

TRINITY SUNDAY

THE EIGHTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

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- Sun. **The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity**
May 27 **IN GOD IS EVERY KIND OF LOVE**
From Revelations of Divine Love by St. Julian of Norwich
- Mon. **A Day for Remembering our Dead**
28 **CONFRONTING THE MYSTERY OF DEATH**
From Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini
- Tues. **Tuesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**
29 **LIVING GOD’S LOVES**
A reflection developed from The Life of Christ
by Nicholas Cabasilas
- Wed. **Wednesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**
30 **THE DIVINE TRINITY & THE HUMAN TRINITIES**
A reflection developed from a sermon of St. Bernard
- Thurs. **The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
31 **AT THE CENTER OF GOD’S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION**
Reflections developed from texts of Carlo Cardinal Martini
- Fri. **MONASTIC DESERT DAY**
June 1 **The Memorial of St. Justin the Martyr**
 CLINGING TO CHRIST BY FAITH
A reflection developed from ancient texts by Justin and others
- Sat. **Saturday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time**
2 **HOLY WISDOM IN REGARD TO GOD’S GIFTS**
A reflection taken from a sermon by St. Bernard

IN GOD IS EVERY KIND OF LOVE

A reflection from Revelations of Divine Love by St. Julian of Norwich

“The eleven disciples made their way to Galilee, to the mountain to which he had summoned them. At the sight of him, those who had entertained doubts feel down in homage” (Mt. 28: 16-20). I saw the blessed Trinity working. I saw that there were three attributes: fatherhood, motherhood and Lordship—all in one God.

In the almighty Father we have been sustained and blessed with regard to our created, natural being from before all time. By the skill and wisdom of the Second Person we are sustained, restored, and saved with regard to our sensual nature, for he is our Mother, brother and Savior. In our good Lord, the Holy Spirit, we have, after our life and hardship is over, that reward and rest which surpasses forever any and every thing we can possibly desire, such is the Spirit’s abounding grace and magnificent courtesy.

Our life too is threefold. In the first stage we have our being, in the second our growth, and in the third our perfection. The first is nature, the second mercy and the third grace. For the first I realized that the great power of the Trinity is our Father, the deep wisdom our Mother, and the great love our Lord. All this we have by nature and in our created and essential being. Moreover, I saw that the Second Person who is our Mother with regard to our essential nature, that same dear Person has become our Mother in the matter of our sensual nature. We are God’s creation twice: essential being and sensual nature. Our being is that higher part which we have in our Father, God Almighty, and the Second Person of the Trinity is Mother of this basic nature, providing the substance in which we are rooted and grounded. But he is our Mother also in mercy, since he has taken our sensual nature upon himself.

Thus, the phrase “Our Mother” describes the different ways in which he works, ways which are separate to us but held together in him. In our Mother, Christ, we grown and develop; in his mercy he reforms and restores us; through the passion, death and resurrection he has united us to our being. So does our Mother work in mercy for all the children who respond to him and obey him.

Grace works with mercy too, and especially in two ways. The work is that of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit, who works by rewarding and giving. Rewarding is the generous gift of truth that the Lord makes to the one who has suffered. Giving is a magnanimous gesture which he makes freely by his grace: perfect, and far beyond the deserts of any creature. Let us rest in all God’s loves.

CONFRONTING THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

A reflection from Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini

It is in regard to death that the human condition is most shrouded in doubt. Thus said the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution “Joy and Hope”. It was describing the anxiety and poverty of humanity as it faces the mystery of death. But we are not called to approach this mystery as an abstraction but as the cause of painful breaks in our human relationships and in each person’s life. How do you remember the dear ones who have entered into eternal life?

Names, persons, faces and kind words are the sort of things that come to mind. They fill us with the memory of days past in the company of those who are now gone. We recall places animated by their wonderful and loving presence. This is something that great saints too lived with due to the agony of such separations. Recall how St. Augustine describes what he endured in the death of his mother. “As I closed her eyes and immense sadness pressed heavily upon my heart and became a flood of tears. But what was it that hurt me so terribly within—it was the raw wound caused by sudden end of our sweet and dear life together. We had grown so accustomed to it.”

If even saints can feel such separations so deeply that their hearts break can things be any different for us? How can we fail to feel pain as we relive moments of sorrow and separation? Yet, the saints also show us the way which is opened before us when we confront the mystery of death. It is the way of Christ’s own Passover. Christ, who by his death has destroyed our death, and by his resurrection given us the gift of life everlasting, shows us that death is more than sadness and separation. It should also be a door into gladness, that of resurrection. In him our dead live, and will live forever. They are with us even now and they live in our presence. We sense they are united with us because of our prayer and faith. They speak to us in Jesus’ words and they want to share with us the consolation the Lord offers.

What we, and all the world, most need is what may be called a “culture of holiness”. When the Second Vatican Council emphasized the universality of the call to holiness it said something new. We are called to the kind of holiness that can be found in the streets, so to speak. It is a quiet and unacclaimed holiness but a luminous one for all that. It radiates in a quiet fashion the Spirit of life and of hope. It is filled with the faith that this life lasts always and is always active sharing life with others. That is what those we remember with love teach us. Love brings life and holiness of life shows us what life can mean—both in times of sorrow and of joy. Our memories of our beloved dead renew the sweetness of this kind of quite and steady sharing within us. They are, then, still doing for us what they did when we lived together. Sharing it opens us more and more to the life God calls us to in the Heavenly Kingdom. That is what this day of remembrance works within us, by the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit.

LIVING GOD'S LOVES

A reflection developed from The Life of Christ by Nicholas Cabasilas

“Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28). Although all the persons of the Trinity have a shared love for us and together save our race, each one of the blessed Persons plays its own part. The Father is reconciled, the Son reconciles, and the Holy Spirit is the gift bestowed upon those who are made God’s friends and children. The Father sets us free, the Son is our ransom, and the Spirit is our liberty.

This last reflects what St. Paul says, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”.

It is a liberty that comes through faith and trust in God. It is a door to a relationship of love toward all and toward each of the three Blessed Persons. Notice that even in the first creation there was a shadowy indication of this Trinity of loves. The Father creates, the Son is the Creator’s hand, and the Paraclete is the Life-giver’s breath.

But why am I saying this? Because in spite of the truth that the distinctions within the Godhead are revealed to us only in the new and second creation, the special love that is proper to each Person is hinted at from the beginning.

God has bestowed many blessings on his creation in every age. But you don’t find that any of them are ascribed to the Heavenly Father alone, or to the Son alone, or to the Spirit. All have their source in the undivided Trinity. The Trinity does every act by a single power and providence and creativity. But in the dispensation by which the Trinity restored our race, something new happened. It is always the undivided Trinity that jointly wills my salvation, and providentially arranges the means to accomplish it, but the active role now belongs to the Word alone because He alone becomes flesh and blood, was scourged, suffered and died and rose again.

Through these acts our nature and each of us received new life. Though these acts baptism was instituted—a new birth and a new creation. Only in this new creation are the distinctions within the Godhead revealed. So those who have accepted the gift of this new and holy re-creation call on each of the Person individually as they come from the sacred bath. They recognize the special love appropriate to each Person and its role in saving and recreating us and lifting us up into everlasting life with their holy community. Our love is for this Trinity but within it we have a special love for the Father, and for the Son and for the Holy Spirit. Embodying these loves in our one life of love for our God brings us to holiness. It brings us assurance that Divine and Saving Love is always with and within us as we love one another in the way Christ calls us to love.

THE DIVINE TRINITY AND THE HUMAN TRINITIES

A reflection developed from a sermon by St. Bernard

The blessed and eternal Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the highest power, the highest wisdom and the highest loving good will. In creating us it created a vestige of its own Trinitarian character that consists of memory, reason and will. God thus created us so that if we remained firm in remembering our God, in contemplating the Divine Wisdom and by living in love we should participate in the very divine life. But since we turned away from God everywhere human kind is wretched.

The created trinity that we are chose to fall by a movement of self-will instead of standing firm in a free choice of God and God's gifts to us. But if I summarize all that follows from our creation and fall and salvation it will be easier for you to remember.

There is the creating Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, from which has come to us a created trinity, memory, reason and will. And this created trinity has fallen. This fall took place through suggestion, pleasure and consent, as we seen in the story of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall. It fell into a kind of anti-trinity: impotence, blindness and dirtiness. Memory, reason and will each have a kind of threefold fall.

Memory falls into thoughts that are affection-driven, laborious, and idle. Reason falls into a triple ignorance: Ignorance of what is good and evil, of what is true and false and of what is beneficial and harmful. Will falls into concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and worldly ambition.

When God's Son came and was made human he showed us, like a good physician, who to recover health. He showed us the triple gift of faith, hope and love. By this trinity he leads us back from the mud hole into which we had fallen. The certainty of faith renews reason, hope renews memory and love cleanses the will. Jesus gave us these teachings in order to restore us to our lost health. To help us believe that this is possible he showed us signs of power and healing. To persuade us that his teachings are indeed useful and healing he promised us blessedness and then showed it to us in his resurrection.

We are given a faith by which we direct our belief to God and that is hope. There is a faith by which we believe God's teachings given us in Christ and by signs God shows us that they can lead us to health. And there is the love that leads us to believe "in" God, in living as humans the life that is revealed to us in Christ. Through this faith we believe that God will fulfill every promise given us. From the first faith comes the hope of pardon, and through the second hope for grace, and from the third the hope of glory.

Through this triune reality of faith, and hope and love, each with three effects, you are restored. Over and guiding and governing them all is that love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. What is our task? It is to begin anew each day to love with this love and so observe watch the transformation of our memories, our reasonings and our choosings. Accept this gift from our living and loving Lord Jesus Christ.

AT THE CENTER OF GOD'S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION

Reflections developed from texts in Journeying with the Lord by Carlo Cardinal Martini

At the center of God's redemptive plan we find a woman, Mary. She is the first in the human chain of believers from which the Church is born. As Mother of the Church she is our mother and a model for all believers. We see what this means in the stories of the Annunciation and of her Visitation to Elizabeth. We repeat her "Fiat" and her Magnificat and so we see our call in hers.

When Adam and Eve fell their first reaction was fear. But St. Paul tells us that we are now free from fear: "Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless and to live through love in his presence" (Eph. 1:4). We see this choice in Mary who hoped in God in a way that cast out all fear. We are predestined as was Mary and so we can be freed from fear by believing as she did. She makes us proud to be a human person! She shows us our life and mission as they are in faith. We have only to imitate her in saying "I am the servant of the Lord". As a servant she goes to Elizabeth in love.

The Magnificat is the joyous hymn Mary proclaims at her encounter with Elizabeth. Feeling herself welcomed by her kinswoman, and welcomed in faith, she feels herself understood in the secret of her maternity through the Holy Spirit and so she breaks into a song of joy, exulting in God's saving works through human history. It is now being accomplished through her and she invites us to allow that to happen through us—through our actions mirroring her coming to Elizabeth in loving help.

In the canticle we see that the joy in Mary's heart begins with the achievement of the plan of salvation that is the coming of God in human form. "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior". She speaks as an individual person immersed in God's creation of saving history and shows us her own and our destiny in and through that history. She speaks individually but ends the song with a reference to all God's People. "God has come to the help of Israel, his servant, mindful of his mercy." We are Israel exactly as we chose to be God's servants.

Mary has become the servant of God's People in serving its destiny. That is what we too are called to become. That is what makes the Magnificat a prophesy of the coming of the Church. In doing this Mary aims at the perfect completion of God's Plan in the realization of the Kingdom of God. She invites us to imitate her. We do this whenever we step forward to help another in fulfilling her, or his, part in God's plan. That is what she was doing by helping Elizabeth fulfill her role as John the Baptist's mother. If we knew the part each of those we lovingly help is to play in realizing this Plan we would see how our loving and living parallels that of Mary. But we do know it in faith! Do we pray daily to collaborate in the work of realizing peace, putting aside resentments and realizing God's mercy? It is a work God promises to complete, and we have a part in that. When we renew our faith in God's working through us we join Mary in singing the Magnificat. We are

doing it now in intention. Let's do it all day long.

CLINGING TO CHRIST BY FAITH

A reflection developed from texts by St. Justin

“Nowhere in this world is there anyone who can frighten or overcome those who believe in Jesus. We may be beheaded or crucified or fed to wild beasts or chained or burnt, but these and every other means of torture will not force us to retract our profession of faith. The more we are persecuted the more people embrace the faith and become worshippers of God through the name of Jesus. There was no one who believed so much in Socrates as to die for his teaching, but not only philosophers and scholars but ordinary people, wholly uneducated, believed in Jesus.”

When already old, Justin was brought before the Prefect, Rusticus, who questioned him. “Where do you assemble?” “Where each one choses”, replied Justin; “the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place, but is invisible and fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by believers.” Rusticus asked, “Aren't you a Christian, then?” Justin replied, “I am a Christian!” The prefect said, “Pay attention, you who are said to be learned and think you know truth; if you are scourged and beheaded do you believe you will ascend into heaven?” Justin replied, “I hope that if I endure those things I shall have God's gifts, for I know that to all who have lived in this way divine favor is given until the finishing of the entire world.” “Do you suppose, then, that you will go up to heaven to receive such recompense?” Justin said, “I don't suppose but know it and am fully persuaded of it.”

The Prefect said, “Let's come to a decision that is pressing. Offer sacrifice to the gods!” Justin replied, “No right-thinking person falls away from piety to impiety!” Rusticus responded, “Unless you obey you will be punished mercilessly.” Justin replied, “Through prayer we can be saved on account of our Lord Jesus Christ in spite of such punishment, because the punishment shall become to us salvation and confidence when we face the more fearful and universal judgment seat of our Lord and Savior.”

All the other martyrs said: “Do as you will, for we are Christians and do not sacrifice to idols.” Rusticus pronounced sentence: “Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to yield to the command of the emperor be scourged and led away to suffer the punishment of decapitation, according to the laws.” The holy martyrs were beheaded and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Savior. Some of the faithful secretly removed their bodies and buried them in a suitable place. To God whose grace wrought such wonderful things among them be glory forever. Amen.

WISDOM IN DEALING WITH GOD'S GIFTS

A reflection taken from a sermon by St. Bernard

There are things having to do with Christ that are unknown or not understood by us. Take his divine generation from the Father. Isaiah says, "*Who shall declare his generation?*" And there are also things that are known such as his divine works. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. How the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son is not known and is co-equal and coeternal with them is unknown. That the Spirit teaches us and works within us by grace is, however, known.

The work of the Spirit has two dimensions. The Spirit works within us for our own sake and another the Spirit does for our neighbors. The first work is well-known but we cannot know the second. But we seem to know some thing about the Spirit's work as it is both within us and within our neighbor.

The Spirit works compunction by burning up sin. The Spirit works devotion by anointing and healing spiritual wounds. The Spirit creates understanding as though nourishing, encouraging and strengthening as with a spiritual food. The Spirit causes these gifts to increase in many ways, especially by pouring love into hearts. This makes us feel as high as drinking much wine. All these gifts are given for the sake of those who receive them. The Spirit also gives gifts like wisdom, knowledge and counsel for the benefit of others. St. Paul speaks of this distribution of gifts. To one, he says, wisdom is given through the Spirit, and to another knowledge, and adds that the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are given on account of others as much as for our own benefit.

This requires that we be careful. We must beware of trying to share with others gifts given us for our own sake and we must not keep for ourselves gifts given for the sake of our neighbor. If we reserve for self what is meant for others we fail in charity. St. John says, "*Wisdom that is hidden and treasure that is not seen, what benefit is there in either of these?*" On the other hand, if you make known God's gifts to yourself then you lose humility. That is rebuked by St. Paul: "*What have you got that you didn't receive?*"

If we are to make progress in the spiritual life we must lose neither charity nor humility. We must first strive to be made more perfect by the gifts given us for our own benefit—such as compunction and like

**virtues and pray that wisdom and knowledge increase through them.
Then we have compunction and humility and charity.**