

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

What if God were different?

If God were just God and not *Father*, He could have still created material reality, but He could not have loved it. If God were just God and not *Son*, He could have still saved human beings, but He would not have had a reason for doing so. If God were just God and not *Holy Spirit*, He could still bestow graces upon us, but He would not want to.

If God were just God and not *Father*, we could fear him, but we could not honor him. If God were just God and not *Son*, we could think about him, but we could not follow him. If God were just God and not *Holy Spirit*, we could still be good, but we could not be joyful.

If God were different, his creation and all that is in it would be different. Made as we are in God's image, if God were different, we would be different. What is the image of God? What can we say about the Trinitarian *Oneness*? And what does it mean for who we are?

We can say that God is conscious and conscious of himself. With regard to the first, we mean that God is *reasoning, consistent, and interested*. These have to do with God's conduct. He is not unthinking, not chance, and not impersonal energy. God's consciousness of himself has to do, of course, with God's awareness and knowledge of himself as God. This is a wholly internal matter. The Son is the Father's knowledge of himself as *uncreated, paternal, and transcendent*. The Father is the Son's knowledge of himself as *Creator, Redeemer, and without end*. The Holy Spirit is God's knowledge of himself as *Love, Wisdom, Beauty, and Truth*.

We can say that God is free. He has limitless *power, limitless authority, limitless knowledge, and limitless will*. The Son is the Father's *Word* unceasingly spoken first to create, and now to keep, all things in existence. The Father is the Son's unsurpassable *justice, fidelity, and mercy*. The Holy Spirit is God's unfathomable *intelligence, rationality, and generosity*.

We can say God is *relational*. He is *interpersonal*. His one consciousness is perfectly communicated among the Three Divine Persons. His one freedom is perfectly exercised by the Three Divine Persons. Everything the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is because God cannot be divided within himself.

Made in the image of God, the individual person is most wholly human when one is – like God – most fully conscious of oneself, most fully free, and most authentically engaged with others. These are not as simple to accomplish one might think.

Self-consciousness is nothing less than the uncompromising knowledge of, and looking at, the truth about oneself. For us, this brutal self-honesty is hard-won, takes a lifetime, and – truth-be-told – is not attempted by everyone or even most.

Freedom is not the right to say, to choose, and to do whatever appeals; rather, freedom is saying, choosing, and doing what someone ought to do, what someone is called upon to do.

A life spent respecting and loving all one meets entails recognizing the distinctiveness as well as the commonality characteristic of all human beings.

We need to take our cue from the Holy Trinity. What we know of the mystery of God, tells us much about the mystery of humanness. The Father is eternally honest with himself and the Son is the truth of the Father. The Son is forever free and so never disobeys the Father. The Three Divine Persons ceaselessly communicate “one heart and one mind” and so is One God. The human race is supposed to be God’s One People: united, free, loving, honest, and truth-filled. Human beings are to be whole/holy because God is whole/holy (Lev 11:45; 1 Pet 1:15-16).

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