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## The Holy Spirit

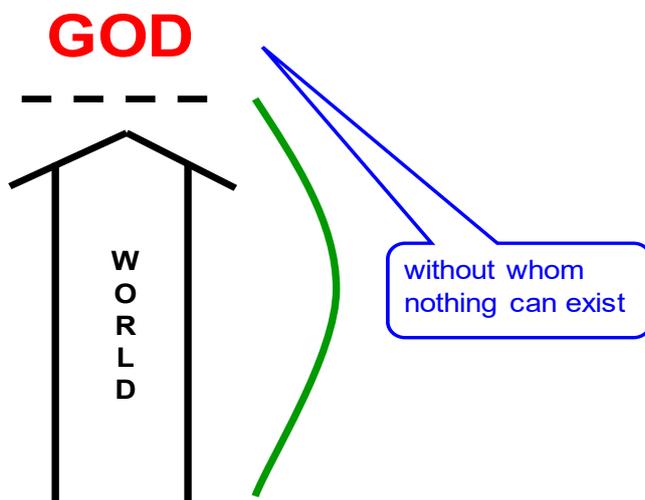
### The WE of God for and in US

The Christian message says that it is “God’s word”. Then one must first ask: Who are you talking about? Especially since you yourselves use to say that God is “incomprehensible”. He does not fall “under concepts”.

#### *God is “without whom nothing is”*

The Creed begins with the words: “I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth. Does this mean, “I believe that God is the Creator of heaven and earth”? Then we would have to already know who God is, and would only additionally say of him that he is the Creator of heaven and earth. In reality, Creator of heaven and earth is the “definition” of God for reason: Everything that exists at all and is the object of our experience is the reason for talking about God. We do not first know who God is and then claim that we are created by Him. It is the other way around. We comprehend of God only that which is different from him, but refers to him. He is “without Whom nothing is. „Whom“ here is relative pronoun and not question-word, because author of a word cannot be something, but only someone. What does “being created out of nothing” mean? For it one can also say positively: totally or restless being created. The

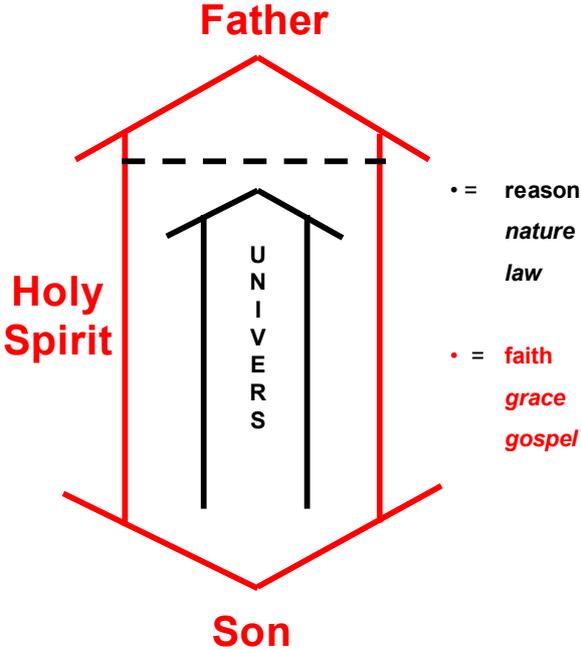
being of the world and its being created is one and the same reality. If we could eliminate our being created (what we cannot do), nothing would remain of us. For “being created out of nothing” one can then also say “being completely related to .../ in complete difference from ...”. We call the whereto of this relation “God”. The world is in every moment what would not be without God. “Being created out of nothing” is not



limited to the origin of something, but applies to every moment of its existence. Even so-called coincidence or evolution are created from nothing. It includes all conceivable ways of origin of the world and all its states. The universe and everything in it can only be described consistently and without logic contradiction if being created is logically implied in this description. This does not mean that one could “use” God for the explanation of the world. The world is not explained with God, but with its being created, thus with its character of indication to God, which is just not God Himself. The whole being of the world is a not-being-capable of existing without God. In everything in which the world or parts of it differ from nothing, they are in their whole reality in such a way that they would not be without God.

Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033-1109) expresses this in two related statements regarding God: 1) “God is greater than all that can be thought.” Thus, He cannot be thought in Himself. 2) “Nothing greater than God can be thought.” The latter is only a statement about the world in its reference character to God: God plus the world are no more than God. An image for this: the light of a candle reflected from the walls of a room mirrored on all sides is by no means an additional light to that of the candle.

Paradoxically, this understanding of God represents the greatest objection imaginable to the talk of a “Word of God.” This God “dwells in inaccessible light” (1 Tim 6:16). Being created is a one-sided real relation of the world to God. How then can communion with God (for that is what the Christian message is about) be spoken about at all in an understandable way?

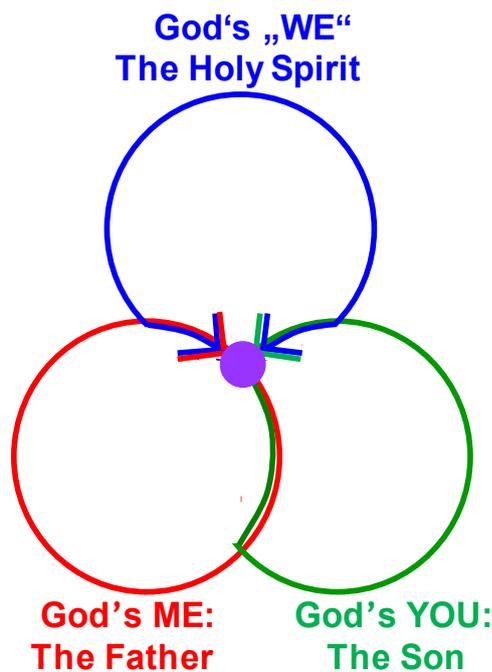


**The Trinity of God.**

The Christian message proclaims that the world is created from the beginning in the eternal love between the Father and the Son, who is the Holy Spirit. We speak of three persons of the one God, in order to proclaim communion with God (which is what all real religions are about), at last definitely and universally understandable.

By “person” the Christian message understands the self-presence of a spiritual (= cognising and willing) reality, thus something like a circularly perfect returning relation of this reality to it-

self This may be illustrated with the following graph:



The Father is without origin, the Son has His origin in the Father, and the Holy Spirit is originated 1) in the Father, 2) in the Father through the Son, 3) thus in the Father and the Son. 4) The Son has it alone from the Father to be together with the Father one origin of the Holy Spirit. 5) Therefore, the Father is the sole ultimate origin of the Holy Spirit. The Eastern Churches attach so much importance to this; but it is not at all contrary to the fact that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son”, but founds it.

Because we are created within this eternal love between the Father and the Son from the beginning, we have access to the Father from his Son in the Holy Spirit. God hears and re-

sponds to the voice of his Son in our prayers, and we love him with the same love with which he loves us: “We cry out ‘Abba, Father!’ in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 8:15), and the Holy Spirit “cries out in us ‘Abba Father!’” (Gal 4:8). Faith is being filled with the Holy Spirit. For seriously “no one can say “Lord is Jesus!’ except in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3).

If this is too high for you, consider, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him ...” (1 Cor 2:9): this is what God gives us precisely with and in our love for Him, namely Himself. What does it mean to love God “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:33)? It means to be in faith as that trust in Him which frees us from any form of world idolatry or despair of the world and from being subject to the power of fear for ourselves. Therein also consists our salvation from a situation still without faith (“original sin”). For faith is not already innate.

### ***The basic dogmas of the church***

According to Gal 4:4, God *sent* his Son (namely, so that he could proclaim to us in human word how we can have communion with God in truth). And in the same passage Paul says (Gal 4:6), God has *sent* the Holy Spirit into our hearts. He is the one who unites us to Christ, to the Father, and to one another. And as for the Son, one can speak of his “incarnation”, in regard to the Holy Spirit one could speak of “becoming church” (cf. Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, n. 8,1). Church is the ongoing event of the transmission of the Word of God. The Church is „holy“ only insofar as she passes on this Word filled with the Holy Spirit.

***There are three basic dogmatic formulas:***

1. God is *three persons in one nature* (of the one being God)
2. Jesus Christ is *one person in two natures*, (being God and being man, both without mixture with each other and without separation from each other, that is to say different from each other, but connected with each other by the relation of his divine person (divine self-presence).
3. The Holy Spirit is *one person in many persons*. As the infinite love between the Father and the Son, and as their common We, he also unites people to the Father and the Son and to each other (cf. II Vatican Council, Constitution of the Church). Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, n. 7,6: „one and the same in head and members“).

From this third basic dogmatic formula, the images for the Church become understandable: The Church is “*Body of Christ*” because the Holy Spirit is *one* in the many. He is like the soul of this body. The Church is called „*People of God*“ because the Holy Spirit is *one in the many*, each human person preserving its own responsibility and not just being like cogs in a larger whole. And finally, the Church is called „*Bride of Christ*“ because the Holy Spirit is differently in Christ, who gives us the Holy Spirit, and differently in us who receive the Holy Spirit as God’s grace for us. To be a Christian (“to believe” in the sense of the Christian message) is to have the Spirit of Jesus and to live by His Spirit.

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***The Holy Spirit in the Sacraments***

In our Eucharistic celebration, we invoke the Holy Spirit upon the gifts (epiclesis = invocation upon ...), followed by the institution narrative itself, and then the prayer of remembrance („anamnesis“) of the Lord's death and resurrection; this ends with the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the entire celebrating community. In the German parish Saint Paul in Brussels , I have always sung „Mystery of Faith“ only after this coherent whole, because it refers precisely to this whole.

In Confirmation, according to Thomas Aquinas, we receive the Holy Spirit to “like officially” [“quasi ex officio”] bear witness to Christ with the Word. It is the explicit consecration to the common priesthood of all believers.

Consecration to the ministry in the Church also occurs as a request for the Holy Spirit to carry out this ministry. The ministry in the church in relation to the congregation underlines that also the faith of all together still “comes from listening” (Rom 10:17) and is not to be reinvented.

On “infallibility” and “assistance of the Holy Spirit”: Christian faith can be proclaimed, by whom-ever, only with the claim to reliability. For the Christian message is itself the happening of what it talks about: self-communication of God, and therefore „true by itself“. It is impossible to produce statements that could be understood as God's self-communication and yet would be false. In so far as the Holy Scriptures proclaim the participation in the Spirit of Jesus, they are themselves „inspired“, Spirit-filled.

According to the Church Constitution of Vatican II n. 12,1 the „totality of believers“ cannot err in faith. The Christian message is recognized as the real „Word of God“ only in faith as the being filled of the believers by the Holy Spirit in connection with each other, but it is not *made* the Word of God only by the faith of the Church. „Of itself“, in any case, according to the definition of Vatican I, only the statements of faith themselves can be infallible, and that by their content.

And the word at the anointing of the sick is: “Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

The “fruits of the Holy Spirit” for us are: „love, joy, peace, endurance, kindness, righteousness, faith, gentleness, restraint“ (Gal 5:22f). And: „Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.“(2 Cor 3,17)