

A Received and Shared Love

Feast of the Holy Trinity

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This past Monday, Pope Leo released his first encyclical, which is his first major document as pope. It is technically his second since he did publish *Dilexi Te*, on love for the poor, in October 2025, but that document was largely left to him by Pope Francis. Leo's new document, *Magnifica Humanitas*, gets into his pastoral vision for the Church in the present moment. In it, he addresses Catholic Social Teaching and Human Dignity, especially in the face of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence. His starting point is that humans can either choose to keep building up like the Tower of Babel or we can build out together as one human family.

This weekend, we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In his paragraph of *Magnifica Humanitas* dedicated to the human person as made in the image of the Triune God, Pope Leo writes that humanity's "deepest vocation is to enter into the Trinitarian dynamic of love received and shared." (48) On today's feast, I would like to briefly reflect on this line of a Trinitarian love that is received and shared.

For many of us, if we are honest, we tend towards one or the other, either a love received or a love shared. I will start with 'a love

shared' because many of us in the Church are very generous in sharing our love. With a love shared, we dedicate ourselves to doing charity, tend to the needs of others, and do not say 'no' very often. Even when we are feeling empty, with a love shared we still choose to keep on giving of ourselves, even putting our own needs aside. While sharing love is an essential dynamic of the Trinity and we should be able to share a lot, however, this is only one side of the dynamic. If it is all we do, we run the risk of burnout or exhaustion. On the other hand, some of us excel at 'a love received.' With a love received, we know that we need other people to help us through life and we want others take care of us. While a love received is an essential dynamic of the Trinity and our capacity to receive love should be great, however, this also is only one side of the dynamic. If all we do is receive love, we run the risk of becoming passive or entitled. The Holy Trinity, as Pope Leo notes, includes both. Anytime we lose the balance of receiving and sharing love, our lives become lopsided and we either become a burden to ourselves or a burden to others.

We need a dynamic love that both receives and shares if we are to image the balanced movement of the Holy Trinity.

What side do I tend to error on, the side of giving and sharing love or the side of taking and receiving love? How can the Holy Trinity help me rebalance love in my life so that I am doing both giving and receiving it?

As we continue with this mass, let us pray for a balanced love. For those of us who are good at sharing love, let us increase our capacity to share even more love by allowing ourselves to receive love. For those of us who are good at receiving love, let us increase our capacity to receive even more love by challenging ourselves to share love. Whatever our vocation in life and no matter our starting point for how we love, may all of us find our deepest vocation in entering into the Trinitarian dynamic of a love that is both received and shared.