

The Most Holy Trinity
May 31, 2026
Year of the Church in History

“The flesh hateth the soul and wageth war with it, though it receiveth no wrong, because it is forbidden to indulge in pleasures; so the world hateth Christians, though it receiveth no wrong from them, because they set themselves against its pleasures.” (The Epistle to Diognetus)

An ancient work, dating to A.D.150, which was read by early Christians was entitled *The Epistle to Diognetus*. The author of this work is unknown to us, but its contents are still very much applicable in our day. Two of the main themes contained in this work center upon why Christians worship God (not the gods of the pagans) and the ways Christians are called to live out their faith in God in society at large. This weekend we will reflect upon the second of these two themes, Christian living.

“For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. For they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life. Nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any human dogma as some are. . . They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. . . They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.”

(The Epistle to Diognetus)

A popular idea which arose from the Second Vatican Council concerned Christianity continuing to go out into the world to preach the Gospel. This call of being a missionary was similar to those many generations of Christians who would traverse the Earth proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. However, there were those who proclaimed this calling to be one of “embracing” rather than “converting.” Much ink was spilt in writing, hours spent in preaching and time spent volunteering to address those issues which plague the society of man. As noble as those efforts were 40-60 years ago, we must ask ourselves: Is our “Christian spirituality” deeper, more fundamentally influential today than it was during the days of our parents?

Statistical studies performed today would present a Christianity in decline. Although we just experienced a massive wave of men and women becoming Catholic, overall, mainline Christianity has shrunk since approximately 1960. Armed with this knowledge, let us return to *The Epistle of Diognetus* asking ourselves IF we are promoting the Christian life it spoke of; are we living as citizens of the world or citizens of Heaven?

One may ask: “How is one to live as a citizen of Heaven?” As simple as the question sounds, its meaning is one involving a lifetime of effort. We are called to diligently live as Jesus would have us live. To accomplish this mandate, Jesus does not leave us orphaned. Not only does He provide the Holy Spirit as our Guide, Helper and Consoler, He also built His Church upon the ministry of Saint Peter and his successors. It is the Church, guided by the Spirit, which assists us in living this necessary holiness. She does so through the Sacraments, Teachings and Liturgy (how we worship). All of these combined, and so many more here unwritten, are given to us to assist us in our life’s goal to become citizens of Heaven. In essence, all these things have been given to us by God Himself to foster within each person the Theological Virtue of Faith.

The First Vatican Council would define Faith as: *“the supernatural virtue whereby under the inspiration and help of God’s grace we believe that what He has revealed is true not because of the intrinsic truth of the matters grasped by the natural light of reason but because of the authorship of God Himself revealing, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.”* God desires our presence with Him for all eternity in Heaven. He wants this more than you or I can imagine. In fact, His desire for our being with Him in Heaven led Him to offer His Son upon the wood of a cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Now, our way is open to a paradise of His making. Yet, He allows us to freely choose IF we want this as well. As the old saying goes: “You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.” Christians of these first centuries were no different from you or I today. They too were given this same choice to be citizens of Heaven or citizens of this world. And, as history teaches all of us, men and women have, through the manner of their lives, have made their choices. Daily we must choose to make and affirm ours by our lives as well.