

"I believe in God the Father" SUMMARY REVIEW

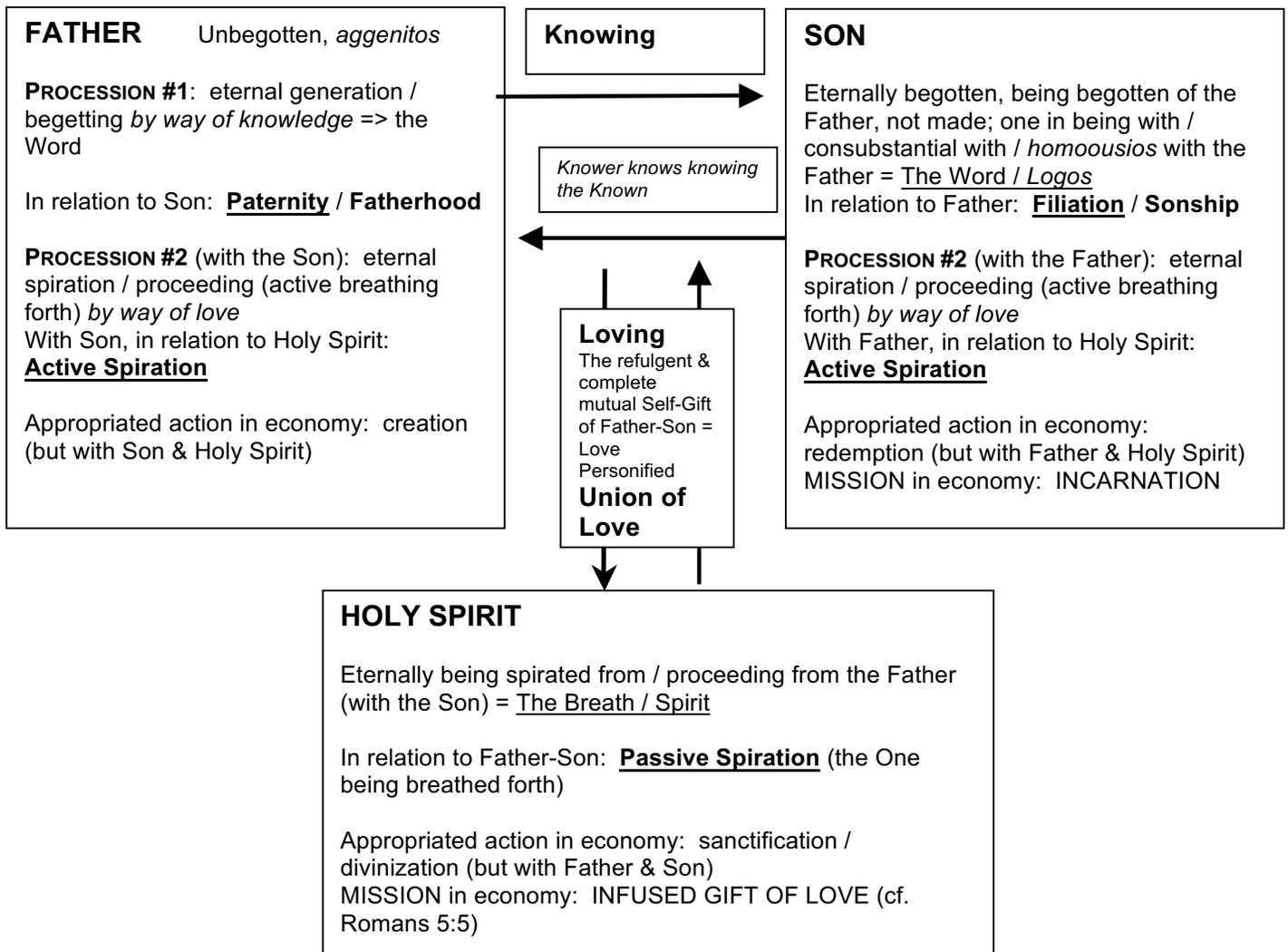
CCC234 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith".⁵⁶ The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin".⁵⁷

Why the great concern with accuracy (even if insufficient to grasp the whole)?

- 1) To see more clearly, love more dearly, follow more nearly
(“we love what we know and seek to know the One we love”)
- 2) Salvation! The Journey *from* diminishment, sin, death, lack of freedom, narcissism...
unto Blessing, happiness, divinization, fulfillment, God-likeness, self-gift.

To an infant, “mother” is simply MILK, warmth, and smiles.

To a mature man, Mother is Source of Life and one we love...and so much more.



OVER

- Knowing & Loving, Fatherhood, Sonship, Spiration, Being Spirated are all logical distinctions, but there is no time or space (or any limits within or without) in the Triune Godhead. Father does not precede Son, nor do Father and Son precede Spirit. The processions are infinite, on-going, without beginning or end, eternal, simultaneous. And the perfections and attributes of God (almighty, all-knowing, just, merciful, true, loving, etc) are all equivalent to one another: God's love is justice & mercy & truth and might....

- The Father lacks nothing that the Son or Spirit are, the Son lacks nothing that the Father and Spirit are, the Spirit lacks nothing that the Father and Son are. Father is God whole and entire, Son is God whole and entire, Spirit is God whole and entire.

- But Father is not Son or Spirit, Son is not Father or Spirit, Spirit is not Father or Son. Father, Son, Spirit are not simply appearances or modes or dimensions of God. They are and each IS, GOD. But there are not three "Almighties."

- God IS; there is Oneness of Divine Nature. But the Knowing and Loving within God (or, the Knowing and Loving that God is) are so complete and without limit that Knowing and Loving each communicate the Fullness of All that God IS: To Know is Fatherhood-Sonship; To Love is Spiration or Breathing Forth Self as Gift.

Without Father, Son, Spirit, God is NOT Knowing and Loving...but He Is Knowing & Loving, so...

- God is **ONE in nature** / essence / substance.

- God is **THREE in persons** / *hypostases*.

What makes it all so difficult to conceive of is that we are dealing with in-finite Divine Nature (from which all other natures take their being or is-ness and are therefore limited and are, at least in theory, rather imaginable and comprehensible by our finite intellects). God IS IS-ness. Moreover, we can imagine no other be-ing for which multiple persons are a single nature *at the same time*; all other be-ings and persons are single separate instantiations of a nature: one person, one nature; one nature instantiated, one separate being or person here. (We will encounter another dimension of this Mystery when we explore the Incarnate Word, One Person with two natures).

- **The Persons are in relation to one another; the relation is precisely what constitutes them as Persons.** We therefore say they are *subsistent relations* (persons). The three subsistent relations (persons) are in four *real relations*: Father to Son, Son to Father, Father-Son to Spirit, and Spirit to Father-Son. "Father-Son" is a source of real relation but is not a person, just as *you* (a person) can relate to "Johnson & Son, Attorneys at Law" but "Johnson & Son, Attorneys at Law" is not a single person even though "it" really relates to you, and "it" is constituted by the persons, Johnson and his son, who are likewise in a real relation with one another and who together constitute the entity, as it were, that you relate to. Got it?

- **In the economy**, the Spirit is the last to be revealed (see CCC 243, 687-690). However, the Spirit is the first "at work" in our experience, the Son is Incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is *necessary* to attest to the Son. Moreover, we are saved by love, and we can only love Love by being divinized by the Spirit of Love, for "God is Love" who first loved us (I John 4).

- At the same time, the Son is the one whose mission is to reveal clearly the Father; apart from the Son, we *cannot* know the Father. The Son IS the window into Reality; He makes concrete the Self-Gift of God. In his humanity, all that humanity is is saved.

- Because God is One, there is one principle of action. Therefore, though we speak of distinct missions and appropriated actions, God Father, Son, & Spirit are all at work in creation, redemption, and sanctification, and Incarnation and Infusion of Love are likewise a cooperation of the three Persons.

- **Key paragraphs from Lesson #3: 197, 206-207, 221, 234, 236, 257-260.**

On the understanding of the dogma: 232-256. To understand, gaze on Him.