

Sunday Message from Fr William for the Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year 2023

The 'Other World' continued – Yes, time to bring in the Spirit!

When, in the 'other world', the Father expresses himself, this self-expression is so complete that it results in a perfect image of himself. And because the Father is infinite, the image is infinite too. This is the Son. He is the 'image' of the Father (*Colossians 2:9*). He is the exact 'expression' of the Father (*Hebrews 1:3*). Or as the Son himself puts it, 'To have seen me is to have seen the Father.' (*John 14:9*). Then from this position of infinite Freedom, the Son gives himself back to the Father in a self-giving of infinite Love. Yes, in the 'other world', there is a relationship of infinite Love between Father and Son.

We have this word 'ecstasy', which literally means 'standing outside oneself', or 'transcending oneself'. In this world the act of self-giving, which is the essence of love, is an act of transcending oneself. The word 'ecstasy' does not begin to do justice to the infinite Love between Father and Son in the 'other world', but it may give some idea of the infinite happiness and infinite delight of this Love.

The Father loves the Son, giving him being/existence, in an infinite act of self-giving. The Son in return loves the Father in an infinite, and reciprocal, act of self-giving. And because this Love between Father and Son is so full, so complete a gift of themselves, it is nothing less than a Third Person between Father and Son. This is the Spirit. And because the Father and the Son are infinite, the Spirit too is infinite. The Spirit is the infinite Love between Father and Son. He's also a person.

Although the Son is the 'image' of the Father, an 'exact expression' of his nature, the Son is also different from the Father, infinitely different. The Spirit is a bridge of Love that spans this infinite difference between the Father and the Son. Here's now completing an earlier quotation from the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar: 'Every world can only have its place within the difference between the Father and the Son, a difference which is both held open and bridged over by the Spirit.' (*Theodramatik III*).

The infinite going forth of the Son from the Father, and his infinite return, 'held open and bridged over by the Spirit', has sometimes been described as the 'dance' of the Trinity. Such is the dynamism of their life in the 'other world'. There are in fact many reflections in this world of that dynamic life of the Trinity: the alternation between dissonance and consonance in music; the journey into love between two people ever deepened by forgiveness and reconciliation; every kind of alternation between separation and coming together; or that beautiful love duet called the 'Song of Songs' that portrays the lovers continually losing each other, then finding each other again. Every reflection in this world of that dynamic life of the Trinity is a kind of 'dance'.

Next, how we human beings may participate in this dynamic life of the Trinity, may be taken up into this ecstatic dance.

to be continued...



Twenty-Second Sunday of
the Year, 3 September 2023