

The Revelation of the Most Holy Trinity

THE VERY ESSENCE of the Christian faith consists in the knowledge and adoration of one God in three Persons. This is the mystery whence all others flow. Our faith centers in this as in the master-truth of all it knows in this life, and as the infinite object whose vision is to form our eternal happiness; and yet, we know it only because it has pleased God to reveal Himself thus to our lowly intelligence, which, after all, can never fathom the infinite perfections of that God, who necessarily inhabits light inaccessible. Human reason may, of itself, come to the knowledge of the existence of God as Creator of all beings; it may, by its own innate power, form to itself an idea of His perfections by the study of His works; but the knowledge of God's intimate Being can come to us only by means of His own gracious revelation.

It was God's good pleasure to make known to us His essence, in order to bring us into closer union with Himself, and to prepare us, in some way, for that face-to-face vision of Himself which He intends to give us in eternity. But His revelation is gradual: He takes mankind from brightness unto brightness, fitting it for the full knowledge and adoration of Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. During the period preceding the Incarnation of the eternal Word, God seemed

intent on inculcating the idea of His Unity, for polytheism was the infectious error of mankind; and every notion of there being a spiritual and sole cause of all things would have been effaced from the earth, had not the infinite goodness of God watched over its preservation.

Not that the Old Testament books were altogether silent on the three divine Persons, whose ineffable relations are eternal; only, the mysterious passages which spoke of them were not understood by the people at large; whereas, in the Christian Church, a child of seven will answer those who ask him, that in God, the three divine Persons

PATER··FILIUS·
SPIRITUS··SANCTUS

have but one and the same Nature, but one and the same Divinity. When the Book of Genesis tells us that God spoke in the plural, and said: "Let Us make man to Our image and likeness," the ancient Jew bowed down and believed, but understood not the sacred text; the Christian, on the contrary, who has been enlightened by the complete revelation of God, sees, under this expression, the three Persons acting together in the formation of man; the light of faith develops the great truth to him, and tells him that, within himself, there is a likeness to the blessed Three in One. Power, understanding, and will, are three faculties within him, and yet he himself is but one being.

Commentary from The Liturgical Year by Dom Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875).

Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form Feast of the Most Holy Trinity



INTROIT (Tobias 12. 6)

BENEDICTA sit sancta Trinitas, atque indivisa unitas: confitemur ei, quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam. *Psalm.* Dómine Dóminus noster, quam admirabile est nomen tuum in univérſa terra. *V.* Glória Patri, et Filio, et Spíritui Sancto. Sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper, et in sácula sáculórum. Amen. — Benedícta sit sancta Trinitas ...

BLESSED be the holy Trinity, and undivided Unity: we will give glory to Him, because He hath shown His mercy to us. *Ps. 8. 2.* O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy Name in all the earth! *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *R.* Amen. — Blessed be the holy Trinity ...

COLLECT

O ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast enabled Thy servants, in confessing the true Faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of Majesty to adore its Unity: we beseech Thee, that by steadfastness in the same Faith, we may ever be defended against all adversity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son...

OMNIPOTENS sempiternus Deus, qui dedisti famulis tuis in confessione veræ fidei, æternæ Trinitatis gloriâ agnoscere, et in potentia majestatis adorare unitatem: quæsumus, ut eiusdem fidei firmitate, ab omnibus semper muniamur adversis. Per Dominum nostrum ...

EPISTLE

From Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Romans, 11. 33-36.

O THE depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen.

O ALTITUDO divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei: quam incomprehensibilia sunt iudicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus! Quis enim cognovit sensum Domini? Aut quis consiliarius ejus fuit? Aut quis prior dedit illi, et retribuetur ei? Quoniam ex ipso, et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia: ipsi gloria in saecula. Amen.

GRADUAL (Daniel 3. 55, 56)

BLESSED art Thou, O Lord, that beholdest the depths and sittest above the Cherubim. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven, and worthy of praise for ever.

Alleluia, alleluia. (*Dan. 3. 52.*) Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and worthy to be praised for ever. Alleluia.

BENEDICTUS es, Domine, qui intueris abyssos, et sedes super Cherubim. V. Benedictus es, Domine, in firmamento caeli, et laudabilis in saecula.

Alleluia, alleluia. V. Benedictus es, Domine, Deus patrum nostrorum, et laudabilis in saecula. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Continuation of the holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, 28. 18-20.

AT THAT TIME Jesus said to His disciples: All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. — *Credo.*

IN ILLO TEMPORE: Dixit Jesus discipulis suis: Data est mihi omnis potestas in caelo, et in terra. Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti: docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis. Et ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi. — *Credo.*

OFFERTORY (Tobias 12. 6)

BENEDICTUS sit Deus Pater, unigenitusque Dei Filius, Sanctus quoque Spiritus: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.

BLESSED be God the Father, and the only-begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit; because He hath shown us His mercy.

SECRET

SANCTIFICA, quæsumus, Domine Deus noster, per tui sancti nominis invocationem, hujus oblationis hostiam: et per eam nosmetipsos tibi perfice munus æternum. Per Dominum ...

SANCTIFY, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our God, by the invocation of Thy holy Name, the Sacrifice we offer, and by it make us an everlasting offering unto Thee. Through our Lord...

PREFACE OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

VERE dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique gratias agere: Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus. Qui cum unigenito Filio tuo, et Spiritu Sancto, unus es Deus, unus es Dominus: non in unius singularitate personæ, sed in unius Trinitate substantiæ. Quod enim de tua gloria, revelante te, credimus, hoc de Filio tuo, hoc de Spiritu Sancto, sine differentia discretionis sentimus. Ut in confessione veræ sempiternæque Deitatis, et in personis proprietas, et in essentia unitas, et in majestate adoretur æqualitas. Quam laudant Angeli, atque Archangeli, Cherubim quoque ac Seraphim: qui non cessant clamare quotidie, una voce dicentes: — *Sanctus.*

IT is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God: Who, together with Thine only-begotten Son and the Holy Ghost, art one God, one Lord: not in the Oneness of a single Person, but in the Trinity of one Substance. For what by Thy revelation we believe of Thy glory, the same do we believe of Thy Son, the same of the Holy Ghost, without difference or separation; so that in confessing the true and eternal Godhead, in It we should adore distinction in Persons, unity in Essence, and equality in Majesty: in praise of which Angels and Archangels, Cherubim also and Seraphim, day by day exclaim, without end and with one voice, saying: — *Sanctus.*

COMMUNION (Tobias 12. 6)

BENEDICIMUS Deum caeli, et coram omnibus viventibus confitebimur ei: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.

WE bless the God of heaven, and before all the living we will praise Him; because He has shown His mercy to us.

POSTCOMMUNION

PROFICIAT nobis ad salutem corporis et animæ, Domine Deus noster, hujus sacramenti suscepio: et sempiternæ sanctæ Trinitatis, eiusdemque indivisibiles unitatis confessio. Per Dominum ...

O LORD, our God, may our reception of this Sacrament and our acknowledgment of the holy and eternal Trinity and its undivided Unity be of avail to us for health of mind and body. Through our Lord ...