**EPIPHANY**

The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ is called Epiphany which means the divine proclamation and revelation. This is because the three hypostases (persons) of the Holy Trinity have been proclaimed publicly: the Son (The Logos) in the water, the Holy Spirit of God descending like a dove when the heavens were opened and the voice of the Father was heard saying, **“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”, Matt3:16, 17.**

In the Jordan, the voice of the Father declared Jesus to be the Beloved Son of the Eternal Father. In His good pleasure the Father was declaring Jesus publicly a mediator between God and man (John3:16). The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon our Lord as a symbol of submission to sacrifice.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY AT THE BAPTISM OF JESUS**

The voice of the Father which declared Jesus to be the Beloved Son of the Eternal Father was not announcing a new fact or a new sonship of our Lord since that sonship existed from all eternity. Instead the voice manifested that the Sacrifice of the Beloved Son would be pleasing to the eternal Father and declared the divinity of Christ.

Jesus did not become the Son of God that day; rather, in His baptism the eternal Son of God was revealed to humanity. The Holy Spirit was always with the Son, with awesome gentleness. In the water of the Jordan, the Holy Spirit crowned the Son as King and dedicated Him to be an eternal sacrifice and High Priest and declared Him as Prophet (Luke4:18, 19; Isa61:1, 2).

**THE TRINITY ACTING IN UNITY**

**In the Creation**

God the Father spoke, (Gen1:3), God the Son was the Logos (John1:1) and Godthe Holy Spirit moved upon the face of the waters (Gen1:2, Job26:12, 13). The Spirit of God hovered over the water at the first creation. At Epiphany the Holy Spirit comes in the form of a dove to anoint the Messiah, the Son of God, at the beginning of the new creation.

**In the Incarnation**

God the Father gave His only son (John3:1), God the Son was born into the world (Luke2:11) and God the Spirit came upon St Mary to cause conception (Luke1: 35).

**In the Redemption**

God the Father accepted the sacrifice of Calvary (Heb9: 14), God the Son offered Himself as our substitute (Heb9:14) and Jesus offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit (Heb9:14).

**In Regeneration**

God the Father records the new name in glory (Luke10: 20), God the Son cleanses sin in His precious Blood (Eph1:7) and God the Spirit performs the transforming miracle of the new birth (John3:3-6).

**In Prayer**

God the Father is the One who receives the requests (John16: 23), God the Son is the One in whose Name we pray (John16: 23) and God the Spirit intercedes for us in our requests (Rom8:26).

**In Benediction**

We receive the blessing ofthe Holy Trinity, **“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen”, 2Cor13:14.**

**In Serving**

We do so in the name of the Holy Trinityas commissioned by Jesus Christ, **“And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, Matt28:18, 19.**

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a mystery and will remain a mystery until we meet the Lord in glory. However, this does not mean that we cannot believe it. We must believe it. God is so different from us: He is a Spirit and we are human beings. I believe that God is honoured and pleased by our believing this doctrine.

God is love, wholehearted love (1Jn4:16). The very being of God is wholehearted love. It is of first importance in God’s personality and in the relationships of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The command to love God with all our heart does not begin with our response to God. It is an expression of the ultimate reality of the kingdom that existed before the creation of the world; namely, God’s heart that burned with perfect love within the fellowship of the Trinity.

In the Holy Trinity, there is one God who forever dwells in three distinct Persons who are coequal as Divine Persons. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each fully possess all of God’s attributes. Each Person is different from the others in function and authority in their relationship and work. Each Person’s work is unified, fully engaged with, and interdependent on the others’ work.

The love burning in God’s heart has at least **five distinct expressions** that are **deeply interrelated.**

**God’s love for God**: Each person in the Trinity intensely loves the others with all their heart. In John13-17, Jesus taught on the union of the three persons in the Trinity. He taught that the Father lives in the Son, and the Son in the Father **“Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me…The Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me…,” Jn14:10-11.**

**“However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come…. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All the things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” Jn16:13-15.**

**“…they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they may be one in Us… The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You…have loved them as You have loved Me,” Jn17:21-23.** Thus, the three Persons are one in heart, thought, and action, so that the One God acts as one and as three.

**God’s love for His people**: He loves His people with all of His heart, mind, and strength. He loves the redeemed with the same intensity that He loves within the fellowship of the Trinity. Jesus declared that He loves the redeemed in the same way or intensity that His Father loves Him “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love,” Jn15:9. He said that the Father also loves the redeemed with this same intensity (Jn17:23). Father, Son, and Spirit love the redeemed with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. “Behold what manner (quality) of love the Father has bestowed on us…,” 1Jn3:1.

**Our love for God**: God’s very own love is imparted to His people by the Spirit (Rom5:5). The Spirit’s first agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the Church. **“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment’,” Mt22:37-38.**

Because of how He feels about us, He wants us to respond to Him with all our love. He created us in His likeness with a capacity to participate in this fellowship of the burning heart. God’s very own love is imparted to His people by the Holy Spirit “The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,” Rom5:5. We love Him because He first loved us (1Jn4:19). We are empowered to love by first receiving His love.

**Our love for ourselves**: We love ourselves in God’s love and for God’s sake. The redeemed are to love themselves in God’s love and for God’s sake. We love ourselves through the lens of the revelation of Jesus, His cross, and our great worth to Him. When we see ourselves and our destiny in God’s love, it empowers us to love ourselves by His Spirit. Jesus delights in who we are in His love. He enjoys us as we enjoy His love for us.

**“And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’,” Mt22:39.** A profound transformation occurs in us as we accept His love for us. This is another expression of the fellowship of the burning heart. We love ourselves in His love without despising our appearance, gifting, or ministry assignment, regardless how small or difficult it is. Self-hatred results in a deep sense of rejection that damages our ability to love and receive love.

**Our love for others**: We love others in the overflow of experiencing God's love (1Jn4:19). We are to love others in the love of God. We do this to the measure that we see how God loves us and how He loves others, even those who mistreat us. Our love for others is an expression of our love for God (1Jn4:7-12). We’ll forever delight in one another as God loves us (Jn15:12).

We feel deep emotions of zealous love when someone comes against a person we love deeply. We love fellow believers who mistreat us because God loves them just as He loves God (Jn15:9; 17:23). We participate in the fellowship of the burning heart by walking in love for others. Jesus wants us to enter into how He feels about other people. The first commandment will forever be the first priority in the Kingdom. Wholehearted love is of first importance in God’s relationship to God, to us, and in our relationship to Him and to others.

Jesus revealed that the essence of salvation is to know God with experiential knowledge. Salvation (eternal life) is an invitation to participate in deep fellowship with the Godhead. **“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ,” Jn17:3.** Our greatest destiny is to participate in the burning love within the fellowship of the Trinity. God loves us with the same intensity that God loves God, **“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love,” Jn15:9.**

Our primary life goal and preoccupation needs to be focused on beholding God’s love. This includes understanding, experiencing, and imparting the truth of His love to others. By beholding or seeing the quality of this love, we are more empowered to resist temptation, endure persecution, and press into God in the midst of various trials without drawing back. We are to make this the primary preoccupation of our life.

Make it your primary life vision to participate deeply in the ultimate reality of the Kingdom, which is the fellowship of the burning heart. We see examples of those who lived with a burning heart of love. Examples of this include the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk24:32) and John the Baptist who was burning lamp (Jn5:35), and who prophesied of a baptism of fire (Lk3:16) as seen at Pentecost (Acts2:3) and eventually will empower all His people (Is62:1).