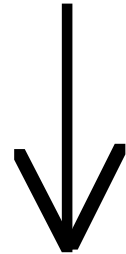


‘I will betroth you to myself forever.
Yes, I will betroth you to myself
in **covenant love** and **faithfulness**.’

GRACE



Communion



BELIEF

FAITH

‘The only thing that counts if
FAITH working through **LOVE**.’

Whether we think of our response to God's self-communication and the invitation into communion that God gives to us directly and personally,

or whether we think of our response to God's self-communication via the truths handed on to us in the Church,

faith involves welcoming this revelation and welcoming God's invitation into communion.

It also involves a graced capacity to respond to God by savouring what we have received, reflecting upon it, integrating it into our lives, and living accordingly.

The Psalmist speaks of ‘savouring’ God’s self-communication when he invites us to ‘taste and see the goodness of Yahweh’ (Psalm 34:8).

Savouring leads to deeper knowledge

- Loving needs to be in accordance with reason, but it cannot be confined within the realms of logic. The experience of love always involves something of a leap in the dark, a going beyond the limits of reason and control. Believing opens up undreamed of areas of understanding.
- ‘Do not seek to understand that you may believe. Seek, rather, to believe so that you may understand’(Augustine).

Savouring leads to deeper knowledge

- This knowledge affects the way we live
- ‘We have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God’(Colossians 1:9-10)

‘By grace you have been saved, through faith,
and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God —
not the result of anything you have done,
so that no one may boast.

For we are God’s work of art,
created in Christ Jesus to live a good life,
the life designed for us by God.’

‘We know that all things work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called according to God’s purpose.’

Romans 8:34, 38-39

‘Who is to condemn us? Christ Jesus?
No, he died and was raised to life,
and is at the God’s right hand interceding for us ...
I am convinced that nothing ...
will be able to separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

1 Timothy 2:4

‘God our Saviour wants everyone to be saved
and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’

Ezekiel 33:11

‘I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner.
I want you to turn from your ways and live;
turn back, turn back from your evil ways.
Why would you want to die?’

1John 4:9-10

‘God’s love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might live through him.
In this is love, not that we loved God
but that God loved us
and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice
for our sins.’

John 15:5

‘I am the vine, you are the branches.
If you abide in me and I in you,
you will bear much fruit.
Apart from me you can do nothing.’

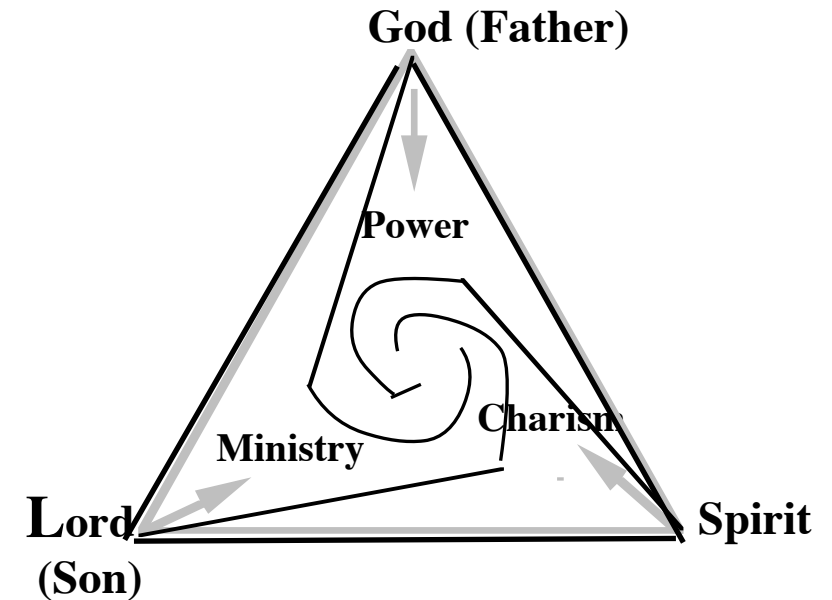
Philippians 4:13

‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’

Various priestly ministries of the faithful

Christians participate in the priestly mediation of Christ in various ways.

1Corinthians 12:4-7



‘There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; there are varieties of ways of exercising power, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.’

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon her;
she will bring forth justice to the nations.
She will not cry or lift up her voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed she will not break,
and a dimly burning wick she will not quench;
Faithfully she will bring forth justice.
She will not grow faint or be crushed
until she has established justice on the earth ...
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

‘Keep on asking and it will be given to you;
keep on searching and you will find;
keep on knocking and the door will be opened for you.
For everyone who asks receives;
everyone who searches finds;
everyone who knocks will have the door opened ...
Will not your heavenly Father
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.’

A key insight into Christian faith is that it is not a faith modelled on the faith of Jesus. We are not asked to imitate Jesus as it were from the outside. He did not say ‘I am a vine, and I want you to be a vine like me.’ He said: ‘I am the vine. You are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing’ (John 15:5).

- We are not copying Jesus. We are called to be our unique selves, and Jesus offers us a share in his love to make this possible in the most beautiful way. Included in this is the gift of his faith, poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit.

- Paul puts this well: ‘It is no longer I who live. Christ lives in me. And the life I now live is by the faith of the Son of God loving me and giving himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20).

McAuley, James (1917-1976) : Faith (01/05/76)

I know that faith is like a root
That's tough, inert and old;
Yet it can send up its green shoot
And flower against the cold.

I know there is a grace that flows
When all the springs run dry.
It wells up to renew the rose
And lift the cedars high.