

blessing, she apportions grace to those who believe in Christ. Through prayer, ascetical effort, and a life of virtue, Christians grow in the grace of the Holy Spirit to the fullness of divinization. Transfigured by grace, human nature abides in God's nature, "without division or confusion."<sup>221</sup> At the same time, in humankind and through humankind, the nature of all creation is transfigured to its final consummation, as "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1).

268 'Through his Resurrection, Jesus Christ revealed new life, and in the Holy Spirit he grants this life to us.' The Holy Spirit is "Life and Life-giver; Light and Light-giver; absolute Good and Spring of Goodness."<sup>222</sup> The Christian is a kind of "master" of creation who sanctifies and transforms it because of the grace of the Holy Spirit:

For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, fellowship, and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished, and transfigured.<sup>223</sup>

269 In the kneeling prayers of Pentecost, the Church invokes the Holy Spirit to descend upon all creation and upon all humankind, living and deceased. In the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, who conquered death, now grants new life to all creation: "In the Holy Spirit all creation is renewed and presses forward to its original state; for he is equal in power to the Father and the Word."<sup>224</sup>

270 Within the life-giving Spirit, there is no death or division. Therefore, at the feast of Pentecost we visit the graves of the departed and prayerfully experience our living bond with them. "On this all-perfect and saving feast you have deigned to accept the supplicatory prayers of forgiveness for those who are held in Hades; you who grant us great hope that unto the departed, held in the bondage of grief, there be sent from you rest and refreshment."<sup>225</sup> On this feast, churches and homes are decorated with greenery, a sign of Life. This is truly a feast of life—the Green Feast or 'Feast of Greenery,' known in Ukrainian as Zeleni Sviata.

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221 See COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON, Decree.

222 GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, Oration 41: On Holy Pentecost, 9: PG 36, 441.

223 VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* [Joy and Hope], 39.

224 Octoechos, Tone 1, Sunday, Matins, Hymns of Ascent, Second Antiphon.

225 Floral Triodion, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Vespers, Third Kneeling Prayer.

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins,  
(Symbol of Faith)*

*And unite all of us, who share in this one bread and cup,  
With one another into the communion of the Holy Spirit, ...  
May we find mercy and grace ...  
Especially with our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady,  
The Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary... and all your saints..  
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

*Remember, o Lord, your holy, catholic and apostolic Church ...  
Bring back the vineyard, and join them  
To your holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

### **C. Church—An Icon of the Most Holy Trinity**

271 In the "fullness of time" (see Ga14:4) God the Father visits humankind through his incarnate Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, so that the human race in the Holy Spirit, through adoption in Christ, could come to the Father. The place and environment where God's adoption of human beings is realized is the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. The Church is the People of God the Father, the Body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>226</sup> The Church, initiated in the eternal plan of the Father, becomes a reality in the Incarnation of God's Son and is manifested at the descent of the Holy Spirit.

272 The Church, as the place where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act, is an icon of the Most Holy Trinity, that is, a community where human being can commune with God and with each other. As God is one in three Persons, so also the one community of the Church exists in the coming together of self-governing Churches that live in communion with each other.

#### **1. Biblical Images of the Church**

##### *a. The Church in the Old Testament*

273 Humankind was created according to the model of the communion of Persons within the Most Holy Trinity: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness ... So God created humankind ..

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<sup>226</sup> See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium [Light of the Nations], 2-4.