

It is incredible. (John 16!2-15)

* Friends, the modernity of our age influences us to change our priorities on behalf of new things. Gradually our society shaped us into busy consumers rushing for the better things. As a result, the multitude of selections and the endless choices made us exceptional among other rushing consumers of the Western world. Next to that, the manufacturing industry wants to keep us even more busy with buying new things as well as making us to believe that newest things are always better. I think there is nothing wrong with buying the modern goods that also include fresh ideas and theories. However, the consumption of the new ideas, which seems for us more profound or intelligent in contrast to our traditional beliefs, is not always healthy, and they may even be poison. Look, if we do not keep a tight rein on the appetite, that will cause trouble! On the other hand, the careful examination of what we are going to consume may help us to save our traditional preferences and to enjoy ourselves with a new discovery.

* Once being united with the body of Christ, the Church became in likeness of the One True God who was perceived and believed as the Godhead of the Three Persons. The baptismal formula, *I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, as well as the earliest doxology, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost* prove the idea that the first apostolic Church was the Trinitarian Church. It's of importance to note that the next idea regarding the nature of the True God is not the invention of the 4th century Nicene's fathers, but its initial advent a reader will find throughout many Books of the Bible. On the other hand, the wrong idea that it is sufficient to belief in Jesus Christ apart from the Trinity was consumed and believed by some heterodox denominations. Friends, saying this I am not going to confront our belief with the nontraditional, rather I will just speak the truth.

* Usually the First Sunday after Pentecost is devoted to the Christians who were shaped into the likeness of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit by virtue of their belief and practice. Today we'll again recall this subject by giving a voice to the Wisdom who wants us to be wiser and to fill us with joy.

At this moment we may want to express our gratefulness to the God of our Salvation for making us into His likeness. And now I ask you to pray.

* O adorable God, You manifested and revealed Yourself as one in essence, yet distinct in persons. Today we are permitted to consider this great and blessed mystery; grant your servants to see the manifestation of Your distinctive nature in obedience of our faith and knowledge of Your infinite grace and mercy. We honor, praise and glorify Your sacred name, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end. Amen

* Last year when preaching on the same subject, I noted that the proclamation of the Holy Trinity is the mark of the true church! However, we should not wonder that many people reject the Trinity, rather we might wonder that we are able to bear the knowledge regarding the Trinity. In the same way, the disciples of Jesus Christ would not be able to bear the sacred knowledge of him if he would tell them. *I still have many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now*, (Joh 16:12), said Jesus. From that point in time, the apostles were not strong enough to bear the revelation of him until Jesus manifested himself as God-Man in his resurrection. After that Thomas said, *My Lord and my God!* (Joh 20:28). Significantly, the disciples continued to keep their monotheistic belief in accord with the Jewish confession, *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one*, (Det 6:4), at the same time they understood that Jesus is from God and He is God, (Joh 1:18; 10:30).

* But before “the things that have happened,” (Luk 24:18), Jesus promised that the Father would send another Divine Person, the Holy Spirit as he foretold in (v.13) of our text. *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into whole truth, for he will not speak by himself, but he will speak as much as he hears, and he will tell you what is to come*. According to Jesus’ mind the leadership of the Holy Spirit was not terminated within the apostolic age, rather the historical narrative of the Holy Spirit traces to the solid doctrinal corpus, building the New Testament canon, in the work of arts, architecture, hymnology, liturgical developments and so forth. Along those lines we found the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was enlarged by the post-apostolic fathers through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The most detailed Creed, named The Creed of Athanasius, was written in order to preserve Jesus’ teaching of the Trinity from all imaginable heresies. The text of the Creed ultimately declares, *Whoever does not keep (believe and practice) it (the teaching of the Trinity) whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally*.

* As soon as we’ve heard this frightening idea, we’ve arrived at the turning point, *Whoever does not believe and practice ... will without doubt perish eternally*, said the colloquium of the fifth century theologians. Friends, now here is a question for you and me: Can we bear this frightening declaration, or are we not strong enough? Yes, we can, but theoretically. However, if we follow the fifth century theologians, we need to practice our faith in the Trinity as well, or there is no hope.

* Now we give the explanation as to *what this mean?* Recalling on our weakness for understanding occasionally I’ve remembered (Gen 1:27) as it is, ... God made a man and woman in his own image. Then, another thought came to me as it is, ... after the Fall, the human race lost the image of God. For this reason, the Father sent His Son in our image so that we might be saved and restored unto the image of the Trinity, (Eph 1:9-10). Wow, it is incredible!

* Friends, as soon as we understood this significance, we may want to know “How” God is going to confirm us unto His likeness. Here is the explanation as to “How.”

* According to doctrine, the Trinity is both of supreme substance and of relationship. From this point, to be restored unto God’s likeness means to be restored unto God’s substance and into the personal relationship with Him. With all hope, we believe that our mortal substance will receive God’s immortality only after our resurrection; BUT the restoration to the relationship has already been set up! The Trinity works in and through us by shaping our relationship similar to what eternally exists within the Godhead.

* The relationship within the Godhead is identified in four characteristics – equality, submission, deference, and intimacy. I borrowed this mindset from Stephen Seamands in his book, *Ministry in the Image of God*. These four characteristics received solid support from the Scripture, and they are trustfully adapted for further explanation.

* In order to be conformed into God’s likeness, we need to practice the same characteristics – equality, submission, deference and intimacy in building our relationship Guess with whom? With the Holy Trinity, of course. Yes, but it begins between you and the members of your congregation. Accordingly the apostle John’s mind, *If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen, (1Jn 4:20)*. The church is the place where God grows us in his image in a natural way. The fellowship on the basis of the given model needs to be practiced among us; there is only one way how God builds his image in us. Surely this idea is worthy to adapt and practice, even though it is a very old.

* Unfortunately for this culture in view of its hyper individualism that emphasizes independence, free of obligation and commitment, the growing in the Image of God has never been easy. Hopefully, we are not to be any more hyper individualists but rather Christians; that is why we love our sisters and brothers as Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, loves us.

* Friends, the outcome of God’s work in us is incredibly significant; *For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed, (1Co 15:52)*. It’s still hard to bear, but despite this, we’ll conform unto likeness of the Sacred Trinity, substantially and relatively becoming one in substance and character, God without end, you and me.

Amen.

Beloved in the Lord, have joy with this idea and it is free

Amen

