

Living The Mystery of Communion of the Trinity in The Community


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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive overview of the mystery of Trinitarian communion before highlighting its applications in the life of the religious community or in the lives of Christians, depending on the condition of life of the reader.

Keywords: Trinity, mystery, communion, consecrated love

Introduction

One day, Saint Augustine was walking on the beach. He saw a child using a seashell to scoop up seawater and pour it into a hole. He asked the child: "What are you doing"? The child replied that he wanted to scoop up all the seawater to pour into this hole. He told him, "You will never finish this project because it is too difficult". The child replied that it was easier for him to do this compared to what the Saint himself was doing: thinking about the Trinity. Indeed, the Mystery of the Trinity is a central mystery of the Catholic faith. This mystery is extremely sublime and incomprehensible to the human mind. Saint Augustine is a doctor of Theology, but he also feels difficult to meditate on this mystery. However, fortunately, Jesus revealed to us that the mystery of the Trinity is a mystery of love. This love has two characteristics.

1. The mystery of the Trinity is a mystery of communion

The Trinity is in full communion with one another. The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Father, and this outpouring of love combined with the love of the Holy Spirit makes love perfect. Jesus said these things many times in the New Testament: "My Father and I were one" (Jn 10, 30). When He prayed for the Apostles, he also said, "May they be one as Father in you and I in you" (Jn 17, 21). The Trinity is in full communion with each other in thought, word, and deed. In a special way, this love is fully realized in God's love of man and in God's salvation of man. Each Person does a different task: The Father is the creator; The Son is the redeemer; The Holy Spirit is the one who sanctifies. Although the Holy Trinity performs three different tasks, they are linked together in a wonderful and holy love.

Furthermore, Saint Athanasius uses a different scheme to describe this communion: “*The Father is light, the Son is light, the Holy Spirit is through whom we are illuminated*”; because “*the Father is the fountain and the Son is called the river, and we drink the Spirit.*”¹ Thus, *each Person not only loves the other but also works for the happiness of the other Persons in an effective way in all activities of each Person. Other Persons participate. The three were never separated.*² We can use a real picture to illustrate this mystery. It's a candle. We see the candle. We see the fire, and we also feel the heat from the flame. The three are separate, but they exist in a single one. Three is one, and one is three. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are bound together. Three persons but one God.

2. The mystery of the Trinity is a mystery of consecrated love

Love has a wonderful feature. That is, the more we love each other, the more we make sacrifices for each other and forgive each other, and the more love grows: instead of wearing out, it will increase day by day, and each day this love will be more intimate. This is very different from the things that we use in life. For example, if we buy a television, a refrigerator, or a car, it will wear out or be damaged after a period of use. Also, health, money, and time also degrade with the years we live. Love is different from that. Love will become richer the more we love each other. Happiness will increase if we know how to forgive and sacrifice for each other more.

Trinitarian love is a love that is completely self-giving. The love of the Trinity for each other has never changed, and this love is getting stronger and more passionate. It never fades, and external factors change it. Jesus said to His disciples, “*If anyone loves me, they will obey me. Then my Father will love them, and we will come to them and live them*” (Jn 14, 23). “*The Father and I are one*” (Jn 10:30); “*Let all be one, as Father: You are in the Son and the Son in you. That they may also be in us*” (Jn 17:21). “*All that the Father has is mine.*” The Father gave the Son himself so that the Son is the perfect image of the Father because Jesus said: “*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*”. (Jn 14:9). The Triune God is linked together in a love that generates more and more fullness. If we give anyone our love, we will receive love from others. When we give our love, we will feel happy because God also gives his love to us generously. The love in the Trinity overflows and overflows to all beings, makes all living things, and participates in the boundless source of love for eternal happiness. This is the hope of Christian communion, which has its divine source in the Trinitarian communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.³

3. Living the mystery of Trinitarian communion in community life

The mystery of the communion of the Trinity is a mystery of communion in its entirety. Can we fully live the mystery of Trinitarian communion in our community? Father Dan

¹ Jos Dong Dang lived in communion according to the example of the Trinity, (<http://www.Catholicvietnam.net/index>, accessed June 12, 2022)

² *The Cambridge Companion to The Trinity*, Edited by Peter C. Phan (Cambridge University Press, 2004), page. 402.

³ Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical letter Ut Unum Sint (That all may be one)*: On Commitment to Ecumenism, 8. Joseph Ratzinger, *Christian Faith, yesterday and today*, p. 248.

Minh has the answer: *“The life of the Trinity is the model for all human organizations. Be united in the essentials, but willingly accept the rich diversity in the secondary.”* The Second Vatican Council wrote: *“The universal Church emerges as a united people springing from the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”*.⁴ Besides, Saint John Paul II wrote in *UT UNUM SINT (That All May Be One)*: *“The faithful are one because, in the Spirit, they are in communion with the Son and, in him, share in his communion with the Father: “Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1Jn 1:3).*⁵

To live the mystery of Trinitarian communion in our community, first of all, we must love one another. When we love one another, we will become disciples of Jesus, as he said: *“If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples”* (Jn 13, 35). Becoming disciples of Jesus is also trying to imitate the Trinitarian example of living in communion with each other. Moreover, the more we give love to others, the more our faith increases. As one author wrote: *“the closer one is to another, the closer one is to oneself. Only when we come out of ourselves can we find ourselves again. It is only through the other, through the presence of the other, that man finds himself again.”*⁶ The Second Vatican Council also affirmed: *“The more people are united with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the easier it is for them to strengthen their brotherhood”*.⁷

Second, to live the Trinitarian communion in the community, we must know how to forgive each other. Every human being has flaws and mistakes towards God, himself, and others. That weakness is the human condition after Adam and Eve sinned. If we love them, we must also forgive them. When we forgive them, God will also forgive us. In the Lord's Prayer, we read: *“Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us”* (Mt 6, 12). God always forgives our sins, no matter how serious they are. And God also desires that we have a kind heart like Him to forgive the mistakes of our brothers and sisters. To forgive an injustice is to elevate oneself to the pinnacle of virtue, rise above nature, and imitate God.⁸ Forgiveness is one of the best gifts you can give yourself. – Katrina Maye. Besides, The Second Vatican Council said that *“God alone is the judge and knows all hearts: he, therefore, forbids us from judging anyone's secret sins.”*⁹

Finally, every Christian is called to be a witness of the Trinity and of communion for the people of this day and age. Bishop Nguyen Van Vien wrote in his book: *“The Church family values both personal relationships and community relationships. On a personal level, the faithful are called to enter into intimate communion with God. Their relationship with God is interpersonal. On the community level, the family Jesus established requires everyone to join hands to build community life.”*¹⁰. Pope Paul VI

⁴ The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, m.4

⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical letter Ut Unum Sint (That all may be one)*: On Commitment to Ecumennis, 9.

⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *Christian Faith, yesterday and today*, p. 248.

⁷ The Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 7.

⁸ Saint. Gregoire De Nysse. <https://ductinjesus.com>, accessed June 12, 2022

⁹ The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, m.8.

¹⁰ Jos Dong Dang, *lived in communion according to the example of the Trinity* (<http://www.conggiaovietnam.net/index>, accessed June 12, 2022

wrote: "*People today prefer witnesses to teachers*". Therefore, what we say with our lips is not as valuable as the work we do. We have an example of mother Terese: she is a small person, but her heart for the poor is huge. Her act of cuddling and caring for orphaned children and homeless people is much larger than the teachings of the scholars.

We become heroes when we humble ourselves to lift up the weak. This action will make people realize the Trinitarian communion more than theoretical words. Furthermore, when we have a love of the Trinity present in our lives, we will courageously preach the Word of God to everyone around us. The Holy Spirit will consecrate us, making us wise and resilient in the face of life's difficulties. Living the mystery of communion also means becoming the most genuine image of the Trinity.

Conclusion

The 16th Universal Synod of Bishops in 2023 starts at the diocesan phase with the theme: "*Towards a cooperative Church: communion - participation - mission*". The Church wants to speak out about the role of communion so that the image of the Trinity becomes closer to everyone. Saint Paul speaks of this role in a passage describing the function of each member of the body: "*If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it does not, for this reason, belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not, for this reason, belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? Where would the sense of smell be if the whole body were hearing? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you."*" (1 Corinthians 12:15-21). We need each other in our lives, and we also help each other to get better every day. If we want to be like this, we must follow the advice of St. Paul: "*Living in truth and in charity, we will grow up.*" (Ep 4, 15-16).

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Biodata

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