

Commentary on the Gospel: The Holy Trinity (Year A)

Gospel for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity (Cycle A), and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 3:16-18*)

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned

already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Commentary

The world, the entire universe, came forth good from God's hands, as the book of Genesis tells us: "And God saw that it was good" (*Gen 1:10*), referring to the world He was creating day by day. But this world that God created good was wounded by man's sin. The Creator, however, refused to abandon it and continued to offer us his love, which is stronger than sin. It was a love that went to the ultimate extreme: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (v. 16).

A Father of the Church, Saint Cyprian, wrote in the third century: "many and great are God's gifts, which the generous and overflowing

goodness of God the Father and Christ has brought about and will always bring about for our salvation. To save us, to give us a new life and redeem us, the Father sent the Son. The Son who was sent wanted to also be called the Son of man, in order to make us sons of God. He lowered himself in order to raise up the people lying on the ground. He was wounded in order to cure our wounds. He became a slave in order to lead us, who were slaves, to freedom. He freely accepted death in order to offer us mortals immortality.”[1]

God the Father gave us his Only-begotten Son. The Father is the giver of all gifts. First, from all eternity He gives everything to his Son, as Jesus himself tells us in his prayer to the Father during the Last Supper: “All that is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine” (*Jn 17:10*). The Father

and the Son share the exact same divine nature.

But God the Father also gives all He possesses to the world created in time, when He gives us his only Son out of love. Benedict XVI said: “On one hand, the word *only* here points back to the prologue to John’s Gospel, where the Logos is called ‘the only Son, who is God’ (*Jn* 1:18). On the other hand, however, it also recalls Abraham, who did not withhold his son, his ‘only’ son from God (*Gen* 22:2, 12). The Father’s act of ‘giving’ is fully accomplished in the love of the Son ‘to the end’ (*Jn* 13:1), that is, to the Cross.”[2]

The gift of God that is his only Son is given not to a chosen or select group of people but to “the world.” Hence its scope is universal. The entire world was in need of salvation, and it has been redeemed by Christ so that

it would “not perish but have eternal life” (v. 16).

“God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (v. 17). Jesus, the Son of God made man, “did not come to condemn us, to accuse us of meanness and smallness. He came to save us, pardon us, excuse us, bring us peace and joy. If only we realize the wonderful way in which God deals with his children, our hearts must change. We will see opening up before us an absolutely new panorama, full of relief, depth and light.”[3]

“If it is true that God has created us, that he has redeemed us, that he loves us so much that he has given up his only-begotten Son for us, that he waits for us every day! — as eagerly as the father of the prodigal son did, how can we doubt that he

wants us to respond to him with all our love? The strange thing would be not to talk to God, to draw away and forget him, and busy ourselves in activities which are closed to the constant promptings of his grace.”[4]

[1] Saint Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis*, 1.

[2] Joseph Ratzinger - Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth, I. From the Baptism to the Transfiguration*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, p. 398.

[3] Saint Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 165.

[4] Saint Josemaria, *Friends of God*, no. 251.

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