

THE BLESSED TRINITY IN CURRENT THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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For years now it has been commonplace to begin any study of the Blessed Trinity by quoting Karl Rahner's brief work that decried the insignificant and isolated place the Trinity held in contemporary theology, and forcefully called for a vigorous renewal of Trinitarian theology.¹ Rahner went on to identify the basic problem and its sources, thus laying down a general ground plan for the urgently needed renewal.

The renewal urged by Rahner has been going on vigorously since Vatican II, and in the past decades the Trinity has become a major theme in theological circles.² There is hardly a major area of research in current theology that has not been touched in some way by the new studies on the Trinity. Since the current literature on the Trinity is extraordinarily profuse, this survey article can only attempt to bring out some of the Trinitarian renewal's major dimensions and their impact and value for the

1. Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), English trans. of the original 1967 study in Vol. 2 of *Mysterium Salutis, Grundriss Heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, ed. J. Feiner and M. Lohrer. One result is documented in J. Bracken, *What Are They Saying About the Trinity?* (New York: Paulist, 1979), and articles like Frederick Crowe, "Rethinking God-With-Us: Categories From Lonergan," *Science et Esprit* 41 (1989) 167-88, and "Rethinking the Trinity: Taking Seriously the 'Homousios'," *Science et Esprit* 47 (1995) 13-31.

2. For example, regarding the Trinitarian influence on various areas of current theological research such as salvation, Cross and Resurrection, Mission, Society and Politics, Language and modern thought, see John Thompson, *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

"new evangelization" of the third millennium.³

Moreover, since a major aim of this renewal has been to overcome the abstract, impersonal, isolated and enclosed nature of the neo-scholastic tract *De Trinitate*, a rather unique methodology has been adopted for this survey. In place of the usual procedure of concentrating first on the recently published major academic studies, followed by a cursory look at the more popular "*ouvrages de haute vulgarisation*," we shall take our lead from how the Trinity is introduced, developed and "applied" in recent official Church adult catechisms, particularly within our local Philippine ecclesial context.⁴ Following this pattern will enable us to stay close to the actual renewal, while at the same time allow for a certain "deepening" at each stage by numerous references to some of the available studies.⁵

This, of course, does not mean that the renewal in Trinitarian theology is limited to immediate pastoral needs. On the contrary, much of the renewal has involved a restudy of the Tradition,⁶ together with an energetic pursuit of new philosophical bases

3. This is strikingly brought out by John Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (Pasay City: Paulines, 1995), which outlines the three-year preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000 in terms of the Trinity: 1997: Jesus Christ; 1998: the Holy Spirit; 1999: God the Father; 2000: Glory to the Blessed Trinity, Eucharistic Congress in Rome. See Jaime Achacoso, "At the Threshold of the Third Millennium," *Docete* 19, No. 86 (July-Sept. 1996) 12-17.

4. See the Vatican's *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Manila: Word & Life Publ., 1994), and Episcopal Commission for Catechesis and Catholic Education [ECCCE], *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (rev. ed.; Makati: Word & Life Publ., 1996). All references to the two works, cited as CCC and CFC, are given in paragraph numbers; CFC numbers are the new numbers of the latest edition.

5. This procedure is grounded on more than the simple desire to be "relevant" or "practical" — which not infrequently leads to oversimplification if not outright error. Its more theoretical basis is sketched in the theme of "pastoral theology" proposed in Robert Imbelli and Thomas Groome, "Signposts Towards a Pastoral Theology," *Theological Studies* 53 (1992) 127-37, and Randy Maddox, "The Recovery of Theology as a Practical Discipline," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990) 650-72.

6. See, e.g., Douglas C. Hall, *The Trinity, An Analysis of St. Thomas Aquinas' Expositio of the De Trinitate of Boethius* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992); Edmund Hill, O.P., trans., intro. and notes, *The Trinity [of St. Augustine]* (New York: New City Press, 1991); Cornelius Plantinga, "Gregory of Nyssa and the Social Analogy of the Trinity," *Thomist* 50 (1986) 325-52; and E. Cousins, "A Theology of Interpersonal Relations [Richard of St. Victor]," *Thought* 45 (1970) 56-82; and George Tavard, *The Vision of the Trinity* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981).

for understanding the mystery of the living God.⁷ But given the limitations of this article, our focus is primarily directed toward the more immediate impact of the renewal on current theological and religious education.

Thus this survey article will first take up the relative importance and place of the Trinity within Catholic doctrine as a whole, followed by a brief summary exposition of how the Trinity is approached in current theological literature. The second section goes into a description of the explicit relations between Trinitarian doctrine and contemporary doctrine on the Church and its mission, Creation/Redemption, Christ's Resurrection, and the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and with Christian moral living and especially Christian prayer and "spiritual life." The third and concluding part picks up some specific themes in current Trinitarian theology.

I. THE TRINITY AS THE BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

We begin by taking our cue from the presentations of the Trinity in the two official adult catechisms considered. Each exemplifies a particular emphasis indicative of the renewal in Trinitarian theology. The *CCC* begins with the most basic human religious question, "who is God?" and presents the Christian answer: the *Most Holy Trinity*. The *CFC* is more concerned with contextualizing this general response.

The *CCC* begins its treatment of the Trinity concretely by describing how Christians are baptized "in the name of the

7. Ted Peters, in his *God as Trinity, Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life* (Louisville: Westminster, 1993), provides a survey of latter 20th century "Trinity Talk" covering Claude Welsh, Eberhard Jüngel, Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, Leonardo Boff, Catherine M. LaCugna, Robert Jenson, and Wolfgang Pannenberg. Another handy summary of recent work covering Barth, Lonergan, Moltmann and Process Theology is *One God In Trinity*, ed. P. Toon and J. D. Spiceland (Westchester: Cornerstone Bks., 1980).

Indicative of the influence of new philosophies on Trinitarian theology are Joseph Bracken, *The Triune Symbol: Persons, Process and Community* (New York: University Press of America, 1985); T. Gerard Connolly, "Perichoresis and the Faith that Personalizes, According to Jean Mouroux," *Eph. Th. Louv.* 62 (1986) 356-80; J. Bracken, "Panentheism from a Trinitarian Perspective," *Horizons* 22 (1995) 7-28; and R. J. Pendergast, "A Thomistic-Process Theory of the Trinity," *Science et Esprit* 42 (1990) 35-59.

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (no. 232). It follows this by the simple yet profound statement:

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of faith and of the Christian life. . . . the most fundamental and essential teaching in the hierarchy of the truths of the faith. (no. 234)

This focus on the Trinity as the central mystery of Christian Faith is commonly accepted — in theory at least. Marsh writes: "The notion of God as Trinity represents the specifically Christian understanding of God. . . . therefore [it] should determine the Christian vision of life in all its forms. We are concerned here with the very bedrock of Christian faith."⁸ This theoretical acceptance, however, has not ruled out severe attacks by certain "revisionist movements," notably feminists, the anti-Incarnationalists, and some proponents on inter-religious dialogue.⁹ Yet these critical movements have actually played a positive role in the current revision of Trinitarian theology.

The CCC explains how the Trinity, as a "mystery of faith in the strict sense," is "inaccessible to human reason alone and even to Israel's faith before the Incarnation of the Son of God and the mission of the Holy Spirit" (no. 237). This raises a practical problem of which some strictly academic Trinitarian studies may not be fully aware. The problem is faced by the CFC which, after presenting the Trinity as the essential core of Christian Faith (nos. 124, 165-66), explains how "mystery" is commonly taken to mean "something we cannot understand." Thus when teachers and preachers present the Trinity simply as "mystery," especially in a school setting, Filipinos generally take

8. Thomas Marsh, *The Triune God* (Mystic: Twenty-third Publ., 1994) 163. This new appreciation of the importance of the Trinity is marked by a flood of studies. See, e.g., among other works cited in other footnotes, Mary Ann Fatula, *The Triune God of Christian Faith* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990); Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1984); Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity* (London: Chapman, 1985); William Hill, *The Three-Personed God* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1982); Robert Jenson, *The Triune Identity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); J. Moltmann, *History and the Triune God: Contributions to Trinitarian Theology* (London: SCM, 1991).

9. Geoffrey Wainwright, "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Where the Church Stands or Falls," *Interpretation* 45 (1991) 117-32. Some positive studies in these fields are cited later in this article.

this to mean that it is something that "just has to be accepted," something that cannot be understood in any way since it is totally incomprehensible, even irrational. This unfortunately cuts off any prayerful reflection on God as Triune, and effectively separates the God revealed by Jesus Christ from common Filipino piety and religiosity (*CFC* no. 1268), not to speak of Filipino theologizing.

What is at stake here, of course, is the radical question of the nature and function of human knowing in faith. While this has a history as long as theology itself, we focus here simply on one major aspect in current theological and religious education. Briefly stated, the contemporary philosophical focus on the human person as subject has stressed the uniqueness of interpersonal knowing and human self-knowledge. An epistemology different from that of neo-scholasticism emerges in which a certain continuity between "natural mysteries" and the supernatural mysteries of Christian faith is brought out. This new appreciation of the nature of "mystery" is extremely important for uncovering the role of the Trinity in daily human life.¹⁰

To counteract the completely negative view of mystery, the *CFC* presents mystery *positively* as something we know much about, but never come to the end of it — like our personal understanding of our own selves, or of a parent or friend. Thus *CFC* proposes human friendship as the best analogue with divine Revelation and Faith (nos. 62, 121). It relates the Trinity as mystery NOT to how the One God can be Three, but to God as Infinite Love, in whom there is always more to understand and love (no. 1348).¹¹ This grounds the fundamental truth that the Blessed Trinity is active in our daily lives.¹² One author shows how the human possibility of sharing in the Trinity responds to

10. See K. Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," *Theological Investigations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) 4:36-73; also "Mystery" in *Sacramentum Mundi*, 4:133-36. Vatican I treated "mystery" in Chap. 4 of its "Dogmatic Constitution Dei Filius" in which it treads a middle ground between rationalists on one side and fideists on the other. But much depends upon which part of the balanced exposition of the role of reason in faith is stressed. Confer the source in *The Christian Faith*, ed. J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, nos. 131-35 (trans. of DS 3015-19).

11. See Anthony Kelly, *The Trinity of Love* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1989).

12. See Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*

two basic human longings: for personal fulfillment, and for authentic interpersonal communion.¹³

DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

The CCC, after presenting the Trinity as mystery, cites some Biblical data showing how the Father was revealed by Jesus Christ, his Son (nos. 238-42), and the Father and the Son were revealed by the Spirit (nos. 243-45).¹⁴ This Scriptural data is then followed by a brief exposition of the theological dispute over the Creed's "Filioque" (nos. 246-48).¹⁵ Then the text describes how the Church formed its Trinitarian doctrine, using technical philosophical terms such as *substance*, *person*, *hypostasis*, and *relation*, in its Councils of Nicea (325), Constantinople I (381), Toledo VI (638) and XI (675), Lyons II (1274), and Florence (1439).¹⁶

(San Francisco: Harper, 1992); also the two complementary articles of Jan Milic Lochman, "The Trinity and Human Life," and David Braine, "Observations on the Trinity," *Theology* 78 (1975) 174-90; and J. Mattam, "The Mystery of Trinity in Human Life," *Vidyajoti* 40 (1976) 338-48.

13. See Mary Timothy Prokes, in *Mutuality: The Human Image of Trinitarian Love* (New York: Paulist, 1993). See also Denis Edwards, "The Open Table: Theological Reflections on Family," *Aust. Cath. Rec.* 72 (1995) 327-39.

14. There is no end to Biblical studies on God and the Trinity. Indicative of many are: J. M. Reese, "The Principal Model of God in the NT," *Biblical Theology Bull.* 8 (1978) 126-31; *The Presence and Absence of God, Concilium* vol. 50; Geoffrey Grogan, *Understanding Bible Teaching: The Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); Arthur Wainwright, *The Trinity in the NT* (London: SPCK, 1977); Kilian McDonnell, "Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995) 209-36; J. Plevnik, "The Trinitarian Formula in Mt. 28:19b," in *Trinification of the World*, ed. T. Dunne and J.-M. Laporte (Toronto: Regis College Press, 1978) 241-58.

15. Among the recent work on the *Filioque*, see the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit," *Osservatore Romano* (20 Sept. 1995); and Leo Scheffczyk, "The Meaning of the 'Filioque'," *Communio* 13 (1986) 125-38.

Gary Badcock, "The Anointing of Christ and the Filioque Doctrine," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 60 (1994) 241-58, provides a trenchant critique of the positions of von Balthasar and Congar on Christ's anointing, and adds suggestions as to the need for another Trinitarian model besides the processional.

16. The standard little work of A. Richardson, *Creeeds in the Making* (London: SCM, 1941) has been updated by Frances M. Young, *The Making of the Creeeds* (London: SCM, 1991). See also Leo D. Davis, *The First Ecumenical Councils (325-787)* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1987); also John Paul II's letter, "Contemporary Context for Two Ancient Councils [Constantinople I and Ephesus]," *Origins* 10 (16 April 1981) 697-701.

The dogma of the Trinity is then presented as grounded in the Councils of Constantinople II (553) and Lateran IV (1215). The Trinity is One God, who is three really distinct divine Persons who are relative to one another (nos. 253-55).¹⁷

A final section describes how the Father realizes his divine plan of creation, redemption, and sanctification through the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit (nos. 257-60), which are later described as "the joint mission of Son and Spirit" (nos. 689-90).

Here a brief theological note will help. The present development in Trinitarian theology has taken on a few basic directions: one drawing on contemporary personalism; another on social model following current social philosophies; a third animated by Process Theology interests. A new feature, exemplified by Boff, is to focus on the Trinitarian *perichoresis* (*circumincessio*) rather than on the divine Processions. These theological trends surface in the following pages.

The *CFC*, instead of citing the Church Councils in detail, stresses the Trinitarian structure of the *Creed* (nos. 226, 256, 1265, 1274).¹⁸ It does this since active Filipino Catholics recite the Creed every Sunday. It emphasizes how the Creed presents God as Trinity (no. 300). Precisely as Trinitarian, the Creed relates us to Christ (no. 249). It also focuses on the actual activity of the "Almighty" Father with Son and Spirit in relation to our expe-

17. On the notion of person, see the illuminating article of J. Ratzinger, "The Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17 (1990) 439-54; also John Grabowski, "Person: Substance and Relation," *Communio* 22 (1995) 139-63; and L. Porter, "Persons in the Trinity," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980) 530-48.

The discussions on "person" in both Trinitarian theology and Christology demonstrate conclusively the necessity for both a critically accurate historical background and an openness to metaphysics. See Christopher Kaiser, "The Ontological Trinity in the Context of Historical Religion," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29 (1976) 301-10. For an specific example, see B. Lonergan's critique of Piet Schoonenberg's *The Christ* (1971) in "Christology Today; Methodological Reflections," *A Third Collection*, ed. F. Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985) 74-99, which was apparently unknown, ignored or rejected by L. Wostyn and J. DeMesa in their popular *Doing Christology* (Quezon City: Claretian, 1985).

18. Recent studies of the Creed include much Trinitarian theology. See, e.g., David Burton Bryan, *From Bible to Creed* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1988); Hans Küng, *Credo: The Apostles Creed Explained for Today* (London: SCM, 1993); and Berard Marthaler, *The Creed, The Apostolic Faith in Contemporary Theology* (rev. ed.; Mystic: Twenty-third Publ., 1993).

rience of evil in the world (nos. 292-93).

In exposing the *dogma of the Trinity*, the CFC adds to the CCC's exposition by explaining the Oneness of God with the contemporary theme of the Trinity as "*Community of Love*" (nos. 1316-27, 1347).¹⁹

Moreover, the CFC in explaining with the CCC the divine Persons as *distinct* and *relational* (nos. 1328-29), points out how we ordinarily do not think of "father" and "son" as *equal* because we do not see them as *relational*.²⁰ The CFC thus adds an explicit exposition of the divine Persons as *equally divine* (no. 1328).²¹

But perhaps more important is the stress on the Trinity's presence in our daily lives, both in constantly *creating* us and as *indwelling* in us in *GRACE* (nos. 1330-31).²² Few Catholic Filipinos seem to realize how they are called even now to share in God's own divine life, the life of Our *Father* in heaven, through his *Son*, Jesus Christ our Risen Lord, in the *Holy Spirit* indwelling within us. This sharing in Trinitarian life in daily life is what we mean by *grace*, the life-giving center of all our prayer and devotions.

In its treatment of *Grace*, the CFC stresses this sharing in the Trinitarian life (nos. 267-68), that is, in a Trinitarian relationship with each of the divine Persons. We exercise this relationship as sons/daughters of the Father, hearers of the Word, the Son who sets us free, and temples of the Holy Spirit (no. 305).

This specific linking of grace with the Trinity helps to avoid thinking of grace only in terms of individual favors asked for. The primary meaning of grace is God giving Himself to us in

19. See Kelly's analysis of love as the best entrance into an understanding of the Trinity, in his *The Trinity of Love*. See also William Rossner, "Toward an Analysis of 'God Is Love'," *Thomist* 37 (1973) 633-67, and John O'Donnell, "The Trinity as Community," *Gregorianum* 69 (1988) 5-34.

20. See C. LaCugna, "The Relational God: Aquinas and Beyond," *Theological Studies* 46 (1985) 647-63; and her book, *God For Us*, esp. Chaps. 2 and 8.

21. The question of the equality of the divine Persons is a subtle topic, seemingly avoided without notice in the CCC (nos. 254-56) perhaps for fear of inciting a new form of subordinationism. But the fact that the divine Persons are explained in terms of "opposition of relationship" (Council of Florence, cf. ND no. 325) introduces a second analogy in the use of the term "person": as predicated of each of the three divine Persons themselves.

22. Much current Trinitarian theology focuses directly on the presence of the Trinity in the just. See, e.g., Robert Faricy, "The Trinitarian Indwelling," *Thomist* 35 (1971) 369-404.

Love as our heavenly Father, our Risen Savior Jesus Christ, and their indwelling Holy Spirit.²³

II. THE TRINITY AND OTHER DOCTRINES

The CCC's Table of Contents explicitly names three "works" of the Holy Trinity: *Creation*, the *Resurrection*, and the *Liturgy*. Many individual paragraphs cite the Father, Son and Spirit, but only these three particular faith-realities are explicitly related to the *Blessed Trinity*.

THE TRINITY AND THE CHURCH

While the CCC's exposition of the *Church* never explicitly mentions the Trinity, it explains the "Mystery of the Church" under three headings: People of God (nos. 781-86), Body of Christ (nos. 787-96), and Temple of the Holy Spirit (nos. 797-801).²⁴

The CFC, on the other hand, explicitly relates the "Church as Mystery" to each Person of the Blessed Trinity (nos. 1357-60), and to "God's own Trinitarian communion" (no. 1363).²⁵ The

23. With the new emphasis on the primary meaning of Grace as God's SELF-giving — not mere "helps" as in the old "De Auxiliis" controversy — a different model of the Trinity in terms of "Self-giving" has been added to the more common traditional "Procession" model. See David Coffey, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Sydney: Faith & Culture, 1979), and his "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986) 227-50; also "The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit in Christ," *Theological Studies* 45 (1984) 466-80.

24. Since Vatican II, the Church is seen in Trinitarian terms. See, e.g., Michael Lawler and Thomas Shanahan, *Church, A Spirited Communion* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995); Bruno Forte, *The Church, Icon of the Trinity* (Makati: St. Paul Publ., 1990); Peter Drilling, "The Genesis of the Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Vatican II," *Science et Esprit* 45 (1993) 61-78; Robert Sears, "Trinitarian Love as Ground of the Church," *Theological Studies* 37 (1976) 652-79; Robert Kress, "The Church as *Communio*: Trinity and Incarnation as the Foundations of Ecclesiology," *The Jurist* 36 (1976) 127-58.

25. See, e.g., J. Bracken, "The Holy Trinity as a Community of Divine Persons," *Heythrop Journal* 15 (1974) 166-82, 257-70; John L. Gresham, "The Social Model of the Trinity and Its Critics," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46 (1993) 325-43; Frank Kirkpatrick, *Communio: A Trinity of Models* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1986); Remi Brague, "On the Christian Model of Unity: The Trinity," *Communio* 10 (1983) 149-66; and George Maloney, "A Trinitarian Church of One in Many: A Mysticism of Community," *Diakonia* 15 (1980) 200-19. Also relevant are critiques of Moltmann's *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* by

Church is further described as "Icon of the Trinity" (nos. 1364-65). The *mission* of the Church is related directly to the missions of Son and Spirit (no. 1412).²⁶ The experience of the Trinity by Filipino Church members is summarized in nos. 1446-47.

THE TRINITY AND CREATION

Contrary to the common notion that only the Father creates, the *CCC* teaches that creation is the common work of the Holy Trinity. Scriptural texts are cited to show how the Father creates through His Word (Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17) in His Spirit. Son and Spirit are the Father's "two hands" in St. Irenaeus' famous expression (nos. 290-92).

The *CFC* also clarifies that the Blessed Trinity is the Creator, drawing on Vatican II as well as Scripture and St. Irenaeus (nos. 318-20). It focuses on this truth in the questions concluding chapter 7 on "Creator of Heaven and Earth" (nos. 354, 359). It also relates the three divine Persons to God's Providence (no. 364).²⁷

THE TRINITY AND THE RESURRECTION

The *CCC* explicitly relates the Resurrection of Christ (no. 648) as well as our future resurrection (no. 989) to the Trinity. This will come as something "new" to many Filipino Catholics, most of whom probably never encountered such an explanation. Linked with this Trinitarian dimension of the resurrection is a brief mention of the Trinity's place in our *final destiny* (nos. 972,

John H. Wright, "The Holy Trinity: Mystery of Salvation," and J. Bracken, "The Trinity as Community of Persons," *Catholic Theological Society of America* 35 (1980) 176-84, 196-201.

26. See, e.g., Carl Braaten, "The Triune God: Source and Model of Christian Unity and Mission," *Missiology: An International Review* 18 (1990) 415-27; Leslie Newigin, *Trinitarian Faith and Today's Mission* (Richmond: John Knox, 1963); Peter Drilling, *Trinity and Ministry* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991); Richard Gaillardetz, "In Service of Communion: A Trinitarian Foundation for Christian Ministry," *Worship* 67 (1993) 418-33.

27. See David A. Walker, "Trinity and Creation in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Thomist* 57 (1993) 443-55; also J. Moltmann, *The Future of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); and Brian Kelly, "Towards a Theology of Redemption," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 57 (1991) 173-84.

1024).²⁸

The *CFC* elaborates more specifically on this dimension of the Trinity's activity. For example, it brings out the Trinity's place in the Church's prayers for the dying (no. 2066), and in administering Holy Viaticum (no. 1839).²⁹ The final goal of all human persons is described as "union with Christ, and through him with the Father, and with one another in the Spirit" (no. 2040).

The Christian idea of our resurrection is clearly distinguished from any kind of Re-incarnation, and explained as "a sharing in the perfect peace and love of the Blessed Trinity" (no. 2047). Finally, the *CFC* draws out the direct relationship between our life of *Grace* now, and our sharing in God's Glory hereafter (no. 2090).

THE TRINITY AND THE LITURGY AND PRAYER

The *CCC* begins its exposition of "The Sacramental Economy" with "The Paschal Mystery in the Time of the Church."³⁰ The

28. Bruno Forte has an interesting section on "The Resurrection as Trinitarian History," in his *Trinity as History* (New York: Alba House, 1989) 20-23.

29. Much has been written on God and suffering, including major theologians such as von Balthasar and Moltmann. See, e.g., text of the International Theological Commission, "The Trinitarian Aspect of the Cross of Jesus or the Problem of the 'Suffering of God'"; J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1974) and his *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); J. Galot, *Dieu souffre-t-il?* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1976); Dominique Gonnet, *Dieu aussi connait la souffrance* (Paris: Cerf, 1990); K. Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God* (London: SCM, 1965).

J. Quinn offers Trinitarian Love as one Christian response to human suffering in "Triune Self-Giving: One Key to the Problem of Suffering," *Thomist* 44 (1980) 173-218; Wilfrid Harrington presents a biblical overview of God suffering in his *The Tears of God. Our Benevolent Creator and Human Suffering* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992).

30. Moltmann must be credited with focusing Trinitarian theology on the Cross, and the Paschal Mystery. See his original article, "The 'Crucified God': God and the Trinity Today," *The God Question, Concilium* vol. 76 (1972) 26-37. See also E. Jüngel, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: God's Being Is in Becoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); John McDade, "The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery," *Heythrop Journal* 29 (1988) 175-91; P. Rogers, "The Paschal Perspective," *The Way Supplement* no. 34 (1978) 123-32. John Macquarrie, in *The Humility of God* (London: SCM, 1978) 54-71, discusses the Passion in terms of each of the divine Persons: The Passion and the Son . . . and the Spirit . . . and the Father.

first article in the latter is "The Liturgy: Work of the Holy Trinity" (no. 1077). It then explains the Father as the liturgy's source and goal (nos. 1077-83), and the role of the glorified Christ in both the earthly and the heavenly liturgies (nos. 1084-90).

Next the *CCC* presents the multiple actions of the Holy Spirit in the *Church's* liturgy,³¹ preparing us for welcoming Christ, recalling and actualizing/making present the mystery of Christ, and putting us in communion with Christ to form his Body (nos. 1091-1109). This Trinitarian nature of the liturgy is developed briefly by the *CCC* in its section on Prayer to the Father, to Jesus, and in the "Come Holy Spirit" (nos. 2664-72). The Trinity is mentioned in explaining the phrase "Our" Father in the Lord's Prayer (nos. 2789, 2801).

The *CFC* presents the liturgy's first essential quality as "Trinitarian and Paschal" (no. 1506), and repeats its Trinitarian basis when calling for "full, conscious, and active participation" (nos. 1514-15). Actually the Trinitarian dimension of all Christian Prayer was explicitly introduced early in the book, in describing Unbelief's challenge to authentic Faith's Trusting and Worshipping (nos. 195-98). It is repeated in chapter 24, "Catholic Prayer and Worship" (nos. 1475, 1496).

But the Trinitarian aspect of Christian Prayer is brought out most often and most clearly in *CFC's* final chapter, the Epilogue on the Lord's Prayer, which functions as a concluding integrating synthesis of the whole catechism. The *CFC* describes the Lord's Prayer as "Trinitarian" (no. 2116):

- in its "You" and "We Petitions" (no. 2131),
 - in relating us to all three divine Persons (no. 2137), and finally
 - as empowered in us by all three divine Persons (no. 2125).
- The prayer's very address "Our Father" is Trinitarian since it

31. Trinitarian theology should obviously ground all "Christian Prayer," both personal and liturgical. C. LaCugna in *God For Us*, 111-42, and John J. O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1988) 145-58, provide valuable overviews, with copious references to many basic sources. See also H. Urs von Balthasar, "Christian Prayer," *Communio* 5 (1973) 15-21; M. Williams, "Trinitarian Prayer," *The Way Supplement* no. 18 (1973) 102-7; L. Dupre, "From Silence to Speech: Negative Theology and Trinitarian Spirituality," *Communio* 11 (1984) 28-34; P. Regan, "Pneumatological and Eschatological Aspects of Liturgical Celebration," *Worship* 51 (1977) 332-50.

relates us to the Father through the special prayer which Christ taught his disciples, who are enlivened from within by the Holy Spirit (no. 2139). "Holy be Your Name" is likewise similarly essentially Trinitarian: the Father's name is hallowed with the Son, through their gift to us of the Holy Spirit (no. 2147).

Likewise in the "We Petitions,"

— "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread" is made with the *Son*, in the *Spirit* who joins us in Christian fellowship, to address our needs to the *Father*. The Spirit also brings us the "Risen Christ present to us in the Bread of life" (no. 2177).

— "Forgive us our Sins as We Forgive Those who Sin against Us" is also Trinitarian since the only way we can possibly respond to Christ's command to forgive without limit (Mt 18: 22) is in accepting the Father's forgiveness, with the Son, through the Spirit's power. Only communion with the Blessed Trinity, lived through the Risen Christ in the Spirit, can make possible this radical forgiveness (no. 2188).

THE TRINITY AND THE SACRAMENTS

The CCC describes the liturgy's words and actions in sacramental celebrations as "an encounter of the children of God with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit" (no. 1153). But it is especially in Baptism and the Eucharist that the Trinity is most evident.³²

Baptism. The baptismal rite, invoking "the Most Holy Trinity" (no. 1278) is described by the CCC as signifying and realizing "the entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity" (no. 1239). The baptized are also described as receiving from the Trinity the gift of sanctifying *Grace*, or the grace of justification, together with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the theological and moral virtues, as aspects of the grace life (no. 1266). *Grace* is a participation in the life of God, introducing us into "the intimacy of the Trin-

32. Besides works on a Trinitarian definition of the ritual sacraments — as distinct from Christ the primordial sacrament and the Church as fundamental sacrament — the major focus of Trinitarian theology in this area has been on the Holy Spirit. See, e.g., Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993); E. Cousins, "Teilhard de Chardin and the Theology of the Holy Spirit," *Cross Currents* 19 (1969) 159-77; Gustave Martelet, "On A Definition of the Holy Spirit Through the Multiform Generation of Christ," *Lumen Vitae* 28 (1973) 54-76.

itarian life" (nos. 1997, 2021).

The *CFC* describes the Trinitarian reality of *Baptism* first in correcting the common mistake of relating Baptism primarily to "wiping away Original Sin," instead of being re-created by sharing the life of the Trinity (nos. 391-92). This is repeated in chapter 25 on "New Life in Christ" which develops what "sharing the very life of the Trinity" really means (nos. 1598, 1615-16), and summarizes it in two questions (nos. 1647, 1654).

The Eucharist. The *CCC* describes the Eucharist as "thanksgiving and praise of the Father (nos. 1359-61), a sacrificial memorial or anamnesis of Christ and of his Body (nos. 1362-72), and as the presence of Christ through the power of the Word and of his Spirit" (nos. 1373-81).

The *CFC* likewise introduces the Eucharist as a "Thanksgiving Worship" that is "Trinitarian" (nos. 1682-83; 1742). Moreover, its Integration section of chapter 26, "Christ as the Living Bread of Life: the Eucharist," shows how the Eucharist as worship of the Holy Trinity unifies and brings together all the major truths of the Christian Faith (no. 1735).³³

The *CFC* goes beyond the *CCC* in bringing out the Trinitarian dimension of other Sacraments as well. One effect of *Confirmation* is described as giving "witness to the love of God the Father, the Risen Incarnate Son, and the Spirit, by loving service of others in the Spirit" (no. 1631). The "God Who Forgives/Reconciles" in the Sacrament of *Penance* is identified as the "Triune God of Love." The respective actions of Father, Christ the Incarnate Son, and the Holy Spirit, are explained in detail (nos. 1773-75). The priestly vocation of all the baptized, and especially of those called to holy *Orders*, is grounded in the Trinity, since the very identity of the priest is ultimately derived from the love of the Father, who sent his Son as High Priest, and empowers by sending the Holy Spirit (nos. 1947-48).

33. See, e.g., the recent work of Bruno Forte, *He Loved Them to the End: Theological Meditations on Love and Eucharist* (Boston: St. Paul Books, 1993). The "classic" on this topic has been M. V. Bernadot, *The Eucharist and the Trinity* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1978).

THE TRINITY AND MORAL/SOCIAL LIFE

The CCC has little to say about the relationship between the Trinity and Christian moral life. Twice it mentions the Trinity in describing the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity (nos. 1812, 1840), but without any detailed development.

The CFC tries to respond to the specific needs of our Philippine religious situation by relating the Trinity to Christian moral teaching (no. 99), to the First Commandment (nos. 883, 885, 889), to the Second Commandment (nos. 898-900), and as "Communion of Persons and Love" to family life (nos. 1015-16, 1054). Likewise in describing the grace of total Christian *conversion*, Father, Son, and Spirit figure prominently (no. 1797). But most fundamental of all, the Christian basis for loving others is grounded in the Father's totally gratuitous love and the missions of Son and Spirit, who have been sent by the Father for our redemption (nos. 966-67).³⁴

Even within the larger area of society in general, theology of the Trinity has had an impact.³⁵

III. PARTICULAR THEMES IN CURRENT TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

There are two current specific areas in which a very animated discussion has been taking place for two decades or more. The first is feminist theology of God,³⁶ from which many individual

34. See, e.g., L. Gregory Jones, *Transformed Judgment: Toward A Trinitarian Account of The Moral Life* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); James Gustafson, "Spiritual Life and Moral Life," *Theology Digest* 19 (1971) 338-48.

35. See, e.g., Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988); Michael Himes and Kenneth Himes, "Rights, Economics, and the Trinity," *Commonweal* 113 (14 March 1986) 137-44; T. D. Parker, "The Political Meaning of the Doctrine of the Trinity," *Journal of Religion* 60 (1980) 165-84; G. Mar Osthathios, *Theology of a Classless Society* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980); Daniel Migliore, *Called to Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980) and *The Power of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); and David E. Jenkins, "The Trinity — Love in the End," in *The Contradiction of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1976) 141-59.

36. See the highly acclaimed work of Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1993). An important overview is offered by Alvin F. Kimel, ed., *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

studies on God as Father have originated.³⁷ As the debate continues, there is a good chance or "re-appropriating the Tradition" in a deeper and more accurate manner.

The second area of special discussion is that of the relationship between Trinitarian theology and world religions.³⁸ Again, there has been manifest progress in awareness regarding Christianity's openness to the world, with ramifications in Missiology and other fields which are beyond the parameters of this article.

CONCLUSION

Since both the *CCC* and the *CFC* contain ample matter on the Holy Trinity, each according to its specific perspective and purpose, they could serve as a basic structure for organizing the multiple revisions taking place in Trinitarian theology. The general aim of this survey article was to introduce the various dimensions of the radical revision in Trinitarian theology which Rahner called for thirty years ago.

The basic premise animating this article and much of the current theological studies in the Blessed Trinity is that the God revealed by Jesus Christ is best understood, loved and related to, through studying in the light of faith the multiple ways He relates to everything and everyone in His creation. In other words, the best approach to the Trinity is to become ever more

1992). See also, e.g., Mary Grey, "The Core of Our Desire: Imaging the Trinity," *Theology* 93 (1990) 363-72.

37. See the standard work of Robert Hamerton-Kelly, *God the Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); also Jean Galot, *Abba, Father, We Long to See Your Face. Theological Insights into the First Person of the Trinity* (New York: Alba House, 1992); *God As Father, Concilium* vol. 143, ed. J. B. Metz and E. Schillebeeckx (New York: Seabury, 1981); and Celine Mangan, *Can We Still Call God "Father"?* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1984).

38. See E. Cousins, "The Trinity and World Religions," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 7 (1970) 476-98; D. Sheridan, "Grounded in the Trinity: Suggestions for a Theology of Relationship to Other Religions," *Thomist* 50 (1986) 260-78; Raimundo Pannikar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (New York: Orbis, 1973); M. D. Bryant, "InterFaith Encounter and Dialogue in a Trinitarian Perspective," in *Christianity and the Wider Ecumenism*, ed. Peter Phan (New York: Paragon House, 1990) 3-19; Rowan Williams, "Trinity and Pluralism," in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, ed. G. D'Costa (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990); Gavin D'Costa, "Christ, the Trinity and Religious Plurality," in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, 16-29.

attentive to the innumerable relationships which the Living God creates and sustains with every being, action and event in our world — Not in some isolated, separated tract entitled “Trinity.” Hopefully, this survey article may lead the reader in that direction.