

First Reading: Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9
Response: *“To you glory and praise for evermore” (Dan.3:52)*
Responsorial Psalm: Daniel 3:52-56
Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13.
Gospel: John 3:16-18

To God be the glory, *“To you glory and praise for ever more” (Dan. 3:52).*

Who is God? He has many names: 'El 'Elyon, אֵל עֵלְיוֹן, God the Most high (Gen.14:20); 'El 'Olam, אֵל עוֹלָם, Everlasting God (Gen.21:33); and 'El Shaddai, אֵל שַׁדַּי, God Almighty (Gen.17:1).

'Elohim, אֱלֹהִים, is an ancient God word. It is plural which could hint at the Blessed Trinity (Gen.1:1).

Moses *“called on the name of the Lord”* (Exod.34:5) and experienced Him as *“the Lord, God of tenderness and compassion”* who is *hesed ve'emet*, חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, *“rich in kindness and faithfulness,”* (Exod.34:6). God's love is so great *“that he gave us his only Son”* (Jn.3:16).

Moses experienced this in the *Shekinah*, שְׁכִינָה, glorious presence of God, when he *“descended in the form of a cloud”* (Exod.34:5). The full *Shekinah* is in the Son who became man and ascended as the Risen Lord *“in a cloud that took him up”* (Acts 1:9).

Jesus then promises that he and the Father will send the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Here in the **Scriptures** and in the whole **TRADITION** of the Church, is God is revealed as the ***Blessed Trinity***. *“The grace of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the love of GOD and the fellowship of the HOLY SPIRIT be with you all”* (2Cor.13:13 and *Introductory Rite of the Order of Mass*).

Liturgy is a vital source of our Tradition, even pre-dating the Bible. The apostles preached, baptized and broke bread before it was put into writing. Our liturgy is grounded in the apostolic experience that proclaims the Blessed Trinity.

Teachings of the early Church (***Creed*** and ***Doctrine***) is another vital source of our ***Tradition***. The apostles had to teach the faith before they baptized. They asked *“Do you believe in God the FATHER Almighty? Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only SON, our Lord? Do you believe in the HOLY SPIRIT?”* From this doctrine arose the ***“Apostles’ Creed.”***

Note that not everything that Jesus taught the apostles is written in the Bible. The Bible itself testifies to that (Jn.20:30, 21:25). The apostolic tradition is to be seen in its entirety, not selectively, like Martin Luther who taught *“sola scripture.”*

Witness is taken from the apostolic experience of the Blessed Trinity. The apostles saw Jesus as the gift of the Father (Jn.3:16) and walked and talked with the Risen Lord but only understood him after they had received the Holy Spirit (*Pentecost*). Now they follow Christ's way to the Father who pours out his tremendous love, giving the breath of new life, the Holy Spirit. The apostles experienced the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. This is eternal life for them, God-life in the Trinity.

The 'Sign of the Cross' is a daily reminder of our spiritual life, life in the Trinity.

FOR THE CHILDREN

“God loved the world so much that he gave us his only Son” (Jn.3:16).

Make the Sign of the Cross and explain it, as used prayerfully and Liturgically.

Who is God? Give Teaching of the Church on what is the Blessed Trinity.

Witness: The Blessed Trinity is a loving God of three Persons. **How can we love God and love one another?**

FOR TEENAGERS (Shared Christian Praxis)

What is your experience of God, the Persons of the Blessed Trinity?

Reflect and share the Church’s teaching and understanding of the Blessed Trinity.

How much do we live what the Church teaches and learn from experience?

What decisions can we make to live more closely with the Blessed Trinity, in thought, word and deed?

RCIA

The Blessed Trinity is at the heart of the mystery of our faith. God’s divine life is a community life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The beloved disciple tells us that “**God is love**” (1 Jn.4:16), “**and God loved the world so much, he gave us his Son**” (Jn.3:16). The ancient Hebrews always trusted in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, *Hesed ve’Emeth*, חסד ואמת. His name is **Yahweh**, יְהוָה, meaning ‘**I AM**’ here always and for you.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I heard a priest preach on the Blessed Trinity. “Play C”, he told the musician. After that he asked for E then G. We heard each note singly. Then he wanted the three notes played together. The triad was a beautiful harmony, a C Major chord. He compared the chord to the Blessed Trinity, the three notes like three persons in harmony making a beautiful triad.

We may draw analogies in our understanding of the Blessed Trinity but ultimately it is a holy mystery, ‘*mysterium tremendum*’ (i). We know the answer but the meaning of it is beyond our comprehension, a God of tremendous love, who loves us into existence and destines us to share in his own life.

(i) **BOBRINSKY** Bob. **The Mystery of the Trinity**. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, N.Y. 1999. p.16.
Original quote from: **OTTO** Rudolf, **The Idea of the Holy**, Oxford University Press, 1958.

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina was upset and gave her father a piece of her mind. “You’re late,” she complained, being the last child to be picked up after a catechism class. Her father did his best in handling the situation. He apologized and promised his little angel that he would try not to be late again and made it clear that he is always there for his beloved daughter. Such assurance was a great blessing to her. It took away all her fears and frustration. He showed himself as a loving father who understood his child and even had time to listen to her complaints. She now snuggled close him as he took her home.

Sometimes having a fight with God our Father, like Israel, **ישראל**, wrestling with God, can sort out a spiritual problem. Friedrich Nietzsche spoke of “my pain and my final bliss.” (i)

(i) **NIETZSCHE** Friedrich. **Thus Spake Zarathustra**. Wordsworth Classics, Ware Herts. UK. 1997. pg.246.

IMPORTANT WORDS:

'Αγία Τριάδα (Τριάς) (*Hagia Triada [Trias]*), *Beata Trinitas*, השילוש הקדוש (*Hashilush Haqadosh*), are the names of the Trinity in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, early languages of the Church. The Trinity is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This doctrine was spelt out in the early



councils of the Church. The councils did not create the doctrine but articulated the mysteries believed since apostolic times. The councils used the language and culture of the day, which was mainly Greek, hence the philosophical approach. They tried to explain the Trinity as divine persons having the same essence, *homo-ousia* ('ὁμοουσία); and the nature of these persons, *hypostasis* ('υποστάσις); and their relationship to one another as *περιχωρησις* (*perichoresis*). Such new terminologies warranted further explanations and more councils to clarify and re-define. That is the background to the “Nicene Creed” compared to the more simple ancient form of the “Apostles’ Creed.”

Watchword: “*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Mt.28:19)

Hebrew: לשם־האב והבן ורוה הקדש

Leshem-ha'Ab vebaBen veRuah haQodesh.

Greek: Εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος.

Eis to onoma tou Patros kai tou Huiou kai tou Hagiau Pneumatos.

Latin: *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.*

Portuguese: *Em nome do Pai, e do Filho e do Espirito Santo.*

Spanish: *En el nombre del Padre, y del Hijo, y del Espiritu Santo.*

French: *Au nom du Pere, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit.*

German: *Auf den Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes.*

Afrikaans: *In die Naam van die Vader en die Seun en die Helige Gees.*

Zulu: *Ngegama likaYise beneNdodana noMoya Ocwebileyo.*

Xhosa: *Egameni loYise, neloNyana, neloMoya oyiNgcwele.*

Sotho: *Lebitso la Ntate, le la Mora, le la Moya oHalalelang.*

Irish: *In ainm an Athar agus an Mhic agus an Spioraid Naoimh.*

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CATECHETICS

Lesson 26:

MODERN CATECHETICS AND REVELATION

Great catechists, like Gabriel Moran in his book, ‘The Present Revelation,’ explored the nature of **revelation** (how God reveals Himself) and applied it to contemporary catechesis. Revelation does not take place in a vacuum but in the human mind, in a human situation. In other words the LOCUS of revelation is in the **human understanding**. Unless God is heard and understood what He is saying; there is no revelation. If God shouted His word from the clouds in a strange tongue, understood by no one, what is that? He must be heard, i.e. in some way communicated Himself, at least in the human mind, and this is the human element of divine revelation. Catechesis involves how God is revealing Himself today in our lives and this warrants a deeper understanding of the human person in his/her **life situation**.

Biblically, God revealed Himself to people through their human experiences and life events. The prophets understood it the light of the **covenant** God made with His people. They were able to relate what was happening to the past and also project it to the future. They proclaimed what God was revealing and teaching through **events** of life. Catechesis today acknowledges revelations as an ongoing process of interpersonal communication of God with humanity. Vatican II, in the spirit of renewal, also develops this concept (*Constitution on Divine Revelation*).

Note, that this does not detract nor undermine the apostolic norm of revelation, viz. God's word as revealed in the Scriptures. **Contemporary catechesis** still holds on the traditional signs of God's self-revelation is given in the Bible, the Teachings of the Church, sacraments (Liturgy) and Christian witness. What it also does is to emphasize the "**image of God**" (the human person) and acknowledge the human heart with all its deepest desires. It recaptures what St. Augustine uttered centuries ago, "*In teipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas,*" 'enter into yourself, in the depths of the human person dwells the Truth (*De Vera Religione XXXIX.72*).

Revelation then, with newer theological insights, has led to a more experienced-based **approach** to catechetics. It means that, like the prophets of old, catechists should:

- **Begin** by making people aware of what is going on within them and around them.
- **Draw** from them their reactions to their experiences.
- **Search** for deeper meanings in what they have discovered.
- **Unfold** the total meaning of God's truth in their lives.

To sum up, this **experiential method** of catechesis is based on self-awareness, personal discovery of God and a development of authentic Christian attitudes. It is based on three important characteristics:

1. Christ is found in and through **daily living**.
2. **Active doing** is given priority to passive knowing.
3. There must be **adaptation** to the circumstances of one's human experiences.

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