

The Being (Greek rendition of YHWH) Exodus 3:14  
ho ôn

Jesus  
Christ



'I will betroth  
you  
to myself  
in tenderness'  
(Hosea 2:20)

Saint  
John

1

Holiness is something that is predicated only of God

- God transcends ('remains beyond') everything we experience.

It is this that we speak of when we say of God:  
'You alone are holy.'(Revelation 15:4)

2

Jesus – 'the Holy One of God'(Mark 1:24, John 6:69).

- When 'the Word was made flesh and pitched his tent among us'(John 1:14), he revealed that God wanted us to draw close to him.  
Jesus is the tent of meeting (John 2:21).
- People had always recognised the immanence of God in creation and in history, but those who experienced Jesus came to see that we are drawn into communion with the Holy One not by withdrawal from the body, from the mind, from thoughts and feelings, but by allowing the Holy One to draw us into the heart of the created world where God will transform us into himself.

In the light of the Incarnation, we came to the astonishing insight that God is indeed the 'heart' as well as the 'beyond' of everything.

3

We are empowered by God's Spirit to live with Jesus a life of holiness

'Because you are God's children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"(Galatians 4:6)

'In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.  
Baptized into Christ you have clothed yourselves with Christ ...  
all of you are one in Christ Jesus'(Galatians 3:26-28).

'We constantly give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you for salvation through the gift of his Spirit who makes you holy'(2Thessalonians 2:13).

'You were washed, you were made holy, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God ... your bodies are members of Christ ... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God. You are not your own'(1Corinthians 6:11, 15, 19).

4

• Jesus astonished us by showing that sinners are invited to enjoy God's embrace, and so to welcome God's invitation: 'you shall be holy, for I am holy'(Leviticus 11:45).

'All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying: This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them'(Luke 15:1-2).

• We sinners are called to be in communion with Jesus and so with the Holy One.

5

• We are made in God's image for God creates us to be in communion with him. God, 'the fountain of all holiness' is constantly pouring the Spirit of love into our hearts, drawing us into his life and so sharing his holiness with us.

'Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light'(1Peter 2:5, 9).

'God's temple is holy, and you are that temple'(1Corinthians 3:17).

6

#### Vatican II LG 39

'The holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful.

And so it must be.

It is expressed in many ways by those who, each in his or her own state of life, tend to the perfection of love.'

7

- To grow in holiness we must cooperate with grace.
- Since God is love, God's gracious initiative comes to us as an offering, an invitation. Since we are created by God and created precisely for this divine communion, the invitation finds an echo in our longing.
- However, we are free to reject or to accept God's loving invitation.
- The transformation which we call holiness and which is union with God occurs only to the extent that we welcome God's grace and open our minds and hearts and wills and bodies to the transforming action of God's Spirit - the Spirit of love.

8

- Especially significant for this intimacy are times of prayer when our mind and heart are turned to God in loving attentiveness.
- It is in prayer that we say Yes to the communion which God is offering. It is in prayer that we open our souls to receive God's offer of himself. It is in prayer that we grow in holiness – a holiness that is expressed in every aspect of our lives.
- Prayer is making space for God's transforming action in our lives. Prayer is giving ourselves, like a child, into his hands.
- He will lead us along the path of holiness, for he will take us ever more closely to his heart.

9

Endeavour and discipline are needed if we are to remain attentive to grace and to allow God's grace to transform us, but we must be careful to be attentive to grace so that our endeavour and discipline is indeed in response to grace and not coming from our own ego.

The spring of divine life (the spring of holiness) issues from the Heart of God alone.

10

We need to allow God the vine-grower to prune away whatever is dead wood. We need to cooperate as God the gardener clears away whatever is blocking the spring or hindering the flow of water. We need to keep responding to grace by cooperating in keeping the channels open and clear. We need to allow the water of life to penetrate the soil of our lives. But we do not hold the shears; we do not do the pruning; we do not create the water or initiate its flow.

A holy person is not a humanly perfect person. A holy person is one who has allowed him or herself to be transformed by communion in love with God – a communion initiated and sustained by God.

11

Herein lies the challenge of becoming holy. We have to learn that we cannot initiate holiness. No amount of control exercised by ourselves can produce or achieve holiness. God is holy. God is utterly transcendent, utterly beyond anything we can initiate. God, however, can and does directly act in our lives.

We have to allow the self-as-initiator to be 'lost'.  
'Those who lose their life for my sake will find it'(Matthew 10:39).  
We have to let go control.

We have to become like a little child and allow to happen whatever God wants to happen as a result of His love. 'Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it'(Mark 10:15).

12

‘It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, loving me and giving himself for me’(Galatians 2:20).

Teresa of Avila (d.1582) insists that the path to holiness and so the journey of prayer is to be in the company of Jesus:

‘It is for you to look at him. He never takes his eyes off you’(Way 26,3).

‘Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us’(Life 8,5).

13

### The Church’s mission

‘Peoples everywhere, open the doors to Christ! His Gospel in no way detracts from human freedom, from the respect that is owed to every culture and to whatever is good in each religion’(J-P II, Mission of Redeemer, n.3).

‘Everyone is searching for the Good News, albeit at times in a confused way, and all have a right to know the value of this gift and to approach it freely’(Mission of the Redeemer, n.11).

‘Missionary activity is the greatest and holiest duty of the Church’(Vatican II Ad Gentes, 29).

‘Missionary activity to those who do not know Christ has only one purpose: to serve men and women by revealing to them the love of God shown forth in Jesus Christ’(Mission of the Redeemer, n.2).

14

‘Working for the Kingdom of God means acknowledging and promoting God’s activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. The Kingdom of God is the manifestation and realisation of God’s plan of salvation in all its fullness’(Mission of the Redeemer, n.15).

‘Through the action of the Holy Spirit the Good News takes shape in human minds and hearts and extends through history. In all of this it is the Holy Spirit who gives life’(J-P II, Lord and Giver of Life [1986] n. 42).

15

### J-P II, Mission of the Redeemer

‘The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son.’(n.23)

‘Missionary dynamism is not born of the will of those who decide to become propagators of their faith. It is born of the Spirit and it progresses through faith in God’s love’(n.44).

16

### 'Secular' Priesthood: Holiness through belonging

'The spiritual life of the priest should be profoundly marked by a missionary zeal and dynamism. In the exercise of their ministry and the witness of their lives, priests have the duty to form the community entrusted to them as a truly missionary community'(J-P II, I will give you shepherds, n.32)

A special strength of the secular priest is precisely that he is in the world. He knows it. His experience informs his insights which in turn contribute to pastoral decisions that are informed by his belonging to people in their everyday lives. This 'unspectacular matter-of-factness'(Tony Philpot), this 'street-wise' quality of his ministry and life is the seed-bed for special redemptive love.

17

For such a calling to be truly graced, the priest's experience, insight and decisions must be informed by his intimate communion with Christ.

Two specially important qualities in today's world are chastity of heart and simplicity of lifestyle.

A priest is called to be chaste like Jesus. A priest can offer his real self to others only insofar as he continues to grow in emotional maturity and relates to people in a sexually responsible way, such that he grows in his capacity to truly be himself. Along with this comes a generosity of spirit whereby the priest is not only able to offer himself to others in love but actually does so, and in a way that does not bind them to him but makes him a sacrament of the love of Christ, freeing them to respond to the love which God is offering them through the mediation of the priest.

19

### Congregation for the Clergy: Priest in the third millennium

'In our times, as always in the Church, heralds of the Gospel are needed who are expert in humanity, profoundly knowing the heart of contemporary man, who share his joys and hopes, his fears and sorrows, and at the same time who are contemplatives, in love with God.'

18

Jesus spoke of the blessedness of the 'poor', that is to say, of those who recognised their need and who looked to God in trust. Priests are called also to share this virtue with Jesus:

'A truly poor priest is indeed a specific sign of separation from, disavowal of and non-submission to the tyranny of a contemporary world which puts all its trust in money and in material security.'(PDV 30).

20

'Priests, as men whose 'portion and inheritance'(Numbers 18:20) is the Lord, ought to use temporal goods only for those purposes to which the teaching of Christ and the direction of the Church allow them to be devoted ... They are not to regard an ecclesiastical office as a source of profit, and are not to spend the income accruing from it for increasing their own private fortunes ... Priests are invited to embrace voluntary poverty. By it they become more clearly conformed to Christ and more ready to devote themselves to their sacred ministry ... More than the rest of Christ's disciples they are to put aside all appearance of vanity in their surroundings. They are to arrange their house in such a way that it never appears unapproachable to anyone and that nobody, even the humblest, is ever afraid to visit it'(PO n. 17).

21



22

Jesus, God's Son

The Dancer, The Singer, The Lover

God the 'Father'

The Dance,  
The Song,  
Love



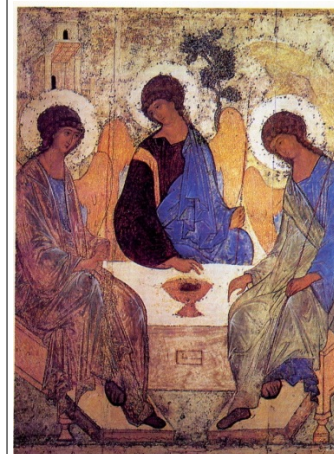
God's Spirit

The Dancing,  
The Singing,  
The Loving

'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all'

(2Corinthians 13:13).

23



Knowing that God is Spirit reminds us to be attentive to the divinely inspired movements of our own heart: movements of longing as we yearn for closer communion with God whose Spirit inspires us; movements of wonder and praise as we rejoice in God being with us. It reminds us to be sensitive to these movements in every man and every woman.

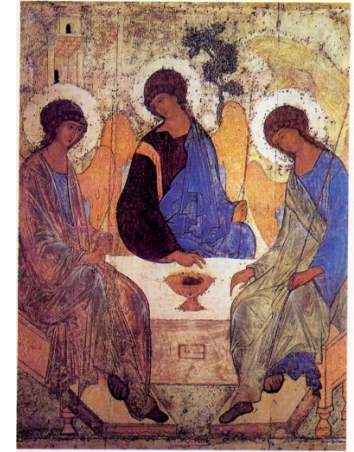
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Knowing that God is Word reminds us to be attentive to the words and actions through which God speaks to us, and the words and actions through which we respond to God. We learn, too, to reverence the sacred ground of each person's Spirit, and be attentive to each person's Word, as together we journey towards God who is the Source ('Father', 'Mother') of all.

25



Knowing that God is Father reminds us to open our hearts to God's love and to treat every other person as our brother or sister.

26