

DIOCESE OF BOISE

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CATECHETICAL LEADERSHIP



The Office of Religious Education and Catechetical Leadership supports the mission of the Diocese of Boise by assisting the Bishop in carrying out his role as the chief catechist of the diocese.

Catechist Certification Fundamental Theology



Kathy Barkdull, Presenter

Opening Prayer

As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.

My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night, as they ask daily, “Where is your God?”

Those times I recall as I pour out my soul, when I went with them to the house of God, amid loud cries of thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival.

Why are you downcast my soul; why do you groan within me?

Wait for God, whom I shall praise again, my savior and my God.

Amen.

Ps 42:2-6

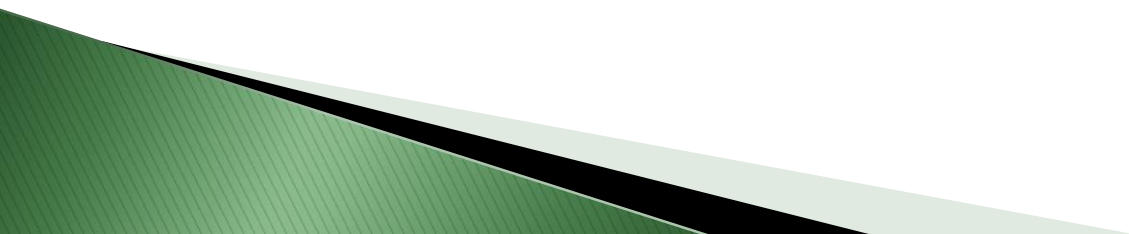
Reflection

How do you search for God?

What is Theology?

Theology is “the study of God.”

Theology is “faith seeking understanding.”



A Personal Encounter with God



Theology & Economy

“Theology” refers to the mystery of God’s inmost life within the Blessed Trinity and “economy” to all the works by which God reveals himself and communicates his life. Through the economy the theology is revealed to us; but conversely, the theology illuminates the whole economy. God’s works reveal who he is in himself; the mystery of his inmost being enlightens our understanding of all his works. So it is, analogously among human persons. A person discloses himself in his actions, and the better we know a person, the better we understand his actions.

CCC 236

Who is God?

Baltimore Catechism: “God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.”

“God made us to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in heaven.”

CCC: “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life.”

Our Desire for God



The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself.

CCC 27



Paths in which to know God:

- Through Creation
- The Human Person

Greatest and Most Essential Path to God





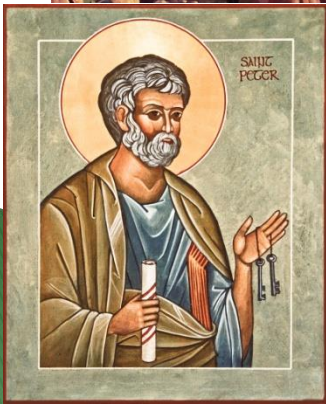
He called Abraham to make of him a great nation, a chosen people through whom salvation would come to the world.



He revealed himself to Moses as “I am who am” – the source of all that is.

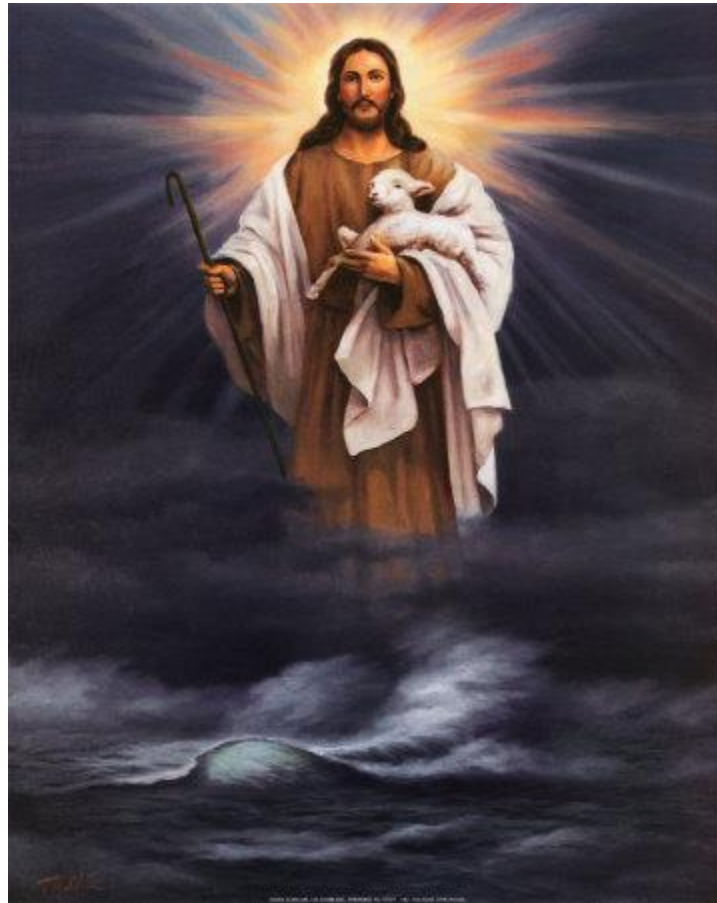


The prophets reflected on God’s actions to make the nature of God clearer.




He called Peter “the Rock” upon which he would build his Church.

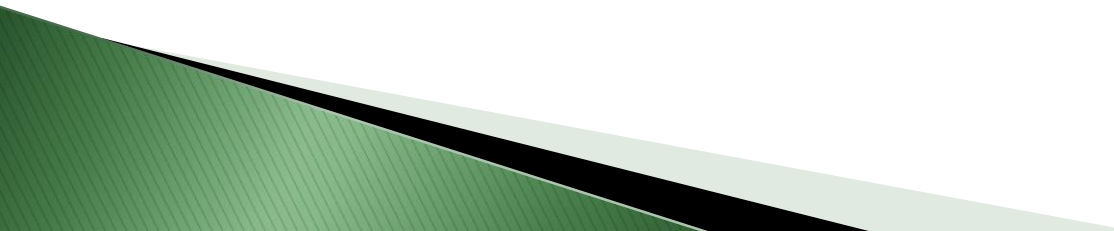
The Ultimate Revelation



Revelation is:

- ▶ A bridge between God and Humans.
 - ▶ The knowledge that God desires to have an intimate relationship with all His people.
 - ▶ The act of God forming a covenant with his people.
 - ▶ The means for transformative change.
 - ▶ Transmitted to us by the Apostles, Tradition and Scripture.
 - ▶ A lifelong process.
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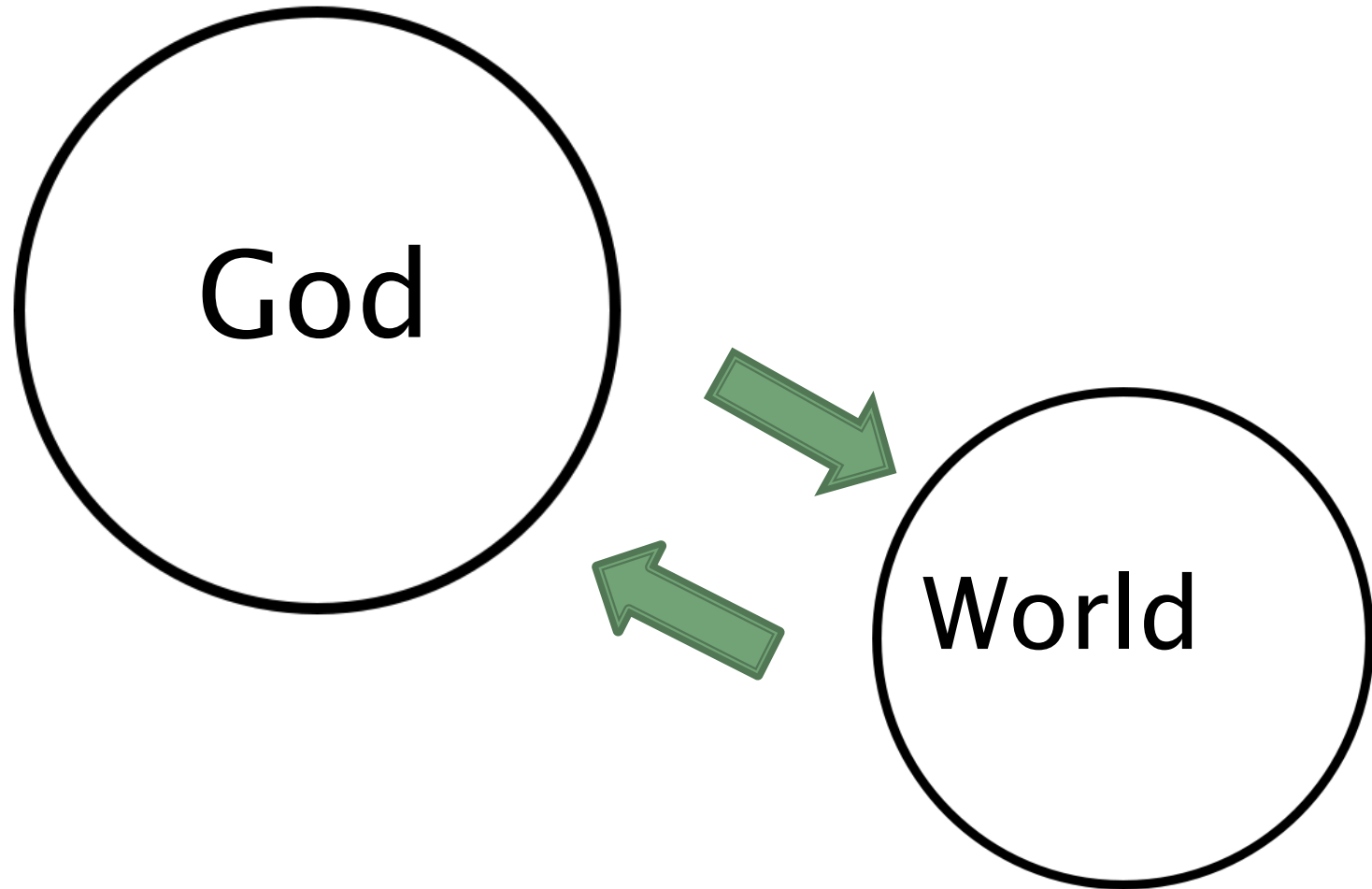
How do we Experience God?

- ▶ In the silence of prayer.
 - ▶ The beauty of nature.
 - ▶ The intimacy of friendship and love.
 - ▶ Through tragedy, suffering, helplessness or injustice.
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Our Image of God

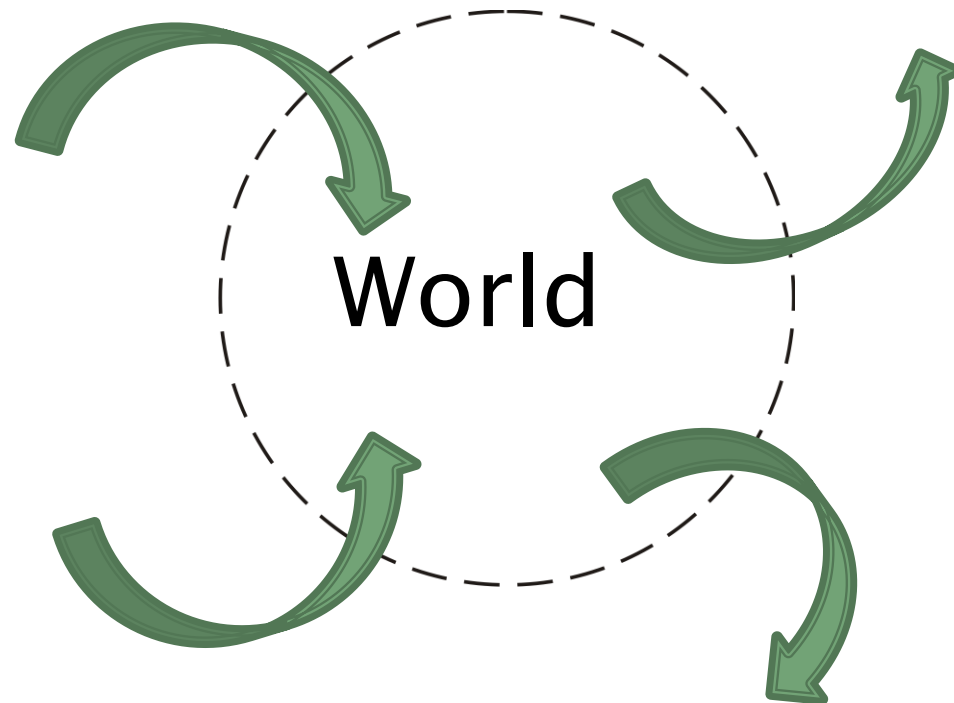


God as Supreme Being



God as the Dynamism of Love

God



God is Holy Mystery

It is right and just to sing to You, to bless You, to praise You, to thank You, to worship You – for You are God ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, always existing and ever the same, You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit.

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

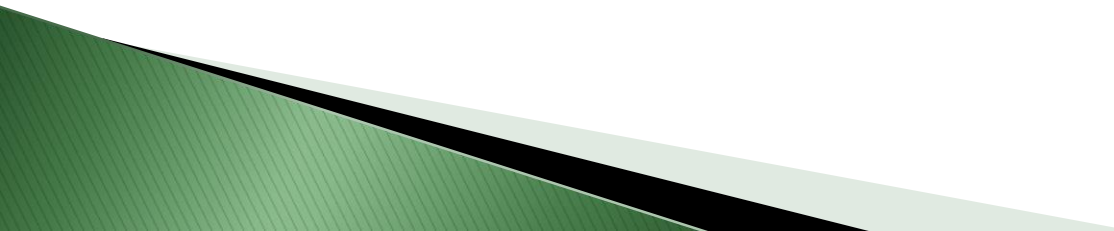
The Mystery of the Holy Trinity



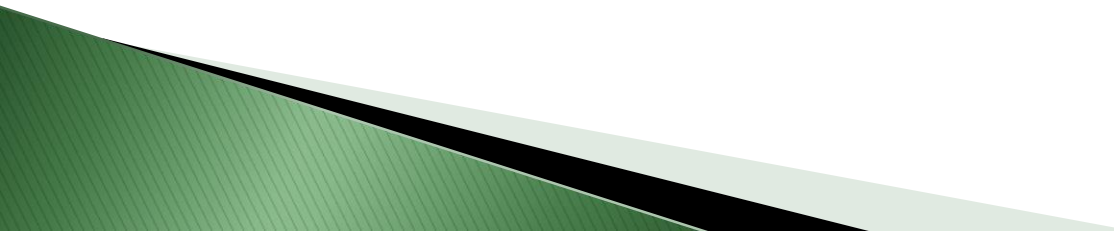
The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

CCC 261

The Doctrine of the Trinity

- ▶ It evolved through the powerful experience of God's love of those who knew Jesus intimately.
 - ▶ They not only experienced God's love through Jesus but experienced God in him even after he was gone.
 - ▶ "The Father and I are one."
 - ▶ God remained one but Jesus was not just a man.
- 

Three Truths of Faith

1. The Trinity is One.
 2. The Divine Persons are distinct from each other, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 3. The Divine Persons are in relation to each other.
- 

The Father cannot be the Father without the Son, nor can the Son be the Son without the Father. The Holy Spirit is related to the Father and the Son who both send him forth.

The Trinity illumines all the other mysteries of faith.

US Catechism for Adults





St. Patrick used the shamrock:
three leaves in one leaf.

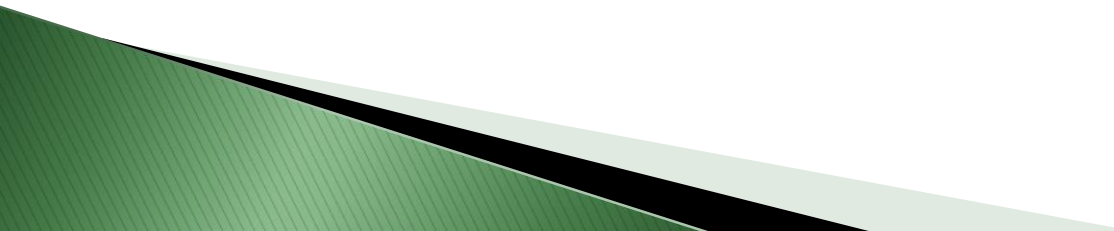


St. Augustine compared the
Trinity to the three aspects
of the human mind:
memory, intellect and will.

God is the Mystery

The doctrine of the Trinity is not a mystery, *God* is the mystery. The doctrine of the Trinity is simply the Church's limited way of trying to express this mystery.

Theology for Ministry, Edward P. Hahnenberg

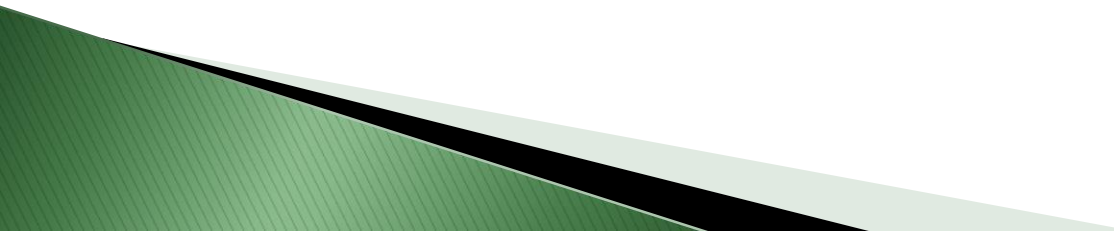




The mystery of God is not a puzzle to be solved. It is a truth to be revered. It is a reality too rich to be fully grasped by our minds, so that while it continues to unfold, it always remains mostly beyond our comprehension.

US Catechism for Adults

The Church as Mystery

- ▶ The Church is a holy mystery because of her origin in the Holy Trinity.
 - ▶ The Trinity brought the Church into being.
 - ▶ The Father called the Church into existence.
 - ▶ The Son established the Church.
 - ▶ The Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and wisdom at Pentecost.
 - ▶ The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, brings salvation to the world.
- 

The Salvation of God

Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. Since without faith it is impossible to please God and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life but he who endures to the end.



*He who believes and is baptized will be saved,
but he who does not believe will be
condemned.*

Mark 16:16



Our salvation flows from God's love for us because "he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins."

1 John 4:10

Salvation and the Church

Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it.

CCC 846



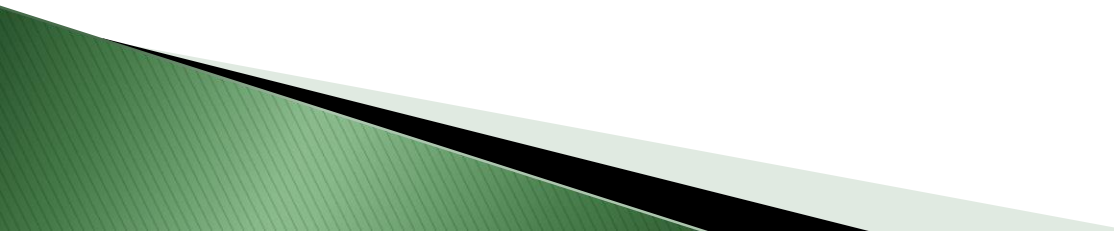
Salvation outside the Church

Those, who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those too may achieve eternal salvation.

CCC 847



Theological Reflection

- ▶ Theological Reflection is a natural activity.
 - ▶ Theological Reflection is a tool.
 - ▶ Theological Reflection is an attempt to integrate the segments of our lives so that we can live and breathe our beliefs.
 - ▶ Theological Reflection is believing that our everyday living is an important agenda for our faith and that our faith has a voice in our everyday life.
 - ▶ An activity of integration and reciprocity.
- 

All experience is raw until it is reflected upon. Theological reflection makes raw experience into lived experience and moves an individual from insight to action.

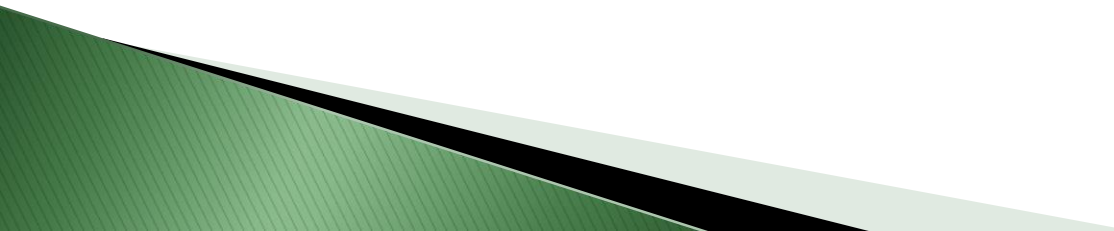
The Book of Sacramental Basics, Tad Guzie



Potential for Transformation

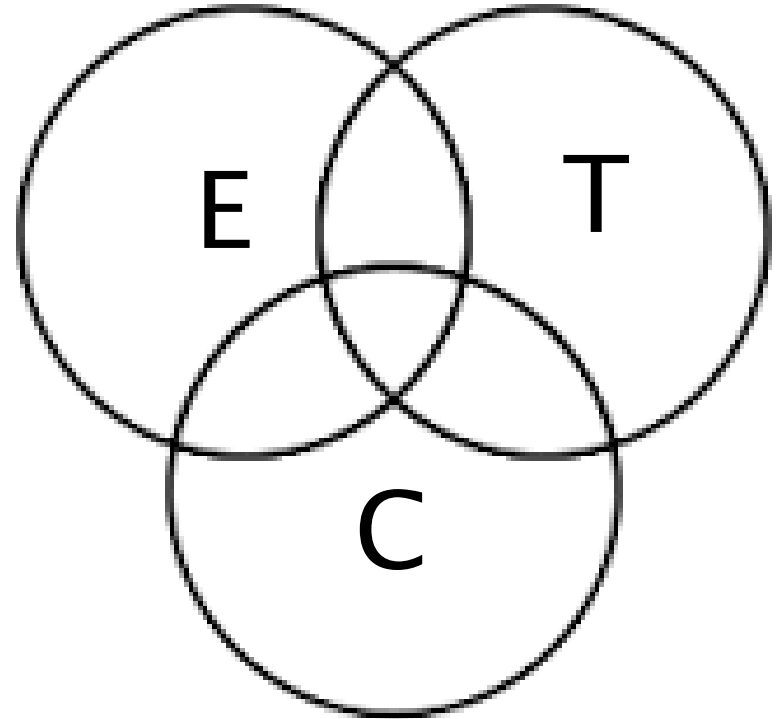


“Lord, that I may see.”

- ▶ We are always in God’s presence, and sometimes we notice it.
 - ▶ Theological reflection is the attempt to notice this truth more often.
 - ▶ Once our eyes are opened, the more we see.
 - ▶ Anything can reveal the holy if we but see.
 - ▶ To see the “God-touched” reality in our life experiences.
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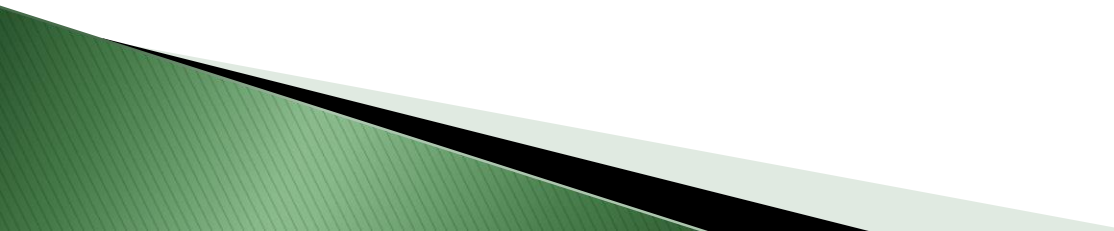
A Model for Theological Reflection

- ▶ Experience (E)
- ▶ Tradition (T)
- ▶ Culture (C)

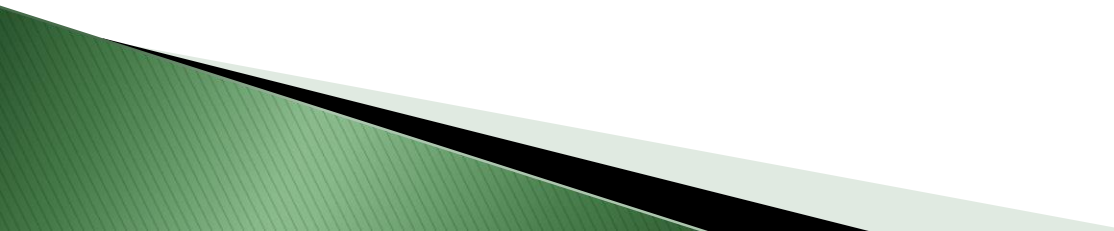


The Whitehead Model, Doctors James and Evelyn Whitehead in *Method in Ministry*.

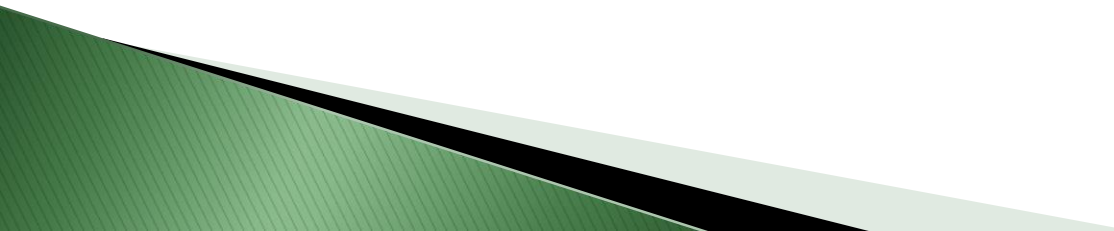
Experience

- ▶ Our feelings, insights, biases, and prejudices.
 - ▶ Simple as it happens right now, right here.
 - ▶ Complex in that what happened in the past acts as a filter for the present.
 - ▶ They are run of the mill, planned or unexpected.
 - ▶ Some we control, some are out of control.
 - ▶ Some we can handle, others overcome us.
- 


Engaging Experience in Theological Reflection

- ▶ Our belief that God acts always and everywhere in human life.
 - ▶ Not something new.
 - ▶ Our ancestors in faith engaged in theological reflection on their Experience, calling upon their Tradition to relate to that Experience.
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Tradition

- ▶ Sacred Scripture
 - ▶ The history of the Christian Church
 - ▶ The teachings of our faith.
 - ▶ The rich treasury of Prayers.
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Engaging Tradition in Theological Reflection

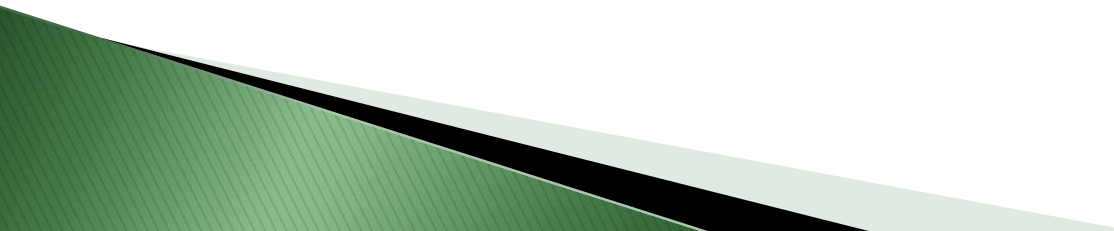
- ▶ An opportunity to bring to life the rich treasury of our faith.
 - ▶ We call upon those who once lived, struggled, cried, and laughed over life. (the Communion of Saints)
 - ▶ We bring the wealth of Tradition into conversation with our Experience and our Culture.
 - ▶ We remember our past as it gives meaning to our present and direction for our future.
- 



Family Treasures

- ▶ We use the wisdom and the gifts that have been passed down to us.
- ▶ We pray ancient prayers that connect us to a long line of faithful believers.
- ▶ We study the scriptures handed down through the generations.

Culture

- ▶ Symbols
 - ▶ Values
 - ▶ Mores
 - ▶ Philosophies
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Engaging Culture in Theological Reflection

We belong to many cultures:

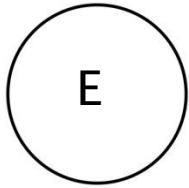
- A variety of Nationalities
- Ministries
- Organizations
- Vocations

The Values of one Culture may clash with another but we also see the areas of support.

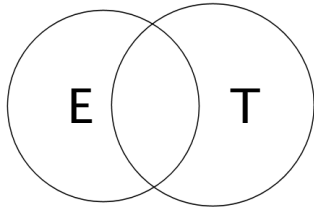
Theological reflection can empower and energize us to take action.



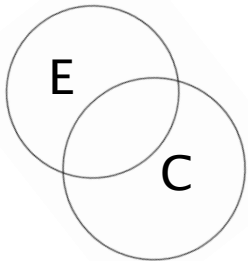
Reflection Exercise



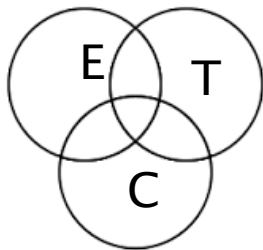
Recall an event from the past week that has some meaning for you.



What Scripture story or Religious teachings would shed light on that experience?



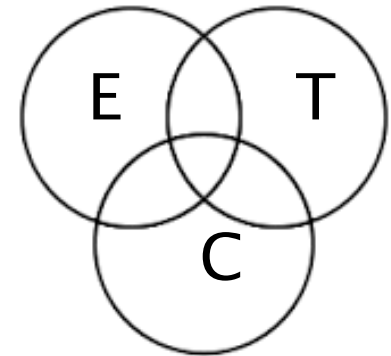
What would today's society say to you about the experience?



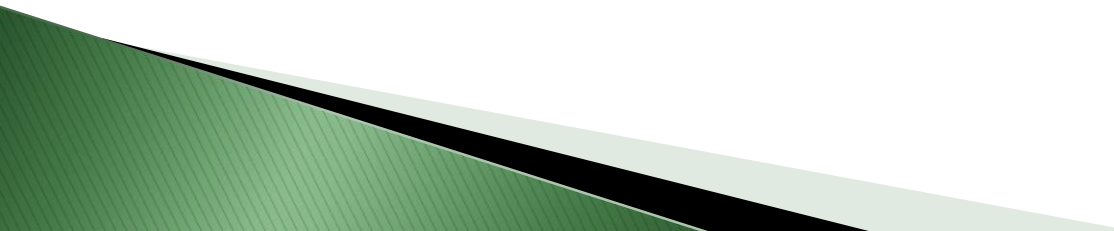
Looking at the three sources – Experience, Tradition and Culture – what have you learned from this exercise? What wisdom have you learned from your experience?

What comes next?

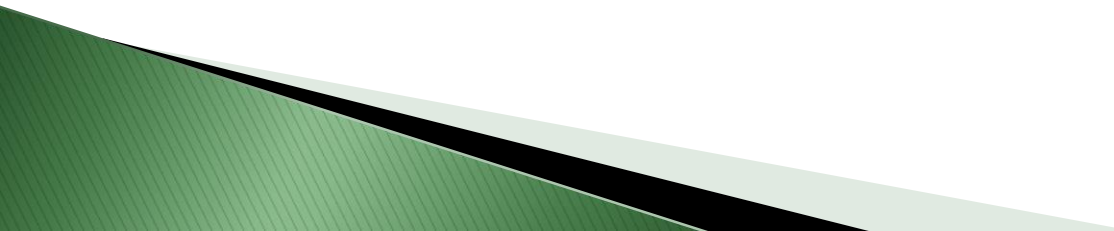
- ▶ Attending
- ▶ Asserting
- ▶ Decision Making



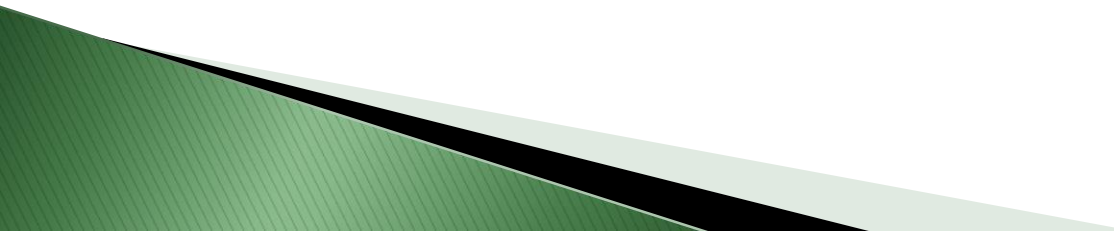
Attending

- ▶ The skill of listening.
 - ▶ Invites all the concerns, values, and information of a person's Experience, the Culture and the Tradition into conversation or dialogue.
 - ▶ Time to explore hidden assumptions, hopes, and convictions.
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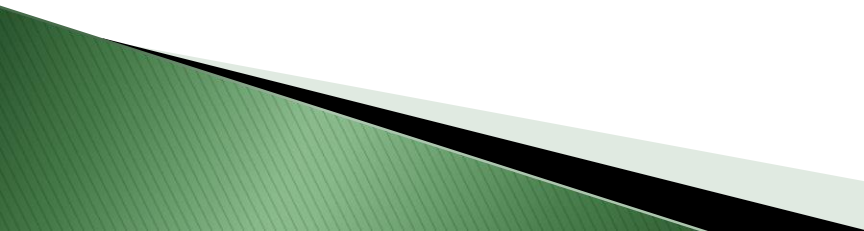
Attending Skills

- ▶ Alert to the movements of mind and heart within.
 - ▶ An openness to the experience of others.
 - ▶ A willingness to move from insight to action.
 - ▶ We may not change a particular action but we have a clearer sense of the “why” behind it.
 - ▶ Attending invites us to look, to pay attention, to see.
 - ▶ Attending is the Gospel call of Jesus to pay attention, to stay awake, to be alert.
- 

Asserting

- ▶ Engages the information from the three sources in a process of mutual clarification to expand and deepen religious insight.
 - ▶ We take ownership for what we believe to be true.
 - ▶ We avoid aggressive behaviors that limit us and prevent us from being open to transformation.
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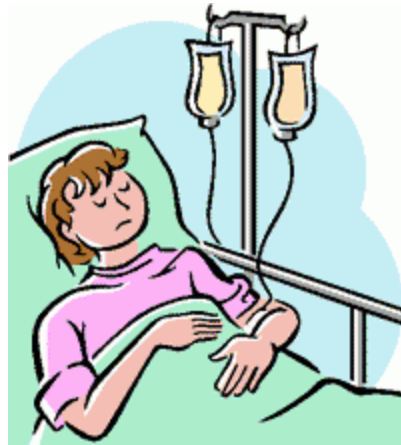
Decision Making

- ▶ The goal of Theological Reflection.
 - ▶ Allow our faith perspective to influence our personal and social life.
 - ▶ We gain clarity, set direction, choose action, and witness to the integration of faith in our life.
 - ▶ Brings our inner world and outer world into harmony.
 - ▶ Responding to call of transformation.
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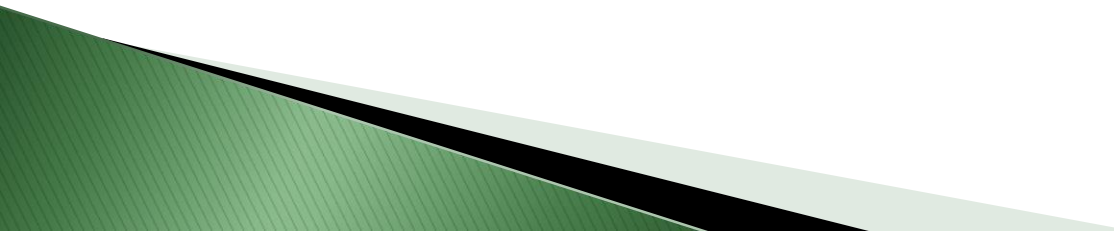
Theological Reflection: How to Begin

Anything and anyone can be an occasion of reflection.

WHEN
-CULTURES-
CLASH



Examples of Theological Reflection

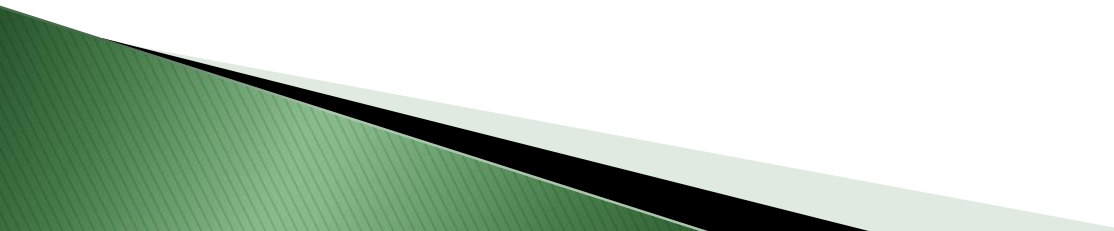
- ▶ Breaking open the Word
 - ▶ Faith-Sharing Group
 - ▶ Religious Education Class
- 

Facilitators of Theological Reflection




- ▶ Deep listeners
- ▶ Faithful to the Tradition
- ▶ Attend to the preparation

Facilitating Theological Reflection

- ▶ Encourage dialogue among the group members.
 - ▶ Create a safe environment for sharing.
 - ▶ Encourage the use of “I” messages.
 - ▶ Allow the Holy Spirit to work within the group through periods of silence.
 - ▶ Keep the group focused.
 - ▶ Avoid generalizations.
 - ▶ Promote open discussions suspending judgments and certitude.
 - ▶ Periodically summarize what has been discussed.
- 

Guidelines for Faith Sharing

- ▶ Sharing is voluntary.
 - ▶ Sharing is not interrupted.
 - ▶ Sharing is not contradicted.
 - ▶ Sharing is done in “I” language.
 - ▶ Sharing is confidential.
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Theological Reflection and the Minister

Even in the mist of the busyness of Ministry, it is important to find time for personal reflection.

Theological Reflection allows us the opportunity to see what we might otherwise miss.

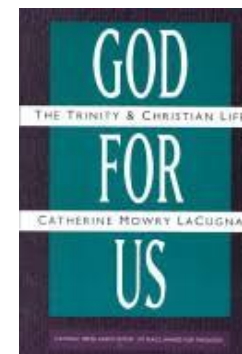
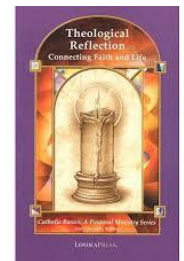
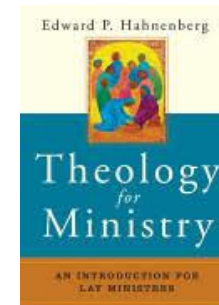
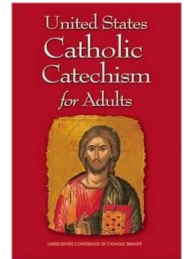
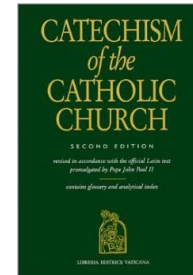
Even what may appear to be mundane has the power to be the means for transformation.

“Lord, that I may see.”



Fundamental Theology Resources

- ▶ 2nd Edition of Catholic Catechism, 2000
- ▶ United States Catechism for Adults, 2006
- ▶ Theology for Ministry: An Introduction for lay ministers, Edward P. Hahnenberg, 2014
- ▶ Theological Reflection: Connecting Faith and Life, Loyola Press, 2002
- ▶ God For Us: The Trinity & Christian Life, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, 1973



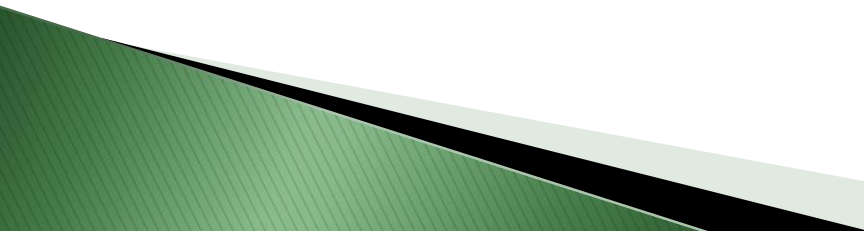
Diocese of Boise

Office of Religious Education and Catechetical Leadership



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Reflection Questions

- ▶ How has your relationship with God changed over the years?
 - ▶ Where did you “see” God this week?
 - ▶ Take this experience of “seeing” God and go through the process of Theological Reflection. What conclusions did you encounter?
 - ▶ How is your faith bringing you closer to God and an understanding of his message?
- 

Closing Prayer

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Amen.

