

THE TRINITARIAN GROUNDING OF MERCY

When we as Dehonians reflected on the motto of our General Chapter “Merciful, in community, with the poor” in these past days, I reflected on “God as Love”, “God as Mercy”, that is, the Trinitarian foundation of mercy. The first thing I discovered was that the theological manuals often forget to speak about the concept of mercy as the principal attribute of God. Thanks to today’s Trinitarian theology, which starts with God’s revelation in Christ, we have rediscovered the reality of God as Mercy. We did so because Jesus reveals himself as the throne of God the Father’s Mercy from his incarnation to the cross. In the cross we see how God reaches the ultimate moment of self-emptying – something he did from the very beginning of time so that the Son and the Spirit may exist. This self-humiliation, this self-emptying, will lead us to the ultimate moment on the cross, where God becomes most distant from himself in the death of his Son. The Spirit, which unites Father and Son, shows us that God is the Lord of death and life, that he favours life, that God is love, communication and life beyond the death. Thus, the cross manifests itself as the mark of the Trinity. So the best mirror of Trinity is the concept of mercy. Finally, this has very practical consequences. The ancient Church considered the penitential praxis as a second chance to renew baptism because of the reality that God is mercy. That is why Jesus invites us in our doing and our being to be merciful with the poor. We, as religious of the Sacred Heart, see that in his open heart from which wells blood and water, the signs of the sacraments of the church, Christ tells us to be a church of mercy that centres its attention on Christ and his heart and lives mercy particularly with those who need it the most.

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