

Trinity As Paradigmatic Love

— by James Chastek at *Just Thomism*

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As supreme existent, God is both intellective (supreme in life) and the highest good, and so within himself there is not just the intellective order but the volitional order whose supreme principle is love, bringing with it *six sequelae: union, perichoresis, ecstasy, zeal, perfection-by-dissolving, principle of all other action*. So far as perfection-by-dissolving involves change it is said of God only metaphorically, but otherwise God is the first instance of all.

1.) UNION: As supreme existent, the divine essence transcends absolute and relative being and so transcends his virtually distinct absolute attributes and his really distinct relations. The relations subsist as persons, each therefore being the transcendent divine essence. As one divine essence, the persons are perfectly one and the paradigm of all other union.

2.) PERICHORESIS: by subsisting correlatively, the union of the persons is not like the contact or enclosure of one body to another but a necessary subsistence of each to and within the others in a perichoresis standing as the unreachable limit of all other indwelling by friendship, since no other friends can overcome the absolute existence that divides them in being.

3.) ECSTASY: Because the divine person does not subsist as an absolute being with a relation to another but rather subsists as the relation, his very subsistence is to another and therefore ecstatic or tending outside of oneself.

4.) ZEAL: Because there is a single act of existence for all three persons, each loves the others with exactly the same love as he loves himself – the preservation of his essence *is* the preservation of the other's. Because of this, no greater zeal of love for another is possible, and all other zeal approaches this at an infinite distance.

5.) PERFECTION-BY-DISSOLUTION: Because we exist absolutely and are perfected by love later, our love softens and dissolves us in preparation to for us to receive its perfection. The subsistence of the divine person, however, simply *is* relative. Love does not need to soften or dissolve the divine person to make it for another in love since the person subsists for another by subsisting at all. No matter how immediately a creature races to love, God will already have beaten him.

6.) PRINCIPLE OF ALL OTHER THINGS. Evident by creation.