

As if that weren't enough, there's more! Jesus came to reveal to us that the inner life of the one true God is a communion of three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity has existed from all eternity as a loving communion of persons. We are made in the image of the Triune God—made for relationships, made for love, created to make a gift of ourselves.



After his death and resurrection, Jesus entrusted the mission of spreading this Good News to his closest followers, the apostles. He told them to “Go make disciples, teaching them everything I taught you, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” He gave them authority to teach in his name, and promised to be with them always. He promised that they would be empowered for this mission through the power of the Holy Spirit, which they received on the feast of Pentecost, after



Jesus ascended into heaven.

The apostolic authority to teach in Jesus' name has been passed on from one

generation to the next in the Catholic Church, through her Bishops. The Church is the gathered community of the baptized, who, through personal conversion, can also become disciples of Jesus. Like the early apostles, Catholics receive the power of the Holy Spirit through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

But much depends upon a person's cooperation with God's grace; sacraments are powerful, but their power can remain dormant without our assent, like unopened gifts. By personal conversion, we enter into a partnership with God to carry out his mission on earth, cooperating with the grace of the sacraments working in us.



The sacraments are among the many special gifts that are available to us as Catholics: seven concrete means of access to God's saving grace. We enter into

God's healing power through Baptism, which heals the damage of original sin. To strengthen us throughout our

life, **Jesus allows us to receive him personally in the gift of the Holy Eucharist, his very body and blood,**



which Catholics receive in the form of bread and wine at every Mass. To help us turn away from sin, he offers us the sacrament of Reconciliation, where we confess our sins to God in the presence of a priest who communicates to us the Lord's forgiveness.



Through the Church, this Good News is extended everywhere in the world, to every generation, while we await the return of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of time.

Through the Church, Jesus offers you the grace to be saved from sin. Salvation is a free gift, but it is not cheap. He invites you to begin a personal relationship with him.

As you entrust yourself to his mercy, and refuse to be mastered by sin,



**he will give you new life through grace.**

The life of grace is established and sustained in you by continually uniting yourself with him in the sacraments of the Church and through prayer.

**By means of this grace, he will transform your old sinful self into a new creation.**

You can get to know him by reading and praying through the Scriptures, which are the inspired word of God. You can understand the Scriptures even more fully by studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**If this sounds like a treasure worth pursuing, let us tell you more. Contact your local Catholic parish, and ask about becoming a disciple of Jesus yourself.**

# A Message from God to You





## The Catholic Church has been entrusted with a message for you.

The message is from the one true God, your creator, who loves you - personally - and who wants you to know him and to have a relationship with him, that he might give you the gift of eternal life. To make this possible, he himself became a human being like you. His name was Jesus Christ. He loves you, he gave his life to save you, and now he is with you always to enlighten, strengthen and free you. That's the heart of a much bigger story that we call "salvation history", the epic story of the human race, its fall from grace, and God's plan to restore it.



## In brief: God created the entire universe, and the earth, and all it contains.

As crown of his creation, he created man and woman, made in his image and likeness. He created them for relationship with himself, and entrusted the care of the earth to them,



and commanded them to "be fruitful and multiply." So far, so good!

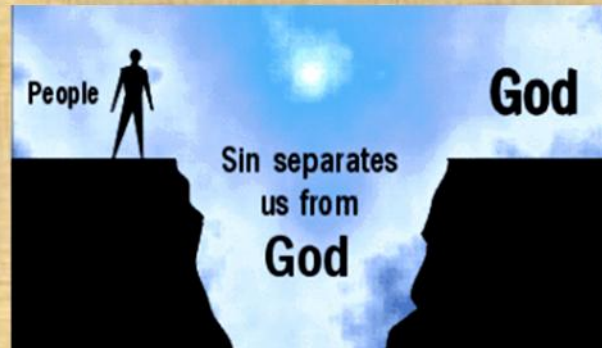
But, in due course, through an act of disobedience, they fell from grace. This "fall" is what we call "original sin," a wound in their human

nature, like a spiritual virus, that infected them, their children, and the rest of the human race, right down to us. The result was condemnation and separation from God. The spiritual void that was left behind became like a black hole of disordered desire..



Turned in on ourselves, sin has inclined us to always seek happiness in selfish pursuits, leaving us empty and frustrated. (One need only pick up the newspaper to see the practical reality of sin!)

Moreover, sin doomed us to the SPIRITUAL DEATH of eternal separation from God.



However, God in his love sought to reconcile with humanity, and heal this wound of sin.

He launched a rescue mission.

Over the course of many centuries, God chose one particular family (which became the Jewish nation) through whom he would bring this reconciliation about. He adopted them as a people uniquely set apart, and through them accomplished the salvation of the human race. The story of our salvation unfolds over many centuries, and is told in the Old Testament of the Bible.



Throughout salvation history, God slowly began to reveal himself to his people.



He taught them that he alone was God. Through many stages of their history, he showed them that he was powerful, and that he could intervene in their circumstances: saving them from their enemies, feeding them in the desert, and amazing them continually with miracles. He set forth a way of life for them in the Ten Commandments, a way that would bring peace and stability to their families and community if they obeyed. He taught them that he was faithful and trustworthy, even though they often failed to keep faith.

Slowly, he prepared his people for the coming of a savior, teaching them, through a series of prophets, to look forward to this blessed event.

In the fullness of time, God himself took on our flesh and our human nature, and became a man, born of a virgin. By taking on our nature, he redeemed it



Jesus Christ, who is truly God, became truly man for us. The Gospels are his story. In the Gospels we learn about the humble life, humiliating death, and glorious resurrection of Jesus. In his person, he has bridged the



separation between humanity and God, and brought about our reconciliation. By the selfless gift of his life on the cross, to the last drop of his blood, he provided the antidote to the virus of sin. He has offered himself on our behalf, and won for us the grace to be saved from the power of sin and death. He offers us the gift of eternal life. The question is—will you say *Yes* to him, yes to his plan for you?

*Will you decide to follow him?*