

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Disciple whom Jesus loved, upon whom the tongues of fire lit fifty days after the resurrection of His Lord, the same John teaches the Church of the Trinity that makes Her Holy. He teaches you, that you might know God aright.

He desires that you know that God is love. But that love, God's love, has taken concrete form. It is not an ethereal emotion. It is seen, enfleshed, in the gift of Jesus Christ for you. If you would know the love of the Father, look at the Son. See the perfect Sacrifice given for you.

It is not that you loved God. Quite the contrary. By your transgressions, you have confessed that you love yourself most. The love of fallen men is not like the love of God. The love of men is conditional. It is fleeting. It is given and withheld as it benefits the sinner. It is interspersed with anger and hatred. In your transgressions, in the transgressions of all men, a destructive love is seen.

The love fallen men extend is a strange love that includes hurting those around them. It is love so imperfect it barely merits being called love. It is impatient, unkind, envious, self-parading, proud, rude, self-serving, frequently angry, and keeps track of wrongs. While it is the best that sinners can muster, even the love of the fallen is transgression in God's sight.

But God's love is perfect. It is perfect from its inception, which is of eternity. There was never a time when He was not – and there was never a time when His love was not. That timeless, perfect love He extends to you. He extends it to you first, without any merit or worthiness on your part. He extends it to you in His Son. In love, God gave His only-begotten Son.

He gave Him over to death to save you by the forgiveness of your sins. He is your propitiation, the Sacrifice that appeases God's wrath for you. Believing in Him, your sins are forgiven.

God's perfect love is shown you by the truth that He abides in you. And by this you know that you abide in Him: because He has given you of His Spirit. The Spirit is the mark of your salvation, the deposit on your eternal redemption. So is God's love perfected in you, dear Christian, for the Father sent the Son for you, and the Spirit that proceeds from them dwells in you.

So you may have boldness each day, but especially in the day of judgment. There is no fear in love. Perfect love, God's love for you in Christ Jesus, casts out all fear. And that love, God's love, fills you and overflows to those around you. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. And He in whom God abides lives forever.

So God's great love for you is shown in the inception of that eternal life – Holy Baptism, rebirth from above. And so does God show you His great love for you as He forgives your sins in Holy Absolution, where He pronounces you to be sinless as His perfect Son is sinless. And this day, as an expression of His boundless love, His unconditional love, He gives you to eat of His Body and Blood, that you be one with the Father, and with the Son, one with the whole Christian Church, in the Unity of the Holy Spirit. By that Spirit, we know and believe the love that God has for us.

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