

The Mystery of the Church (15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

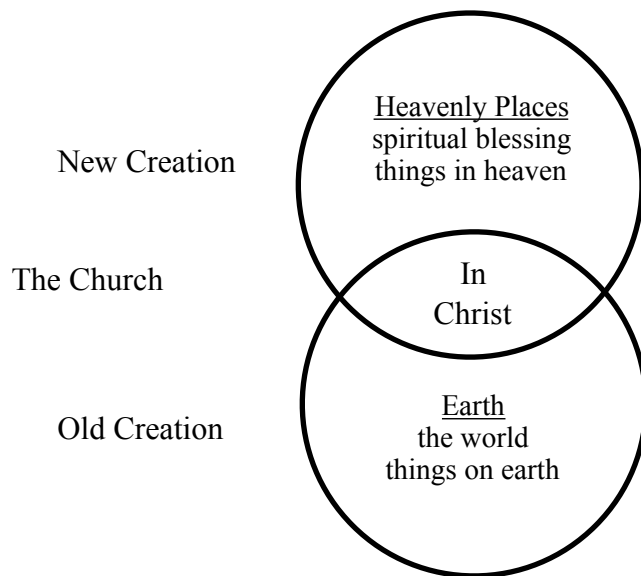
Ephesians 1:3-14—The Mystery of the Church

[¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.]

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,* ⁴ even as *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.* ⁵ *He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,* ⁶ to the praise of *his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.* ⁷ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace* ⁸ *which he lavished upon us.* ⁹ *For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ* ¹⁰ *as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.* (Ephesians 1:1-14)



The Living Tradition

Vatican II: The Son, accordingly, came, sent by the Father who, before the foundation of the world, chose us and predestined us in him for adoptive sonship. *For it is in him that it pleased the Father to restore all things* (cf. Eph. 1:4–5 and 10). *To carry out the will of the Father Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us his mystery; by his obedience he brought about our redemption. The Church—that is, the kingdom of Christ already present in mystery—grows visibly through the power of God in the world.... All men are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world,*

from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and towards whom our whole life is directed. (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* 1.3, trans. A. Flannery).

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. How does Paul's understanding of the "mystery" of God's will inform your own understanding of the Church? Do you think of the Church primarily as an institution, or as a mystery?

For Further Reading

1. Peter S. Williamson. *Ephesians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009.
2. Mark J. Edwards. *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VIII. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999.
3. Thomas Aquinas, O.P. *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*. Translated by F. R. Larcher, O.P., and M. L. Lamb. Lander, Wyo.: Aquinas Institute, 2012.