

**TRINITAS:
Called to Holiness,
Community,
Mission:**

A Workbook for New Members

by Carol Cowgill

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1

INTRODUCTION

Article 1. Trinitas is headquartered in Ventura County, in the Santa Barbara Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California, and is under the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocesan Bishop of that diocese. Other Trinitas communities will also be under the authority of their Diocesan Bishop.

As we are in foundation times, the community in Ventura, which initiated Trinitas, needed to get official recognition from the Church, for a local bishop has total authority over any group in his diocese claiming to be Catholic (see canon 300). Without episcopal approval we would have no legal standing. Thus the Ventura community worked with the archbishop's Vicar for Religious from before the beginning, trying to give ourselves a legal shape that reflects whom we feel called to be and that satisfies the need of the local bishop to feel sure that what we strive to be is an authentic expression of the mind and heart of the Church.

Episcopal recognition is thus an act of trust on the part of the Church that we are truly living the life of Jesus in the world and that we are committed to helping each other live it more completely. On a more practical level, this is a necessary first step so that pastors will take us seriously enough to recommend Trinitas to those who are searching for a structure of total dedication of their life.

It is intended that as communities form in other dioceses they introduce themselves to their local bishop and ask him for a letter of recognition and recommendation to the members of his diocese.

All of this applies to the existence of a community of Trinitas in a diocese, not to the presence of an individual member. However, once there are committed members the local bishop needs to be informed and his cooperation sought before the community is established.

It might happen that a particular bishop is opposed to the formation of a Trinitas community in his diocese. In such a case the members should appeal to the Coordinator Conference, which will take whatever steps possible to resolve the dilemma. In the meantime the Trinitas community cannot go public.

When Trinitas communities exist in several dioceses in the same country, we would seek recognition by the national Conference of Bishops. If it be God's will that we flourish internationally, we may need to seek papal recognition. Even if this occur, it would still be important for the local bishop to know of our existence and presence, since we will have visibility and since he and his staff need to know what is going on within the diocese.

2 PURPOSE

Article 2. The purpose of Trinitas is to form and support Christian communities which engage in efforts of evangelization and mission which animate the secular order.

This article is so short and stark that it can be deceptive. But it gives three basic reasons to justify our existence. We aim to:

form communities,
live the christian life,
and carry the gospel into the secular order.

The first two aims will be discussed in articles 3-5 and 7-8. The third will be discussed in article 6.

Actually, Trinitas does not fit easily into any established mode of consecrated life. Because our roots are in the secular institutes (canons 713.1 and 714 will be pertinent to this discussion). From this source we have drawn our commitment to the evangelical counsels lived in a form appropriate to the mission of the laity and the limits of secular life: our mission is to be a leaven in the dough of ordinary life. We make promises to live the life of the gospel in the way Christ calls us. Some members are called to celibacy, some to marriage; all are called to poverty, obedience and work for his kingdom. So, who are we?

We are lay people

living the whole gospel profoundly,
called to remain in the world where God has placed us, to transform it from within,
and helping one another do so.



Be adored among men,
God, three-numbered form;
Wring thy rebel, dogged in den;
Man's malice, with wrecking and storm.
Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,
Thou are lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm;
Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung:
Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

With an anvil-ding
And with fire in him forge thy will
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring
Through him, melt him but master him still:
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,
Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill,
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

G.M. Hopkins, *Wreck of the Deutschland*, 9-10

The first element, holiness, is expressed in our keeping God as Trinity at the center of our conscious life. We feel called to live the life of God in all its fullness, from within our union with Jesus. Gathered by Jesus into his sonship, the life of each of us is a life lived toward the Father, as St. John indicates in his opening line: the Word was in God's presence, or "toward" God. Our charism calls us to join Jesus in living face-to-face with the Father, which includes surrendering in love as Jesus did. Our spirituality, the gift of the Spirit empowering us, is thus consciously relational. This is the call to each member of Trinitas, but it is also God's call to us as a community. The Father and Son are members of our community (or, perhaps better, we are members of the community of the Father and the Son), and everything in the interactions among all of us is a response to the Spirit's impulse. At least, we intend that it be. The result is that as individuals and as community we should be able to say with Jesus: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9); "whoever welcomes this little child, on my account, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me" (Lk 9:48). We are a community searching for God, finding him in Christ and radiating the fullness of God to all we meet.

A historical note on the charism. From reading the preceding one gets the impression that all this was coolly planned. Not at all. This sense of community and mission grew out of our frustration with the community from which we sprang, but the trinitarian focus came as sheer, totally unexpected gift. As the four founders were coming to the end of the discernment process and it seemed clear that something new would come into being, suggestions for names surfaced: Institute of the Poor Christ was one; Community of St. Ignatius was another. Then someone, exasperated so long with a 7-10 word name, suggested that it be something short and sweet like Caritas or Trinitas. We began to see that Trinitas was the most clearly focussed on God himself as the reason for our search, our love and our being together. We felt that the people whom we would like to join us in Trinitas would be those in search of God alone and his will for the world. A consensus was reached very quickly on this as the mature focus of St. Ignatius' way to God. The spirituality articulated in this section on the charism flows from reflection on how we must live if our name is to correspond authentically to what and who we are.

The second element, our search for God is focussed in community where we find him incarnated. We are called to community to be able to live this life, as God does, in relationship with others. But the quality of our relationships must share in the quality of the relation between Father and Son. Nothing about community is automatic. Our community, like our worship, must be lived "in Spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23). *Truth* demands truthfulness and openness, which we know are absolutely necessary if people are to communicate intimately. *Spirit* means being aware that each member of the community is a presence of the Trinity and a gift to the others, a gift given freely and received gratefully. Because we believe that each of us has been called individually by God into a particular group of people, we believe that it is our responsibility to seek to become aware of the giftedness of each and how the gift calls the community to grow beyond itself in relationship to God and the world. In the review of life each speaks of the gifts of the Spirit in himself/herself, and the community reflects on these gifts as a call to the group as a whole. Besides recognition, appreciation of God's gifts requires that we be challenged to develop them further; this growth and development, in fact, is the primary mode of our ongoing conversion in love. Stagnant members of a community in opposition to the gift of new life are both great evils, which will destroy community. So care must be taken that the review of life be a true discernment on the part of the person making it and that the community discuss the implications of what this movement of the Spirit means for the community as a whole. Thus in the review of life the community has two tasks: to help the member in her/his discernment and to help the community discern its further call from God.

The third dimension of our charism has to do with our mission. "The light shines in the darkness," says John, and "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (1:5, 14). The

All this is only a taste of our life. Fuller development of all these elements will follow.

REFINEMENT

But you, oh God,
are real, so real
I fall to silence,
where my words
for you are like
a leaning wall
before it leans,
like the sound
of a bell before
it rings,
like a smile
about to form,
like a shadow
not yet fallen,
like a ship's wake
to be carved
upon the sea,
like the pause
before a pirouette,
like a waterfall
soon to descend,
like a wind
that is not risen,
like a loudness
gathering,
like a shrug

where it begins,
like the welling
of a sob,
like a top
about to spin,
like an eye
lifted to see,
like a dankness as
it leaves the pond,
like a moment
forming on a clock,
like movement
in the background
of a photograph,
like a thought
until it's shaped.

So in my silence
I will write
these poems for you
and leave them
somewhere you
will find them.

George McCauley, Night Air Dancing

The obstacles to the trinitarian integration which I have experienced in myself and in the community:

Patricia	Nancy	Carol	Mary Ann
<p>As I am a flawed human being, it has not always been easy to accept my own limitations or those of others. In attempting to live my promises to God, self and community I sometimes fail to turn to the One who is in charge, namely, God.</p>	<p>Trying to live at a deeper, more honest level naturally results in fear in myself and sometimes conflicts with others. I realize community is fragile and therefore not a given, but rather a gift to be cherished. Peace comes from trusting that this is what God wants.</p>	<p>I feel the main obstacle to be my mediocrity: I am not very holy; I sometimes don't distinguish between God's mission and my own pleasure in work. I forget that all this is God's grace.</p>	<p>The main obstacle I have encountered in myself at the beginning of Trinitas was a reluctance to receive other members in their totality, their gifts as well as their defects. I am learning that as I am more conscious of my own shortcoming and ask God for the grace to change, my attitude toward others is becoming more accepting and compassionate. I have not experienced any obstacles in the community.</p>

2. Choose a story from tonight's news. Analyze it prayerfully:
- what is the Father's will in this situation?
 - what changes would be necessary in the people involved in order for them to recognize and assent to the Father's will?
 - what one thing will you do to make this happen?

3. The Our Father is an expression of our charism:
• who is included in the "our" of Our Father?

• what are the implications in your life of asking God to make his kingdom come?

• what changes are needed in your heart so that all will have daily bread?

• what changes do you need to make about forgiving?

• where in your life do you see the clash between the evil one and the Spirit of Jesus?

NOW YOUR TURN TO INTEGRATE

How the trinitarian integration of holiness, community and mission has transformed my spiritual path:

The obstacles to the trinitarian integration which I have experienced in myself and in the community:

New insights that Trinitas has brought me:

two are mutually reinforcing: all our reading of the gospels should be contemplation, and our approach to God in prayer should always take place in, with, through and for Christ. (Although we speak here of the gospels, all scripture is the good news and, read in faith, is a place to touch the Trinity and Christ.)

Because the Exercises are foundational to our understanding of God and of Jesus' mission to the world, we are grateful sons and daughters of St. Ignatius. We pray to him to guide us in discernment, detachment and magnanimity. And since prayer to a saint is difficult if we do not get to know him, all members should read a good life of St. Ignatius some time before first commitment. The Spiritual Exercises are the foundational grace of Trinitas. All members should make the long retreat before commitment, either by going away for a month or by following the nineteenth annotation. After this, the annual retreat should be ignatian, the length depending on what is possible. All are encouraged that it be a week (5-8 days) or three weekends. Each community strives to make an ignatian retreat available; however, it is more important for our spiritual growth that it be ignatian than that it be sponsored by Trinitas. Making retreat together fosters community, but this is not the principal object of the retreat.

Our other guide is Mary, especially in the mystery of the Visitation. We accept her from Jesus as his chosen instrument to mother in us all the gifts of the Spirit and we take her as our model of total consecration to God in an ordinary life of faith-filled concern for and service of others. We believe that this is the first step of evangelization, of bringing good news into everyday life, as did Mary's visit to Elizabeth. For this reason we honor Mary of Guadalupe as the evangelizer and reconciler of the Americas in her appearance at Tepeyac, a unique visitation of our continent. It is important that members gain a true appreciation of the Virgin Mary, realizing that much that is written about her is not in line with the mind of the Church; the Church's guidelines should be followed.

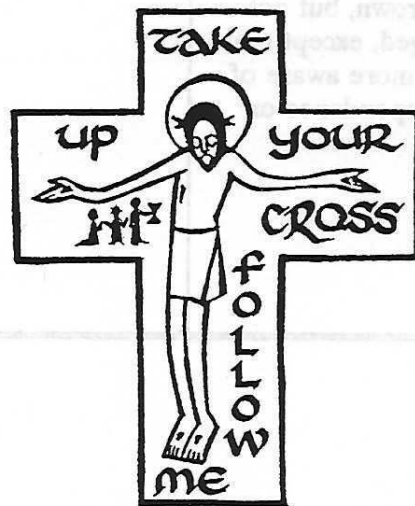
Our prayer to Mary consists of the liturgical celebrations of her feasts, especially that of the Visitation and of entrusting our vocation to her motherly concern. Members are free to find the form of devotion to Mary that most helps them to this, but the community must be careful not to impose these on other members. What all of us should do is join Mary in her prayer of poverty and praise, the *Magnificat*. Since our spirituality is rooted in the love that finds God in all his gifts, Mary's prayer is the model; we explicitly ask Mary to guide us in finding God and so in sharing her joy.

The aim of all forms of prayer is to attune us to God's Spirit and will for us. The examination of conscience has the pride of place in this, but the regular review of life, communal discernment times, regular spiritual direction and celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation are also very helpful. Fidelity to these means should be discussed in the monthly review of life.

While all these means are basic for all, those who have been called to celibacy and have been chosen by God to focus intimacy and affectivity in him need prayer in such a unique way that they should make it the focus of their spirituality in much the same way as the married members make the family the focus of their mission.

Final remarks on this article include the observation in paragraph 4 that we in Trinitas are committed to spiritual growth. Modern psychology has shown that development is the necessary mode of anything good for the human soul-psyche. So in Trinitas we continue to study the things of God, we embrace spiritual direction, we continue our humane and professional education--that is, we develop the gifts God has given us.

Another dimension of Trinitas spirituality lies in the enhancement and preservation of beauty around us. This includes not only making ourselves, body and soul, more harmonious and receptive to the integrating action of God, but also creating beauty around us in our homes, at our work and in civic planning. Concern about civic improvement in parks, tree planting, redevelopment, clean-up, environmental responsibility is all part of our spiritual life.



How have you experienced Mary's intervention in your life?

Mary Ann	Patricia	Nancy	Carol
<p>Two dramatic experiences of Mary's intervention in my life occurred when I visited the basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The first (pre-Trinitas) was a healing of my relationship with my mother, and the second, about 8 years ago, was the grace to realize that God was calling me to "go for broke." Life is too short and time too precious to settle for less.</p>	<p>I had gone through a difficult period in my life when I and few members of my former community made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. I believe it was through her intervention that I was able to be totally filled with God's love and healing power and was able to share it with those around me. I needed to feel God's love in my life, and I did.</p>	<p>Mary has been a mother in the deepest sense and has been there at difficult and turning points in my life.</p>	<p>My experience has been that all the major graces of my life have come as direct interventions of Mary. This is especially true of the conversions in my life, from the first when I was 21, through all the crises of spiritual growth and development. When I remember to pray to her retreats that have started in total aridity have proved turning points.</p>

What simple introduction to prayer would you recommend?

Nancy	Carol	Mary Ann	Patricia
<p>T. Green's <i>Opening to God</i> is a good beginning book on prayer. If I had to teach someone, I would start with scripture and <i>lectio divina</i>.</p>	<p>Using the lectionary readings for meditation every day is a great way to integrate meditation and the Mass. Shooting quick acts of love and trust at God all during the day helps me keep in touch.</p>	<p>As a simple introduction to prayer I would recommend the short Liturgy of the Hours; praying with scripture and instruction in <i>lectio divina</i>; a good introductory book on prayer, such as Thomas Green's <i>Opening to God</i>. Learning to center; discovering the posture personally most conducive to prayer, as well as finding/creating the setting for prayer are also valuable.</p>	<p>The Spirit draws me to the prayer given by the son, the Our Father. When I slowly and consciously pray this I am in close union with the Trinity as well as with my human family: I see the world as the fullness of God.</p>

It does no prejudice.
The glass-blue days are those
When every colour glows,
Each shape and shadow shows.
Blue be it: this blue heaven
The seven or seven times
seven

Hued sunbeam will transmit
Perfect, not alter it.
Or if there does some soft,
On things aloof, aloft,
Bloom breathe, that one
breath more
Earth is the fairer for.
Whereas did air not make
This bath of blue and slake
His fire, the sun would shake,
A blear and blinding ball
With blackness bound, and all
The thick stars round him roll
Flashing like flecks of coal,
Quartz-fret, or sparks of salt,
In grimy vasty vault.

So God was god of old:
A mother came to mould

Those limbs like our which are
What must make our daystar
Much dearer to mankind;
Whose glory bare would blind
Or less would win man's mind.
Through her we may see him
Made sweeter, not made dim,
And her hand leaves his light
Sifted to suit our sight.

Be thou then, O thou
dear

Mother, my atmosphere;
My happier world, wherein
To wend and meet no sin;
Above me, round me lie
Fronting my froward eye
With sweet and scarless sky;
Stir in my ears, speak there
Of God's love, O live air,
Of patience, penance, prayer:
Worldmothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee
isled,

Fold home, fast fold thy child.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

22

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What has keeping this log done for your spiritual growth this month?

2. The God-Work outline for the examen is simple. Try doing this twice a day, beginning tomorrow. At the end of the month write a summary of chief events in which God spoke to you and see if you can perceive a pattern. Report on how this went at the review of life.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

POVERTY

When we have been the guests of the Spirit of God in our lives, especially how has your Spirit? To understand and live the call of poverty in the Beatitudes and the poor Jesus, on the Beatitudes. This is the heart of the poverty to which Ignatius is calling us. This commitment we seek to become reality what Jesus is.

"Because of the importance in our lives of the gift of solidarity, we of Trinitas do not exempt ourselves in any way from the human condition, neither do we let our way of life is often easier. We are self-supporting through our work, working so as to have something to share. We accept responsibility for the expenses of our life and its resources, using no more than we need. We accept responsibility for our own health and well-being. We provide for our own retirement. As a community of love, we share

3. In spiritual reading it is good to have three or four books going simultaneously. Please list title of what you are currently using for:

. life of the saints or St. Ignatius;

. how to pray

. the spiritual life

. the Bible

4. Start acquiring a basic resource library for the community:

Bible

Complete Liturgy of the Hours

Daily missal

Who Are You, Ignatius Loyola (D'Hotel)

Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (Puhl)

Pope Paul VI, Guidelines for Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Video tapes of the Spiritual Exercises (available only in Spanish)

As a community we wanted to articulate our vision from our direct experience of poverty, to be the central heart of the proclamation of poverty, far from the alternative of religion with its ideology of renunciation of the world. Ignatius, we think, we needed to understand poverty as an ideal. Jesus was not a renouncer of things, but he emptied himself of things. As we see in the Beatitudes and in his teaching, he embraced the vulnerability of the leper and the poor, with all its dirt and implications. Please refer to Falcón #7 for a fuller understanding of the spirituality of the Beatitudes and of the poor. We consider that evangelical poverty must be lived within the attitude of powerlessness, recognizing being God's tool and instrument, without a fixed purpose. This is the only way to live the specific form of poverty that Ignatius calls for. Although this sounds very spiritual, we hope to remember that it will include many material realities. It includes our personalities with all their limits, flaws and slow growth, in relation to the limits of our education, social position, health, as it is on having money, health, and power, and we are comfortable in time for actual situations, even in relatively simple matters like giving a meal to

5
POVERTY

Article 5. ¹To understand and live the self-giving poverty of Jesus and the Father, we focus, as did the poor Jesus, on the Beatitudes. This is the heart of the poverty to which Trinitas is committed. By this commitment we seek to become totally what Jesus is.

²Because of the importance in our lives of the gift of secularity, we of Trinitas do not exempt ourselves, in any way, from the human condition; never-theless our way of life is often counter-cultural. We are self-supporting through our work, working so as to have something to share. We accept stewardship for the earth, for its beauty and its resources, using no more than we need. We accept stewardship for our own health and well-being. We provide for our own retirement. As a community of love, we share our community resources with members in need.

³An important sacrament of this secular stewardship is the offering of money, time, service and resources. We make an annual written covenant of the form this offering will take. The offering is used for the support of the Trinitas community and its works.

⁴Giving an account of our stewardship of God's gifts forms part of the monthly review of life.

We begin the evangelical counsels with poverty, not only because poverty traditionally is mentioned first, but because the founders' experience in beginning Trinitas was finding themselves cast adrift by the community out of which they came without any distribution of property, having only what they could earn by their work and a bank balance of about \$3000. Fortunately, the bulk of the attorney's fees had already been paid. Money aside, they had been experiencing a marginalized existence; their voices were not heard, and they were able to make no real contribution to the life of the group. They had been handling the situation according to their personalities, not always very spiritually: Nancy overextended herself into internal work, creating and vision and policies no one wanted to read; Carol withdrew into the work of evangelization and sheer endurance of the night; Mary Ann rose up in prophetic denunciation of injustice; Pat suffered the meaninglessness. So at the beginning the community tried to deal with this living poverty from its biblical, ignatian and secular roots up.

As a community we wanted to articulate our vision from our direct experience of poverty, avoiding the general bent of the asceticisms of poverty flowing from the literature of religious life, with its theology of renunciation of the world. Rather, we thought we needed to take Jesus' living of poverty as our model. Jesus was not a renouncer of things, but an emptier of himself (Phil 2:5 ff). As we see in the Beatitudes and in his teaching, he embraced the spirituality of the biblical *anawim* (the poor), with all its limits and implications. Please refer to Bulletin #7 for a fuller discussion of the spirituality of the Beatitudes and of the poor. We consider that evangelical poverty must be lived within the attitudes of powerlessness, mourning, longing to be God's justice and holiness, trusting in God's power. Doing this will give rise to the specific form our poverty will take at every moment. Although this sounds very spiritual, we have to remember that it will include many humiliating realities. It includes our personalities with all their limits, flaws and slow growth. It includes the limits of our education, social position (based as it is on having money), limits that make us feel uncomfortable in broader social situations, even in relatively simple matters like giving a promotional

and vote our informed conscience.

We commit ourselves to simplifying our needs, to using as few of the world's resources as possible within the situation in which God has placed us. This is another counter-cultural stance in a consumerist world. We live in adequate (not luxurious) housing; we drive functional (not "sexy") cars; we dress simply, appropriately and beautifully, without spending a lot of money on clothes; we eat moderately and simply; we control our desire to collect things, whether books, pets, *objets d'art* or large bank balances. Then we find (always under God's guidance) the way to divest ourselves of what we do not truly need. Although we must save for retirement, members should make a will before commitment, so that their affairs are in order and they can use their energy on things that are more important. This will should be reviewed and updated, if necessary, every five years. The community is not to try to influence the member about the dispositions of the will.

Part of secular poverty is to take responsibility for the environment. Here, too, we need to make decisions out of an informed conscience. But since our poverty must be soulful, we of Trinitas have a responsibility to make our environment--house, town, world--as beautiful as possible to fight against the tolerance of ugliness and dirt around us.

Part of our poverty is care for our health, physical and emotional. We need to do ordinary prevention and use our resources wisely when we are ill. Part of budgeting is provision of insurance or savings for illness. But when the money is gone we need to inform ourselves of the Church's guidelines regarding not having to take extraordinary means to preserve life and place our neediness in God's hands. In the care of the terminally ill and old, the community must not abandon them, but encourage them to persevere in the poverty they have promised so long and which God is letting them taste: to be actually poor with the poor man, Jesus:

Eternal Lord of all things, in the presence of your infinite goodness and of your glorious mother and of all the saints of your heavenly court, this is the offering of myself which I make with your favor and help. I protest that it is my earnest desire and my deliberate choice, provided only it is for your greater service and praise, to imitate you in bearing all wrongs and all abuse and all poverty, both actual and spiritual, should your most holy majesty deign to choose and admit me to such a state and way of life.

Spiritual Exercises, 98

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDERS

For me, from the beginning, the most important spiritual dimension of poverty has been:

Carol	Mary Ann	Patricia	Nancy
<p>The desire to be one with Christ poor (even if I cannot put this into action) and to let God decide what I really need without clinging. Also to make as simple and generous a return to God as possible for all he has given me.</p>	<p>The most important spiritual dimension of poverty since the beginning of Trinitas has been the inner freedom to start over and the grace to accept the losses involved in terms of personal relationships and resources. We started Trinitas with very little except each other and our faith in God's call to begin this new community.</p>	<p>To let God be God. To not be afraid, but believe in his overwhelming love for me, for the person he has made, and because of this be able to let go, so that others may feel his love through me.</p>	<p>This has been the closing concept in Orsy's article on spiritual poverty, namely, "A poor person lives on gifts." Poverty is like a coin with two sides. The need I experience in myself speaks clearly to me of my total dependency on God. It used to frighten me to live this way; now it's becoming a little exciting. At the moment, John the Baptist's words make sense to me: "I must decrease; he must increase."</p>

My greatest obstacle to poverty has been...and God has helped me overcome it by...

Patricia	Nancy	Carol	Mary Ann
	<p>For me, keeping a balance (in my life as well as my check book) is difficult. It's easier to think of a poverty that means being destitute (more Franciscan) rather than having as if on had not (more Ignatian). Earning a salary, paying bills, providing for old age and all the aspects of poverty lived in a secular setting like any other lay person are difficult.</p> <p>Sometimes I think that being in convent and living a form of poverty that frees one from cares about material things would be easier--but this is not how the Holy Family would have lived. How has God helped me with this? Regular accounting and being accountable to the community has been a big help. The Ignatian view that we are to find God in all things has counteracted my Jansenist tendency to think that material things are bad and to be avoided.</p>	<p>The recurring obstacle to poverty has been the anxiety that leads me to try to control my surroundings and my future. The grace that helps me control this is honesty in facing it, choosing to trust God and then let it go.</p>	<p>The greatest obstacle to poverty in relationship to Trinitas is my personal reluctance to face the challenges of starting over in my late fifties without having the resources I would prefer in regard to health, finances, etc. With God's grace, I am growing into this more radical trust and surrender.</p>

2. Develop a budget for the next 12 months:

For me, from the beginning, the most important spiritual dimension of poverty has been:

The promise of poverty has been significant for me because:

My greatest obstacle to poverty has been...and God has helped me overcome it

NOW YOUR TURN TO INTEGRATE

For me, from the beginning, the most important spiritual dimension of poverty has been:

The promise of poverty has been significant for me because:

My greatest obstacle to poverty has been...and God has helped me overcome it by...

So our obedience means allowing God to catch us into the transforming whirlwind and putting ourselves at the service of the transformation of the world. The Trinitas community exists primarily to help us to move beyond our blind spots and fears and "to go from strength to strength" (Ps 84).

By promising obedience, we in Trinitas give our local community the authority to make the final decision of the form the bringing of the kingdom will take; that is, we invite the community into our spiritual discernment as co-discerners and cooperate in reaching consensus. This is a view of obedience that is different from the common understanding--that I give the community the right to command me. This latter is not Trinitas' desire: the person who wants to exercise authority on a coercion model (do what I say) or even on an elitist model (I know better than you) needs to be educated out of it during the review of life. No one commands; everyone discerns and exhorts. Because we are a small and intimate community this way of doing things can work.

Our obedience, then, is a matter of discernment of God's action in our world (or opposition to God's action in our world). The ignatian desire to find God in all things was for the purpose of putting ourselves at the service of his creative desire to free people from the blindness and slavery that keep them from enjoying the fullness of life.

Our promise, then, is a dual promise: to keep trying to discern what God is actively doing in this world and to put our lives at its service. This discernment obviously has to begin with me myself. Then it moves into my community of intimacy: the Trinitas community and, if married, my family. To some extent the Trinitas community and the family are "trial runs": can I discern and respond to God's grace at work in a small group whom I am learning to love? Small groups can be pressure cookers, because there is no let up in the demands for letting go of my egoism, rigidity and preconceptions. But more on this when we discuss community. Having gotten a handle on how to do it in an intimate setting, we are ready to move as a potential friend in the Spirit to the people with whom we work and the social concerns that flow from our work. If we look carefully at Jesus' methods, we see that he took people one by one and discerned what *this* person needed to learn or do in order to give a lively response to God. In the area of social concerns, where breadth of view is needed, Trinitas especially needs to allow itself to be guided by the Church's social teaching. Since local problems are dealt with by national conferences of bishops, we need to have regular access to official statements.

It is important to note all this because when many Catholics hear the word "evangelization" they immediately think of rallies or projects of inviting people or preaching on sidewalks. When Trinitas uses the word we mean that all we say and do flows from God and is useful for people to touch God's Spirit. This is why the first preparation for proclaiming the good news is to free ourselves from our sinful actions, attitudes and attachments. The second is that we are consciously on the road to spiritual growth, a growth we can talk about. Our two schools of evangelization are the review of life and the process of integration of the Spirit of Jesus as found in scripture. Self-knowledge and the knowledge of Jesus--real personal and ongoing knowledge. It is in this process that poverty and obedience meet. For who of us totally knows himself or herself? Who of us is so free of attachments that we can trust ourselves to discern God's will? Who of us has the Spirit of Jesus without alloy?

So we must ask ourselves if obedience is possible? The truthful answer is "no." We are in a process of allowing God's ongoing impulse of grace to break in on us as waves on the shore. We promise to orient our hearts to respond. But at any moment we may get tired, get rigid, get selfish, get lazy (and probably every other capital sin), and fail to catch the wave. This is where the examination of conscience during the day can be our salvation. The question to God: when during the morning were you breaking on my heart and the hearts of the people around me, and which of these waves did I ride in? With a thank-you as a response. And if the moment was wasted, the

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDERS

For me, the most important dimension of the Kingdom of God is:

Nancy	Mary Ann	Carol	Patricia
<p>In the past I think it was the realization that God had a plan for all creation and that all needed to be brought under his dominion. Now I am just very grateful that I can share in working for the building up of the Kingdom. I have received so much. This way I can make a return for all. On the other hand, to be able to work for the build-up of the Kingdom through Trinitas is itself a great gift from God to me. The apocalyptic vision of a new heaven and a new earth has meant a lot to me personally.</p>	<p>For me, the most important dimension of the Kingdom of God is that Jesus came to make this Kingdom of love, justice, peace and healing a reality. And he has called me to active involvement in and personal commitment to building this Kingdom.</p>	<p>For me, the Kingdom is the life of the Spirit to which every person is called and in which so many people in the world are progressing. I see my call to help this growth happen.</p>	<p>The most important dimension of the Kingdom is to be happy, to live in the present, here and now, the present moment, this gift of time that God has given me. He wants and needs my help. He cannot do it alone. He wills that I allow him to be made visible through me this day. This is the kingdom of God: when I know and do his will, so that the present and the future may be lived totally in his fullness. He wishes to use me in his plan of redemptive love.</p>

The things that I have most had to overcome in myself to facilitate my response to God and his call to the Kingdom are:

Carol	Patricia	Nancy	Mary Ann
<p>Learning to really care about people rather than just serve them; letting go of making my ego the central referent so as to be able to discern God's desires in situations.</p>	<p>My anxiety with self: is who I am enough? God wills that I keep turning back to him. Only through this will I ever be enough, for I have allowed God to fill that which is lacking. Life is a gift in process, a gift that he hopes I find joy in living.</p>	<p>Much of my work involves being in front of a class. I tend to be self-conscious. Being well prepared, using aids like slides, and the effort to keep my mind off myself help. When I'm in front of a class I can't think on my feet, so the application of my work to the Kingdom must be done in quiet times. Prayer time helps me integrate.</p>	<p>To facilitate my response to God I have had to adjust my idealism in regard to the community and my expectations of the members to correspond to the reality of the human condition and its limitations, starting with myself. God has blessed me with many opportunities to experience my own limitations, so that gradually I am becoming more compassionate.</p>

WORKING THINGS OUT

The things that I have most had in my life that have helped me to respond to his call to the kingdom are:

1. In your own recent experience, what pattern of attitudes have been the biggest block to your awareness of God's action?

The community of Trinitas has most helped and blessed me by:

...to your responding to God's action?

2. In your own words explain the difference between an authority of command and an authority of final decision?

3. If you had a serious decision to make, to whom in the community would you take it, and why?

The things that I have most had to overcome in myself to facilitate my response to God and his call to the kingdom are:

The community of Trinitas has most helped and hindered me by:

how, concretely, God is using me to transform the people in my life. Are they holier? more aware? freer? more just? If they are, then I have made a start on the road to chastity.

But I also have to look at the appropriateness of my expression of erotic love. If I am married, is it respectful, loving and responsible. If I am searching for a spouse, is my behavior honest, warm, respectful and non-genital. If I am celibate, is it expressed in warmth and service and not directed toward myself or others as possible sex partners. Christian chastity requires the ability to control impulses until their appropriateness can be evaluated in the light of my overall call, with all the values it contains. In our day there are millions in infinite misery because they neglect chastity. Marriage has been reduced to an arena for free sex; there is often no sense of commitment and fidelity to a spouse; the commandments governing control in sexual matters are ignored, supplanted by concern to avoid pregnancy or AIDS; murder of the unborn is seen as a normal means to remove the unplanned consequences of sex; battering women and children as male sexual prerogative; the valuation of orgasm as the highest human joy. The result, as Dante points out in the first circle of hell, is innumerable people blown about in a perpetual hurricane of desire—who never get themselves together enough for the fullness of life which Jesus wishes to give them.

The members of Trinitas have learned this and we understand that we can choose to be chaste, even in the 21st century, and that the calm of chastity can open the door to greater joy of the Spirit. Sometimes this seems too obvious to need saying, but the unhappiness all around us indicates otherwise. We are chaste because chastity is necessary if we are to be free to love.

It is this growth in freedom to love that is discussed in the review of life.

Can a married person belong to Trinitas? Yes, if the spouse is supportive. Can a single person looking for a spouse and dating belong to Trinitas? Yes, as long as (s)he controls her/his sexual impulses so that sexuality expresses a serving and life-giving love and not a bald erotic attachment. Trinitas requires that we have gotten past enslavement to our sex hormones as well as to our dependencies.

When the person applies to become a member (s)he opts for celibacy or marriage. Before commitment the person has to become free for this choice by having taken care to secure necessary annulments, dispensations or other procedures required by the Church. If annulment of a previous marriage cannot be obtained, the person needs to know that (s)he is not free either to date (actively search for a life partner) or to make a lifetime commitment to celibacy.

A final issue regarding celibacy is the concern for the ongoing psycho-sexual development of each member. St. Teresa once reminded her sisters that some people think that because they love no one they therefore love God. The truly chaste person, married or celibate, is warm, giving, capable of friendship, of forming community, of mentoring, of expressing affection, of pursuing great desires, of joy. We look for these qualities in our members and expect some discernment of them during the review of life.

Since I am celibate my chastity enables me to love God and neighbor more by:

Mary Ann	Carol	Patricia	Nancy
<p>Chastity enables me to love God with a single heart. He is the primary focus of my love in a way which is undivided and which makes me available and free to love and serve my neighbor.</p>	<p>Being able to escape the illusion of a small focus of my love in comfortable groups like family and friends; constantly facing me with the need to discern whether I am truly loving or not.</p>	<p>In my continuing desire to be centered in Christ I am more open to his presence in those around me. When I am free to use my gifts I feel more complete. I feel like one who gives as well as receives life from others.</p>	<p>The focus of chastity has always been on loving God and others and on creativity--not on fear of loving. As chaste, my love is freeing, because being loved in return or loved as someone special by another person is not really so important. The love of God is stabilizing. The vow of chastity keeps before my consciousness that I am to love and be life-giving for others. My natural tendency would be to withdraw into myself. Chastity keeps me striving to be for others.</p>

I think I did/did not do a pretty good job of discerning my vocation to celibacy, because... Today I would choose...because...

Patricia	Nancy	Mary Ann	Carol
<p>My desire has not changed. I still want to follow Christ as a celibate member of Trinitas, because he is still calling me to become more like him.</p>	<p>Today I would choose the same. the job of discerning the group in which the vow of chastity would be made has varied, but I think I did the best I could at the time and under the circumstances.</p>	<p>I think I was not completely free to discern my vocation to celibacy originally. But knowing that, I would again respond to God's love with a response of celibacy, had I a "second time around." He is truly my one and my all.</p>	<p>From the beginning I experienced celibacy as a very clear call, and this has been true for 40 years. Of all the commitments of Trinitas this has been the least troubled.</p>

WORKING THINGS OUT

1. Where would you rate yourself as a lover of people? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What are the personal qualities that help you be a loving person?

3. What are the personal qualities that hold you back from being a loving person?

NOW YOUR TURN TO INTEGRATE

Can you describe the stages in your psycho-sexual development that have led you to your present situation with regard to chastity?

Since I am celibate/married my chastity enables me to love God and neighbor more by:

The hardest part of living a life of chastity (chaste love) has been:

Community

Article 8. ¹Trinitas builds a community on the model of God. The purpose of our gathering in one mind and one heart is to discover together, as Christ did, the Father's will for each member and for the community as a whole, and to actively respond to it. All members must take responsibility for their spiritual development.

²We invite and call others into this oneness. Each of us of Trinitas is equally responsible for the good of our community and for Trinitas as a whole. Since God graces each member with personal gifts, each will be a special blessing to the community, able to fulfill unique roles. The community assigns tasks according to these gifts and our possibilities of using them.

³Jesus excluded no one from his call to follow him: men, women, married and unmarried, of various professions, social status and age. Any serious, mature and committed Christian who is living the Gospel may apply to become a member. The qualities looked for in a potential member are:

- a growing generosity,*
- a growing willingness to serve,*
- a deepening life of prayer,*
- a growing desire for community,*
- a developing ability to be open and honest,*
- a potential for spiritual discernment,*
- and, if married, ongoing cooperation of the spouse.*

⁴A Trinitas community is co-responsible and collegial. Co-responsibility takes the spiritual forms already noted and also includes willingness to confront destructive elements together. Major decisions are made by consensus within a process of communal discernment which respects the freedom of conscience of each member. Consensus is the agreement of most members. Dissenting members must articulate their understanding and acceptance of the consensus.

⁵Every Trinitas community will have a circle of friends who are not called to become members, but who want to share the spiritual gifts of the community. Such friends are welcomed to all community events except the review of life.

This article is at the heart of Trinitas as it is the heart of the statutes themselves. When we were in the midst of the discernment which led us to the new road, the facilitator was trying to help us get in touch with the elements of our vocation that were non-negotiable. Community emerged from the deep conviction that it is impossible to lead a life of holiness and mission alone. It was our conviction that the community was supposed to be a help in our following of Christ--not just a non-hindrance, but a true spiritual help. From years of living in community, we hit on the two basic principles of community life: that no christian life is possible unless we learn to live it together and that the purpose of a christian association is to associate with one another.

So first we need to look to the Trinity for the model. To review our vision of community so far, we are a community of mutual love and surrender (art. 3.1) incarnated in our interactions (art. 4.1-2) and co-discerning (art. 6.3).

To be able to form community, therefore, all we have said about warmth, service and capacity

be a committed Christian who is psychologically capable of participating in a community of love. So we need to see evidence of generosity of spirit, a spirit of service, a life of prayer, ability to act interdependently and take responsibility for the community, the qualities needed for communication and discernment. Some people will not be able to function this way: the very dependent; those with unresolved power and control issues; people highly addicted to substances and processes that destroy their freedom to take time and allow relationships with God, the community and the world to develop; those that suck energy from others; whose whose impulses are frequently out of control; those incapable of making friends or holding a job; those who will not seek help for chronic psychological problems; those who acquiesce in order to avoid conflict. This list could be longer. Such persons should not be accepted. If the problem is slight enough, a person might be accepted on condition that (s)he seek professional help and change his/her behavior--and then this should be reviewed regularly during the review of life. Some of these issues might be a reason for deciding that the person make only yearly commitments. In all of this the good of the community as a whole must be the determining factor.

A Trinitas community is co-responsible, meaning that all members take responsibility for what the community does as a community and for the depth of faith and love at which Trinitas' life is lived. Of course, love begins with his/herself, but the slothful indifference of "I don't care" or "You decide" or "Let the coordinator do it" is definitely not part of our spirit. This means that each is willing to carry his/her share of the community tasks. The one area specifically mentioned, what is traditionally called "fraternal correction," is especially important when the community spirit is suffering because of destructive behavior on someone's part.

Collegiality means that the rules governing the life of the community are arrived at together.

Consensus is the prayerful process by which all contribute to the concerns about which decisions are made and all members' voices are heard, so that the final decision is made by all, without violating anyone's conscience. The consensus model was chosen as a result of seeing the violations of conscience that can happen when a majority simply outvotes a minority on important issues without the least spiritual discernment taking place, or when one person is vested with the power to decide for all. The majority vote violates the search for God's will; the autocratic decision is an anachronism not only in the modern world but more particularly in a community of equals. The last sentence in paragraph 4 is important in order to preserve the voice of the silent members. All must speak. Especially if I have been on the dissenting end of the discussion, I must express what the consensus seems to be and indicate that I can truly live with the decision without becoming sullen or trying to subvert the decision later. This whole process is to take place in prayer.

Since Trinitas seeks to be above-board in everything, the friends of Trinitas are invited to whatever the community is doing that would benefit them spiritually. Such would include study/discussion meetings, retreats, workshops on spiritual topics, joint meetings with other institutes, celebrations and the like. Things that would not help them are business meetings, including corporation meetings. They are not invited to the review of life because of the level of intimacy of the process, to which all must be absolutely committed and for which they must be spiritually prepared. How the communities handle friends is already varying, so cultural factors are at work. Ventura, for example, has a handful of friends who help out in mission projects and come to retreats and get-togethers. Pachuca seems to be developing into a very small Trinitas nucleus with several couples who attend meetings and make their own review of life. We will be able to be more specific about the practical implications of the friends when the communities have actually been founded and have worked things out.

Nancy	Mary Ann	Carol	Patricia
<p>Originally, in order to consecrate my life by promises of poverty, chastity and obedience it seemed necessary to belong to a community approved by the Church. The reasons are obvious. A community with statutes keeps one balanced and not tempted to follow self and one's own interpretation. A community of like-minded believers helps one keep going for the long haul after the first enthusiasm has passed. The community keeps challenging and inspiring me, so I don't get settled in a comfortable rut. A community counters my tendency to be withdrawn, a loner. A community gives concrete opportunities to practice what one preaches.</p>	<p>The reality of my call to belong to a community was a spiritual experience of "hearing" God call me to "work out my salvation with these people." I didn't experience it as a need at the time.</p>	<p>From the beginning I had an intuition that it would not be possible to live a life of holiness and following of Christ all alone. Somehow I thought it would not be possible to persevere.</p>	<p>Having received the call to a deeper commitment and closer relationship with God, I knew I must have the support of a community who would journey with me or I would possibly lose what I had received. God calls individuals, but he usually calls them into relationship with others.</p>

What has been the main grace of the review of life for you?

Carol	Patricia	Nancy	Mary Ann
<p>The review helps me keep in touch with the reality of God's action in myself and in the others in the community and to know ourselves graced.</p>	<p>Over a period of time I have come to know and feel God's unconditional love for me. He is present in his fullness at our review of life and I see him more clearly in myself and my community by our listening to one another and by the grace that God has revealed in and through our sharing.</p>	<p>It makes me conscious of the importance of practicing the consciousness examen, of keeping alert to God's action in everyday life. I think the second effect is a deepening ability to trust in God's grace and the members' goodwill that things will not fall apart if there are conflicts or disagreements or direct expressions of negative feelings. I have seen how the Holy Spirit works with the whole group together and speaks through our scripture reading, prayer and sharing.</p>	<p>The main grace of the review of life for me has been gratitude for the evidence of the co-operation of each member with God's grace. This give me courage to persevere in a spirit of maganimity.</p>

What issues of community would you like Trinitas to address?

Nancy	Mary Ann	Carol	Patricia
<p>I suspect that trying to live our statutes over the next few years will make unforeseeable issues apparent. Things that have arisen so far are: how to do effective formation at a distance; how to assist an interested person to start a community; how to make life-giving adaptations to local needs; second coordinator terms in very small groups; how to reach out and serve the community; adapting vocabulary for non-Catholic christians.</p>	<p>How to have fluid community boundaries which allow for interaction and sharing between communities which at the same time respect and maintain the autonomy and inner integrity of each.</p>	<p>How to help the members be autonomous and strong and yet love each other and work together.</p>	

3. Read the Ballad of the Trinity at the beginning of this book. After praying over it for a while, write a letter to a friend to whom you were trying to explain why you think community is important, using at least three ideas from the poem.

A PRAYER

O eternal Trinity!
 Eternal Trinity!
 O the and deep well of charity!
 O you who are made in love
 with your creation!
 O eternal truth!

O eternal truth!
 O eternal truth!
 O eternal truth!
 O eternal truth!
 O eternal truth!

4. List each of the members of your community. In what way is (s)he the messiah in your midst?

and with love,
 of what use to you was our redemption?
 None at all, not for ill to you, not for good to you,
 for you have no need of us,
 you who are our God,
 for whose good was it
 Only humanity's

of what use to you was our redemption?
 None at all, not for ill to you, not for good to you,
 for you have no need of us,
 you who are our God,
 for whose good was it
 Only humanity's

NOW YOUR TURN TO INTEGRATE

What were the realities that made you conclude that you needed to belong to a community?

What are the most important graces that you have received from the Trinitas community?

What has been the main grace of the review of life for you?

What have been your biggest disappointments in the creation of community?

Membership

Article 9. ¹Before accepting an applicant the community requires a period of inquiry of indefinite duration, screening and securing of necessary certificates and recommendations. The applicant must have adequate physical and emotional health, be employed and self-supporting, even if a student, and must be a Christian. Ordinarily, applicants should be under age 40.

²The local community as a whole receives the application and accepts the person into candidacy. Membership begins with admission into candidacy at a formal rite of admission. Candidates begin a period of initiation of approximately two years. This period is to help the candidate to live all aspects of community life. This initiation process is to be balanced, deep and gender-and-state-of-life-appropriate. During initiation the candidate reviews his/her spiritual development at the communal review of life.

³The Educator recommends the candidate for first commitment. Applications for first commitment are made in January. The community meets for discernment before Lent begins. The proximate period of preparation for commitment is the three months of the Lent-Easter season, which is a period of intensive prayer and following of Christ.

⁴At commitment, members make promises of poverty, chastity, obedience and work for the Kingdom.

⁵Commitments are made on the solemnity of the Holy Trinity. The period of commitment is one year. Ordinarily, after five years, with approval of the community, a perpetual commitment may be made.

⁶All applications for yearly or perpetual commitment are made in January.

Article 11. ¹A person not willing to renew the commitment should leave freely, on friendly terms with the community. He or she should discuss the decision with the community and put the decision in writing. If the commitment is not renewed, all promises cease on Trinity Sunday. Those with perpetual commitments are asked to engage in at least a year's discernment process with the community and their spiritual directors.

²The community has the responsibility to help members in transition out of the community and to discern. Members of the community are to be truthful, loving and non-judgmental, looking to both the good of the individual and of the community.

Article 12. A member who is not living the spirit of Trinitas or who is not attending the meetings of the community, may be dismissed. The unacceptable behavior or attitudes of the member must be pointed out to him or her at least three times during the communal review of life. If there is no real change within six months of the third review, the community instructs the Coordinator to write a letter of dismissal in the name of the community. In the case of a member who is consistently absent from the communal review of life, the Coordinator writes up to three letters warning the member of dismissal

during one of the liturgical hours. It follows.

ACCEPTANCE INTO INITIATION

After the homily the community gathers in the sanctuary. A Bible and a copy of the Statutes is prominently available.

Coordinator: [N]...please come forward.

The candidate comes forward.

Coordinator: What do you desire from the Trinitas community?

Candidate: The love of the Blessed Trinity and the bringing of God's kingdom wherever I am.

Coordinator: If this is what you desire, you must live your whole life as Jesus did and help the community do so. Is this your desire?

Candidate: Yes, it is.

Coordinator: [N]... the Trinitas community admits you into the process of initiation. Here are copies of the Word of God and the Statutes. Contemplate them and put them into practice.

Candidate: Amen, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The community gives the new member the sign of peace.

The Educator takes over at this point to explain the life of Trinitas more fully and to help the candidate live it. As soon as the candidate understands the review of life (s)he joins the community in the process. Since integration cannot be rushed the period of initiation lasts about two years, longer if necessary.

The Educator should use whatever most helps the candidate grow, but the candidate must make the full *Spiritual Exercises* during this time, if (s)he has not already done so. If it has been some time since (s)he made them, making them again is highly recommended. The guidelines for the Educator are simple:

1. The initiation process must be balanced, that is, appropriate to the real commitments expected of members, together with the realism of knowing when adaptation needs to be made to real life.
2. The member is to be initiated into the depths of trinitarian spirituality in the ignatian mode.
3. Real help is to be given to the particular needs of men/women (no, we are not the same), married/celibate (not the same either), childrearing/free, young/old, and so on.

COMMITMENT CEREMONY

After the homily those making their commitment approach the altar, baptismal candle in hand. At the same time the altar server brings forward the book of the Gospels. These questions are answered as a group.

C: Do you want to love Jesus Christ?

R: Yes I do!

C: Through Jesus Christ, with him and in him, do you want to love his Father and our Father with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength until death?

R: Yes, I do!

C: Do you want to join the Trinitas community, making yourself brother and sister to the companions Jesus has chosen and loving them in him?

R: Yes, I do!

C: With your sisters and brothers, do you want to seek the one thing necessary, that is, the everlasting good news in action and contemplation, in such a way that you and your sisters and brothers experience the life of the Lord and try to realize it with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength?

R: Yes, I do!

C: With your brothers and sisters, do you want to be of one heart and one mind in the Spirit of Jesus? Do you want to love your sisters and brothers as your own soul and care for them as the apple of your eye, being for them a light in the darkness, a shade in the heat of the journey through the desert of this world, serving them and being faithful to them; being their help in good times and bad, amid abundance and in need, in times of joy and of sadness? Do you want to pray and intercede for them, day and night, every day?

R: Yes, I do!

C: Do you want to accept from God every gift that he wants to lavish on you and use all his gifts only for his glory and the spread of his kingdom? Then, do you want to renounce yourself in such a way that you are poor like Jesus who emptied himself, bringing himself to nothing?

R: Yes, I do!

Membership ceases if the yearly commitment is not renewed on the feast of the Trinity. Obviously leaving the community requires the same serious discernment as entering it and should not be done in time of desolation or under strong emotional pressure. Stating one's intent in writing is a way to calm oneself and clarify the issues. In the case of a person with a lifetime commitment the discernment should be quite long (a year should be enough time to regain the needed state of consolation) and the community should be very actively involved.

Since the loss of a member, especially one with a lifetime commitment, is always very difficult for a community that loves the member, the community should help the departing member make the transition as smoothly as possible. This should be done without recriminations, but also with frank communication, especially if it seems that the person is deciding outside of the movement of God's Spirit. Above all, much prayer and fasting is called for at this time.

To the extent possible, ex-members should be invited to remain friends of Trinitas. However, if a person wants to sever ties with Trinitas, the community needs to respect the person's decision.

But if the case is that the community discerns that a member is not living the life of Trinitas or is absent too frequently, the community needs to cut off the dead branch that saps its energy. As can be seen in article 12, we need to honor the requirements of due process; the community must go through this process and document doing so. It should be noted that absence is a reason to dismiss, since we were founded because we need to be in touch with the community. The steps in the statutes are clear. Membership ceases when the letter of dismissal is sent. If the person appeals within three months of the sending of the letter, membership ceases when the Conference ratifies the decision of the local community. If the Coordinator Conference does not ratify the decision of the local community, it needs to recommend an appropriate course of action to resolve the problem.

Until the Coordinator Conference is functional, the founding community takes responsibility for dealing with the appeals.

WORKING THINGS OUT

1. Someone writes to you indicating an interest in becoming a member. List the steps (s)he would have to take and the people (s) would have to be in touch with in your community.

Is, hair of the head, numbered.
Nay, what we had lighthanded left in surly the mere mould
will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the wind what while we slept,
This side, that side hurling a heavyheaded hundredfold
What while we, while we slumbered.
O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are we so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-
killed, so fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered,
When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer, fonder
A care kept--Where kept? do but tell us where kept, where--
Yonder.--What high as that! We follow, now we follow.--
Yonder.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

would be the most life-giving way to do this. Communities need to be warned that division is an extremely traumatic act and that there will be a great deal of psychological resistance. This needs to be dealt with spiritually before the discernment process can begin. A facilitator might be very useful in this process, especially since no community has as yet reached a point of division.

We are actively trying to create communities a second way, with one or two members, hoping that they will be able to draw a nucleus of three people around them. This is a very difficult way of beginning and can be very discouraging when vocations are slow. In a situation in which a member is simultaneously trying to learn the Trinitas way of life at a distance from an existing community and trying to form a community around him/herself, we must expect the poverty of feeling always stretched beyond the limits of the possible. Doing things this way is only for the strong or those who can put their total trust in the Lord. The community needs to understand that supporting the member in such a situation will be very difficult. And the member asking to form the community this way needs to be extraordinarily prudent. Since this way is so difficult it should be attempted only in situations where God's will seems extraordinarily clear. We have been attempting this in Mexico and Guatemala, but it is too early to evaluate.

A third way communities begin--less difficult than the last--is that a small group of people who are attracted to the Trinitas ideal and ask to become a community. In this case someone from the founding community will meet regularly with them to initiate formation. We are attempting this in Orange and Pachuca and there is a hopefully vitality about the project.

Communities formed at a distance will have less oversight and so there may be a deficiency in their understanding of Trinitas life. Or sometimes a community will lessen in its fervor and the spirit go out of the thing, or sometimes a rogue leadership surfaces, turning the community into something different from Trinitas. When the problem is brought to the attention of the Coordinator Conference the due-process provisions of article 14 are initiated. Hopefully a creative solution can be found, but if nothing changes, the Coordinator Conference, through the Central Coordinator, informs the community that it no longer belongs to the Trinitas Federation. The diocesan bishop is also informed of this. At this point they need to drop the word "Trinitas" from their name.

Their assets become the property of the Trinitas Federation according to some plan devised by the Coordinator Conference. If the time comes when the Coordinator Conference ceases to exist, the property is to be divided as indicated in the process, since the assets of Trinitas do not belong to the individual members but to the community.

In such a case there may be one or more committed members of the excommunicated community who was not in agreement with the direction of the majority and still feel called to the Trinitas way of life. In such a case the Coordinator Conference treats him/her as a relocating member or as a new group at a distance and helps them get started either by joining an already-existing community in the area or in forming a new community, whatever would be most life-giving for all concerned.

Until the Coordinator Conference is functioning the founding community will be responsible for all this.

We will ignore the demise of the Trinitas federation until it actually exists. The process will be clarified with a canon lawyer.

Because the Educator is crucial for the future of Trietas, he or she is elected first. The election is made by consensus within a process of deliberative democracy. All committed members present at the meeting express their choice. If the community is seriously divided on the candidate, the election is postponed for a time, so that further discernment can take place. The person is elected if the members reach a consensus. If by the third attempt a consensus cannot be reached, the community is asked to

After this, the Coordinator is elected by the same process.

There are two main officers in Trietas: the Coordinator and the Educator. The Coordinator is elected by the community. If either the Coordinator or the Educator is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities, the community

Doxology

God fills my being to the brim
with floods His immensity.
I drown within a drop of Him
whose sea-bed is infinity.

The Father's will is everywhere
for chart and chance His precept keep.
There are no beaches to His care
nor cliffs to pluck from His deep.

The Son is never far away from me
for presence is what love compels.
Divinely and incarnately
He draws me where His mercy dwells.

And lo, myself am the abode
of Love, the third of the Triune,
the primal surge and sweep of God
and my eternal claimant soon!

Praise to the Father and the Son
and to the Spirit! May I be,
O Water, Wave and Tide in One,
Thine animate doxology.

Jessica Powers

³Because the Educator is crucial for the future of Trinitas, he or she is elected first. The election is made by consensus within a process of communal discernment. All committed members present at the meeting express their choice. If the community is seriously divided on the candidate, the decision is postponed for a time, so that further discernment can take place. The person is elected if the members reach a consensus. If by the third attempt opinion remains equally divided, the decision is made by lot.

⁴After this, the Coordinator is elected by the same process.

⁵If either the Coordinator or the Educator becomes unable to fulfill his or her commitments, he or she resigns, and the community gathers to elect a member to serve the remainder of the term. A person incapable of making a resignation will be formally removed from office by the community gathered to elect the person who will serve the remainder of the term.

Article 15 is straightforward. It means that the final decision-making body is the community. This does not mean that the community administers its decisions, but that all major decisions and policies come from within the community and that the office holders are responsible to the community.

The easiest way understand the operation of leadership in articles 16-17 is to look at your community.

. who is the Coordinator?

. what does the Coordinator actually do? and do best?

. who is the Educator?

. what does the Educator actually do? and do best?

are there any committees in your community? whom are they responsible to?

LITURGICAL MEDITATIONS ON THE TRINITY

Year A

Exodus 34: 4-9
Daniel 3: 52-56
2 Corinthians 13: 11-13
John 3: 16-18

Year B

Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40
Psalm 33: 4-6, 9 18-20, 21
Romans 8: 14-17
Matthew 28: 18-20

Year C

Proverbs 8: 22-31
Psalm 8: 4-9
Romans 5: 1-5
John 16: 12-15

and your Spirit to make us holy.

Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.
Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons
by proclaiming and living our faith in you.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

draw two circles, labeled Coordinator and Educator. In each write the tasks being done and by whom. (This summarizes the first three items.)

and we praise you,
Father all powerful, Christ Lord and Saviour, Spirit of love,
You reveal yourself in the depths of our being,
drawing us to share in your life and your love
One God, three Persons,
we yearn to the people formed in your image,
raise to the world your love brings to life.
We ask you this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God true and living for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us give all honor and glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as we try out with joy:
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Holy Father, send your Spirit as we speak now and then to glory as we ought,
that he may help us in our needs, and ask for us those gifts which will make us pleasing to you.
Christ, Son of the living God, you send the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon your Church,
make us worthy to have the Spirit of truth with us always.

Christ, Holy Spirit, that we may show your fruit in our lives: charity, joy, peace, self-control, kindness,
and so forth.
King of glory, with the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit, always.

Father all powerful, you have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts, so that we may abide
in you.

Send us, Father, the Holy Spirit that we may be your heirs, and cooperate with Christ.
Christ Jesus, you send the Paraclete who proceeds from the Father to bear witness to you
and to be your witness before others.

LITURGICAL MEDITATIONS ON THE TRINITY

Year A

Exodus 34: 4-9
Daniel 3: 52-56
2 Corinthians 13: 11-13
John 3: 16-18

Year B

Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40
Psalm 33: 4-6, 9 18-20, 22
Romans 8: 14-17
Matthew 28: 16-20

Year C

Proverbs 8: 22-31
Psalm 8: 4-9
Romans 5: 1-5
John 16: 12-15

Father,
you sent your Word to bring us truth
and your Spirit to make us holy.
Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.
Help us to worship you, on God in three Persons,
by proclaiming and living our faith in you.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

God, we praise you:
Father all-powerful, Christ Lord and Savior, Spirit of love,
You reveal yourself in the depths of our being,
drawing us to share in your life and your love.
One God, three Persons,
be near to the people formed in your image,
close to the world your love brings to life.
We ask you this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God true and living, for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us give all honor and glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as we cry out with joy:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Holy Father, send your Spirit to us know know not how to pray as we ought,

that he may help us in our frailty, and ask for us those gifts which will make us pleasing to you.

Christ, Son of the living God, you asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon your Church,

make us worthy to have the Spirit of Truth with us always.

Come, Holy Spirit, that we may show your fruit in our lives: charity joy, peace, equanimity, kindness, generosity,

long-suffering, patience, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.

Father all powerful, you have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts, so that we cry: Abba, Father,

make us submissive to your Spirit that we may be your heirs, and coheirs with Christ.

Christ Jesus, you sent the Paraclete who proceeds from the Father to bear witness to you,

enable us also to be your witnesses before others.

*to write official communications,
to represent Trinitas to Rome,
to give an accounting of his or her service to the Coordinator Conference.
To do this well, the Central Coordinator must be an effective discoverer of talent and delegator.*

Article 21. The statutes may be changed by the Coordinator Conference at the Triennial Meeting only after careful discernment of God's will for Trinitas, following these procedures:

Proposals for statute changes are submitted by the local Coordinator to the Central Coordinator.

The Central Coordinator communicates the proposal to all local Coordinators to submit to their communities for study, discernment and consensus opinion, which is sent to the Central Coordinator.

After receiving the opinions of all communities, the Central Coordinator publishes this information for all communities and places the proposed statute change, for which a favorable consensus exists, on the agenda for the next Triennial Meeting.

At the Triennial Meeting a consensus of the Coordinators must be reached.

Following the approval of the appropriate ecclesiastical authority, the statute change may be promulgated.

Trinitas is a federation of autonomous communities. There are many examples of federations of religious communities in the Church: Benedictines, Poor Clares and Sisters of Mercy being obvious examples. What they have in common is that they share a spirituality and way of life, that they are distant from each other, and that they are small communities (whether deliberately or by historical circumstance). The blessing of the small group is intimacy and support. The drawback is insularity and entropy when the work of the Spirit is impeded. For this reason small communities bind together, not to make one large community, but to provide the fresh air, objectivity and additional spiritual resources to keep developing.

This is why Trinitas has a Coordinator Conference. The Conference is a network composed of the Coordinators of all the communities. Their main task is to meet together every three years to open spiritual windows and discuss a topic of importance to the life and spirit of Trinitas as a whole. The Triennial Meeting is primarily educational, so is open to all members who are able to attend. Because this may be the only time that some of the Coordinators can meet, some items of business are attended to at this Triennial Meeting, particularly the election of the Central Coordinator for the following three years.

When not meeting, the Conference keeps in touch by telephone, letter, fax and the newsletter.

Besides this structured interaction among the Coordinators, communities close to each other geographically or spiritually can cluster for events that are important to them, like retreats, workshops--or even purely social events.

For the Federation to function well there must be good communication. The newsletter is especially important to keep everyone current on the activities of each community, on the doings and gifts of individual members, on questions and issues which communities would like to discuss, on events of interest in the region in which the communities find themselves, on a sharing of information on books and articles of general interest, on Trinitas resources developed by communities willing to share them, and so forth. Remember, there is no top in Trinitas from which things can trickle down. We need to have a source from which controversy and insight can well up.

Integration: 5th Year of Commitment

How has your experience of God changed?

How have you experienced Mary's intercession in your life?

The obstacles to the Christian integration which I have experienced in myself and in the community:

How do you provide focus and continuity in your prayer life? Is there something that especially helps you?

How insights that Ignace has brought about in prayer and ways of commitment help you?

What have been the graces of the Spiritual Exercises in your life, especially how has your experience of God changed?

How have you experienced Mary's intervention in your life?

How do you provide focus and continuity in your prayer life? Is there something that especially helps you?

What simple introduction to prayer has helped you?

Integration: 5th Year of Commitment: Obedience and Work for the Kingdom

For me, the most important dimension of the kingdom of God is:

The main graces God has given me to bring the kingdom where I am and have been:

The things that I have most had to overcome in myself to facilitate my response to God and his call to the kingdom are:

The community of Trinitas has most helped and hindered me by:

I think I did/did not do a pretty good job of discerning my vocation to celibacy/marriage, because... Today I would choose...because...

What were the realities that made you conclude that you needed to belong to a community?

Empty response box for the first question.

What are the most important graces that you have received from the community?

Empty response box for the second question.

What has been the main grace of the review of life for you?

Empty response box for the third question.

What have been your biggest disappointments in the vocation of community?

Empty response box for the fourth question.

What issues of community would you like your community to address?

And as for those who have managed to participate in your society
in an immaterial sensation—to share materially
in your mysteries, formidable and for all unpredictable,
and to recognize, in visible things, the invisible glory
and the strange mystery which has taken place in the world,
they are still less numerous - well do I know it!

They are the ones who have received pure contemplation,
from the One who was in the beginning, before all creation,
begotten of the Father, and with the Spirit, Son, God and Word,
triple light in unity but unique light in the three.
Two aspects of a unique light, Father, Son and Spirit,
for it is indivisible in the three Persons, without confusion,
these three persons in whom, according to the divine nature, there is
but one power,
one glory, one authority and one will.

For all three appear to me, in one unique face,
like two beautiful eyes filled with light.
How will the eyes see without the face, tell me?
But without eyes, it is useless to speak of the face.
Admired as it is of the essential, or better still, of everything,
likewise the sun, were one to extract from it the light which is its
beauty,
would disappear first, and after it, would disappear the entire
creation
which receives light and vision from it.

Thus in the order of the intelligible, if God were deprived of one
of the two,
either of the Son or of the Spirit, he would no longer be Father,
He would no longer even be being, separated from the Spirit who
gives life and being to everyone.

Let every truly rational creature adore them
- all those who are under the sun, all those above it -
the Divine Nature in three hypostases transcending all explanation.
No man has ever known anything about God, indeed,
neither his name nor his nature nor his form nor his
substance;
to be able to say it or to write about it or to share it with others,
but as the radiant sun which penetrates into the cloud
and no longer lets itself be seen nor its light appear,
but sheds on the inhabitants of the earth a pale glimmer,
so, believe me, my God is hidden from us
and a vast and profound darkness envelopes us all.

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Integration: 15th Year of Commitment

How has your spiritual path changed?
What has been the most significant experience of God changed?

How have you experienced Mary's intervention in your life?

The obstacles to the Christian integration which I have experienced in myself and in the community:

How do you provide focus and continuity in your prayer life? Is there something that especially helps you?

How has the Holy Spirit brought you to this point?

What have been the graces of the Spiritual Exercises in your life, especially how has your experience of God changed?

How have you experienced Mary's intervention in your life?

How do you provide focus and continuity in your prayer life? Is there something that especially helps you?

What simple introduction to prayer has helped you?

Integration: 15th Year of Commitment; Obedience and Work for the Kingdom

For me, the most important dimension of the kingdom of God is:

The main graces God has given me to bring the kingdom where I am and have been:

The things that I have most had to overcome in myself to facilitate my response to God and his call to the kingdom are:

The community of Trinitas has most helped and hindered me by:

The hardest part of living a life of chastity (chaste love) has been:

What were the realities that made you conclude that you needed to belong to a community?

I think I did/did not do a pretty good job of discerning my vocation to celibacy/marriage, because... Today I would choose...because...

What has been the main grace of the review of life for you?

What have been your biggest disappointments in the reaction of community?

What issues of community would you like your community to address?

I - P

An Invitation

O dear Child! The best possible life is this: to do our utmost to content God with love, and above all to trust in him. For we come closest to him by confidence: for he said himself to one person that true prayer is nothing else than pure abandonment to him, with perfect fidelity to trust him is all that he is. For he himself said: "People who do not know me and my goodness, who I see, serve me with fasting, and vigils, and country labors. And with these labors they exhaust themselves to me. But nothing has so much power over me as the perfect abandonment of lofty fidelity." He added: "Your soul's hunger disposes me to prepare everything for you, so that I, what I am shall be yours. Through your striving to satisfy your hunger for me, you grew up to full perfection, and you became like to me: your death and mine shall be one, and therefore we shall live with one life, and one loaf shall satisfy the hunger of us both."

I am inviting to you these good things, which our Lord offered, so that you may better believe, and think and know, that abandonment in fidelity is the quickest way to perfection, by which we may content God most perfectly and best.

By this I exhort you to all the most perfect liberty of Love, so I say, that you would take to my Father, so I urge this on you, for I hold it dearest to me above all things. Make haste to strive in veritable Love; and take care that God be honored by you and by all things which you can hold, with effort, with self-sacrifice, with counsel, and with all that you can do accordingly.

Hildegard, Letter II

An Invitation

O dear Child! The best possible life is this: to do our utmost to content God with love, and above all to trust in him. For we come closest to him by confidence; for he said himself to one person that true prayer is nothing else than pure abandonment to him, with perfect fidelity to trust him in all that he is. For he himself said: "People who do not know me and my goodness, who I am, serve me with fasting, and vigils, and sundry labors. And with these labors they entrust themselves to me. But nothing has so much power over me as the perfect abandonment of lofty fidelity." He added: "Your soul's hunger disposes me to prepare everything for you, so that I, what I am, shall be yours. Through your striving to satisfy your hunger for me, you grew up to full perfection, and you became like to me: your death and mine shall be one, and therefore we shall live with one life, and one love shall satisfy the hunger of us both."

I am imparting to you these glad tidings, which our Lord uttered, so that you may better believe, and think and know that abandonment in fidelity is the quickest way to perfection, by which we may content God most perfectly and best.

By this I exhort you to all the most perfect liberty of Love, for I saw... that you would rally to my blazon; so I urge this on you, for I hold it dearest to me above all things. Make haste to virtue in veritable Love; and take care that God be honored by you and by all those whom you can help, with effort, with self-sacrifice, with counsel, and with all that you can do unremittingly.

Hadewijch, *Letter 31*

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