

CERTIFICATE IN CATECHESIS
COURSE 5

**I BELIEVE IN THE
HOLY SPIRIT
AND THE
HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH
THE BLESSED TRINITY PART 3**



STUDENT TEXTBOOK



The School
of the Faith
CATECHETICAL INSTITUTE

Cover Image: *The Baptism of Jesus* by Daniel Bonnell

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HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Lesson I

TRINITY IN THE CHURCH'S MAGISTERIUM AND THE TRINITARIAN HERESIES

Lesson Plan:

1. Antiquity
2. The Synods of Toledo in Visigothic Spain
3. The Consistory of Reims
4. The Fourth Lateran Council
5. The Council of Lyon
6. The Council of Florence
7. Encyclical Letter *Divinum illud munus*
8. The Trinitarian Heresies
9. Self-Test

Deepen your Faith:

- 1.- Reflect on the Trinity as presented in several conciliar documents.
- 2.- Recognize the main Trinitarian heresies.

Doctrinal Body:

Introduction

In this chapter we present the interventions of the Church's Magisterium concerning the mystery of the Trinity. Although an exhaustive presentation on the topic is not possible here, we offer a catalog of the principal magisterial declarations in chronological order. Our criteria for selecting which documents to present were two: the importance of the document, and a document's innovative content, that is say, the addition of a new element to the comprehension of the dogma.

Understanding heresies helps us also to value the efforts of theological reflection in the service of the Magisterium, leading to an adequate presentation of faith with a precise formulation.

1. Christian Antiquity

a) *Letter to Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria*. This letter, addressed to the Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria, dated between 260 and 268 A.D., has doctrinal value, having

been accepted and cited as an argument of authority by Saint Athanasius in the Council of Nicaea (*De dectretis Nicaenae synodi*, 26). The letter is addressed to the Tritheists and Sybelians and presents for the first time, although just a general overview, the contents of what the doctrine of perichoresis doctrine would be.

"Now assuredly it is just to preach against those who destroy the one power which is the most sacred teaching of the Church of God, dividing and rending it into some three powers and distinct substances and three deities. For I have heard that some who preach and explain the divine word among you are teachers of this belief; yet they, so to speak, are diametrically opposed to the opinion of Sabellius. For the latter blasphemes when he says that the Son Himself is the Father and the reverse: the former indeed in a certain measure proclaim three gods, when they divide the sacred unity into three different substances altogether distinct from one another. For it is necessary that the divine Word be united to the God of all, and that the Holy Spirit abide in God and dwell in Him: and thus the divine Trinity is reduced to and gathered into one, as it were, into a certain head, that is into the almighty God of all. ¹.

The text quoted above clearly condemns Tritheism (three autonomous divinities) and the Sybelianism, which is the rigid monotheism that reduces the Persons to mere appearances. It must be noted that in the condemnation of Tritheism the word *hypostasis* to indicate the Persons, is not accepted, because of the substantial sense, which was attributed by the Tritheists. Further on, this term, will be justly used to name the Persons. The reference to the doctrine of the perichoresis is found in the words that describe how the three are one.

b) *First Council of Nicaea (First Ecumenical Council)*. This Council was called in the 325 A.D. by the Emperor Constantine the Great to establish order in the midst of the controversies in the Church. The Great Council mainly dealt with the condemnation of Arius' heresy. The Council of Nicaea set the bases for the formula of the Trinitarian dogma with the doctrine of consubstantiality (*homoousia*) of the Son. We refer here to the words that figure in the Creed, that we recite to this day.

"We believe in one God the Father almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible. And in our one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, the only begotten, born of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, born, not made, of one substance with the Father (called "*homousion*" in Greek), by whom all things were made, which are in heaven and on earth, who for our salvation came down, and became incarnate and was made man, and suffered, and arose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit. But those who say: "There was [a time] when He was not," and, "Before He was born, He was not," and "Because He was made from non-existing matter, He is either of another substance or essence," and those who call "God the Son of God changeable and

¹ DS 48.

mutable," these the Catholic Church anathematizes.²

The doctrine of Nicaea, against all hopes, did not receive the peaceful reception of all; furthermore, the adhesion to this doctrine of Arius himself and the Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia had a great influence on Constantine, who had no understanding of doctrinal issues, but was looking for the easiest way to restore order.

c) *First Council of Constantinople (Second Ecumenical Council)*. The Emperor Theodosius, in Constantinople, summoned this Council in 381 A.D. This Council has an ecumenical value, because the Pope accepted it and it was received in the Western Church. The essential contribution of this Council was the definitive formulation of the Symbol or Creed, with the development of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which, up to that time, had not yet been defined. The first part of the Creed picks up the formulas of the Council of Nicaea. Of notable influence in the Council of Constantinople were the works and doctrine of the Three Cappadocian Fathers, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, who presided the conciliar assembly for a time. The doctrine of these Fathers was defined as "neo-Nicene", because it distinguished in the Trinity "one substance (*ousía*) and three Persons (*hypostasis*)". This terminology was not yet fully understood, and the rigid Nicaeans (one single substance – *homoousía*) suspected that it was heretical, as if those distinctions were not a stratagem to reintroduce the difference of the substances, given that in Greek there was no clear difference between *ousía* and *hypostasis*, since both could mean "substance". Here is the text of the Creed, according to the Greek translation.

We believe [I believe] in one God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the Father [the only begotten Son of God. And born of the Father] before all ages. [God of God, light of light] true God of true God. Born [Begotten], not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and our salvation [and for our salvation] came down from heaven. And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made human [was made man]. And He was crucified [He was crucified also] for us under Pontius Pilate, [suffered]-and was buried. And on the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures. And] ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, [and I will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall not be an end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, proceeding from the Father, [who proceeds from the Father and the Son, * who] to be adored with the Father and the Son [is adored together with] and to be glorified together with (them) [and is glorified together with], who spoke through the holy Prophets [by the Prophets]. And in one holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We confess [I confess] one baptism for the remission of sins. We expect [And I expect] the resurrection of the dead, and the life of a future age [to come]. Amen.³

Of particular note is the doctrine on the Holy Spirit: He is called Lord, as the Son,

² DS 54 (Version of the Greek Translation).

³ DS 86.

indicating His divinity, and Giver of life, as His prerogative; His procession from the Father would later be completed in the West, with the addition “and of the Son” (*Filioque*), as we shall see further on; the Church, the grace, the economical aspect of sacraments and the definitive fulfillment come from Him.

2. The Synods of Toledo of Visigothic Spain.

The regional Synods that took place in Spain during the Visigothic period offer a Trinitarian doctrine that becomes successively more mature each time, in answer to the heresies that they aim to condemn. The First Synod of Toledo goes back to the year 400 and rejects the Modalism of the Priscillians.

The *Third Synod of Toledo* (589) is of great importance, as it was here that the doctrine of the *Filioque* was formulated in the Creed (DH, 470):

We profess that there is one Father, Who has generated a Son of His own substance, co-equal and co-eternal to Him, although not in the sense that He Himself is the One who is born and the One who has begotten, but in the sense of the person: One is the Father who has engendered, and the Other is the Son Who was engendered, even when both are of one single substance according to their divinity: the Father, from Whom the Son proceeds, comes from no other; the Son, Who has a Father, nevertheless subsists without beginning nor reduction in His divinity, since He is equal and co-eternal to the Father. Likewise, we profess and preach that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son; therefore, in the Trinity, the third Person is the Holy Spirit Who, nevertheless, has, in common with the Father and with the Son, the essence of divinity.

We should note the accent on the unity and the differentiation of the Persons based on their procedence: the Father's Generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son Hence, this differentiation does not establish a diverse level between them (as does Arianism), but reaffirms their equality.

The *Eleventh Synod of Toledo* (DH 525) and the *Sixteenth* (DH 568) deepened even more the affirmation of the parity between the divine Persons in their substantial unity, as seen in the continuous proposal of the doctrine of the *Filioque* in the procession of the Holy Spirit. The change in accent on the differentiation of the divine Persons that took place in the Sixteenth Synod of Toledo is particularly evident, focusing on their “relations”; we are given the definition of relation in the following terms: “‘relation’ is a term used to designate one person in reference to another; indeed, when using ‘Father’, the Person of the Son is also being designated; and when we say ‘Son’, the Father is without any doubt present in Him.”

3. The Consistory of Reims

The Consistory of Reims (1148) is the continuation of the Synod with the same name, personally chaired by Pope Eugene III. The Consistory, which enjoyed the active participation of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, was dedicated to the doctrine of Gilbert of la Porrée, Bishop of Poitiers, called the Porretan. The final document, written and signed by

the Pope, stressed that “no judgment in theology may lead to a division between the nature and the Person, nor can God be called a divine essence solely in the sense of an ablative, but must also include the nominative sense”. These words aim to confirm that God is one and the same essence, and the Persons do not differ in that divine essence, but are all precisely that same unique divine essence. The concept of essence applied to God must be understood in an analogous way regarding the essences of the divine creatures. Simply stated, we must be careful *to* not change the reality of God, no matter how absurd it may seem that He is only One, yet He is three at the same time.

4. The Fourth Council of Lateran

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) involved the refutation of the doctrine of Joachim of Fiore in Trinitarian matter, who tended towards Tritheism. God must not be thought of as a community, but as a unique essence. Tritheism considered this unity to "not be true and proper, but instead was a collectivity based on similarity, in the manner of many men calling themselves a town." (DS 431). "Even though the Father is one, the Son is another and the Holy Spirit is another; they are not another thing, but what the Father is, so absolutely are the Son and the Holy Spirit." (DS 432) There is an analogy in the way we conceive of the unity of the faithful with God and amongst each other, and the unity of God: "the expression '*one unique thing*', regarding the faithful, is used to explain the unity in charity through grace, but concerning the divine Persons, it is used to explain the unity of identity in nature" (DS 432).

5. The Second Council of Lyon

In the *Second Council of Lyon* (1274), the Fourteenth Ecumenical Council, with the presence of Pope Gregory X, and in which many Greek representatives attended and even the Emperor of the East, Michael Palaeologus, the Greek Church's accusations against the Latin Church's thinking that the Holy Spirit proceeds from two different principles, Father and Son, were solemnly rejected. It was solemnly declared that they both constitute one sole principle of Spiration of the Holy Spirit: "In faithful and devout profession we declare that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two beginnings, but from one beginning, not from two breathings but from one breathing. The most holy Roman Church, the mother and teacher of all the faithful, has up to this time professed, preached, and taught this; this she firmly holds, preaches, declares, and teaches; the unchangeable and true opinion of the orthodox Fathers and Doctors, Latin as well as Greek, holds this" (DS 460).

6. The Council of Florence

The *Council of Florence* is considered to be the Seventeenth Ecumenical Council, along with the Councils of Basel and Ferrara, the former being the continuation of the latter two, under the Pontificate of Eugene IV. It began in Basel in 1431, and was first moved to Ferrara, and then to Florence (to avoid plague), where most of the work was accomplished, and finally to Rome, where the work was completed in 1445. It was a truly ecumenical council, with the attendance of many of the representatives of the Eastern

Churches and other rites. Communion between Rome and the Greek and Churches of other diverse rites, such as the Armenian, Coptic, Syriac, Chaldeans and Maronites was proclaimed.

From the point of view of Trinitarian doctrine, the council was important for three reasons:

a) In the Decree *Laetentur caeli* concerning union with the Greeks, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*) was declared once again: "We define that this truth of faith be believed and accepted by all Christians, and that all likewise profess that the Holy Spirit is eternally from the Father and the Son and has His essence and His subsistent being both from the Father and the Son, and proceeds from both eternally as from one principle and one Spiration" (DS 691).

Also, the formula *per filium* was declared equally valid. This term was used by the Greeks to indicate the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit: "We declare that what the holy Doctors and Fathers say, namely, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, tends to this meaning, that by this it is signified that the Son also is the cause, according to the Greeks, and according to the Latins, the principle of the subsistence of the Holy Spirit, as is the Father also" (DS 691).

Along with this declaration, it was specified that the Son has received everything from the Father in His Generation, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him.

Finally, the legitimacy and the reason for adding to the expression *Filioque* into the Symbol by the Latin Church were justified: «the addition of the words *Filioque* (and of the Son) was licitly and reasonably introduced into the Creed, with a view to making the truth clearer and due to the urgent requirements of that moment" (DS 691).

b) The Decree *Cantate Domino* concerning the union with the Copts and Ethiopians, took up a very important expression concerning the definition of the concept of "Person" in the Trinity: "These three Persons are one God, and not three gods, because the three have one substance, one essence, one nature, one divinity, one immensity, one eternity, where no opposition of relationship interferes" (DH 1330). This last phrase specifies that what characterizes the Persons in God is the "relation". The Council was inspired by a text by Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe (*De fide seu de regula fidei ad Petrum* 1, n.4, PL 65,674AB).

c) The third important point of the Trinitarian doctrine is also found the Decree *Cantate Domino*, immediately after the text we just cited, and it is referred to the Doctrine of the Perichoreis, that is expressed clearly, even though its name is not used: « Because of this unity the Father is entire in the Son, entire in the Holy Spirit; the Son is entire in the Father, entire in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is entire in the Father, entire in the Son.» (DH 1331); and regarding the Creation, according to the same doctrine, it is confirmed that: « are not three principles of the creature, but one principle.» (DH 1331).

7. Encyclical Letter *Divinum illud munus*

a) In the Encyclical Letter *Divinum illud munus* (1897), Pope Leo XIII remembers how the Church has always worshipped the Trinity in its unity, and never considered the

divine Persons separately, thus rejecting the proposal to create a feast in honor of the Father. The feasts focusing on Christ refer to the Incarnate Word and His Mission, for example, are not directed to that one Person of the Trinity, "so as to not give occasion for the multiplication of the divine essence by the distinguishing of the Persons" (DH 3325).

b) The Pope later recalls the doctrine of the divine "attributions" (DH 3326): With great property, the Church is accustomed to assigning to the Father the works of power; to the Son, of wisdom; of the Holy Spirit, of love. This is not to say that all the perfections and all the works *ad extra* are not common to the three divine Persons, but "indivisible are the works of the Trinity, as indivisible is their essence" (Saint Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 1, 4,5), because like the Divine Persons, "they are inseparable, they act inseparably" (ibidem); but because of a certain relationship and like affinity that exists in the external acts and the "proper" character of each Person, they are attributed to one of the more than the other, or – like it is said – "they are appropriated".

8. Trinitarian Heresies

8.1. Monarchianism

The main characteristic of this heresy is that they conceive a rigid monotheism, of the Hebrew kind, without admitting to the real existence of the *Persons* in God, reducing, in consequence, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to "divine forces" (this type receives the name of "dynamic monarchianism") or "modes" in which God is presented to the men in history (this type receives the name of "modalist monarchianism"). It is called monarchianism, because it proposes the existence of only one principle and only one government (the Greek term "*monarchia*", is composed of two words: *mone* – alone, and *arché* – beginning).

8.1.1 Dynamic Monarchians

To this type of monarchianism the adjective "dynamic" is added: this sect conceived of only one Person in God, while the Son and the Holy Spirit *divine forces* that come from Him. In Greek "*dynamis*" means force, the origin of this adjective.

a) The Judaizers were a sect against whom Saint Peter, Saint John and their immediate disciples had to intervene. They had consolidated themselves as a sect clearly against Trinitarian dogma by the end of the first century, around a person named Cerinthus and the sect of the Ebionites, "the poor" (*ébion*).

b) Theodotus the Tanner and his followers: justifying himself for having denied the Christian faith during a persecution and having burned incense to the idols, Theodotus affirmed that he had done it, because he was convinced that Jesus was not God, but just a man that had miraculously been born of a Virgin. His miracles were explained thanks to the "powers of God" acting in Him after His baptism in the Jordan, the moment in which He received the infusion of the Holy Spirit, which he considered to be a "divine force".

c) Paul of Samosata and his followers, in Antioch of Syria, around the middle of the third century (260) incurred in a similar heresy. Among the main points of the doctrine were: The Word is not a subsistent Son of God, but an impersonal force of God Himself, that enters into a man. In this way, God adopts a man and He instills this force that receives also the names of “principle” and “force of above”. Jesus is a man that was born of Mary and the Holy Spirit, and is because of this a special man. He is not united consubstantially to the Word, but only possesses the qualities, as a prophet is united to the Word (which is merely a divine force). For this reason, his heretical doctrine received the name of *adoptionism*.

8.1.2 Modalist Monarchians

A second group, connected to the environment of the Greco-Latin culture also defended the unity of uniqueness of God, excluding the subsistent Persons, and proposed one single God that adopts three modes or diverse aspects to present Himself to mankind. For this reason the adjective “*modalist*” was added to characterize this heresy.

a) *Noetus*, with his doctrine of the *Patripassionism*: maintained that a sole God exists, which is the one of always, the Father. Therefore, God, the Father, is the one who suffers and dies on the Cruz, under the appearance of a man. That is the meaning of the name given to his doctrine.

b) *Praxeas* acted in Rome, where he gathered his followers, in the mid second century. The Pope Eleuterus (176-193) condemned him.

c) Sabellius (3rd century), considered God as a "monad" having three modes or masks; in Greek, mask is called “*prósopon*”, a term that in its Latin version would later be used to mean “person”, and to indicate “the Persons” in God. The Priscillians made up a branch of the Sabellians.

8.2. Subordinationism

A second large group of Trinitarian heresies receives the name of subordinationism, and without a doubt is the one which has most affected and persisted in Christianity. It began early in the Fourth Century in the East, in environments where the Greek language and culture flourished. Its doctrine developed and branched out from various points of the Creed, but always remained linked to its founder, Arius. Its influence would be felt up to the Ninth Century, demanding constant and vigilant work of the Church’s Magisterium. The battle against Arianism and its developments would indirectly become the cause of many misunderstandings between the Churches of East and West, from the times of Saint Basil the Great up to the great crisis of the schism of the 11th century (1054).

For the subordinationists, the Word is not only a force – unlike the monarchianists – but is “somebody”, but a “somebody” inferior to God: He is not God. And at the same time, the Holy Spirit is an angelic spirit inferior to God. Subordinationism was originally an attempt to explain Christianity according to the Neoplatonic and Gnostic mentality

which ruled the Greek culture during the fourth century.

a) Arius (from whom the heretical doctrine's name, Arianism, comes), sustained that the divine hypostasis (interpreted as divine substances) are not in God, but that they are created or made outside of God. The Son (Word) is the first creature, the loftiest of all, but is not God. Following the terms of Saint Lucian of Antioch and of Origen, he said that only the Father is the inborn, without beginning, and therefore, only He is God. The Son is generated, and therefore, He derives from the Father and is a creature, because he has a beginning. The order and the origin are seen as if they were differences in nature, and not in the sense of the processions and the divine missions. Thus, the Arians, became to be known as the *Anomoios*, because they say that the Son is "diverse" (in Greek, *anomóios*), from the Father.

b) The Semiarians are the followers of a "diluted" and undercover Arianism which developed during the Council of Nicaea. They were not as rigid as the Christian Anomoios, who sustained the diversity between the Son and the Father; but did also declare that it was excessive to consider the Son as "equal" in the substance (*homoousios*), and that it was preferable to say that He was similar in the substance (*homoioúsios*); this is where they got their name of homoiousians, in opposition to those who faithfully followed the Nicaean Council, called homousians. With this game of words, the confusion amongst the faithful was extended.

c) The *Macedonianism* is a doctrine that was developed after the Council of Nicaea, the Holy Spirit would be of similar nature, but inferior, to God, like an angel, based upon an inadequate interpretation of the text of Heb 1:14. The followers of Macedonius also received the name of *Pneumatomachians*, that is to say, "opponents of the Holy Spirit".

8.3. Tritheism

The third great group of Trinitarian heresies is called Tritheism. It considers three divine distinct entities: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Also, in this case, we have philosophical substantial errors, above all, the "nominalism and historicism", applied to God, without respecting the requirements of the faith.

a) *Marcion*, live around the year 150 in the sub-apostolic age, and he called for a radical rejection of the Hebraism, rejecting all of the Old Testament, and accepting in his "canon" of Holy Scriptures only the writings of the New Testament, and this, only after purifying them by eliminating texts that made references to the Old Testament. This approach led him to also reject monotheism and to propose a Christian-like faith with three gods, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This heretical sect directly opposes the Ebionists, whom we have already seen when we considered the Monarchians.

b) John the Philoponus (+565), commenting on Aristotle, identified *person* with nature (*hypostasis* with *ousía*), and therefore, succumbed to two heresies, monophysism in Christology and Tritheism in conceiving God.

c) Nominalism: does not admit the nature of the divine essence, but only the existent individual in act without nature; Roscellinus of Compiègne (+1120) applied this to the Trinity, stating that there are three individual realities, separated from each other, united only by harmony, will and power, but not by nature; in other terms – according to Roscellinus – they would not exist. In consequence, Trinity appears to be like a collegiality.

d) *Gilbert de la Porrée, bishop of Poitiers*, (called the Porretanus, +1154) postulated a real distinction between the Persons and the divine essence, in this way, he even identified four realities in God, the three Persons, and the divinity that would be non-personal.

e) Joachim of Fiore (+1102) proposes a collegial vision of the three divine Persons: *unitas collectiva et similitudinaria*. They manifest themselves successively throughout history. He considered first a period of the Father that went until the moment of Christ's Incarnation. This was followed by a period of the Son, that stretches through the hierarchical Church until the days of Joachim himself; and, finally a period of the Holy Spirit that appears to mystically arise from Joachim, marked by the appearance of totally spiritual men, fully similar to Christ and docile to the Holy Spirit, without the need of a temporary government.

f) *Anton Günther* (+1863) adopted Hegel's philosophy as it was formulated in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*: God is the absolute process of the mind, made up of three successive moments: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. These three moments of God are recognizable in the three Persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

9. Self-Test

- 1) Which are the principal interventions of the Church's Magisterium in the first four centuries of Christianity concerning the Trinity and what are their contents?
- 2) What are the principal contributions of the Synods of Toledo 3E, 11E and 16E?
- 3) What is the point of the Trinitarian dogma studied in the Consistory of Reims?
- 4) What Ecumenical Council rebutted the doctrines of Joachim of Fiore and what are its contents?
- 5) Explain the doctrine of the First Council of Lyon on the Trinity.
- 6) Explain the doctrine of the Council of Florence on the Trinity.
- 7) What is the encyclical letter in which the proposal of creating a liturgical feast for the person of the Father is rejected, and in which the divine attributions are explained?
- 8) Name the three representatives of dynamic Monarchianism and explain their doctrine.

9) Who are the principle representatives of Tritheism and what are their doctrines?

Lesson II

TRINITARIAN IMAGES

Lesson Plan:

1. The Value of Images in Theology
2. Saint Augustine's Trinitarian Images
3. Saint Thomas Aquinas' Trinitarian Images
4. Richard of Saint Victor's Trinitarian Images
5. Saint Bonaventure's Trinitarian Images
6. Self-Test

Deepen Your Faith:

- 1.- From the point of view of theology, what are Trinitarian images?
- 2.- What have Christian theologians over the ages thought about Trinitarian images?

Magisterium:

Saint Augustine, *De Trinitate*
Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*
Richard of Saint Victor, *De Trinitate*
Saint Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*

Doctrinal Body:

Introduction

All of the theologians and pastors who have thought about the Trinity and expressed their thoughts on God's mystery have used images. Their discourse always hinges around one or various images.

1. The Value of Images in Theology

The Church Fathers, and later on, the Medieval theologians broadly, and with great confidence and freedom of spirit used images to describe the Trinitarian mystery, based on the principle that Creation is God's real participation. Since God is Trinity, the structure of reality must in some way reflect God's way of being. Schmaus expresses the concept in this way: "Since the Trinity is not something that is accessory to God, but is His very being, and given that His *ad extra* activity, although unique, has a certain place according to the order of the divine processions, we must find an imprint of the august

Triad in created things"⁴.

It is in this way that theologians apply the "analogy of faith" in the second sense of this expression (Cf. the three senses discussed in Session 1 of this manual): St. Anselm's development of Saint Augustine's *credo ut intelligam*. This implies comparing elements from Creation in which the *stamp or image of the Trinity* can be glimpsed. This is "analogy of faith" because it is faith which performs this operation, using reason to proceed, with Creation as the starting point for comparison.

In current theology, *metaphors* are preferred over images. Saint Thomas made use of and gave the name of *metaphor* to the use of the images offered by Sacred Scripture.⁵ Using metaphors we can intuitively grasp the sense of divine mystery. Nevertheless, they can help us to grasp *only a part* of the mystery. We cannot understand it all, as is evident, because metaphors can only help to point things out, but they can't explain them.

Images or metaphors are not pagan artifacts, they are "*converts*": faith uses them, transforms them, *converts them*, makes them enter into a horizon of understanding which is the horizon of faith. Faith comes before the images. Faith uses them as instruments obtained from other fields of knowledge in order to express the pre-understood reality. "The ray of divine Revelation is not extinguished by the sensible imagery wherewith it is veiled, as Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. i); and its truth so far remains that it does not allow the minds of those to whom the Revelation has been made, to rest in the metaphors, but raises them to the knowledge of truths; and through those to whom the Revelation has been made others also may receive instruction in these matters."⁶

Therefore, *it is not licit to develop an image using internal logic* as that would be deviating from faith. "Logic" comes to the images from outside: it is the logic of faith, of the mystery known by faith (according to the principle of the "hierarchy of truth"). Images *are always complementary* to the truth known by faith.

Regarding the Trinity, *descriptive images* show some of the aspects, and above all, take pains to offer to the imagination a presentation of the *relationships between the Persons*. They neither aim, nor are able to explain the nature of what they present.

Saint Augustine distinguishes two categories of image: *stamps or traces*⁷ of the Trinity which can be found in non-spiritual creatures and when we analyze the metaphysical structure of the created being in order to discover triadic principles. He uses the term *images* only for those things offered by man as image of the Trinity.

2. Saint Augustine's Trinitarian Images

Saint Augustine offers numerous images. We shall now consider the three main ones: love, lovers, and man's spirit.

2.1 The Image of Love

Saint Augustine has a predilection for this image because he affirms that in all love we already experience God and understand Trinity. Indeed, according to him, there cannot exist any true love without a real reference to God, which means without the participation

⁴ Schmaus, M. (1963). *Teología Dogmática*, I. Madrid:RIALP.

⁵ *STh* I, 1, a.9.

⁶ *STh* Part I, Question 1, Article 9, Reply to Objection 2

⁷ *De Trinitate* 8, 10, 14

of God's loving bond. "But here for a little while let our purpose rest, not that it may think itself to have found already what it seeks; but just as usually the place has first to be found where anything is to be sought, while the thing itself is not yet found, but we have only found already where to look for it"⁸. Where love is involved, we are sure to find a reality in which God is directly implicated, and therefore it is in this place where we can later look for an image of the Trinitarian mystery of God.

True love is God. In effect, either we love out of concupiscence, in which case it cannot be love even when we think it is (concupiscence is egoism and therefore a disorder which hurts the one who loves and the one who is loved), or we love out of true love. True love cannot cease bearing reference to God. Loving that is ordered, pure, and free of egoism is only possible when one first places oneself in the love of God. It is then that we can love others, because then we stand solidly rooted in God's love and we can give and receive love for the sake of God, and not concupiscence. This love is charity and contains three elements: he that loves, that which is loved, and love.⁹ This leads us to understand the Trinity: "Well, but you will say, I see love, and, as far as I am able, I gaze upon it with my mind, and I believe the Scripture, saying, that God is love; and he that dwells in love, dwells in God; but when I see love, I do not see in it the Trinity. *Nay, but you see the Trinity if you see love.*"¹⁰

This first approximation of love as the trace of the Trinity is found in Saint Augustine's works, *De Doctrina Christiana*, and *De Trinitate*, Book VIII. In us there is a *desiderium* which prods us to seek what is good. We only find the true good in love, because love is found in the truth and so there can be no error, concupiscence or egoism. This true good which can be loved *for the sake of justice*, is only God. Love God above all things, and with all your being, the First Commandment says. Concupiscence is disorder, "non-love", hurtfulness for the other, evil, injustice, darkness. Loving that is ordered means loving God first, then our neighbor and then ourselves, and finally other things. God is the final end, supreme love. All love is true if it follows this order, when it has found *the first One*. A second important element is that love for God and love for neighbor and for ourselves is one movement. The reason for this is that we cannot love ourselves and our neighbor in an orderly fashion without first loving God as our reference point. Saint Augustine sees a path. By traveling this path we find the others.

2.2 A Trinitarian Image of Love: he who loves, he who is loved, and love

As mentioned above, Saint Augustine states that in our experience of love, there is a triple reality which gives us a clue to the idea of the Trinitarian God. "Behold, then, there are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love. What, then, is love, except a certain life which couples or seeks to couple together some two things, namely, the one that loves, and that which is loved? And this is so even in outward and carnal loves. But that we may drink in something more pure and clear, let us tread down the flesh and ascend to the mind. What does the mind love in a friend except the mind? There, then, also are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love."¹¹

⁸ Augustine of Hippo, *De Trinitate* 8, 10, 14. Retrieved 9 Nov 2016 from the New Advent website at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/130108.htm>.

⁹ *Ibidem*

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 8,8,12

¹¹ *De Trinitate*, Book VIII, Chapter 10, Paragraph 14.

We understand love in "I who love": in this reality there are three elements - the lover, the loved one and love. They all come down to the same thing in the reality of love. When there is love in me, I love myself as the one who loves, I love what is loved and I love *love* with the *love* that I do the loving with.

The advantages of this image are: the spiritual act of loving is unique, and yet is directed simultaneously to the three elements. If one of the elements disappears, so does love. The image also underlies the bond of love which can represent a person, and by analogy, a divine Person.

The disadvantages of this image are: although the unity in the act of love which simultaneously embraces three related realities is clear, there is, nonetheless a difficult metaphysical jump to its application the divine Persons. Love is an act, but the loved and the loved one are the subjects. The image does not adequately present the identity of the persons with divine essence or nature. Only the third element, love itself, is an adequate comparison. Also, the persons are not perfectly equal.

2.3 The Image of the Spirit Who Knows Itself: Mens, notitia, amor (Mind, Self-Knowledge, and Love)

Saint Augustine was well aware that his image fell short. He made a later attempt to sharpen and perfect the image he had proposed: "And so there is a kind of image of the Trinity in the mind itself, and the knowledge of it, which is its offspring and its word concerning itself, and love as a third, and these three are one, and one substance. Neither is the offspring less, since the mind knows itself according to the measure of its own being; nor is the love less, since it loves itself according to the measure both of its own knowledge and of its own being."¹²

The advantages of this image is that it offers a unity between the subject and simultaneity: from the moment the image exists in the mind, it fulfills the act of self-knowing and self-loving. The concept also offers the idea of the "Generation" of the Word and the "procession" of the Holy Spirit.

There are disadvantages to this image too: although the image makes a better go at manifesting the divine processions, this image still has difficulty in showing the perfect unity between God in His essence and the Persons: God is compared to the spiritual subject; the Persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit are represented through two immanent acts of the mind. However, an act is never the subject itself. Therefore, only the first, the Father is fully identified. The consequence is that the Persons are not being shown at the same logical or metaphysical level: the first, the Father is a subject, while the other two are acts, and thus are shown as unequal.

2.4 The Image of the Faculties of the Mind: Memoria, intelligentia, voluntas (memory, understanding, and will)

In order to solve the problem of the deficiencies of his previous images, Saint Augustine sought a more ideal image to speak of the Holy Trinity, and recurred to that of the mind of a man, with its three faculties: memory, understanding, and will.

¹² *De Trinitate*, Book IX, Chapter 12, Paragraph 18.

Our saintly theologian dedicated the entire tenth chapter of *De Trinitate* to explain this image, and invests a great deal of time in showing how these three faculties characterize man's mind, both in childhood and in adulthood, considering these faculties either as natural, or acquired after a long period of conscious maturation. The strength of the image resides precisely in the "personalistic" consideration, which means, that of a mind which lives and makes itself manifest. St. Augustine shows how the three expressions of the mind are aspects which in their specificity exhaust and cover the whole of the mind of a person, and at the same time are strictly interconnected. I know what I remember, and if I am mindful of the knowledge which characterizes me and which is available to my mind, and in accordance with the maturity of the other two, I can love freely what I remember and know.

With this image Saint Augustine considered that he had found the way to most clearly present the characteristics which are proper to the Trinitarian mystery: the unity, and at the same time, the Trinity of the Persons. Each of these faculties fully expresses man's mind, while each can be identified individually based on its relationship with the other two. They are the mind, and at the same time, each is truly itself. In a way, the relationship amongst the three faculties constructs the way in which the others proceed: intelligence from knowledge, and will from memory and intelligence.

Beyond a doubt, from the dogmatic point of view, this is the best image offered by Saint Augustine, but without ever losing view of the fact that it is only an image, and will never be able to truly present the Trinitarian mystery.

The last two images of Saint Augustine - mind, self-knowledge, love and memory, intelligence-love - have enjoyed great success in later western theological thought.

3. Saint Thomas Aquinas' Trinitarian Images

Saint Thomas Aquinas utilizes a sole image to present the Trinitarian mystery, and its content is original, even when it is a remake of Saint Augustine's image: *mens-notitia-amor*, in accordance with the dogmatic development proper to Saint Thomas.

According to Saint Thomas, our spiritual nature has two operations: knowledge and will. In God too, eminent spiritual nature, there are two operations: knowledge and will. These operations are the foundation of the two processions, that of the Word, in the way of the word in the mind in the act of knowing and that of the Spirit, in the way of how love emanates from the mind.¹³

There is no question that the image offered by Saint Thomas is very limited, and does not pretend to exhaust the various aspects of Trinitarian dogma. It seems, instead, that Saint Thomas intentionally reduced the force of the image to leave less space to the imagination and more attention to the mystery. The image does not offer any characterization of the Persons or their relations, but only their processions, and in relation to these, he does not clarify the origin or the participation of the Persons. In presenting his Trinitarian doctrine, Saint Thomas entrusts all of the aspects to the speculation and argumentation which arise from Scripture and Tradition, but not to the strength of the image.

¹³ St. Thomas' image can be read in *STh* I, 27, a. 1-4, and *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, 11.

4. Richard of Saint Victor's Trinitarian Images

In the history of western theological thought, the highly original and fascinating image of the lovers presented by Richard, a Scottish monk, mystic, and influential theologian, and the most famous of the masters of the French monastery, Saint Victor. Richard too, with his great originality, reworks St. Augustine's image of love according to his own exigency.

Richard, in the third book of his *De Trinitate*, compares God to Supreme or perfect Love, and attempts to bring to light the concept of a supreme love being Trinitarian.

4.1 *The Image of Perfect Love: The Lover, The Condign, and the Condilect*

God being Supreme Goodness, must also be supreme charity because He would be less good if He were not charity. Supreme charity must have a *condign* to love. "A divine Person, therefore, could not show supreme love for a person who does not possess divinity" (III, 2).

From his concept of perfection in charity it is understood that the greatest love is that which desires that the other be loved with the love with which we are loved (beloved in itself = *dilectus*): in other words, that love be shared. There is less love in not wanting another to share in that love, than in wanting his participation in love. Therefore in God, there is a *condilect* (=co-loved), One who is equally worthy as the other two (III, 11). This condilection in the moment in which it is in the Persons, permits the maximum expression and communication of their love and joy. Therefore, condilection is essential to charity itself and intimately characterizes it. Condilection characterizes the apex of love, and constitutes the true originality of Richard's intuition.

Richard's image, then, presents God as Supreme Love, and the Persons of the Trinity as Lover, Condign, and Condilect. He places the accent on the Persons and on love's requirement, inasmuch as it exists in its perfection, to "bring the Persons out". Richard's theology, as we shall see, strongly emphasizes the Persons and the processions, and is a bit weak in representing God's unity. Richard speaks of the Holy Spirit's procession as the One who *proceeds* from two, a statement which has been explicitly rejected by the Magisterium of the Church.

4.2 *Free and Necessary Love*

After the argument concerning God's goodness, Richard moves on to God's happiness (*De Trinitate* III,3). In love we are happy, and this is also true of God to a supreme degree. However, there is no fully happy love if it is not corresponded. Therefore, in God, it cannot be imagined that His love of supreme, freely-given charity not be corresponded by someone else through gratitude. God's supreme happiness requires that in Him there be the presence of free love (that of the Father) and of the love which is due in correspondence (that of the Son). Thus, love that is both free and necessary is communicated to a third Person, who receives both in Himself, as the fullness of joy.

5. Saint Bonaventure's Trinitarian Images

5.1 *The Three Faculties: Memory, Intelligence and Will*¹⁴

From Saint Augustine, through the works of Jean de la Rochelle (*Summa de anima*, c. 33), Saint Bonaventure takes up the image of the Trinity seen in the three spiritual faculties of man: memory, understanding and will. "See then how close the soul is to God and how memory in its operations leads to eternity, intelligence to truth, the power of choice to the highest goodness."¹⁵ In the attributes of eternity, truth and goodness, Saint Bonaventure sees the traits of the divine Persons, and thus the possibility of representing the Blessed Trinity in this image. This image is also useful in portraying divine unity.

"Following the order and origin and comportment of these powers, we are led to the most blessed Trinity itself. From memory arises intelligence as its offspring, for then do we know when a likeness which is in the memory leaps into the eye of the intellect, which is nothing other than a word. From memory and intelligence is breathed forth love, which is the tie between the two. These three—the generating mind, the word, and love—are in the soul as memory, intelligence, and will, which are consubstantial, coequal, and coeval, mutually immanent."¹⁶

5.2 *The Good: love that is voluntary, free, necessary*

Another image used by Saint Bonaventure is that of the Highest Good, which is said to be self-diffusive, and is therefore, the Greatest Love. This image is supported by the self-diffusion of the Good, which in God's case, is the Highest Good, and therefore, the most self-diffusive.¹⁷ The Son and the Spirit are God's necessary diffusion: "The greatest diffusion, however, can exist only if it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and hypostatic, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect. Unless, then, there be eternally in the highest good a production which is actual and consubstantial, and an hypostasis as noble as the producer through Generation and Spiration, so that it would be from the eternal principle eternally co-producing and would be beloved ("dilectus") in itself and co-loved ("condilectus"), generated, and spirated as are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in no way would it be the highest good, for it would not diffuse itself most highly." In divine nature, there is every voluntary, optional, and free diffusivity towards creatures too. Thus the Father and the Son are the background for all gifts given to the creature. God's self-diffusion is, moreover, described as free and necessary: free as the Father's finality, and necessary as the Son's response who has received all from the Father.

5.3 *Christ*¹⁸

Christ is presented by Saint Bonaventure as the most perfect image of the Trinity. The unity of God is understood where the first and the last are united: "In this

¹⁴ *Itinerarium mentis in Deum (Journey of the Mind into God)*, 3,2-5 Retrieved from Crossroads Initiative on 9 Nov, 2016 at <https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/journey-of-the-mind-into-god/>

¹⁵ *Itinerarium*, Chapter III, Paragraph 4.

¹⁶ *Itinerarium*, Chapter III, Paragraph 5.

¹⁷ *Itinerarium*, Chapter 6, paragraph 2

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 6, 4-7.

consideration is the perfection of the mind's illumination, when, as if on the sixth day, it sees man made in the image of God. If then the image is an express likeness when our mind contemplates in Christ the Son of God, Who is the natural image of the invisible God, our humanity now wonderfully exalted, now ineffably united, by seeing at once in one Being the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the circumference and the center, the alpha and the omega, the caused and the cause, the Creator and the creature, the book written within and without, it [the mind] arrives at a perfect being in order that it may arrive with God at the perfection of His illuminations on the sixth level, as if on the sixth day; nor does anything more remain save the day of rest, on which, by the elevation of the mind, its insight rests from all work which He had done.¹⁹

In Christ's humanity we find: "God joined with man formed on the sixth day, the eternal joined with temporal man, born in the fullness of time of a Virgin—the most simple joined with the most composite, the most actual with the most passive and mortal, the most perfect and immense with the little, the most highly unified and all-inclusive with the composite individual distinct from all else." ²⁰ "Contemplating Christ's divinity, we perceive the divine Mission, the sending forth of the Son who is God, Who reveals before us the Blessed Trinity of Persons. We see that in God when you contemplate the properties of the Persons, you will also wonder that communicability exists with individuality, consubstantiality with plurality, configurability with personality, co-equality with order, co-eternity with production, co-intimacy with mission, for the Son was sent by the Father, and the Holy Spirit by both, Who nevertheless is always with Them and never withdraws from Them. Look to the propitiatory and wonder because in Christ is a personal union with a trinity of substances and a duality of natures, an absolute agreement with a plurality of wills, a common speech between God and man with plurality of properties, an equal worship with plurality of ranks, an equal exaltation above all things with plurality of dignities, a condominium with plurality of powers" ²¹

The divine Mission, manifested by Christ, is our starting point and our look-out point. After this "image gallery", let us now turn to the divine Missions so as to be able to develop our Trinitarian theology.

6. Self-Test

- 1) Explain the value of images in reflecting on faith.
- 2) What are the four main images used by Saint Augustine and which is the best? Why?
- 3) Explain the image used by Saint Thomas Aquinas.
- 4) Explain the two images used by Richard of Saint Victor.
- 5) Explain the three main images used by Saint Bonaventure.

¹⁹ *Itinerarium*, Chapter 6, Paragraph 7

²⁰ *Itinerarium*, Chapter 6, Paragraph 5.

²¹ *Itinerarium*, Chapter 6, Paragraph 6.

Lesson III

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lesson Plan:

1. Images From Scripture and Tradition
2. The Holy Spirit and History
3. Self-Test

Deepen Your Faith:

- 1.- What are some of the images used to represent the Holy Spirit?
- 2.- How has the Holy Spirit intervened in the history of mankind?

Doctrinal Body:

Introduction

Now comes the time to discuss the third Person of the Blessed Trinity: the Holy Spirit. We shall begin with a presentation of the imagery found in Scripture and will later reflect on the Holy Spirit's intervention in our history.

1. Images From Scripture and Tradition

Unlike Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is not identified with a clear personal form: for this reason, He does not have a proper name as His name is common to God in His three Persons as His divine essence. When considering God from either aspect - as one Godhead or as Triune, each of the Persons can be referred to as *Spirit*, and can certainly be described as *Holy*. In describing the qualities of the Holy Spirit, the best way is to turn to the images which Scripture has given us:

1.1 *Breath (breeze, wind)*

The Holy Spirit as a breath of air or a breeze is the first image Scripture refers to in using the Hebrew word *ruach*. Genesis 1:1-2 refers to the Holy Spirit by describing God's breath as a mighty wind: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth - and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters -". Although the text does not refer directly to the Holy Spirit, but rather to God in general, there are Biblical scholars who consider this a prefiguration of the Son, Who as Word, is present in Creation. Given the generic character of this expression, we can also glimpse a prefiguration of the Holy Spirit and His role in

Creation.

In the Genesis narrative of man's Creation (Gen 2:7) "the LORD God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and *blew into his nostrils the breath of life*, and the man became a living being." The Hebrew word *ruach* was also used in this passage to refer to the breath of life. Because God blew this breath of life into the man's nostrils, giving the man His gift, the man becomes a living being (*anima*). God's act is one of giving, His breath penetrates the man, God communicates life - which is so characteristic of Him. These traits of God's are proper to the Holy Spirit, and they become clearer and clearer throughout Revelation history.

The prophet Isaiah (11:1-2) also uses the *ruach* expression (translated in the NABRE version of the Bible as spirit) as he predicts that the Spirit of the Lord will descend on the Messiah and give him wisdom and virtue: "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from His roots a bud shall blossom. The *spirit of the LORD* shall rest upon Him: a *spirit* of wisdom and of understanding, a *spirit* of counsel and of strength, a *spirit* of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,

It is the same Spirit which gives life to all: "Send forth your spirit, they are created and You renew the face of the earth" (Ps 104:30). Even the dead come back to life by the effusion of the Spirit: "Then he said to Me: Prophecy to the *breath*, prophesy, son of man! Say to the *breath*: Thus says the Lord GOD: From the four winds come, O *breath*, and *breathe* into these slain that they may come to life." I prophesied as He commanded Me, and the *breath* entered them; they *came to life* and stood on their feet, a vast army" (Ezek 37:9-10).

In Jn 3:5-8, Jesus tells Nicodemus that to be born again from above and to have a new life even when old and close to death, he must be born of water and Spirit. He tells him that "The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

It is the same Spirit who chooses the judges who come to the assistance of the people: "The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel" (Judges 3:10; Cf. also 6:34; 11:29)²², Who selects and transforms King Saul (1 Sam 10:6), gives skill to the artisans (Ex 31:3-5), gives discernment and wisdom to those who govern, and particularly inspires the prophets (Joel 3:1-3).

The Acts of the Apostles (2:2) confirm the validity of this image to refer to the Holy Spirit when describing the wonders at Pentecost: "And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were."

Recalling Gen 2:7, where God breathed on the first man giving him life, Saint John (20:22), too, describes the effusion of the Holy Spirit as a breath: "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit!'"

The Creed gathers these qualities shown in Scripture when using the following expressions: "Lord", "the Giver of Life", "Who spoke by the prophets".

²² Footnote to the NABRE version of the Bible for Judges 6:34 "Clothed with the spirit of the LORD: narratives about the selection of leaders in early Israel typically attribute their prowess to "the spirit of the Lord," not to their own qualities (cf. v. 15). The Lord's spirit "comes upon" them (3:10; 11:29; 13:25) or "rushes upon" them (14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sm 11:6), and they are transformed into effective leaders. Here, Gideon is "clothed" with the Lord's spirit; cf. the clothing or vesture imagery in Is 59:17; 61:10; Ez 16:10-14; Jb 29:14."

1.2 *Water*

This is the Living Water which gives life and blessings to humanity: "I will pour out water upon the thirsty ground, streams upon the dry land; I will pour out My spirit upon your offspring, My blessing upon your descendants. They shall spring forth amid grass like poplars beside flowing waters" (Is 44:3-4). This image appears a number of times in Sacred Scripture, especially in the Psalms and in the books of the prophets. The Letter to the Hebrews (6:4-7) also uses this image as applied to the Holy Spirit granted to the Christians: "For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to bring them to repentance again, since they are recrucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding Him up to contempt. Ground that has absorbed the *rain falling upon it repeatedly* and brings forth crops useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God."

The theme of water also reminds us of the universal flood, whose waters purify and bring in a new age of peace between God and the world (Gen 7:1-9,17); and the waters which flow from the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem and fertilize the entire region (Ezek 47:1-12).

In Saint John's Gospel, the Spirit is presented as united to the sign of water: in Baptism which makes us be born again of water and of the Spirit (Jn 3:5); in Jesus' explicit words as He affirms that He can and wants to give the Spirit of eternal life as a spring of living water which quenches thirst and wells up to eternal life (Jn 4: 10-15), and the rivers of living water which will flow from within whomever believes in Him (Jn 7:37-39).

This element is still a powerful image used for communicating the Holy Spirit in the liturgy and in the sacrament of Baptism and other sacramentals.

1.3 *Fire (tongues of fire)*

The prophet receives God's fire in his mouth to become purified and be able to pronounce His message (Is 6:6): "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it. "See," he said, "now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" Here I am," I said; "send me!""

The fire that burns on the altar of the Lord is the fire which God Himself has lit and which can never go out - that fire which in some way is Himself, and is His Spirit. The Old Testament contains numerous references to fire as a divine presence and the supreme expression of His life - beginning from Moses before the Burning Bush.

This image of the Holy Spirit is fully validated in representing the Holy Spirit in the narrative of the events at Pentecost which appears in the Acts of the Apostles (2:3-4): "Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim." Fire is presented in the form of *tongues*, and it is immediately afterwards that the miracle of speaking in tongues comes about. A

multitude of pilgrims come from many different regions and hear the Apostles speaking as if it were their own language. This wonder is the remedy to the dispersion of the Tower of Babel, where humanity had gathered to proudly show themselves off, and whom God, in consequence, deprived of comprehension, communication, and cohesion when He tells them: "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that no one will understand the speech of another. So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city" (Gen 11:7-8).

Hence, there are two notable aspects related to the image of fire: the *word* which is communication made efficacious with *fire*, and unity. As to communication, it should also be noted that in Is 6:6, fire has to do with the mouth, and the prophet becomes capable of taking and delivering the Lord's message (the Spirit "who spoke by the prophets", as the Creed professes). Amongst natural elements, there is nothing better than the image of fire to express the capacity to totally penetrate all things, spreading to everything, from one thing to another, adapting to each thing. So is the efficacious word of the Spirit, brought by the Spirit, which penetrates all hearts and minds, adapting to each person and invading everything. The Spirit is God's maximum communicability. The fruit of this is the holy unity which exists even in the most diverse forms, since all are animated by the same Spirit. On the contrary, unity cannot reign in that which is not animated by the Spirit, since God has deprived the wicked of unity; they have in them the germ of division, which, sooner or later, will bring them to their ruin.

These two images are taken from nature and evoke the bursting in of a presence, an irresistible expansion, which always acts in the depths.

1.4 *Wisdom*

We have already mentioned, in reference to God's knowledge and the theology of the Word, that the figure of the Son is recognized when the Old Testament presents "the Wisdom of God" which always accompanies God in Creation and in governing Creation. It is along these lines that Saints John and Paul will develop the theology of the Word of God. However, the Wisdom of the Old Testament is a multiform figure, and owing to many of its characteristics, also represents the Holy Spirit. There is a particularly clear allusion to the Holy Spirit in the following passage from Wisdom 7:21-26:

"Whatever is hidden or plain I learned, for Wisdom, the artisan of all, taught me. For in her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, never harmful, loving the good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, kindly, firm, secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, and pervading all spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle. For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity. For she is a breath of the might of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled can enter into her. For she is the reflection of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God, the image of His goodness."

Amongst these twenty-one (7x3) attributes of the spirit in Wisdom, i.e. the Holy Spirit, we find the characteristics to which we have alluded above which qualify the image of fire: penetrating and pervasive, subtle, unhampered or adaptable in its ability to enter

all things, efficacious and agile in communication. It is a positive Spirit which illuminates all things, which favors everything, which leads all things to good, and immediately pours out into the pure spirits. The holy person desires, implores and lets Him or herself be penetrated by this Spirit, as we read a bit further on in the book of Wisdom 9:9-11. "Now with You is Wisdom, Who knows your works and was present when You made the world; Who understands what is pleasing in Your eyes and what is conformable with Your commands". We see in this the reference to the Holy Spirit which was a mighty wind sweeping over the waters. "Send her forth from Your holy heavens and from Your glorious throne dispatch her that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know what is pleasing to You. For She knows and understands all things, and will guide me prudently in my affairs and safeguard me by Her glory".

Hebrews 4:12-13 takes up the meaning of these characteristics and attributes them to the Word of God, trusting in the Holy Spirit and His capacity for intimate communication: "Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from Him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to Whom we must render an account."

Saint Paul expresses the same concepts in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16: "Yet we do speak a wisdom to those who are mature, but not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory[...]this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.[...]And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in spiritual terms. Now the natural person does not accept what pertains to the Spirit of God, for to him it is foolishness, and he cannot understand it, because it is judged spiritually." The Spirit's great communicability, which makes itself intimate and penetrating in such an efficacious manner is His most beautiful and consoling characteristic, because He invades everything and gives it life: He is council and strength for each person. Maybe because of His immense ductility and intimacy, He has no face. It is as if He were a part of us, completely one with us, adapting His countenance to the reality which He is penetrating so as to fill us with His sense of justice and have us bring it to fruition. The Spirit is the most intimate part of ourselves, perhaps even more so than our own spirit is.

Man's pride and egoism can put a break on this communicability of the Spirit. If the Spirit withdraws and stops before a person, his existence will be tremendously lonely and sad.

1.5 *The Dove*

In both the Old Testament and for the rabbis, the dove was *not* a symbol of God's Holy Spirit. The dove often meant God's message directed at the prophets from the image of carrier pigeons. The dove was mainly the symbol of the People of Israel. In Christian tradition, the dove means the Holy Spirit, who first became manifest in the form of a dove when He came down from on high upon Christ in the Baptism of Jesus in Jordan. This is a sign of a miracle. Saint Augustine uses the word "dove" for both the Spirit and the Church.

1.6 Holy Oil (*anointment, chrism*)

The prophet Isaiah (61:1) describes the vocation of prophet: "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me". He goes on to describe the functions to which he has been called. In the New Testament, Saint Luke refers to the scene in the synagogue in Nazareth when Christ, upon starting His mission, publicly reads this same passage and ascribes it to Himself (Lk 4:16-22):

"He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to His custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed Me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, He handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at Him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.""

Anointing with holy oil or chrism means, therefore, the presence of the Spirit with following characteristics: coming, penetration, function, divine force. The oil is the element which is added to the characteristics proper to the Holy Spirit. Since always, oil has been used to invest priests, kings, prophets with their function to exercise their actions in representation of God and with His divine strength.

Even today, the use of this element signifies the coming of the Holy Spirit in the celebration of Christian sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Priestly Ordination, and Anointing of the Sick.

1.7 *The Finger of God*

The symbol of God's hand expresses the power of His Spirit. This image puts into relief the Holy Spirit's operativity - one that is both mysterious and almighty. This image is also suggestive of the sense of touch, and thus the closeness and adaptability of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself calls the Holy Spirit "the Finger of God" (Lk 11:20): "But if it is by the Finger of God that [I] drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you". In the parallel text of Matthew 12:28, Christ explicitly uses the expression: "it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons". With these formulas, Christ alludes to the power, the divine force and omnipotence which is exercised over the Kingdom, and which coincides with the elimination of all negative or contrary influences. Therefore, this image brings a great deal of light to the figure and function of the Holy Spirit.

Already in the Old Testament, God's influential force and omnipotence was indicated with the image of God's Finger. In Exodus (8:14-15) we read: "Though the magicians did the same thing to produce gnats by their magic arts, they could not do so. The gnats were on human being and beast alike, and the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is *the Finger of God.*" Yet Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said". And in Psalm 8:4, the same theme is again taken up: "When I see Your heavens, the *work of Your Fingers*, the moon and stars that You set in place".

The tablets of the covenant were written by God's Finger (Ex 31:18; Deut 9:10): "When the LORD had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the covenant, the stone tablets inscribed by God's own Finger". For Saint Paul, God's New Covenant is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:2-3): "You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all, shown to be a letter of Christ administered by us, written not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are hearts of flesh."

Michaelangelo used the image of God's Finger to represent the Creation of man on the vault of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

1.8 *The Seal of God*

A seal is used to imprint an indelible sign indicating ownership, a condition or a definitive destination. The seal marks the bearer of the definitiveness or irrevocableness: Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who expresses this Himself in John 6:27: "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." The Bearer of this seal is the only One whom we should follow, with no need for us to search for alternatives. This same Messianic meaning is present in the words of Saint Peter (Acts 10:38): "[the news of] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him".

With this same seal, those who have attained the definitive reality - which Christ, the Bearer, has received - are themselves sealed: the very real change in them is indicated through the image of the seal: "But the One who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; He has also put His seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment" (2 Cor 1:21-22). Therefore, this seal is the advance deposit, the first installment of the definitive realization, which is truly here, with the Holy Spirit Who inhabits us. We find this same expression in the Letter to the Ephesians (1:13-14): "In Him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of His glory."

Deriving from this, there are consequences for Christians as to their behavior (Eph 4:30): "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption." The seal indicates, finally, the dimension of redemption - there is no looking back.

This image of the Holy Spirit as seal points to His carrying out a real, fully transformational change in the human being.

1.9 *Gift*

The New Testament (and particularly the Acts of the Apostles) shows how the Holy Spirit is *sent forth* for our *sanctification*. Other verbs with similar meaning are found in Scripture: the Spirit is *given*, *received*, *asked for*, *made to come down*, *poured out*, etc. He is a gift which is poured out onto the Apostles and the pagans (the Samaritans, Cornelius and his family, for example).

Against the pretensions of Simon the Magician, the aspect of God's gift as gratuity is accented: "When Simon saw that the Spirit was conferred by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me this power too, so that anyone upon whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "May your money perish with you, because you thought that you could buy the gift of God with money" (Acts 8:18-20).

To the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:10), Jesus says: "If you knew the Gift of God and Who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water". On five occasions in John chapters 14-16, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit which the Father gives to His disciples. Saint Paul often repeats that the Holy Spirit has been given to us in our hearts.

1.10 *Love*

"God is Love", says Saint John, synthesizing in this way all of the novelty of the Gospel (1 Jn 4:8, 16). From the Holy Spirit's denomination as "gift", we can deduce that the Holy Spirit has a special aptitude for representing God as love because, as Saint Thomas rightly observed, one makes of oneself as a gift when one loves, and therefore the gift shows love, and the first gift is love itself, as we shall see a little bit further on.²³

Saint Paul is quick to understand this special aptitude of the Holy Spirit's in representing divine love: "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). It is a love which establishes a bond of deep and lasting love with God, like that shared by Christ with His Father, as we become "children" and He permits us to call God our Father: "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:14-16). The Spirit inspires and expresses in us an intense, concrete desire for God: "In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the One who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will (Rom 8:26-27). Later on, when Saint Paul speaks to the Corinthians of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the building of the Body of Christ which is the Church, he says that His main and proper gift is love (1 Cor 12:31-13:13). Love is the gift that will never fade: the gifts of tongues, of prophecy and of knowledge may all come to nothing, because one day we will have perfect knowledge, but love - the greatest gift - will endure.

This expression of the Holy Spirit - love - puts us into direct contact with the definitive fulfillment, the final end towards which the Holy Spirit leads us as our guide (Jn 16:13).

1.11 *Peace*

When Jesus Christ pours the Holy Spirit down on the Apostles, He says: "Peace be

²³ Cfr. SCG IV,19; STh I, 37.

with you" (Jn 20:19-22) just as He had promised before His death: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" (Jn 14:27). In Saint Paul's writings (Rm 14:17-19), we also find this expression of fulfillment of peace in the Spirit: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit; whoever serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by others. Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another."

This is a peace which God grants as a gift, and which is the fruit of the fulfillment of God's plan. Saint Augustine notes that peace resides in order, meaning in the perfection of those who have found their place and have obtained the just meaning of their existence, the fulfillment in order and place. These are the ones who are in communion with their final end, which is God.

To obtain a presentation of the mystery of the Person of the Holy Spirit, as well as a description of His marvelous action in the world, it is useful to read and meditate on the liturgical hymns dedicated to Him and which invoke His presence: *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come, Creator Spirit) and especially *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Come, Holy Spirit). These are sung in the sequence before the proclamation of the Gospel in the mass celebrating the feast of Pentecost.

There is also an abundant variety of spiritual images, which are the fruit of the personal experience of many saints, allowing us to delightedly understand several aspects of the relation with the Holy Spirit, such as the images of the *key that opens the door* (Saint Simeon the New Theologian) and Saint Bernard's *kiss which the Father and Son give to each other*: "If, as is properly understood, the Father is He who kisses, the Son He who is kissed, then it cannot be wrong to see in the kiss the Holy Spirit, for he is the imperturbable peace of the Father and the Son, their unshakable bond, their undivided love, their indivisible unity."²⁴ This last concept is taken up again in Session XIV which examines the development of the dogma of perichoresis.

2. The Holy Spirit and History

Above all, we must say that the Holy Spirit bursts into the history of mankind as an envoy, and history becomes sacred history, even "divine history" precisely because of the Holy Spirit's action in history. He penetrates history and leads it to its end, which is communion with God, the *parousia*, directly taking the initiative of leading everything to fulfillment. The *Catechism* (303) says that God "cares for all, from the least things to the great events of the world and its history". He says this about Divine Providence, which with all the more reason can be attributed to the Holy Spirit, as He was personally sent into history. As we have noted on several occasions, God does not suppress human freedom. The Holy Spirit does not try to forcibly persuade us, but rather respects us. His presence facilitates the authentic exercise of this freedom because, thanks to Him, the human mind is illumined, wounded nature is healed, passions grow calm, will is reinforced, and charity is abundantly given. It is then that man is in a condition to be able to really respond and collaborate with his freedom so that his existence reaches fulfillment.

The Holy Spirit sent to humanity becomes personally present in each person -

²⁴ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, in Sermon 8, Sermons on the Song of Songs

visiting, permeating and renewing us - so that we lay down our obstacles. His marvelous ductility, His subtlety and capacity to penetrate is infinite and almighty. This is a good time to recall the images of fire, the communicability of the word, the wisdom, love and gift. All of these present the holy Spirit's ductility. He makes Himself intimate and penetrates the depths of our being because He is extremely subtle and highly adaptable. Perhaps for this reason, as we have said, we do not know His face, and He remains mysterious to us in His personality because of His adaptation to each of us and His becoming all and entering into all, and probably, too by becoming so intimate that He cannot be separated or isolated and placed in front of us, as could be done with an individual face. He remains within us - *with* and *in* us (as Saint Basil says). Therefore, we can say that the Holy Spirit enters *into* history above all because He enters into us and makes history in us.

3. Self-Test

- 1) List the eleven images found in Scripture to speak of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) What images are presented at Pentecost? Explain why.
- 3) Explain the image of the Holy Spirit as "God's Wisdom".

LESSON IV

THE BLESSED TRINITY IN WORSHIP

Lesson Plan:

1. The Blessed Trinity in Sacramental Liturgy
2. The Blessed Trinity and Holy Eucharist
3. Trinitarian Worship in Devotions
4. Liturgy on the Blessed Trinity
5. Self-Test

Deepen Your Faith:

- 1.- What do you understand by the term "epiclesis"²⁵?
- 2.- What are Trinitarian Devotions?

Catechism:

To gain a deeper understanding, consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery; Section One: The Sacramental Economy, 1077 to 1112 and Section Two: The Seven Sacraments of the Church: 1210 to 1419

Doctrinal Body

Introduction

In this chapter we must redirect our attention to the living contact of the Christian with the Triune God. This is worship of the Trinity. When we speak of worship we are referring to the reality which is familiar to us in our relationship with God. The Church's official worship of God reflects what she believes and lives. Christians actively participate in worship, especially through the sacraments, and in this way glorify God and become sanctified. Worship reveals our relationship with the Trinitarian God.

This is not an exhaustive presentation. We shall limit ourselves to the following aspects: the Trinity in sacramental liturgy, and then a focus on the Trinity in the Eucharist, and finally Trinitarian devotions.

1. The Blessed Trinity in Sacramental Liturgy

All seven sacraments have a Trinitarian root, structure and finality. The Trinity is

²⁵ "Epiclesis is the part of the Eucharistic prayer in which the presence of the Holy Spirit is invoked to bless the elements or the communicants." From the Oxford Dictionary online.

their source and their goal²⁶ as the sacraments are salvific actions. These have a Trinitarian structure because they are Christ's actions which the Church carries out "*in persona Christi*", that is, identifying with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit's cooperation, through communion with the Father and in the love of the Father. Therefore, the finality of the sacraments is that man be incorporated into the Trinitarian mystery.

All sacramental action, and more generally speaking, all liturgical action, is in its own way, an *act of Christ* as He is the one who instituted the sacraments of the new law. This implies the presence and intervention of the Holy Spirit. Christ acts through the *Finger of God*²⁷, together with the Holy Spirit who has descended from heaven upon humanity. So it is that all sacramental and liturgical action implies an *epiclesis* (an "*invocation upon*")²⁸, in which the Church begs Him to send the Holy Spirit and pour this Gift into our hearts²⁹ with His presence.

The dialogue between the priest and the people with which all sacramental and liturgical action begins is the greeting "May the Lord be with you", "And with your spirit".³⁰ This has a generic *epicletic* meaning as it is a clear supplication for the divine presence. It is the condition that is required in order to begin and be worthy of carrying out the liturgy.

In fact, for the baptized person, all of the actions of our life are acts of salvation and are clothed in a liturgical and sacramental character, in the broadest sense, for glorifying the Father in Christ and with the strength of the Holy Spirit. This is the motive through which the main actions of the Christian every day of our lives are preceded by - or should be - an *epiclesis*, a supplication asking that God, and particularly the Holy Spirit heed our prayers, and become present, and acting through His outpouring, make the unique mystery present.³¹

The *Catechism* (1108, 1109) describes the communion of the Holy Spirit which every liturgical action brings about:

"In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form His Body. The Holy Spirit is like the sap of the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches. The most intimate cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the Church is achieved in the liturgy. The Spirit who is the Spirit of communion, abides indefectibly in the Church. For this reason the Church is the great sacrament of divine communion which gathers God's scattered children together. Communion with the Holy Trinity and fraternal communion are inseparably the fruit of the Spirit in the liturgy.

"The epiclesis is also a prayer for the full effect of the assembly's communion with the mystery of Christ. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" have to remain with us always and bear fruit beyond the Eucharistic celebration. The Church therefore asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make the lives of the faithful a living sacrifice to God by their spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's

²⁶ Cf. *Catechism*, 1082

²⁷ The Finger of God was discussed in the images of the Holy Spirit in Session XII of this manual. Cf. Lk 11:20; Mt 12:28.

²⁸ *Catechism*, 1105

²⁹ Cf. *Catechism*, 1082, 1083

³⁰ The USCCB has a nice little explanation of this greeting under the Prayer and Worship section of their webpage, entitled "And With Your Spirit" at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/roman-missal/and-with-your-spirit.cfm>

³¹ *Catechism*, 1104

unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity.""

All sacramental and liturgical actions, including prayer follow this pattern:

*a Patre, per Filium, in Spiritu Sancto, ad Patrem*³²;

or

*a Patre, in Filio, cum Spiritu Sancto, ad Patrem*³³

The *Catechism* (1110 to 1112) summarizes this Trinitarian presence in the liturgy of the Church: "In the liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all the blessings of Creation and salvation with which he has blessed us in His Son, in order to give us the Spirit of filial adoption:

"Christ's work in the liturgy is sacramental: because His mystery of salvation is made present there by the power of His Holy Spirit; because His Body, which is the Church, is like a sacrament (sign and instrument) in which the Holy Spirit dispenses the mystery of salvation; and because through her liturgical actions the pilgrim Church already participates, as by a foretaste, in the heavenly liturgy.

"The mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ; to recall and manifest Christ to the faith of the assembly; to make the saving work of Christ present and active by His transforming power; and to make the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church."

2. The Blessed Trinity and Holy Eucharist

To understand the Trinitarian mystery of the Eucharist, it is helpful to recognize a distinction in this sacrament, first explained in Saint Augustine and later in the Scholastics. There are three fundamental aspects: *sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum, res tantum*.

a) *Sacramentum tantum* (only the sacramental sign): this expression refers to the reality which we observe, the sacramental signs, the "species" which are the bread and the wine.

b) *Res et sacramentum* (the reality and the sacramental sign): this expression refers to the mysterious reality which the sacramental signs, the "species" represent. This reality is the very real Body and Blood of Christ, the true presence of Christ.

c) *Res tantum* (only the reality): this expression refers to the mysterious reality present in the sacrament of the Eucharist, but which is not present in the sacramental signs: this reality is the Church united and made holy in love thanks to the communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord. It is the union of the Mystical Body with Christ, the

³² From the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, to the Father

³³ From the Father, in the Son, with the Holy Spirit, to the Father

Head.

"The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates His Church and all her members with His sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to His Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on His Body which is the Church."³⁴

We see, then, that there is a *dual action* in the sacrament of the Eucharist:

a) The "confection" of Christ's Body and Blood, called *transubstantiation*, which expresses God's omnipotence in His creative action and in the action of the hypostatic union as He assumes human nature as the Word of God, as well as in the salvific action of His Body and Blood sacrificed and spilled by Jesus Christ's humanity. In this first *action*, according to Saint Augustine's comments³⁵ as well as those of Saint Thomas, the Holy Spirit is present in the "words" of the consecration, and in the "Body" of the Lord who is present.

b) The sanctification of the Church, communion with Christ, identification with Him: to reuse the same word as above, this is the "confection" of Christ's Mystical Body. The fullness of this action that makes us holy is attained in eating His Body and drinking His Blood (Cf. Jn 6:51 ff.) with the due disposition (1 Cor 11:17-22). Here though, the external expression does not coincide perfectly with the mysterious reality because one can be sanctified by this sacrament even without receiving the Eucharistic "species" by means of a spiritual communion - sanctification and communion with the Mystical Body of Christ. It works the other way around too, one can receive the Eucharistic "species" but not the spiritual fruit of sanctification which springs from this sacrament, if we take communion without being adequately prepared, or if we are unworthy - not in a state of grace, or lacking the charity which the Holy Spirit foment in us. The Catechism (111 to 1134) mentions:

"The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions. The Church celebrates the sacraments as a priestly community structured by the baptismal priesthood and the priesthood of ordained ministers. The Holy Spirit prepares the faithful for the sacraments by the Word of God and the faith which welcomes that word in well-disposed hearts. Thus the sacraments strengthen faith and express it. The fruit of sacramental life is both personal and ecclesial. For every one of the faithful on the one hand, this fruit is life for God in Christ Jesus; for the Church, on the other, it is an increase in charity and in her mission of witness."

In this second *action* of the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit is present in Christ, who joins

³⁴ Catechism, 1407

³⁵ Cfr. S. AGUSTÍN, *Comentario al Evangelio de san Juan*, 6,51 y siguientes.

the Church to Him in order to make her holy, and He is present in the Church, which is sanctified becomes identified with Christ.

In the Eucharist, this the *dual divine action* means also a dual *epiclesis*, one supplication for each action: one for the consecration of the "species", or *transubstantiation*, and another for the sanctification of the Church. Indeed, in the Eucharistic Prayer, the Holy Spirit is first invoked so that He accompany the consecration³⁶. The second time, the Holy Spirit is invoked asking Him to sanctify all of those who have partaken of Christ's Body and Blood - both sacramentally and spiritually - and make them full participants of the fruits of communion, so that Christ's redemptive action reaches its full effect in the faithful.³⁷

As to the *epiclesis* during consecration, in the Eastern Church, Greek Orthodox and Catholic, as well as the Syrian Church, there is a greater emphasis on the consecratory *epiclesis* requesting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the transubstantiation of the bread and wine. Some celebrants insist that Christ's words, which are said during the *anamnesis*³⁸(or memorial)³⁹ do not bring about the consecration, and that transubstantiation only comes about with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, some Eastern Eucharistic Prayers, the invocation of the Holy Spirit over the offerings comes *after* the *anamnesis*.

The Western Church of Latin rite has always insisted on the consecratory virtue of Christ's words during the *anamnesis*.⁴⁰ So as to not reduce the importance of the consecratory words in the Eucharistic Prayers of Latin rite, even those which are derived from the Eastern tradition, the *epiclesis* for consecration was placed *before* the *anamnesis*. This ensures the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the action which is undertaken "*in persona Christi*", in the Person of Christ, the Redeemer.

What it boils down to, then, is that the difference between the Eastern and Western churches, is mainly a question of emphasis, and currently both Churches are growing closer even on this point. If the sacraments are indeed efficacious actions of Christ's, we know that He carries out the Father's will with "the Finger of God", with the Holy Spirit who is in Him. In current liturgy, even in the West, the *epiclesis* invoking the Holy Spirit for consecration and to come to the faithful is clearer than ever.

To keep the entire Trinitarian dimension in mind during the Eucharist and other sacraments and liturgical acts, remember that these, as Christ's actions, reflect and carry out the Father's action - the Son is always united with the Father. The same applies to the Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic Prayer makes this aspect clear by consciously addressing the Father, in union with Christ and with the Holy Spirit.

³⁶ In Eucharistic Prayers II-III-IV, this is very clear: "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and + Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." In Eucharistic Prayer I, this first *epiclesis* is present and addressed to the Father; the petition for the Spirit is implicit.

³⁷ For this second *epiclesis*, there is also an explicit formula addressed to the Father asking that He send the Holy Spirit upon the Church, in Eucharistic Prayers II, III and IV. In Eucharistic Prayer I, this prayer is expressed explicitly, although the mention of the Holy Spirit is implicit.

³⁸ Catechism, 1103: "*Anamnesis*. The liturgical celebration always refers to God's saving interventions in history. "The economy of Revelation is realized by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other. . . . [T]he words for their part proclaim the works and bring to light the mystery they contain." In the Liturgy of the Word the Holy Spirit "recalls" to the assembly all that Christ has done for us. In keeping with the nature of liturgical actions and the ritual traditions of the churches, the celebration "makes a remembrance" of the marvelous works of God in an *anamnesis* which may be more or less developed. The Holy Spirit who thus awakens the memory of the Church then inspires thanksgiving and praise (*doxology*)."

³⁹ Cf. Compendium, 280: "The Eucharist is a *memorial* in the sense that it makes present and actual the sacrifice which Christ offered to the Father on the cross, once and for all on behalf of mankind. The sacrificial character of the Holy Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution, "This is My Body which is given for you" and "This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood that will be shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20). The sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one and the same sacrifice*. The priest and the victim are the same; only the manner of offering is different: in a bloody manner on the cross, in an unbloody manner in the Eucharist."

⁴⁰ The question was studied and debated in depth due to the crisis which arose from the 11 th century controversy over the Eucharistic heresy of Berengar of Tours during the pontificate of Gregory VII. The solution was given in 1079 with these expressions (DS 355): "the bread and wine which are placed on the altar, through the mystery of holy prayer and the words of our Redeemer, become transformed in their substance into the true, proper and life-giving Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, and after the consecration are the true Body of Christ Who was born of the Virgin and Who, offered for the world's salvation, was hung on the Cross and is seated at the right-hand-side of the Father; and the true Blood of Christ, which poured out from His side, not only as the sign and virtue of the sacrament, but as the property of the nature and truth of the substance." These formulas touch upon various aspects of the Eucharistic mystery which required an explanation that we cannot go into here. But, as to the point which interests us, both the invocation ("holy prayer") and the "consecratory words" should be noted. Both aspects receive the name of "mystery".

3. Trinitarian Worship in Devotions

Trinitarian devotions are widely popular amongst the Christian faithful. here is a list of some of these:

- the sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"
- blessings: "I bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"
- the doxology: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit"
- reciting the Creed⁴¹
- the litanies of the Virgin, the saints, and others all begin with an invocation of the
- three Persons of the Blessed Trinity
- liturgical hymns dedicated to the Holy Trinity
- prayers addressed to the Holy Trinity

Icons of the Blessed Trinity are venerated in churches all over the world, and are even found in great museums which collect the fine art of painters over the centuries. The cover to this manual features a reproduction of a painting depicting the Baptism of Jesus by the American painter Daniel Bonnell.

4. Liturgy on the Blessed Trinity

As mentioned earlier, all of the Church's liturgy is Trinitarian. There is also a special solemnity dedicated to the Trinity, which in the Western Christian liturgical calendar falls on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

The Solemnity of Trinity Sunday expresses thanks for the Lord's mercy which saves us, and who personally intervenes in salvation so that we can find Him. It is significant that trinity Sunday falls at the close of the Lenten and Easter seasons during which the Church celebrates in a particular manner, God's work of salvation.

There are no feasts for the Father or other Persons of the Trinity considered on their own. There are feasts and celebrations which focus to a greater extent on the Son or on the Holy Spirit in relation to certain salvific events (for example, Christmas or Pentecost), but the work of the entire Trinity is always emphasized. Catholic liturgy always avoids any sort of allusion to a tritheism, referring to the mystery of the one infinitely transcendent God who creates and redeems us out of love.

5. Self-Check

- 1) What is the pattern in all sacramental action?
- 2) Explain the *epiclesis* in the Eucharistic celebration.

⁴¹ St. Augustine recommended that catechumens, the day before their Baptism, recite the Creed (Cf. *Sermones*, 58,12, in *Obras completas*, X, *Sermones* [2] 51-116, B.A.C., Madrid 1983).

3) List some of the Trinitarian devotion.

4) Are there specific liturgical celebrations for each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity?
Explain.