

God: A Community of Love Meditation

Speaker: A Person of Mature Christian Spirituality

Length: 30 minutes (with song)

Setting: The candidates have lived through a profound communal experience of “dying” (metanoia) through the process of “Die Day.” And having experienced the warm sharing in the unfolding of the TEC community around them, interspersed with the flow of the meditations, they have come to a sense in faith awareness that Jesus is truly their friend who loves them very deeply personally. They renewed their Baptismal Promises in the Paschal Vigil the night before, and have participated in the Resurrection Prayer Service a short time ago. Now is the moment **when we strive to bring the mystery of Christ into focus so that our own personal mystery finds meaning within Him.**

This meditation is designed to open up for them the magnificent mystery of the full love of God Jesus brings to us. To encounter Christ is to know Jesus not only in his person as he walked the earth, but to know him as only he could reveal himself to us in the full splendor of his life as God. **This meditation strives to enter into the divine mystery through the heart of Christ** as he has shared his relationship with his Father and the Holy Spirit with whom he lives in intimate communion within an eternal embrace. The love that Jesus can share with us how it is to live within this joyful circle of love. Jesus invites you and me to come to know God’s living love as he experienced it.

We find ourselves at this moment standing in the presence of the resurrected Christ who comes into our midst in his transformed humanity. **This is the moment towards which all his life among us had be converging.** It is also the moment in which the fullness of his self-gift finds it expression. It is the moment in which the full flow of the love of his Father who raised him up for us, together with the Holy Spirit, achieves a breakthrough into our lives and penetrates our hearts. **In the words of St. Paul we are invited to live “in Christ.”**

Our entry into this profound mystery is through the heart of Christ. He both lived and constantly shared a deep personal relationship with his father. In that relationship he found his identity; his entire life was spent in responding to the love the Father had for him. Enveloped in that warm embrace he found it easy to share his gift-love with all who were fortunate enough to come into his presence. His final and life-defining act of surrendering himself into the hands of his Father on the cross was the highest realization of their mutual love and trust of one another. The scriptures tell us that it was the Father who raised him up through the Holy Spirit and made him the core of his plan to draw the human family into the circle of their love. We too, are included in their embrace.

Jesus also revealed to us how his heart and the heart of the Holy Spirit beat in such unison it was difficult at times to discern who was doing some work. The Holy Spirit clothed Jesus with his humanity, anointed him with his sense of mission, was his constant companion, and was sent by Jesus and his Father to continue the work Jesus had done, enlightening the minds and continually inspiring the hearts of those who open themselves to Christ’s love. He enables the spirit of Jesus to dwell in the hearts of his faithful.

This meditation is the joyful celebration and relishing of the full Christ we encounter in the love circle of the tri-personal God. It is meant to be a delightful experience of the full dimension of his person. As the depth and breadth of the God-love that sustains his heart and flows in and through him to us, the mystery of who we are in God's mystery comes home to us. The end result of this meditation in the minds and hearts of the youth on the TEC weekend should be: How good it is to be here. I am the beloved brother/sister of Jesus, the adopted son/daughter of God. This is my ultimate value as a human person; it is the full realization of my vocation. **I have been invited to walk in companionship with a God who loves me so much it took three hearts to embrace me.**

MANNER OF APPROACH

The manner in which this meditation is shared with the youth calls for an awareness in the speaker of the possible options in the manner of its presentation and the reasons why the options which follow have been chosen as essential to the purpose of the meditation. **The purpose of the meditation in shaping the faith awareness in the candidates is to bring them a strong personal conviction that God loves them in Jesus personally to such a degree the tri-personal God draws them into the intimate circle of God's life and love.**

The first important point that must be made is that this is NOT a class on the Doctrine of the Trinity. We are not trying to create theologians. We are striving here to present our God of love as revealed in Jesus in a highly personal way. Jesus revealed God as a relational God both within the Divine communion and in all God's initiatives to reestablish his love-bond with human hearts. Another title might read: How God Graces Our Lives with his three-fold love. The image of God we strive to present to the faith awareness of the youth is the God of Grace.

This does not mean that we abandon the doctrine on the Trinity, rather we use it as a framework within which we prayerfully portray in graced human terms how the love of God touches our lives and brings alive within us an awareness of who we are. In trying to bring home to the candidates this truth in a manner they can easily grasp we lay before them the magnificent display of the gifts God bestowed upon us as a testimony to how he holds us in his love.

We do this by not by approaching the mystery (ad intra) from the inside out, as it were, by striving to share how the three persons in God live in an eternal embrace of life and love. (This is the traditional Scholastic approach). But rather we approach the mystery of God in so far as the Divine life is active in our world—touches our personal lives. (This is the manner in which the Bishops in Vatican II chose to unfold the mystery of the Trinity.) **It is not only a matter of God-with-God, but of God-with-us.** What is more, given all these insights, it is still possible that the speaker might talk about God rather than speak from their own personal graced love relationship with God. It is the difference between talking about some persona in general, and sharing about someone whom we love. Hence, the kind of material used in the presentation of this Meditation should be gathered from our own personal prayerful reflection of the graced moments when we became aware of the living-loving presence of God in our world. **St. Therese, the Little Flower, describes prayer as “the surge of the heart when it recognizes the presence of love.” (God Moments)**

To clothe the diving truth with warmth and life, it might be well to use some of the Ignatian form of reflective prayer which makes good use of the imagination. It is a matter of recreating real life

experiences of Jesus and holding them up for admiration and imitation. It is not the fabrication of figments of our imagination. It is clothing the truth with images that enable us to experience the encounter with Christ here and now in our own personal faith reflection. The Ignatian guidelines state that **“This form of prayer should be palpable (an experience we can touch and feel), directive (evoking a response), and an affair of the heart. In it we are drawn to imitate the self-emptying of God’s love. We make God’s love personally understandable.”**

Since the youth are **culturally conditioned to see all of the created world as fact, not as a gift**, and are thus locked out of perceiving it as a mystery, the speaker should use the Augustinian approach that sees all of creation as a sacrament revealing the presence of a God who loves us. In presenting the personal mission of God the Father as creator he/she should make broad use of images gleaned from the lavish beauty of the world, all seen as gifts. In this way the speaker draws the candidates to reinterpret their life experiences within the framework of their faith vision.

In presenting the grace-life communicated by Jesus in his resurrection, through the Holy Spirit, the speaker should draw upon examples showing how life came together in a unique way in these instances because of the presence of God’s love active in human hearts. It is like seeing the sun’s presence by the warmth and light that touches our cheek. If the examples are well chosen, they will also serve to illustrate how God continues to reveal himself in our personal experiences of the Paschal Mystery – a reliving of the sorrow and joy of Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection through which our hearts are progressively refashioned in his image.

Finally, the speaker concludes by sharing that all of this magnificent mystery became part of their life at the moment of Baptism. Baptism is not something we do for God. It is the willingness to open our heart to God who loves us so deeply. God’s love is a creative and expansive love. He not only shares his life with us, he gives us the ability to share his life with others. We are members of the family of God. We are brothers and sisters of Christ who chose to make us the sons and daughters of God. We are persons who are invited to walk the earth in companionship with our God.

Scriptural Texts:

- John 10:10
- 1John 4:16
- John 1:18
- John 14:23
- Romans 5:5
- John 15:11

OUTLINE

1. Speaker recalls the experiences of last night in the Paschal Vigil (renewal of Baptismal Promises) and the morning (Resurrection Service). Yesterday we shared and lived the Paschal Mystery of Jesus in community. **Today we stand at the very heart of this mystery, the dynamic surge of love drawn from the Heart of God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to draw us into a circle of God’s communion.** Jesus in his Resurrection revealed himself to be not only God-with-us but also God-with-God. Those who knew him as a friend, now see the full mystery of his person radiantly present. He is also their Lord in whom the powerful love of his Father and the Holy Spirit enjoy an intimate and eternal love-bond with him.

2. **Review the great capacity for friendship that Jesus showed in his life among us.** Jesus had a deep personal, intimate love for all of his disciples.

- He looked upon the rich young man and he loved him because of his goodness.
- He had a special love for Mary Magdalene. It was evident in his tone of voice.
- He had a special love for Peter, Do you love me? (philia, friendship)
- He had a very special love for John, the youngest of his disciples. John was a stand in for all of us
- He had a special love for children – held them in his arms and blessed them
- He had a special love for his mother, Mary.

Jesus is the sacrament of God in our midst. He entered into our familiar world on common ground with us to unfold for us the full mystery of God's life and love for us. Jesus as our friend was a person of warmth and great depth. He brought an entirely new form of love into the world, gift love: Loving others passionately without any hope of return. His was a life-giving love.

3. **Jesus is our window to God.** St Augustine said: "The greatest act of love of Jesus for us was his revelation of the inner life of God." We are dealing with a profound mystery. But our lives too are mysteries. We constantly discover new things about ourselves as our life unfolds. In friendship and love there is a constant sharing at a deeper level. **To whom do we belong;** that is who we are. We only reveal the secret of who we are only to those who love us. Jesus followed the same pattern in revealing how his heart and the heart of his Father and the Holy Spirit were bonded together in life and love. **He shared with us the special ways in which each of them share their lover for us in a personal way – yet all their love for us comes from their three hearts beating as one** (The Holy Trinity).
4. **Jesus enjoyed a very special love for his Father and his Father for him.** There was an abiding intimacy between them. Contrast the image of the Father in the Old Testament and the image Jesus presents of his Father. (Sketch briefly our relationship with our human fathers.) San the world and present a panoramic vision of all that God the Father has done for us in laying out the world and in our own personal formation and continued care. Show how Jesus wants to share his Father with us.
5. **Jesus enjoyed and intimate bond of love and life with the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit was involved in his incarnation, was his soul-mate during all of his life on earth, and was present in Jesus when he announced his mission at the synagogue at Nazareth. The Holy Spirit was Jesus' final gift to us. Continues to inspire and instruct our hearts enabling us to live in intimate union with the full mystery of God in Jesus.
6. **The whole powerful dynamic flow of living love from the communion of the hearts of the tri-personal God reached its fullest expression in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus.** God's divine plan whereby God chose to take the initiative in laying his heart next to our human hearts was realized in the incarnation of God's Son. Even when human

sinfulness puts that love on a cross to bleed to death, God's love raised him up for us in the full splendor of his divinity, a life-giving spirit. God redeemed us by out-loving us. (**Show how this mystery is expressed in the sign of the cross**).

7. **Jesus established the Sacrament of Baptism as the entry point into the living love of God.** St. Paul tells us we were “plunged into the life and love of God,” but only after we responded CREDO, (I give my heart to God). We are the anointed of God.

- We are the beloved of God.
- We are configured with Christ.
- We are the image of God – to be revealed more clearly in our love relationship with Christ our brother.

8. **Agape love calls us to:**

- **Love as God loves**
- Love that is constantly expanding
- A bonding love that calls us together as a family
- **We are meant to be other's Christ.**

It is very important that the speaker in both the meditation: God: A Community of Love and Church: People of God read the “Flow of the Covenant Rite Sequence of Day Two found in Section V, Pages 22-27 for a clear understanding of how these two meditations and the Covenant Rite flow together.