

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Jesus said: “Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
Matthew 28: 19

The quote above supplies the rationale for the Catholic practice of baptizing. It is a message that comes right from the lips of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was one of the very last things he said to his disciples before he ascended to the Father. We do what we do sacramentally because Jesus told us to. The command is explicit in the Sacraments of Baptism and of Eucharist. In Baptism we pour water and then says the words of the Trinitarian formula.

That simple fact seems to be almost beyond the need even to put into words. But Jesus did put it into words and the evangelist did write it in the Gospel of Matthew. What does not strike us at all odd or new or even novel is the Trinitarian formula itself—in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But it was very new when Jesus said it. Unprecedented in the history of mankind.

It literally took thousands of years for the members of the human race to let go of their conviction about the “multiplicity of gods and goddesses” that populated the heavens and begin to believe that there was one God, Creator of all things. There are still major religions in the world today where many millions of people believe in a pantheon of gods and goddesses. But not the Hebrew people. Not the Christian people. They believe in one God who is Father of all. And Jesus of Nazareth, referred to this Creator in the very familiar name, Abba, Father, or even Papa. The ultimate Transcendent God is at the same time closer to us than we can ever realize. AND. This One God has this beloved Word in his heart that is just as truly God and there is this unifying Spirit between the two who is just as truly God. Love and Beloved in Loving relationship. Each a person. Each truly and fully God. Not identical. Not the same but equal in dignity, power and knowledge. One God. Three Persons. We call this Trinity and you and I have been baptized in the name of this One Triune God. We are theirs—forever. Can you believe it? The question of the week.