



EMBRACE THE YEAR OF MERCY

How does it all fit together?

Growing up Catholic I learned a good deal of “information” over the years about the Faith. The only problem was that all of this “information” seemed unrelated and therefore did not make sense to me. What I learned in a homily or read in a book, or even talked about with family and friends never took me deeper in my relationship with Jesus Christ, frankly because it was too hard to try to remember the seemingly disconnected facts. The heart of the problem was that I did not know the foundation of everything that we believe.

When I heard someone tell *The Story of the Bible* in a just a few minutes, I said to myself, “Now I get it!” I had this funny image come to mind of a clothesline. The major points of *The Story* were on the clothesline and anything I learned could now be “attached” in the proper place. Everything lined up in an order that made sense and now I understood the big picture of who God is; what He wants; who I am and how I want to respond to Him.

So here is the “clothesline.” The main point of *The Story* is that God loves you and wants to be united with you.

The BLESSED TRINITY

There is only one God but in God there are three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We call the three Persons in one God the Blessed Trinity. God is total, self-giving love and He desires to share His love with you in a deep personal friendship.

God creates man and woman out of love

God creates Adam and Eve to be united with Him in a relationship of love. God dwells within the soul of Adam and Eve. We call this grace – a share in God’s life.

Adam and Eve disobey God, separating themselves from Him.

Through the Original Sin, Adam and Eve separate themselves from God. They lose the gift of grace that God had given them. They are no longer united with God in a relationship of love. There is nothing Adam and Eve, or you and I, can do on our own to fix the problem of the Original Sin, which causes separation from God.

God still loves Adam and Eve even though they have sinned. God promises a Redeemer.

Jesus, our Redeemer, does not come right away because God wants His people to see and understand that they cannot love Him, themselves or others without His Divine help – His gift of grace.

God gives Moses the Ten Commandments

These Commandments are Laws of Love so that we know how to live to stay close to God, to live a life of interior joy and peace. However, no matter how hard they try, God’s Chosen people keep disobeying Him, choosing against His Love – by rejecting His Laws given to protect them, and us, from a life of emptiness and misery. Before Jesus’ coming, the people are unable to be faithful to God because they do not have His gift of grace – His Divine Life within them.

God kept His Promise. The Savior is born in a stable.

Jesus comes to be among us and chooses these humble circumstances so that we will know that He is the Savior for every person, rich and poor alike.

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How does it all fit together?

At age 33, Jesus begins His public ministry, choosing 12 Apostles, giving them His teachings, establishing one Church, and instituting seven Sacraments. The Sacraments are the means through which we receive God's gift of grace, His divine life within us. This shows how much God loves us in that He wants to be so close to us. He wants to dwell within us! God the Son became Man to reunite us with God in a relationship of love through His grace received in the Sacraments.

Jesus suffers greatly and dies on the Cross

Jesus dies out of love for us so that our sins can be forgiven and we can be reunited with the Blessed Trinity in a relationship of love through grace.

Jesus rises from the dead on the third day.

Through His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus overcomes Satan, sin and death.

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Jesus sends God the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the Apostles to empower them to publicly manifest the Catholic Church: they go forth to teach, preach and baptize as well as celebrate the other six Sacraments. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the Person of the Holy Spirit in the Church restores to the baptized God's grace lost through sin, reuniting us in a relationship of love with the Blessed Trinity.

The Story of God's Family

God desires that we know Him through a deep personal friendship. He wants us to be so close to Him, so united with Him, that He allows us to receive Him in the Sacraments through the one Church that Jesus established.

Our Response

How should we respond to *The Story*? Thank God for His personal love for you. Ask God to help you to know Him personally through the Person of Jesus Christ. Talk with God often, as you do with any friend, about anything happening in your life, no matter how small.

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