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Pentecost and the Plan of the Father

From the beginning of the world the Father has had a plan - it is the dream of the Trinity, shared between him and his Son and their Spirit. That plan is adoption. It is the plan to create new persons, distinct and free (like the persons of the Trinity), and to adopt these persons into the Triune Life as children of the Father.

Such a plan boggles our human imagination. We can imagine a god who makes creatures to serve him or to worship him or for his own amusement, but we can hardly wrap our minds around the Truth, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Truth of the God who is relationship, who created us to share in his relationship, and who fulfilled his plan by uniting us to himself in the humanity of his Son.

Since Jesus is the Truth of who God really is and why he created humanity, we can see the Father's plan of adoption in the life of Jesus. In order to empower the Church to see Jesus' life and to know how his life reveals the Father's plan, the Holy Spirit gave the Church the Worship Calendar of the Christian Year. Step by step, culminating in the Feast of Pentecost (Sunday, May 31, this year), this Worship Calendar tells the story of the Father's plan fulfilled in Jesus.

Advent: The Father called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants to become his chosen people in the world. In this chosen nation of Israel the Father prepared a place for the coming (advent) of the Son. The whole history of Israel, from Abraham to Zechariah, found its destiny in the Virgin Mary. Israel, summed up in Mary, was the womb of the incarnation and the place prepared for the coming of the Son.

Christmas: So that we might become what he is - a child of the Father - the Son became what we are. The Son became flesh and blood and made his dwelling among us, being born as a baby of the Virgin Mary. He did not simply "appear" to be human, he really became what we are and joined us in our real, sinful, fallen flesh. The miracle is that even though he entered our sinful nature he never sinned. Instead, he lived out a faithful life in communion with his Father and their Spirit from within our nature. He adopted humanity into the life of the Trinity and made us whole, healed, and holy by his presence.

Epiphany: Having assumed our human nature, the Son then baptized our nature into the Holy Spirit and the life of the Trinity in his baptism. When the Father spoke from heaven and said "this is my beloved Son" these words were spoken to the Son in his humanity, and thus were spoke to humanity - to you and me and everyone we know and love. And in that moment the Holy Spirit descended onto the human nature in which the Son now dwells, affirming that the Son shares with us the anointing he alone has in the Spirit of his Father.

Lent: From within the human nature that had once said "yes" to Satan and "no" to the Father, the Son now reversed that decision once and for all. In the midst of the hellish wilderness of human sin and alienation the Son said "no!" to Satan's lies and said "yes!" to our Daddy's love and reversed the fall of Adam and Eve.

Palm Sunday: On his way to his victory on the cross, Jesus was received by the people of Israel as

the conquering hero he would prove to be. Not a hero on a white stallion carrying the sword of punishment, but riding on a donkey and headed for the cross.

Holy Thursday: The Son revealed to us the truth of his mission, that he shares with us his body (bread) and his blood (wine) and that he stoops to wash our feet and make us clean to sit at the Father's table.

Good Friday: By his death on the cross, the Son defeated our enemy, Satan, and put our sinful nature to death once and for all. In this great victory he set humanity free from captivity to the devil and from the fear of death.

Easter Sunday: In the glory of his resurrection, the Son raised up our human nature, new and immortal, now destined not for Adam's death but for Christ's eternal life with the Father. In this moment of transformation he made humanity eternal and thus capable of eternal relationship with the Trinity as children of the Father.

Ascension Sunday: Because the Father's purpose was for us to live forever with him, the Son carried us up into the heavenly realms and the Father seated us in Christ at his right hand. Our human nature had now been transformed and carried into the most holy place, the heart and life of the Trinity, in fulfillment of the Father's plan of adoption.

Pentecost: So, human nature is now permanently united to the Triune nature in the risen and ascended Jesus. Our adoption is complete and we can now know the Father for who he really is and relate to him as his children. But we must know and believe this truth about ourselves! So the Father pours out the Holy Spirit on all flesh, giving us the gift of the Spirit who brings about relationship and communion within the Trinity and now also within humanity as Jesus, the Son, shares the knowledge of his human nature with the Spirit.

In these simple worship celebrations we rejoice in the Father's plan revealed in Jesus and discover that telling the story of Jesus' life reveals the truth of our lives.

~ Jonathan Stepp