitarian life. The Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son by the eternal gift which the Father makes of Him to the Son. Sent by the Father and the Incarnate Son, the Holy Spirit guides the Church “to know all truth” (John 16:13)

TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE HOLY TRINITY?

The three divine Persons are only one God because each of them equally possesses the fullness of the one and Indivisible divine nature. They are really distinct from each other because of their relationship to each other. The Father generates the Son; the Son is generated by the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

HOW DO THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS WORK?

Inseparable in their one substance, the three divine Persons are also inseparable in and their activity. The Trinity has one operation, sole the same. In this one divine action, however, each Person is present according to the mode which is proper to him in the Trinity.

“Oh my God, Trinity whom I adore... grant my soul peace; make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling, and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring and wholly given over to your creative action.”



St Elizabeth of the Trinity

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT GOD IS ALMIGHTY?

God reveals himself as “the strong One, the mighty One” (Psalm 24:8), as the One “to whom nothing is impossible” (Luke 1:37). His omnipotence is universal, mysterious and shows itself in the creation of the world out of nothing and humanity out of love; but above all it shows itself in the Incarnation and the resurrection of His Son, in the gift of filial adoption and in the forgiveness of sins. So the Church directs her prayers to the “almighty and eternal God.”

Week 3

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 51- 58



WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF SAYING “IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH” (GENESIS 1:1)?

The meaning is that creation is the foundation of all God’s saving plans. It (Creation) shows forth the almighty and wise love of God and it is the first step toward the covenant of the One God with his people. It is the beginning of the history of salvation which culminates in Christ; and it is the first answer to our fundamental questions regarding our very origin and destiny.

WHO CREATED THE WORLD?

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the one and indivisible principle of creation even though the work of creating the world is particularly attributed to God the Father.

WHY WAS THE WORLD CREATED?

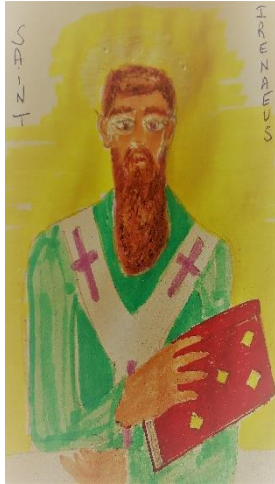
The world was created for the glory of God who wishes to communicate his Goodness, Truth and Beauty. The ultimate end of creation is that God, in Christ, might be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28) for His Glory and our happiness.

HOW DID GOD CREATE THE UNIVERSE?

God created the universe freely with wisdom and love. The world is not the result of any necessity, nor of blind fate, nor of chance. God created “out of nothing” (2 Maccabees 7:28) a world which is ordered and good and which He infinitely transcends. God preserves His creation in being and sustains it, giving it the capacity to act and leading it toward its fulfilment through His Son and the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS DIVINE PROVIDENCE?

Divine Providence consists in the dispositions with which God leads his creatures toward their ultimate end. God is the sovereign Master of His own plan. To carry it out, however, He also makes use of the cooperation of His creatures. For God grants His creatures the dignity of acting on their own and of being causes for each other.



Saint Irenaeus said,

"The glory of God is man fully alive; moreover man's life is the vision of God"

HOW DO WE COLLABORATE WITH DIVINE PROVIDENCE?

While respecting our freedom, God asks us to cooperate with Him and gives us the ability to do so through actions, prayers and sufferings.

IF GOD IS OMNIPOTENT AND PROVIDENT, WHY THEN DOES EVIL EXIST?

To this question, as painful and mysterious as it is, only the whole of the Christian faith can constitute a response. God is not in any way – directly or indirectly – the cause of evil. He illuminates the mystery of evil in His Son, Jesus Christ who died and rose up again in order to vanquish that great moral evil – human sin – which is at the root of all other evils.

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT EVIL?

Faith gives us the certainty that God would not permit evil if He did not cause a good to come from that very evil. This was realized in a wondrous way by God in the death and resurrection of Christ. In fact, from the greatest of all moral evils (the murder of His Son) He has brought forth the greatest of all goods (the glorification of Christ and our redemption) – *(about which, more later).*



DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium of the Catechism: 59 – 66

WHAT DID GOD CREATE?

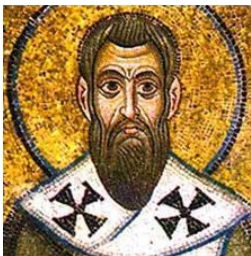
Sacred Scripture says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The Church claims that God is the Creator of everything, visible and invisible³, of all spiritual and corporeal beings, that is, of angels and of the visible world and, in a special way, of man and woman.

WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

The angels are purely spiritual creatures, incorporeal, invisible, immortal, and personal beings endowed with intelligence and will. They ceaselessly contemplate God face-to-face and they glorify him. They serve Him and are His messengers in the accomplishment of His saving mission. Christ is the centre of the angelic world. (Catechism paragraphs 328 to 336 for more information)

IN WHAT WAY ARE ANGELS PRESENT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH?

The Church joins with the angels in adoring God, invokes their assistance and commemorates some in her liturgy.



“Beside each believer stands an angel as a protector and shepherd leading him to life.”
St Basil the Great

WHAT DOES SACRED SCRIPTURE TEACH ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE VISIBLE WORLD?

Through the account of the “six days” of creation Sacred Scripture teaches us the value of the created world and its purpose, namely, to praise God and to serve humanity. Every single thing owes its very existence to God from whom it receives its goodness and perfection, its proper laws and its proper place in the universe.

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN CREATION?

The human person is the summit of visible creation in as much as he or she is created in the image and likeness of God.

WHAT KIND OF BOND EXISTS BETWEEN CREATED THINGS?

There exists an interdependence and a hierarchy among creatures as willed by God. At the same time, there is also a unity and solidarity among creatures since all have the same Creator, are loved by Him and are ordered to His glory. Respecting the laws inscribed in creation and the relations which derive from the nature of things is, therefore, a principle of wisdom and a foundation for morality.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORK OF CREATION AND THE WORK OF REDEMPTION?

The work of creation culminates in the still greater work of redemption, which in fact gives rise to a new creation in which everything will recover its true meaning and fulfilment.

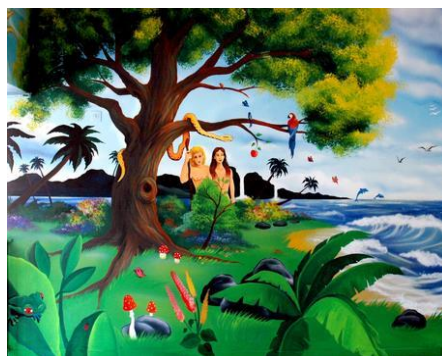
THE IMAGE OF GOD AND MAN: IN WHAT SENSE DO WE UNDERSTAND MAN AND WOMAN AS CREATED “IN THE IMAGE OF GOD”?

The human person is created in the image of God in the sense that he or she is capable of knowing and of loving their creator in freedom. Human beings are the only creatures on earth that God has willed for their own sake and has called to share, through knowledge and love, in His own divine life. All human beings, in as much as they are created in the image of God, have the dignity of a person. A person is not something but someone, capable of self-knowledge and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with God and with other persons.

Week 5

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 67- 75



WHY, FOR WHAT PURPOSE DID GOD CREATE MAN AND WOMAN?

God has created everything for them; but He has created them to know Him, and to serve and love God, to offer all of creation in this world in thanksgiving back to Him and to be raised up to life with Him in Heaven. Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of the human person come into true light. Man and woman are predestined to reproduce the image of the Son of God made Man, who is the perfect “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15)

WHY DOES THE HUMAN RACE FORM A UNITY?

All people form the unity of the human race by reason of the common origin which they have from God. God has made “from one ancestor all the nations of men” (Acts 17:26). All have but one Saviour and are called to share in the eternal happiness of God.

HOW DOES THE SOUL AND BODY FORM A UNITY IN THE HUMAN BEING?

The human person is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. In man, spirit and matter form one nature. This unity is so profound that, thanks to the spiritual principle which is the soul, the body which is material, becomes a living human body and participates in the dignity of the image of God.

WHERE DOES THE SOUL COME FROM?

The spiritual soul does not come from one's parents but is created immediately by God and is immortal. It does not perish at the moment when it is separated from the body in death, and it will be once again reunited with the body at the moment of the final resurrection.

WHAT RELATIONSHIP HAS GOD ESTABLISHED BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN?

Man and woman have been created by God in equal dignity insofar as they are human persons. At the same time, they have been created in a reciprocal complementarity insofar as they are masculine and feminine. God has willed them one *for* the other to form a communion of persons. They are also called to transmit human life by forming in matrimony "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). They are likewise called to subdue the earth as "stewards" of God.

WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN PERSON ACCORDING TO THE PLAN OF GOD?

In creating man and woman, God had given them a special participation in His own divine life in holiness and justice. In the plan of God, they would not have had to suffer or die. Further, a perfect harmony held sway within the human person, a harmony between creature and Creator, between man and woman, as well as between the first human couple and all of creation.

HOW SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF SIN?

Sin is present in human history. This reality of sin can be understood clearly only in the light of divine revelation and above all in the light of Christ the Saviour of all. Where sin abounded, he made grace to abound all the more.

WHAT WAS THE FALL OF THE ANGELS?

Satan and the other demons, about which Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church speak, were angels created good by God. They were, however, transformed into evil because with a free and irrevocable choice they rejected God and his Kingdom, thus giving rise to the existence of hell. They try to associate human beings with their revolt against God. However, God has wrought in Christ a sure victory over the Evil One.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST HUMAN SIN?

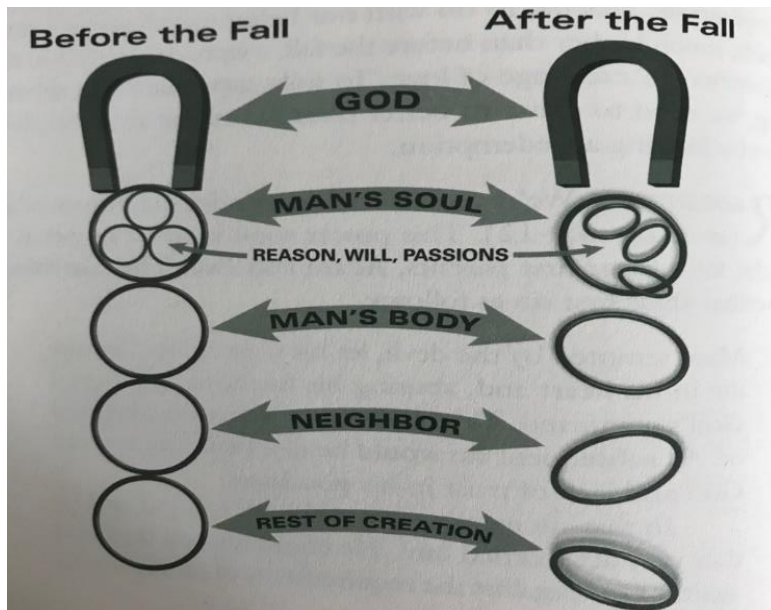
When tempted by the devil, the first man and woman allowed trust in their Creator to die in their hearts. In their disobedience they wished to become "like God" but without God and not in accordance with God (Genesis 3:5). Thus, Adam and Eve immediately lost for themselves and for all their descendants the original grace of holiness and justice.

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 76 – 83

WHAT IS ORIGINAL SIN?

Original sin, in which all human beings are born, is the state of deprivation of original holiness and justice. It is a sin “contracted” by us not “committed”; it is a state of birth and not a personal act. Because of the original unity of all human beings, it is transmitted to the descendants of Adam “not imitation, but by propagation”. This transmission remains a mystery which we cannot fully understand.



Picture taken from “The One thing is Three” by Michael E. Gaitley, MiC (2012) Marian Press, Stockbridge, USA P40.

It shows the effects of original sin in breaking the bonds of love in our relationships with God, within ourselves, with our body, with our neighbour and with the rest of creation.

WHAT OTHER CONSEQUENCES DERIVE FROM ORIGINAL SIN?

In consequence of original sin, human nature, without being totally corrupted, is wounded in its natural powers. It is subject to ignorance, to suffering and to the dominion of death and is inclined toward sin. This inclination is called *concupiscence*.

AFTER THE FIRST SIN, WHAT DID GOD DO?

After the first sin the world was inundated with sin but God did not abandon man to the power of death. Rather he foretold in a mysterious way in the “Protoevangelium” (Genesis 3:15) that evil would be conquered and that man would be lifted up from his fall. This was the first proclamation of the Messiah and Redeemer. Therefore, the fall would be called in the future a “happy fault” because it “gained for us so great a Redeemer” (Liturgy of the Easter Vigil).

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR HUMANITY?

It is the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the “Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), who died and rose from the dead. In the time of King Herod and the Emperor Caesar Augustus, God fulfilled the promises that he made to Abraham and his descendants. He sent “His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4: 4-5)

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE NAME “JESUS”?

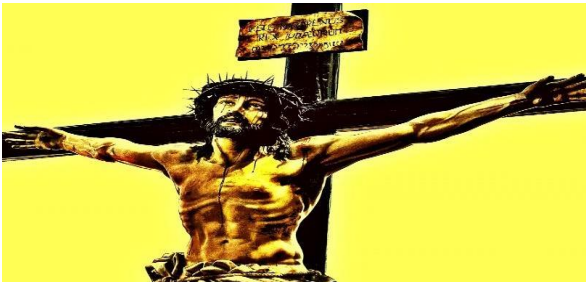
Given at the time of the Annunciation, the name “Jesus” means “God saves”. The name expresses his identity and his mission “because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Peter proclaimed that “there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we can be saved! (Acts 4:12).

WHY IS JESUS CALLED “CHRIST”?

“Christ” in Greek, “Messiah” in Hebrew, means the “anointed one”. Jesus is the Christ because He is consecrated by God and anointed by the Holy Spirit for His redeeming mission. He is the Messiah awaited by Israel sent into the world by the Father. Jesus accepted the title of Messiah but He made the meaning of the term clear: “come down from heaven” (John 3:13), crucified and then risen, He is the Suffering Servant “who gives His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). From the name Christ comes our name of *Christian*.

IN WHAT SENSE IS JESUS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD?

Jesus is the Son of God in a unique and perfect way. At the time of His Baptism and His Transfiguration, the voice of the Father designated Jesus as His “beloved Son”. In presenting Himself as the Son who “knows the Father” (Matthew 11:27), Jesus affirmed His singular and eternal relationship with God His Father. He is “the Only Begotten Son of God” (1 John 4:9), the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the central figure of apostolic preaching. The apostles saw “His glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father” (John 1:14).



The image of Jesus on the Cross is a graphic physical representation of the effect of our sins on our soul, as well as being a sign of the solidarity of God with mankind in our suffering.

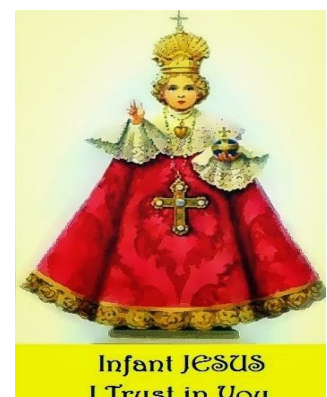
Week 7

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 84 – 91

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE TITLE “LORD”?

In the Bible, this title regularly designates God as Sovereign. Jesus ascribed this title to himself and revealed his divine sovereignty by his power over nature, over demons, over sin and over death, above all by his Resurrection. The first Christian creeds proclaimed that the power, the honour, and the glory that are due to God the Father also belong to Jesus: God “has given him the name which is above every other name” (Philippians 2:9). He is the Lord of the world and of history, the only One to whom we must completely submit our personal freedom.



WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME MAN?

For us men and for our salvation, the Son of God became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did so to reconcile us sinners with God, to have us learn of God's infinite love, to be our model of holiness and to make us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

WHAT DOES THE WORD "INCARNATION" MEAN?

The Church calls the mystery of the wonderful union of the divine and human natures in the one divine Person of the Word the "incarnation". To bring about our salvation the Son of God was made "flesh" (John 1:14) and became truly man. Faith in the Incarnation is a distinctive sign of the Christian faith.

IN WHAT WAY IS JESUS CHRIST TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN?

Jesus is inseparably true God and true man in the unity of his divine Person. As the Son of God, who is "begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father," he was made true man, our brother, without ceasing to be God, our Lord.

WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON (YEAR 451) TEACH IN THIS REGARD?

The Council of Chalcedon teaches us to confess "one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in his humanity, true God and true man, composed of rational soul and body, consubstantial with the Father by his divinity, and consubstantial with us by his humanity, 'like us in all things but sin' (Hebrews 4:15), begotten from the Father before all ages as to his divinity, and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary, the Virgin and Mother of God, as to his humanity."

HOW DOES THE CHURCH SET FORTH THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION?

The Church confesses that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, with two natures, a divine nature, and a human nature, not confused with each other but united in the Person of the Word. Therefore, in the humanity of Jesus all things – his miracles, his suffering, and his death – must be attributed to his divine Person which acts by means of his assumed human nature.

DID THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD HAVE A SOUL WITH HUMAN KNOWLEDGE?

The Son of God assumed a body animated by a rational human soul. With his human intellect Jesus learned many things by way of experience, but also as man the Son of God had an intimate and immediate knowledge of God his Father. He likewise understood people's secret thoughts and he knew fully the eternal plans which he had come to reveal.

HOW DID THE TWO WILLS OF THE INCARNATE WORD COOPERATE?

Jesus had a divine will, and a human will. In his earthly life the Son of God humanly willed all that he had divinely decided with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our salvation. The human will of Christ followed without opposition or reluctance the Divine Will or, in other words, it was subject to it.

From a window in the Basilica of Saint



Mary Star of the Sea, Key West, Florida, USA.

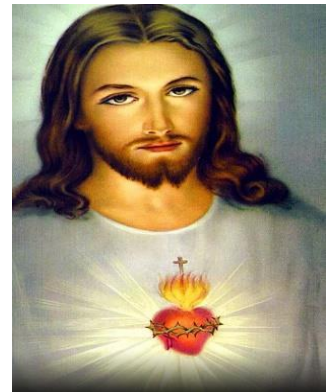
Week 8

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium of the Catechism: 92-100

DID CHRIST HAVE A TRUE HUMAN BODY?

Christ assumed a true human body by means of which the invisible God became visible. This is the reason why Christ can be represented and venerated in sacred images.



WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS EXEMPLIFY?

Jesus knew us and loved us with a human heart. His heart, pierced for our salvation, is the symbol of that infinite love with which he loves the Father and each one of us.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION “CONCEIVED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...”?

This expression means that the Virgin Mary conceived the eternal Son in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit without the cooperation of a man. The angel told her at the Annunciation that “the Holy Spirit will come upon you” (Luke 1:35).

“... BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”: WHY IS MARY TRULY THE MOTHER OF GOD?

Mary is truly the Mother of God because she is the Mother of Jesus (John 2:1, John 19:25). The One who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and became truly her Son is actually the eternal Son of God the Father. He is God Himself.

WHAT DOES THE “IMMACULATE CONCEPTION” MEAN?

God freely chose Mary from all eternity to be the Mother of his Son. To carry out her mission she herself was *conceived immaculate*. This means that, thanks to the grace of God and in anticipation of the merits of Jesus Christ, Mary was preserved from original sin from the first instant of her conception.

HOW DOES MARY COOPERATE IN THE DIVINE PLAN OF SALVATION?

By the grace of God Mary was kept free from every personal sin her whole life long. She is the one who is “full of grace” (Luke 1:28), “the all holy”. When the angel announced to her that she would give birth to “the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32), she freely gave her consent with “the obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5). Mary thus gave herself entirely to the person and work of her Son Jesus, espousing wholeheartedly the divine will regarding salvation.

WHAT DOES THE VIRGINAL CONCEPTION OF JESUS MEAN?

The virginal conception of Jesus means that Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Virgin solely by the power of the Holy Spirit without the intervention of man. Jesus is the Son of the heavenly Father according to his divine nature and the Son of Mary according to his human nature. He is, however, truly the Son of God in both natures since there is in him only one Person who is divine.

IN WHAT SENSE IS MARY “EVER VIRGIN”?

Mary is ever virgin in the sense that she “remained a virgin in conceiving her Son, a virgin in giving birth to him, a virgin in carrying him, a virgin in nursing him at her breast, always a virgin.” (Saint Augustine). Therefore, when the Gospels speak of the “brothers and sisters of Jesus”, they are talking about the close relations of Jesus, according to the way of speaking used in Sacred Scripture.

IN WHAT WAY IS THE SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD OF MARY UNIVERSAL?

Mary had only one Son, Jesus, but in Him her spiritual motherhood extends to all whom He came to save. Obediently standing at the side of the new Adam that is Jesus Christ, the Virgin is the new Eve, the true mother of all the living, who with a mother’s love cooperates in their birth and their formation in the order of grace. Virgin and Mother, Mary is the figure of the Church, its most perfect realization.

Week 9

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 101 – 107

IN WHAT SENSE IS THE LIFE OF CHRIST A MYSTERY?

The entire life of Christ is a revelation. What was visible in the earthly life of Jesus leads us to the *invisible mystery of his divine sonship*: “who-ever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). Furthermore, even though salvation comes completely from the cross and the resurrection, the entire life of Christ is a *mystery of redemption* because everything that Jesus did, said, and suffered had for its aim the salvation of fallen human beings and the restoration of their vocation as children of God.

HOW DID GOD PREPARE THE WORLD FOR THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST?

God prepared for the coming of His Son over the centuries. He awaked in the hearts of the pagans a dim expectation of this coming and He prepared for it specifically through the Old Testament, culminating with *John the Baptist* who was the last and greatest of the prophets. We relive this long period of expectancy in the annual liturgical celebration of the season of Advent.

WHAT DOES THE GOSPEL TEACH ABOUT THE MYSTERIES OF THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS?

At *Christmas* the glory of heaven is shown forth in the weakness of a baby; the *circumcision* of Jesus is a sign of His belonging to the Hebrew people and is a prefiguration of our Baptism; the *Epiphany* is the manifestation of the Messiah King of Israel to all the nations; at the *presentation in the temple*, Simeon and Anna symbolise all the anticipation of Israel awaiting its encounter with its Saviour; the *flight to Egypt* and the massacre of the innocents proclaim that the entire life of Christ will be under the sign of persecution; the *departure from Egypt* recalls the exodus and presents Jesus as the new Moses and the true and definitive liberator.

WHAT DOES THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS IN NAZARETH TEACH US?

In the course of His *hidden life* in Nazareth Jesus stayed in the silence of an ordinary existence. This allows us to enter into fellowship with Him in the holiness to be found in a daily life marked by prayer, simplicity, work, and family love. His obedience to Mary and to Joseph, His foster father, is an image of His filial obedience to the Father. Mary and Joseph accepted with faith the mystery of Jesus even though they did not always understand it.

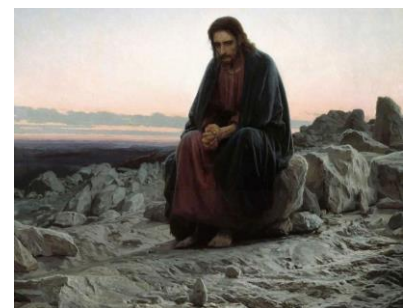
WHY DID JESUS RECEIVE FROM JOHN THE “BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS” (LUKE 3:3)?

To inaugurate his public life and to anticipate the “Baptism” of His death, He who was without sin accepted to be numbered among sinners. He was “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Father proclaimed Him to be “His beloved Son” (Matthew 3:17) and the Spirit descended upon Him. The baptism of Jesus is a prefiguring of our baptism.

WHAT DO THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS IN THE DESERT TEACH?

The temptations of Jesus in the desert recapitulate the temptation of Adam in Paradise and the temptations of Israel in the desert. Satan tempts Jesus in regard to His obedience to the mission given Him by the Father. Christ, the new Adam, resists and His victory proclaims that of His passion which is the supreme obedience of his filial love. The Church unites herself to this mystery in a special way in the liturgical season of *Lent*.

Christ in the desert by Ivan Kramskoy



WHO IS INVITED TO COME INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD PROCLAIMED AND BROUGHT ABOUT BY JESUS?

All are invited by Jesus to enter the Kingdom of God. Even the worst of sinners is called to convert and to accept the boundless mercy of the Father. Already here on earth, the Kingdom belongs to those who accept it with a humble heart. To them the mysteries of the Kingdom are revealed.

WHY DID JESUS MANIFEST THE KINGDOM BY MEANS OF SIGNS AND MIRACLES?

Jesus accompanied his words with signs and miracles to bear witness to the fact that the Kingdom is present in him, the Messiah. Although he healed some people, he did not come to abolish all evils here below but rather to free us especially from the slavery of sin. The driving out of demons proclaimed that His cross would be victorious over “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31).

IN THE KINGDOM, WHAT AUTHORITY DID JESUS BESTOW UPON HIS APOSTLES?

Jesus chose the twelve, the future witnesses of His Resurrection, and made them sharers of His mission and of his authority to teach, to absolve from sins, and to build up and govern the Church. In this college, Peter received “the keys of the Kingdom” (Matthew 16:19) and assumed the first place with the mission to keep the faith in its integrity and to strengthen his brothers.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE TRANSFIGURATION?

Above all the Transfiguration shows forth the Trinity: “the Father in the voice, the Son in the man Jesus, the Spirit in the shining cloud” (Saint Thomas Aquinas). Speaking with Moses and Elijah about his “departure” (Luke 9:31), Jesus reveals that His glory comes by way of the cross and He anticipates His resurrection and His glorious coming “which will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body” (Phil 3:21).

“You were transfigured on the mountain and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendour of the Father.” *From the Byzantine Liturgy.*

The Transfiguration



by Carl Bloch

HOW DID THE ENTRANCE OF JESUS THE MESSIAH INTO JERUSALEM COME ABOUT?

At the established time Jesus chose to go up to Jerusalem to suffer His passion and death and to rise from the dead. As the Messiah King who shows forth the coming of the Kingdom, he entered into His city mounted on a donkey. He was acclaimed by the little children whose shout of joyful praise is taken up in the Sanctus of the Eucharistic liturgy: “blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna (save us!)” (Matthew 21:9). The liturgy of the Church opens Holy Week by celebrating this entry into Jerusalem (on Palm Sunday).



“Sanctus” means “Holy” or “blessed”.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY OF JESUS?

The Paschal Mystery of Jesus, which comprises His passion, death and resurrection and glorification, stands at the centre of the Christian faith because God’s saving plan was accomplished once for all by the redemptive death of His Son Jesus Christ.

WHAT WERE THE ACCUSATIONS BY WHICH JESUS WAS CONDEMNED TO DEATH?

Some of the leaders of Israel accused Jesus of acting against the law, the temple in Jerusalem, and in particular against faith in the one God because He proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God. For this reason, they handed Him over to Pilate so that He might condemn Him to death.

(The Roman Emperor Tiberius had appointed Pontius Pilate to be the governor of the province of Judea, where they lived, and he served as such for about 10 years: from about 26 AD to 36 AD. Judea had been invaded by the Romans and they ruled it as a Province of Rome at that time.)

Week 11

Dipping into the Catechism

From the Compendium of the Catechism: 114 – 121

How did Jesus conduct himself in regard to the Law of Israel?

Jesus did not abolish the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai but he fulfilled it by giving it its definitive interpretation. He himself was the divine Legislator who fully carried out this Law. Furthermore, as the faithful Servant, he offered by means of his expiatory death the only sacrifice capable of making atonement for all the “transgressions committed by men under the first Covenant” (Hebrews 9:15)



Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane

What was the attitude of Jesus toward the temple in Jerusalem?

Jesus was accused of hostility to the temple. On the contrary, he venerated it as “the house of his Father” (John 2:16); and it was there that He imparted an important part of His teaching. However, He also foretold its destruction in connection with His own death and He presented Himself as the definitive dwelling place of God among men.

Did Jesus contradict Israel’s faith in the one God and saviour?

Jesus never contradicted faith in the one God, not even when He performed the stupendous divine work which fulfilled the messianic promises and revealed Himself as equal to God, namely the pardoning of sins.

Who is responsible for the death of Jesus?

The passion and death of Jesus cannot be imputed indiscriminately either to all the Jews that were living at that time or to their descendants. Every single sinner, that is, every human being is really the cause and the instrument of the sufferings of the Redeemer; and the greater blame in this respect falls on those above all who are Christians and who the more often fall into sin or delight in their vices.

Why was the death of Jesus part of God’s plan?

To reconcile to Himself all who were destined to die because of sin God took the loving initiative of sending His Son that He might give Himself up for sinners. Proclaimed in the Old Testament, especially as the sacrifice of the Suffering Servant, the death of Jesus came about “in accordance with the Scriptures”.

In what way did Christ offer Himself to the Father?

The entire life of Christ was a free offering to the Father to carry out His plan of salvation. He gave “His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45) and in this way He reconciled all of humanity with God. His suffering and death showed how His humanity was the free and perfect instrument of that divine love which desires the salvation of all people.

How is Jesus' offering expressed at the Last Supper?

At the Last Supper with His apostles on the eve of His passion Jesus anticipated, that is, both symbolised His free self-offering and made it really present: “This is my Body which *is given* for you” (Luke 22:19), “This is my Blood which *is poured out...*” (Matthew 26:28). Thus He both instituted the Eucharist as the “memorial” (1 Corinthians 11:25) of His sacrifice and instituted His apostles as priests of the new covenant.

What happened in the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Despite the horror which death represented for the sacred humanity of Jesus “who is the Author of Life” (Acts 3:15), the human will of the Son of God remained faithful to the will of the Father for our salvation. Jesus accepted the duty to carry our sins in His Body “becoming obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:8).



Week 12

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 132 – 139

What does the Ascension mean?

After 40 days during which Jesus showed Himself to the apostles with ordinary human features which veiled His glory as the Risen One, Christ ascended into Heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father. He is the Lord who now in His humanity reigns in the everlasting glory of the Son of God and constantly intercedes for us before the Father. Together with the Father, He sends us the Holy Spirit and He gives us the hope of one day reaching the place He has prepared for us.



How does the Lord Jesus now reign?

As the Lord of the cosmos and of history, the Head of His Church, the glorified Christ mysteriously remains on earth where His kingdom is already present in seed and in its beginning in the Church. One day He will return in glory but we do not know the time. Because of this we live in watchful anticipation, praying “Come, Lord” (Revelation 22:20).

How will the coming of the Lord in glory happen?

After the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world the glorious coming of Christ will take place. Then will come the definitive triumph of God in the Parousia and the Last Judgment. Thus the Kingdom of God will be realized. (see *Catechism paragraphs 678 to 682*) (*Parousia means “the second coming of Christ”*.)

How will Christ judge the living and the dead?

Christ will judge with the power He has gained as the Redeemer of the world who came to bring salvation to all. The secrets of hearts will be brought to light as well as the conduct of each one toward God and toward his neighbour. Everyone, according to how he has lived, will either be filled with life or damned for eternity. In this way, “the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13) will come about in which “God will be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

What does the Church mean when she confesses “I believe in the Holy Spirit”?

To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess faith in the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity who proceeds from the Father and the Son and “is worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son”. The Spirit is “sent into our hearts” (Galatians 4:6) so that we might receive new life as sons of God.

Are the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit inseparable?

In the indivisible Trinity, the Son and the Spirit are distinct but inseparable. From the very beginning until the end of time, when the Father sends His Son He also sends His Spirit who unites us to Christ in faith so that as adopted sons we can call God “Father” (Romans 8:15). The Spirit is invisible, but we know Him through His actions, when He reveals the Word to us and when He acts in the Church.

What are the names of the Holy Spirit?

“The Holy Spirit” is the proper name of the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Jesus also called Him the Paraclete (Consoler or Advocate) and the Spirit of Truth. The New Testament also refers to Him as the Spirit of Christ, of the Lord, of God – the Spirit of Glory and the Spirit of the Promise.

What symbols are used to represent the Holy Spirit?

There are many symbols of the Holy Spirit: *living water* which springs from the wounded Heart of Christ and which quenches the thirst of the baptised; *anointing* with oil, which is the sacramental sign of Confirmation; *fire* which transforms what it touches; *the cloud*, dark or luminous, in which the Divine Glory is revealed; the *imposition of hands* by which the Holy Spirit is given; *the dove* which descended on Christ at his baptism and remained with him.



The Vatican Dove of Peace represents the Holy Spirit.

Dipping into the Catechism

From the Compendium of the Catechism: 122 – 131



What results from the sacrifice of Christ on the cross?

Jesus freely offered his life as an expiatory sacrifice, that is, he made reparation for our sins with the full obedience of his love unto death. This love “to the end” (John 13:1) of the Son of God reconciled all of humanity with the Father. The paschal sacrifice of Christ, therefore redeems humanity in a way that is unique, perfect, and definitive; and it opens up for them communion with God.

Why does Jesus call upon his disciples to take up their cross?

By calling His disciples to take up their cross and follow Him Jesus desires to associate with His redeeming sacrifice those who are to be its first beneficiaries.

In what condition was the body of Christ while it lay in the tomb?

Christ underwent a real death and a true burial. However, the power of God preserved his body from corruption.

“Jesus Christ descended in to Hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead.”

What is the “hell” into which Jesus descended?

This “hell” was different from the hell of the damned. It was the state of all those, righteous and evil, who died before Christ. With His soul united to His divine Person Jesus went down to the just in hell who were awaiting their Redeemer so they could enter at last into the vision of God. When He had conquered by His death both death and the devil “who has the power of death” (Hebrews 2:14), He freed the just who looked forward to the Redeemer and opened for them the gates of heaven.

What place does the Resurrection of Christ occupy in our faith?

The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ and represents along with his cross an essential part of the Paschal Mystery.

What are the signs that bear witness to the Resurrection of Jesus?

Along with the essential sign of the empty tomb, the Resurrection of Jesus is witnessed to by the women who first encountered Christ and proclaimed Him to the apostles. Jesus then “appeared to Cephas (Peter) and then to the Twelve.

Following that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brethren at one time” (1 Corinthians 15:5-6) and to others as well. The apostles could not have invented the story of the resurrection since it seemed impossible to them. As a matter of fact, Jesus himself upbraided them for their unbelief.

What is the condition of the risen body of Jesus?

The Resurrection of Christ was not a return to earthly life. His risen body is that which was crucified and bears the marks of his passion. However, it also participates in the divine life, with the characteristics of a glorified body. Because of this the risen Jesus was utterly free to appear to his disciples how and where He wished and under various aspects.

How is the Resurrection the work of the Most Holy Trinity?

The Resurrection of Christ is a transcendent work of God. The three Persons act together according to what is proper to them: the Father manifests His power; the Son “takes again” the life which He freely offered (John 10:7), reuniting His soul and His body which the Spirit brings to life and glorifies.

What is the saving meaning of the Resurrection?

The Resurrection is the climax of the Incarnation. It confirms the divinity of Christ and all the things which He did and taught. It fulfils all the divine promises made for us. Furthermore, the risen Christ, the conqueror of sin and death, is the principle of our justification and our Resurrection. It procures for us now the grace of filial adoption which is a real share in the life of the only begotten Son. At the end of time he will raise up our bodies.



Jesus' body is no longer there. The tomb is empty.



DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

Compendium to the Catechism: 140 – 147

What does it mean that the Spirit “has spoken through the prophets”?

The term “prophets” means those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak in the name of God. The Spirit brings the prophecies of the Old Testament to their complete fulfilment in Christ whose mystery he reveals in the New Testament.

What did the Holy Spirit accomplish in John the Baptist?

The Spirit filled John the Baptist, who was the last prophet of the Old Testament. Under His inspiration John was sent to “prepare for the Lord a people well disposed” (Luke 1:17). He was to proclaim the coming of Christ, the Son of God, upon whom he saw the Spirit descend and remain, the one who “baptises with the Spirit” (John 1:33).

What is the work of the Spirit in Mary?

The Holy Spirit brought to fulfilment in Mary all the waiting and the preparation of the Old Testament for the coming of Christ. In a singular way he filled her with grace and made her virginity fruitful so that she could give birth to the Son of God made flesh. He made her the Mother of the “whole Christ”, that is, of Jesus the Head and of the Church his body. Mary was present with the twelve on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit inaugurated the “last days” with the manifestation of the Church.

What is the relationship between the Spirit and Christ Jesus in his earthly mission?

Beginning with His Incarnation, the Son of God was consecrated in His humanity as the Messiah by means of the anointing of the Spirit. He revealed the Spirit in His teaching, fulfilled the promises made to the Fathers, and bestowed Him upon the Church at its birth when He breathed on the Apostles after the Resurrection.

What happened at Pentecost?

Fifty days after the Resurrection at Pentecost the glorified Jesus Christ poured out the Spirit in abundance and revealed Him as a divine Person so that the Holy Trinity was fully manifest. The mission of Christ and of the Spirit became the mission of the Church which is sent to proclaim and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity.

“We have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith: we adore the invisible Trinity, who has saved us”

from the Byzantine Liturgy, Troparion of Vespers of Pentecost.

What does the Spirit do in the Church?

The Spirit *builds, animates* and *sanctifies* the Church. As the Spirit of Love, He restores to the baptised the Divine likeness that was lost through sin and causes them to live in Christ the very life of the Holy Trinity. He sends them forth to bear witness to the Truth of Christ and He organises them in their respective functions so that all might bear “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22).

How do Christ and His Spirit act in the hearts of the faithful?

Christ communicates His Spirit and the grace of God through the *sacraments* to all the members of the Church, who thus bear the fruits of the *new life* of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also the Master of *prayer*.

In “I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church” What does the word *Church* mean?

The word *Church* refers to the people whom God calls and gathers together from every part of the earth. They form the assembly of those who through faith and Baptism have become children of God, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit.



Week 15

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 148 – 157

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN AND THE FULFILMENT OF THE CHURCH?

The Church finds her origin and fulfilment in the eternal plan of God. She was prepared for in the Old Covenant with the election of Israel, the sign of the future gathering of all the nations. Founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by His redeeming death and Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. She will be perfected in the glory of Heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth.



WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus Christ among all peoples. The Church constitutes on earth the seed and beginning of this salvific Kingdom.

IN WHAT WAY IS THE CHURCH A MYSTERY?

The Church is a mystery in as much as in her visible reality there is present and active a divine spiritual reality which can only be seen with the eyes of faith.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT THE CHURCH IS THE UNIVERSAL SACRAMENT OF SALVATION?

This means that she is the sign and instrument both of the reconciliation and communion of all of humanity with God and of the unity of the entire human race.

WHY IS THE CHURCH THE 'PEOPLE OF GOD'? AND WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD?

It pleased God to sanctify and save men not in isolation but by making them into one people gathered together by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. One becomes a member of this people through faith in Christ and Baptism. This people has for its origin God the Father; for its head Jesus Christ; for its hallmark the dignity and freedom of the sons of God; for its law the new commandment of love; for its mission to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; and for its destiny the Kingdom of God, already begun on earth.

IN WHAT WAY DOES THE PEOPLE OF GOD SHARE IN THE THREE FUNCTIONS OF CHRIST AS PRIEST, PROPHET, AND KING?

The people of God participate in Christ's priestly office insofar as the baptized are consecrated by the Holy Spirit to offer spiritual sacrifices. They share in Christ's prophetic office when with a supernatural sense of faith they adhere unfailingly to that faith and deepen their understanding and witness to it. The people of God share in his kingly office by means of service, imitating Jesus Christ who as King of the universe made himself the servant of all, especially the poor and the suffering.

IN WHAT WAY IS THE CHURCH THE BODY OF CHRIST?

The risen Christ united His faithful people to Himself in an intimate way by means of the Holy Spirit. In this way, those who believe in Christ, in as much as they are close to Him especially in the Eucharist, are united among themselves in charity. They form one body, the Church, whose unity is experienced in the diversity of its members and its functions.

WHO IS THE HEAD OF THIS BODY?

Christ "is the Head of the body, the Church" (Colossians 1:18). The Church lives from Him, in Him and for Him. Christ and the Church make up the "whole Christ" (Saint Augustine); "Head and members form as it were, one and the same mystical person" (Saint Thomas Aquinas).

WHY IS THE CHURCH CALLED THE "BRIDE OF CHRIST"?

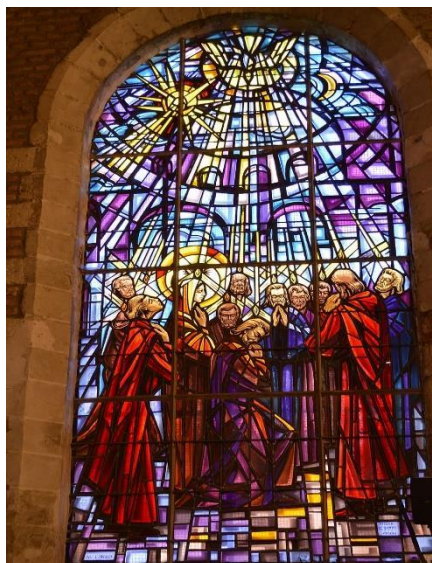
She is called the "Bride of Christ" because the Lord Himself called Himself her "Spouse" (Mark 2:19). The Lord has loved the Church and has joined her to Himself in an everlasting covenant. He has given himself up for her in order to purify her with His blood and "sanctify her" (Eph 5:26), making her the fruitful mother of all the children of God. While the term "body" expresses the unity of the "head" with the members, the term "bride" emphasizes the distinction of the two in their personal relationship.



Week 16

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium to the Catechism: 159- 166.



WHY IS THE CHURCH CALLED THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Because the Holy Spirit resides in the body which is the Church, in her Head and in her members. The Holy Spirit also builds up the Church in love by the Word of God, the sacraments, the virtues and charisms.

WHAT ARE CHARISMS?

Charisms are special gifts of the Holy Spirit which are given to individuals for the good of others, the needs of the world and in particular for the building up of the Church. The discernment of charisms is the responsibility of the Magisterium.

THE CHURCH: ONE HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC

WHY IS THE CHURCH ONE?

The Church is one because she has as her source and exemplar the unity of the Trinity of Persons in one God. As her Founder and Head, Jesus Christ re-established the unity of all people in one body. As her soul, the Holy Spirit unites all the faithful in communion with Christ. The Church has but one faith, one sacramental life, one apostolic succession, one common hope, and one and the same charity.

WHERE DOES THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST SUBSIST?

The one Church of Christ, as a society constituted and organised in the world, subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him. Only through this Church can one obtain the fullness of the means of salvation since the Lord has entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone whose head is Peter (The Pope).

HOW ARE NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS TO BE CONSIDERED?

In the churches and church-like communities which are separated from full communion with the Catholic Church, many elements of sanctification and truth can be found. All of these blessings come from Christ and lead to Catholic unity. Members of these churches and communities are incorporated into Christ by Baptism and so we recognise them as brothers.

HOW DOES ONE COMMIT ONESELF TO WORK FOR THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS?

The desire to restore the unity of all Christians is a gift from Christ and a call of the Spirit. This desire involves the entire Church and it is pursued by conversion of heart, prayer, fraternal knowledge of each other and theological dialogue.

IN WHAT WAY IS THE CHURCH HOLY?

The Church is holy insofar as the Most Holy God is her author. Christ has given himself for her to sanctify her and make her a source of sanctification. The Holy Spirit gives her life with charity. In the Church one finds the fullness of the means of salvation. Holiness is the vocation of each of her members and the purpose of all her activities. The Church counts among her members the Virgin Mary and numerous Saints who are her models and intercessors. The holiness of the Church is the fountain of sanctification for her children who here on earth recognise themselves as sinners ever in need of conversion and purification.

WHY IS THE CHURCH CALLED CATHOLIC?

The Church is catholic, that is universal, insofar as Christ is present in her: “where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch). The Church proclaims the fullness and the totality of the faith: she bears and administers the fullness of the means of salvation; she is sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race.

St Augustine of Hippo said:

“What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the members of Christ, that is the body of Christ, which is the Church.”

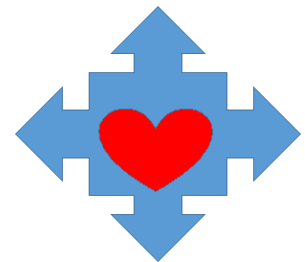
Week 17

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

Compendium to the Catechism: 167 – 176

Is the particular Church catholic?

Every particular Church (that is diocese or eparchy) is catholic. It is formed by a community of Christians who are in communion of faith and of the sacraments both with their bishop, who is ordained in apostolic succession, and with the Church of Rome which “presides in charity” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch).



Who belongs to the Catholic Church?

All human beings in various ways belong to or are ordered to the Catholic unity of the people of God. Fully incorporated into the Catholic Church are those who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, are joined to the Church by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion. The baptised who do not enjoy full Catholic unity are in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.

What is the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Jewish people?

The Catholic Church recognises a particular link with the Jewish people in the fact that God chose them before all others to receive his Word. To the Jewish people belong “the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, and the patriarchs; and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ” (Romans 9:4,5). The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to the Revelation of God in the Old Covenant.

What is the meaning of the affirmation “outside the Church there is no salvation”?

This means that all salvation comes from Christ, the Head, through the Church which is His Body. Hence they cannot be saved who, knowing the Church as founded by Christ and necessary for salvation, would refuse to enter her or remain in her. At the same time, thanks to Christ and to his Church, those who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church but sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, try to do His Will as it is known through the dictates of conscience can attain eternal salvation.

Why must the Church proclaim the Gospel to the whole world?

The Church must do so because Christ has given the command: “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This missionary mandate of the Lord has its origin in the eternal love of God who has sent His Son and the Holy Spirit because “He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

In what sense is the Church missionary?

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continues the mission of Christ Himself in the course of history. Christians must, therefore, proclaim to everyone the Good News borne by Christ; and, following His path, they must be ready for self-sacrifice, even unto martyrdom.

Why is the church apostolic?

The Church is apostolic in her *origin* because she has been built on “the foundation of the Apostles” (Ephesians 2:20). She is apostolic in her *teaching* which is the same as that of the Apostles. She is apostolic by reason of her *structure* insofar as she is taught, sanctified and guided until Christ returns by the Apostles through their successors who are the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter.

In what does the mission of the Apostles consist?

The word “Apostle” means “one who is sent”. Jesus, the One sent by the Father, called to Himself twelve of His disciples and appointed them as His Apostles, making them the chosen witnesses of His Resurrection and the foundation of His Church. He gave them the command to continue His own mission saying, “As the Father has sent me, so I also send you” (John 20:21); and He promised to remain with them until the end of the world.

What is apostolic succession?

Apostolic succession is the transmission by means of the sacrament of Holy Orders of the mission and power of the Apostles to their successors, the bishops. Thanks to this transmission the Church remains in communion of faith and life with her origin, while through the centuries she carries on her apostolate for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.