



“What is Man that you are mindful of him...”

A Christological Reflection on God’s Plan of Salvation

Deacon Craig Robinson

Throughout human history, men and women have struggled to recognize and resist the sinfulness and moral evil present in the world and in their lives and yet, God is always mindful of us.

This course explores the nature of sin, it’s devastating effect each of us, and how God restored human nature to a higher dignity in Christ than he gave it at creation.

Our Christological reflection will explore the theological origins of how we understand God’s Son, the Father’s plan of salvation in Christ and, how Christ restores our relationship with God, with each other, and with our true selves.



“The unfolding mystery of Christ is God’s response to the human yearning for pure, infinite love implicit in any genuine interpersonal relationship”

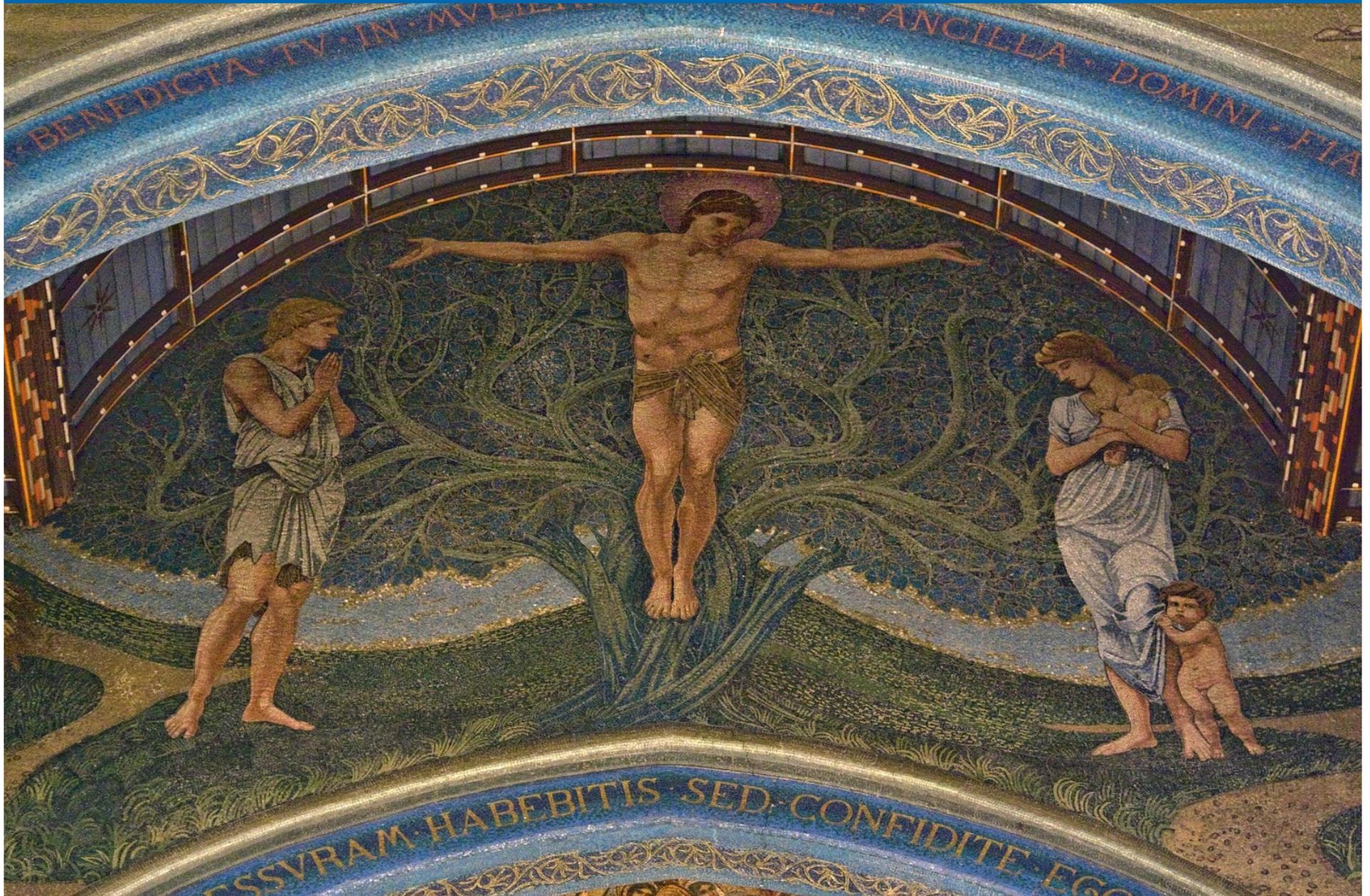
Meeting God in Today’s World

H.U. von Balthasar

In order to yearn for something, a person must have some understanding of what it is—and in humanity’s case, what was lost.



“And you shall live forever in Jesus Christ the Lord”



A Psalm of David 8:2, 4-10

*“O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!
I will sing of your majesty above the heavens*

*When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars
that you set in place—What is man that you are mindful of him, and a
son of man that you care for him?*

*Yet you have made him little less than a god, crowned him with glory
and honor.*

*You have given him rule over the works of your hands, put all things at
his feet: All sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the field, the birds of the
air, the fish of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas.*

*O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all
the earth!”*



Overview

- **Creation: Man's original state and original vocation**
- **The Fall: Original Sin, shattered relationships, corruption—a universal sinful environment**
- **Ages of Man: The Time Under Nature, The Time Under The Law, and The Age of the Church**
- **The Role of the Father**
- **The Role of the Son**
- **The Role of the Holy Spirit**
- **Beatific Vision: Man's divinification and fullest realization of the Spousal Meaning of the Body**

But first.....



Areas of Reflection

Anthropology: Interpretation of human existence in the light of Christ;

Christology: The theological interpretation of Jesus Christ—who and what he is;

Eschatology: Knowledge and study of last things in the context of Man and God's final Kingdom;

Hermeneutics: Understanding and interpreting texts;

Holy/Holiness: Utterly or totally other, set apart, moral and spiritual perfection, being sanctified in and by the Holy Spirit;

Soteriology: Doctrine of salvation—the interpretation of Christ's saving work



We have a problem with “Language”

In the beginning, Man was made “little less than gods,” and language was not a barrier to a human person’s knowing or understanding the created world, their relationship with God and other humans, or their ability to express their true selves.

However, with Man’s first sin, human intellect was severely darkened, our ability to know and understand was corrupted beyond repair, and language, not only became a barrier to all human pursuits, humanity began to weaponized language for very sinful purposes.



Analogy help—a little

Theologians have always understood that human language is inadequate to represent revealed mystery or truth: “Our human words always fall short of the mystery of God” (CCC 42).

With Man’s intellect so severely wounded by sin, and his ability to know and understand in a state of corruption, language was very limited and, what language was available, at best, could provide only modest comprehension of divine revelation.

Analogy help us to see a likeness in those things that are beyond our comprehension.



Analogy help—a little

The “Principle of Analogy,” helps us to express revealed mystery in the sense of human experience.

For instance: we use the analogy of “Father” for the first person of the Holy Trinity given that a human father is involved with procreation, protection, love, and provides for the needs of the family. However, any similarities we see in a human father, the dissimilarities with God the Father are infinite.

This “Analogy of Being,” is but a dim reflection of the divine reality of God. Such analogies are used throughout Sacred Scripture and it is good to keep this in mind when dealing with the senses of scripture (Marthaler 39-42, CCC 42-43, 115-118).



Passion & Myth

We do have a problem with language. In order to have any grasp on the significance of the what makes salvation in Christ possible (the Paschal Mystery—passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ), it is critical to understand these two concepts.

Passion means suffering—this is an obsolete definition according to Webster's Dictionary. In terms of the fully divine and fully human Jesus, this means complete, all-encompassing or infinite suffering—suffering that we cannot fully comprehend and therefore cannot adequately define.

A myth is not a fanciful tale, fairy story, or something that is not true rather, in the scholarly sense, a myth is a story that is so true that it determines the truth of other stories and events—it is a world-making story (Barr 453).







Christ in Prayer, G. F. Watts

Faith

What is faith? Are we saved by faith? If so, whose faith?

Faith, from the Latin means belief however faith in the sense of God's plan of salvation in Christ does not mean belief: it includes belief but it is much more.

When we synthesize the meaning of faith from the Old Testament, the writings of St. Paul, the teachings of early Church Fathers, and the words of Christ from the Gospels an image of faith emerges.

Faith, first and foremost, is: a gift from God, it is grace, and it is one of the three Theological Virtues that are infused into the hearts of all human persons.



Faith

One of the demands of faith, as a gift from God, is that we accept it and not to do so is disobedient and as such, there can be no salvation without faith.

Simply put, Faith is our living response to God, who created us and who has claim to us.

For many in the world today, this comes as a shock—a shock that goes all the way back to the Garden when our first parents decide to stand apart from God—a choice that is so often ratify today by how we choose to live.

In the light of this truth, our living response to God, first and foremost, must be to put God first in all things!



Faith

Our human understanding of Faith is founded on revealed truth as expressed in the Old Testament e.g. the Shema Deut 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them on your arm as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.”



Faith

In the light of this truth, our living response to God, first and foremost, must be to put God first in all things with:

- Love
- Humility
- Obedience
- Loyalty
- Trust
- With service in the sense of Holy Action and,
- Belief that Jesus is Lord

Sacred Scripture calls this living response to God “the obedience of Faith” (CCC 143).



Faith

Faith, as a gift from God, demands this living response from each of us and, as Disciples of Christ, we need to be attentive to this precious gift with all of the courage we can muster.

- Love as the total abandonment of self-will and a total focus on God is hard.
- Being obedient is hard--it is hard to turn away from the idols that enslave us.
- Being faithful to God's word in the face of temptation and surrendering to God's will in the face of fear are hard.
- Making the self-giving love that Jesus showed on the Cross a way of life is hard.
- And the mystery of Our Lord's passion, death, resurrection and ascension that has made salvation possible defies belief.



Post-Modernism

We also have a problem with our cultural glasses—we see everything through the lenses of our time and, we live in the Post-Modernism era.

If we compare Original Sin to the Big Bang; the Post-Modernism era is its loudest echo. And, even though we are, “in the world but not of the world,” we are all affected by it.

Where Enlightenment elevated human reason to the level of idolatry, whereby the Mechanical Universe was the only foundation for truth and reality and, where Modernism saw a rise in hyper-individualism and continued secularization; Post-Modernism rejects all absolutes—truth—as they infringe on personal freedom and as such, all meaning is subjective

(Washburn 454-7).



Post-Modernism

In the Post-Modernism era, the way people think about words and truth has radically changed. From every corner of the secular culture, language is used as a game or as a weapon that organizations use to control people.

The concepts of individual reason and a personal relationship with a God who cares for you is rejected and replaced by “groupism” whereby truth is determined according to subjective agreement of those things that fit the narrative of the group.

We see this everywhere in politics, corporations, and the news media just to name a few (Washburn 454-7).



The Mystery of the Church

God created Man in His own image, making him a rational being with an immortal soul and free will.

God willed that Man should be left to his own counsel so that he could seek and know his Creator and freely attain perfection through union with Him: Man's free will gave him mastery over his acts (CCC 1706-7, 1730).

With his failure by abusing this freedom with the Original Sin, God revealed the mystery of salvation in Christ through the Holy Spirit and, in order to make this encounter with Christ possible, God willed His Church (VS 17).



The Mystery of the Church

What is it?

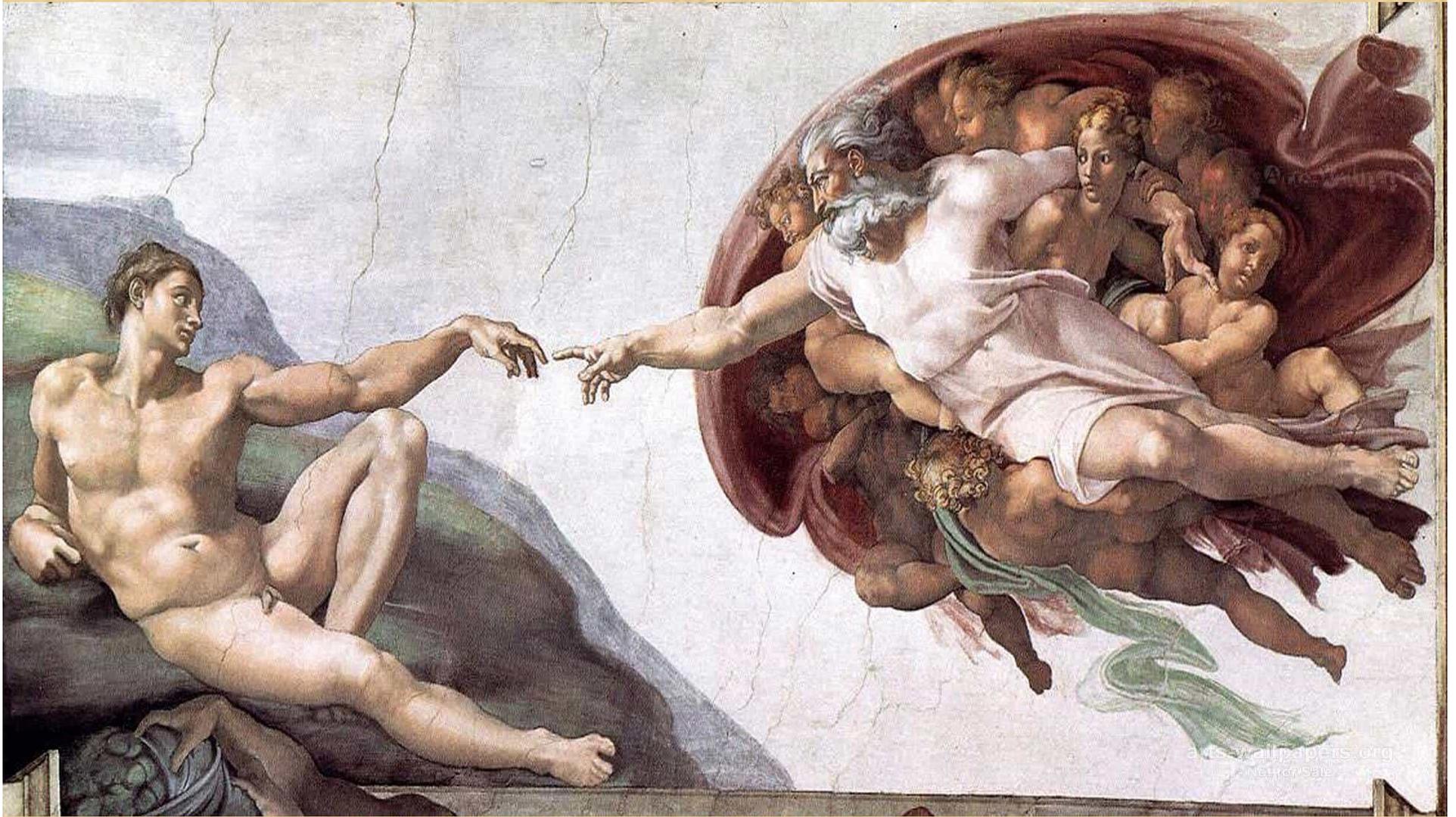
“It is the mystery of God’s dwelling with humanity through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Reciprocally, it is the believers’ dwelling with God by Faith.

To be aware of this mutual indwelling is tantamount to perceiving the glory of God in Christ, even under the conditions of the Cross.

The existence and unity of the Church themselves pertain to this mystery” (Tavard 201).









Creation: The Original State of Man

In his image, God created Man with an immortal soul therefore, Man has personhood and every human soul is a distinct person.

With foreknowledge of the Incarnation, God formed Adam's face in His Son's image: Man has a body.

The mystery of human hypostasis is that Man is a unity of body and soul.

The soul does not preexist the body and the body does not preexist the soul—the human body and soul are a composite that are never meant to be separated.



Creation: The Original State of Man

Out of divine love, God created Man in His image as a rational being who could know and love Him therefore, Man has a rational intellect.

God willed that Man have the ability to choose to love Him, to be in a relationship with Him, therefore, Man has free will: Man is self-directed.

“If Man is the image of the divine nature and if divine nature is free, so is the image” St Maximus.

In the beginning, according to God’s plan for human existence, Man’s intellect perfected his will and intellect and will were in harmony.

Satan worked to corrupted this harmony.



Creation: The Original State of Man

As a composite of body and soul, Man occupies the middle position in creation, straddling the divisions between the material world that we inhabit and the spiritual world of the angelic powers” (St. Maximus).

Human bodies, in the beginning, partook of imperishable fruits but produced no waste, were impervious to all elements, were free of all bodily infirmities and injuries, and thus were immortal, of a more spiritualized temperament than the denser, mortal, less spiritualized bodies post-lapsarian.

And, the human mind didn't suffered ignorance or forgetfulness.



Creation: The Original Sate of Man

According to St. Maximus, “When God created human nature, He did not create sensible pleasure and pain along with it; rather, He furnished it with a certain spiritual capacity for pleasure, a pleasure whereby human beings would be able to enjoy God ineffably.” This was a time of Original Solitude, Unity, Happiness, Innocence, and Nakedness (St. Maximus).

“Clearly, Man was meant for a reality that is wholly other than our experience of corruption, pain, worldly pleasure, and death” (Dominick).



Creation: The Original Sate of Man

God willed that there be two, complimentary and equal, ways to be human: Male and Female.

In His Image, God created man as a communion of persons meant to join together and become one flesh in the dimension of self-giving love that images the self-giving love of the Blessed Trinity (Gen 2:24,

TOB 167).

“In the mystery of creation, man and woman are a reciprocal gift” and the whole of creation, Original Innocence and Freedom, pertain to Man’s capacity for self-giving (TOB 201).



Creation: The Original Sate of Man

By creating Man in His Image, Man appears in the world as the highest expression of divine gift and, “Man becomes the visible sign of the economy of Truth and Love, which has its source in God” (TOB 202-3).

In a state of Original Innocence, Man’s capacity for self-gift was the foundation for original happiness whereby man and woman came together by reciprocal choice and “knew” each other with an inner vision, an inner dimension “a share in the vision of the Creator himself” that constitutes the dimension of Original Nakedness (TOB 175-7, Gen 1:31).



Creation: The Original Sate of Man

In creating Man in His image, God established Man as the primordial Sacrament of Creation; “understood as a sign that efficaciously transmits in the visible world the invisible mystery hidden in God from eternity.”

Additionally, as a communion of persons, in a sate of innocence, grace, love, and justice, God establishes the Primordial Sacrament of marriage (TOB

202-3).

Original Sin and the evil that echoes from it, constantly work to destroy the spousal relationship between man and woman and Christ and His Church.



Creation: Man's Original Vocation

When God created man in his image as male and female He ordered all of creation to His good purpose and set man over all that He had made.

In His image, God made “free self-determination” the very essence of human nature and the very image of God the Son in man.

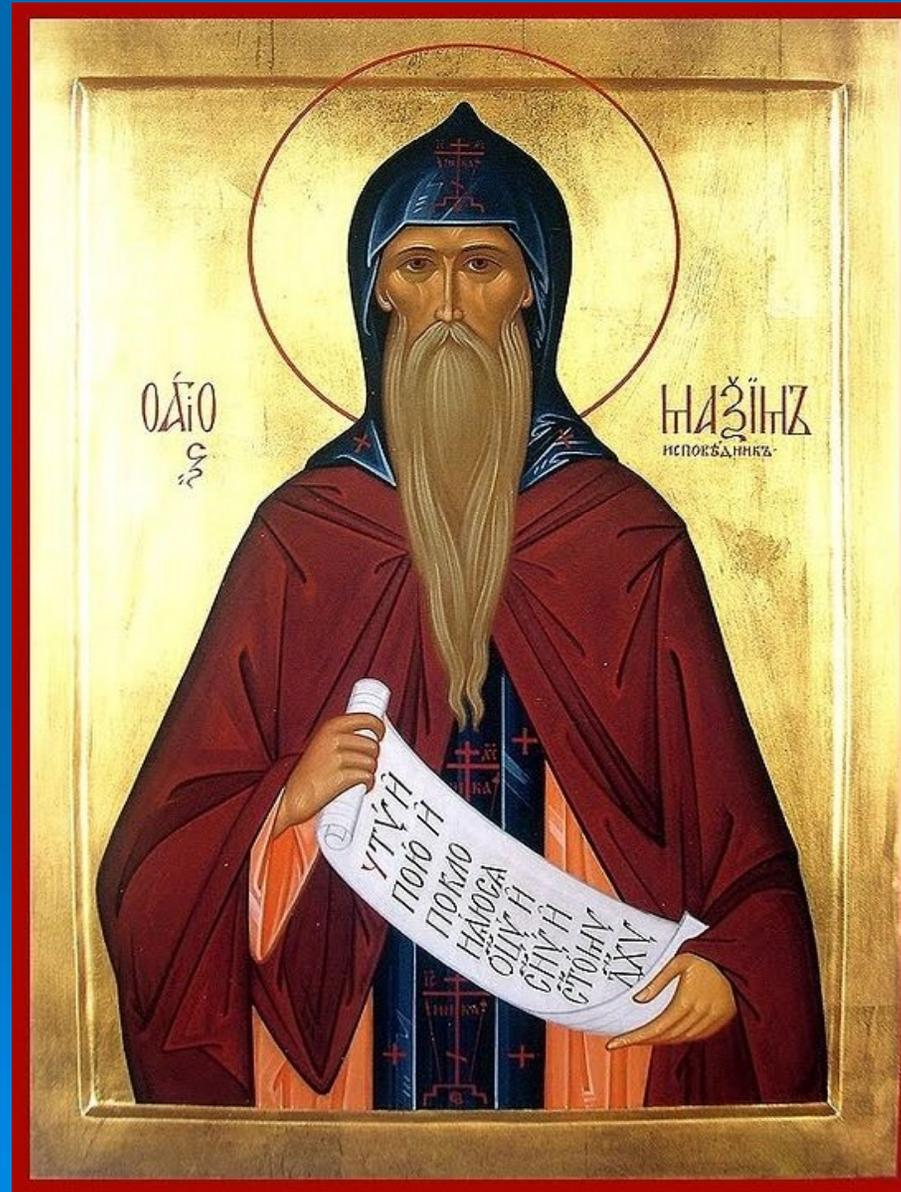
God deemed that man and woman would have a vocation and that they were to compliment and help each other to accomplish the task that God had set before them—we were created with purpose.

The fate of all creation is tied to that of mankind and this purpose and, thus in turning away from God, the entire cosmos was turned from God (Dominick).



Creation: Man's Original Vocation

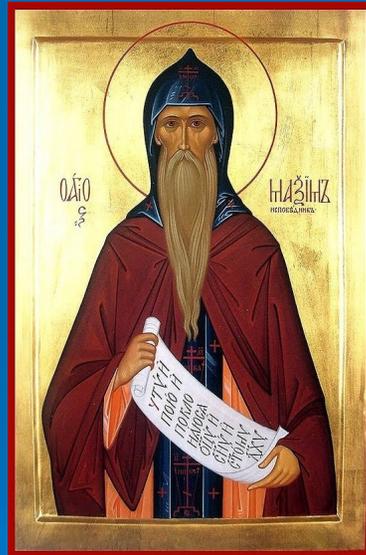
The Cosmology of St. Maximus Confessor



Creation: Man's Original Vocation

The Cosmology of St. Maximus Confessor

Unlike Western Christendom, the Eastern Orthodox Church does not use the term Doctors of the Church, rather they identify Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom as the Three Holy Hierarchs.



With these three men, St. Maximus Confessor stands as a theological and spiritual giant in the Orthodox Church.

Creation: Man's Original Vocation

The Cosmology of St. Maximus Confessor

St. Maximus masterfully harmonized the philosophical and theological work of his predecessors, correcting where need be, to present an image of cosmology, anthropology, Christology, soteriology, and eschatology as one harmonized vision in which creation reflects the glory of God, and man is charged with the task of raising all of creation to union with the Godhead (Dominick).

“For St. Maximus, salvation is much more broader than a rescue from sin and death, a Divine undoing of Man's mistake, but points to God's eternal plan for mankind regardless of the fall” (Dominick).



Creation: Man's Original Vocation

The Cosmology of St. Maximus Confessor

Made in the image of God, straddling the division between the material world and the spiritual world of angelic powers, St. Maximus points out how man's was meant to realize his potential in uniting all of creation with God as a divine purpose or vocation (Dominick).

This task would only be possible in the state of Original Innocence that has the attributes known as St. Maximus' famous triad of "Being-Well-being-Ever-being.

Being and Well-being pertain to the image of God, while Well-being pertains to the likeness of God to which Man is called.

Ill-being, which becomes a reality after the Fall, pertains to a life apart from God (Dominick).



Creation: Man's Original Vocation

The Cosmology of St. Maximus Confessor

“According to St. Maximus, the human race was created last because it was destined to become the natural link between the opposite extremes (dualities) of all creation. God gave it the vocation to unite in itself these extremes and ‘the all’ of creation with God” (Kereszty 217).

There are five pairs of opposites that the human race was destined to unite:

1. Male & female
2. Paradise and earth
3. Earth and heaven
4. Sensible and intellectual realities
5. Creation and God (Kereszty 217).



Creation: Man's Original Vocation

The Cosmology of St. Maximus Confessor

“Humankind was to unite the whole of creation with God so that it might enter completely into God and become god by participation” (Kereszty 217).

Our first parents, instead of uniting these opposites in an upward movement towards God, due to the desires of self-love, they moved downward towards that which was below and properly subordinate to it.

Humanity abused its power to unite by disrupting the existing unity of the universe and thus, God became man in order to carry out the original vocation of the human race (Kereszty 217).







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The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

The first step towards understanding “the way of redemption,” is to examine the state of sin from which humanity, and the entire created universe(s) have been redeemed (Kereszty 331).

In the first sin, man and woman chose to realize their human existence in conscious independence from and opposition to God—this was made possible by their nature as beings endowed with complete self-determination.

Due to this “Original Sin,” all human beings are born without God’s grace and are inclined to ratify the same option for themselves (Kereszty 331).



The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

The inclination in humankind for a false autonomy from God has been reinforced by the accumulation of personal sins and this has created a universal sinful environment (Kereszty 331).

The gravitational pull of sin is akin to a black-hole from which no human can escape—the corruption of self-love is virtually total and beyond any human faculty to overcome.

However, the virtue of redemption accomplished by Christ has always afforded human beings the grace to resist the gravitational pull of sin or at least to repent—even before the act of redemption (Kereszty 331).



The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

Despite being born without God's grace; God's Natural Law and divine love is written into every human heart and the soul yearns to be in a right relationship with God.

However, the "sinful self" is opposed to anything that stands in the way of self-love, and by sinning and appealing to their rational judgment to support their false autonomy, the sinner becomes estranged—alienated—from their true selves.

Alienated from their true—moral—self, the sinner chooses what he or she decides is good, he or she becomes the absolute authority of good or evil and in doing so idolizes himself or herself

(Kereszty 332-3).



The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

As the sole authority of good and evil, the sinner assigns roles and expectations to all others. When these roles are not fulfilled and expectations not met, resentment and hatred follow.

In a state of sinfulness, the sinner cannot accept his or her neighbor as an equal and he or she then attempts to subjugate and control all others.

As long as the sinner holds themselves to be the center of the universe, others cannot be accepted for their own sake rather they become objects to promote the sinner's own interests or rivals in either case, the sinner "will attempt to suppress, manipulate, and exploit the freedom of others" (Kereszty 332-3).



The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

“The conflict with one’s conscience and one’s neighbor necessarily implies a conflict with God,” and the sinner finds himself or herself in a state of three-fold alienation—alienated from their true-self, from all other people, and from God (Kereszty 332-3).

However, as St. John Paul II teaches, the heart is a battlefield between love and concupiscence. As such, every person is aware of the absolute obligation to do what is right—to accept the love of God the Father who wants to transform us into His children (Kereszty 334).

Therefore, every sin, to varying degrees and in varying ways, is always a personal offense Against God the Father.



The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

“If then sin is an offense against God himself, then it is, in some real sense, of infinite Gravity.”

Given that God treats humanity as adults who must take ownership of their actions and obtain forgiveness; it is impossible for humanity to make up for this infinite offence.

Only if God becomes human and takes upon Himself the death of the sinner and turns the process of estrangement ending in death into the human expression of infinite love can the sinner make satisfaction for their sins and unite themselves through faith with the life and death of the Son of God (Kereszty 334-41).



The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

The conflict between one's conscience and one's self-love may distort a person's understanding of God whereby the person begins to rationalize the sin, determining that it is not God who forbids "it" but the Church or some human/worldly construct (Kereszty 332-3).

For others, resentment of God as the source of their guilt may lead them to see God as a tyrant and a vindictive judge.

Still others, repress their instinctive knowledge of God and come to the conclusion that God does not exist.

In all cases, by sinning, a person distorts or represses their knowledge of God and no longer knows the holy and loving One who created them out of love and whose will is their life and fulfillment (Kereszty 334).





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The Fall

Original Sin, Personal Sin & Corruption

Fallen Man's corruption and sinfulness not only infects the body whereby the sinner becomes "flesh," that is to be captivated by things of the passing world rather than by the things of God, the influence of corruption and sin extends throughout all the structures of society including the economic, political, domestic and cultural institutions (Kereszty 332-3).

Although such a sinful environment does not eliminate all individual freedom to do good, it curtails its scope drastically.

Hypocritical or promiscuous parents may produce the same propensities in their children while institutionalized economic exploitation and political oppression create a climate void of social justice and deep secularization engenders societal norms and morals in opposition to Divine

Law (Kereszty 334-6).



Need for Redemption

God's Salvific Plan in Christ

In a state of corruption, the sinner is no longer free to reverse the process.

Sin as a “Threefold Alienation” stemmed from our free rejection of God’s love and our self-love has made it impossible for us to earn back God’s love even as He freely offers it to us much less can we gain it back by our own resources—only divine redemption could restore us to a right relationship with God (Kereszty 332-3).

In rescuing us, God responded to our needs—He took into consideration our distorted understanding of His divine reality, our suspicions, mistrust, and aggressiveness towards the Divine.



Need for Redemption

God's Salvific Plan in Christ

In its sinful, fallen state, humanity needed more than just moral exhortation and a divine offer of grace to convert us. God's grace had to provide us with convincing and tangible evidence for the reality of His infinite compassion and of His holiness (Kereszty 332-3).

In order to respect our rational nature, this evidence had to be both external and internal: historical facts and the inner persuasion of grace.

Both of these had to be of such power to breakthrough our fiercely defended idols, dislodge our self-love, and unchain our will from slavery and move us towards a right relationship with God (Kereszty 339-341).

As we have seen, Divine Law, Natural Law, Theological Virtues, and God's self-revelation in the Old Testament was not enough.





Ages of Man

The two Ages of Man that we will be briefly looking at—the Time Under Nature and the Time Under the Law—are characterized by the human condition of threefold estrangement and the punishment for sin.

Being made in His image, God, in full respect for human dignity, allowed/allows Man to freely shape his/her own being.

If a person freely distorts their own reality and thereby their relationship to their neighbor and God, God allows this freely chosen distortion to take effect.

As sin is the freely chosen opposition to one's true self, to God and to one's neighbor, the punishment is the suffering that results from this three-fold estrangement.

Therefore, the punishment of sin is its necessary and natural consequence

(Kereszty 336-7.)





Ages of Man—Time Under Nature

When Man rebelled against God, the natural world, in a way, rebelled against Man—Man had to survive in a world at odds with humanity's very existence.

In refusing to accept himself as a gift from God and to accept God's own self--offered to him in love--Man turned to self-love and chose to be independent from God.

God respected this choice and allowed Man to try to become something that he was not—an absolute in himself.

For this reason, the Time Under Nature was a time when God allowed Man to his own devises—Man had to experience an existence without God's presence.

Cut off from God, Man experienced the fragility of his own being that bordered nothingness and the threat of nothingness (Kereszty 336-7).



Ages of Man—Time under Nature

In his abject loneliness and desire to control the world/nature, Man created gods in his image.

Man's hubris, cruelty, and corruption resulted in God's intervention e.g. the Tower of Babel and God's covenant with Noah.

The Time Under Nature was necessary for Man to come to realize that without God, he is nothing.

In time, when Man's desire to be in a relationship with God overshadowed his desire to be independent from God, God's offer of relationship was revealed so that Man could chose to respond in faith.





Ages of Man—Time under The Law

The faith of the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--and the People Israel was tested through many years of hardship and bondage.

With God's self-revelation on Mount Sinai, the Chosen People entered the Time Under the Law.

The Time Under The Law was necessary for Man to come to realize that, even with The Law, Judges, and Prophets; there was nothing that they could do to be in a right-relationship with God.

The effects of sin and corruption were too strong for them to overcome.





Role of the Father

“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time” T. S. Eliot .

After Original Sin, man and woman were to lose the grace of Original Innocence...but not the distant echo of that grace (Tob 202)



Role of the Father

After the first man and woman had rejected personal communion with God, the initiative to restore the broken relationship with God and to re-create humanity's corrupted and distorted nature had to come from God himself

Given that humanity possess the dignity of freewill, through God's free initiative, a human being should redeem the human race.

Redemption has two inseparable aspects: 1) the transformation of our being and faculties, and 2) the assumption of the sinner into the Trinitarian communion (Kereszty 397).



Role of the Father

The Father's plan of salvation determined that a human had to redeem the human race however as, in its state of corruption, humanity did not have the capacity to accomplish its own redemption, the Father sent His only Son.

With the Son's full acceptance, Jesus Christ becomes the Father's perfect gift such that Jesus, in his full divine-human reality, truly and definitely, becomes ours.

The image of a human father giving up a son is a very weak analogy of the Father sending his Son.

“God the Father giving his Son gives away all that he is, the fullness of his divinity”

(Kereszty 398).



Role of the Father

The Father “gives his Son out of pure, infinite love and gives him to his sinful creatures who, apart from God’s creative and redeeming love, are absolutely nothing” (Kereszty 398).

Yet, the Father is mindful of us and He calls us into communion. And, as noted earlier, that sacrifice re-orders relationships, sacrifice produces communion and, in this instance, incomprehensible suffering.

Given His transcendent, infinite love for His Son, the Father could not remain indifferent to the suffering of His Son who, concentrated upon himself all of the suffering of all men and women.

The Father makes the suffering of another His own: that of sinful humankind, then that of His Own Son (Kereszty 399).



Role of the Father

In giving His only Son, the Father demonstrates infinite divine compassion.

The Father embraces the same compassion, that He has for His Son, for all men and women whose sufferings the Son has taken upon himself

By making the suffering of others His own, and pouring forth His divine compassion, the Father shows infinite sensitivity for humanity including His Son such that in giving His Son, He truly gives all that He has and all that He is (Kereszty 399).



Role of the Father

The Father's gift of His Son is so effective, that the Son truly becomes ours and we truly participate in him.

“Since God is absolute, simple perfection, the Father's compassion for His incarnate Son and for us is not a finite accidental quality, but identical with the Father's giving eternal birth to the Son...The Father is involved with infinite intensity in the personal fate of His Son and of humankind through the infinite perfection of His eternal divine fatherhood” (Kereszty 400).

The Father's eternal decision to send/give His Son to us will end in our full communion with the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit (Kereszty 400).



Role of the Father

In Jesus, God the Father Himself died for us.

To accomplish His will to restore humanity into a perfect relationship with Him, the Father, at the resurrection, raised Christ His Son and perfectly introduced His Son's humanity, including his body, into the Trinity (CCC 648).

The actions of the Father calls the sinner into a very specific relationship with Him. As with each person of the Holy Trinity, guided by the Holy Spirit, every human soul is call to communion with the Father in a very unique way.









Role of the Son

The Son agrees from all eternity with the Father's decision to save us and he makes the Father's love for fallen humanity his own: For his love of the Father, he agrees to be sent.

By agreeing to be sent, Jesus takes up full solidarity with us by not only accepting to become man but also to become "flesh" that is to say to endure the consequences of sin specifically the state of three-fold alienation.

Jesus agrees to take the state of three-fold alienation to its last logical stage in this world which is physical death "experienced as the anticipation of eternal spiritual death."

Jesus accepts alienation from his Divine Self—emptying himself, he freely renounces the infinite glory and power of his Father which is by all rights his own (Kereszty 401).



Role of the Son

Additionally, Jesus accepts not letting his divine consciousness permeate his human consciousness, and in not doing so, he experiences in himself the infinite distance that separates the sinner from the Father.

Finally, fully human and experiencing all that is human in himself—especially the human desire for “pure, infinite love implicit in any genuine interpersonal relationship”—Jesus suffers a complete alienation from almost every other human being with the intensity of divine love being totally rejected—his own people reject him and his chosen disciples abandon him in fear and disappointment (Kereszty 401).



Role of the Son

Paradoxically, Jesus accepts alienation from his divines self, the Father, and other human beings as an expression of his perfect love—a love which our first parents withdrew from the Father.

The tree-fold alienation reaches its utmost intensity on the Cross, but so does the Son's love.

“His divine love for God and for us obtains its most perfect human expression in this state of greatest alienation; therefore, it is through his death that Christ overcomes for himself and for us all forms of alienation, and enters into full communion with his Father, and with us forever”
(Kereszty 401).



Role of the Son

It is only the innocent victim who understands the evil of his torturer's sin and Jesus encounters these sins and all sins by expressing his love for the Father in the name of all men and women, for whose sins he freely accepts death on the cross.

It is only Jesus who knows and understands the true nature of the crimes set against him, the crime in which the Satanic intent of all sins surfaces; Satan, who was “a murderer from the beginning” (Jn 8:44), was intent on using human beings as his instrument to do away with God himself in his person

(Kereszty 402).

Jesus alone experiences the evil of our sins in their full gravity and by making the misery of the sinner on the brink of damnation his own, Jesus suffers in a way that no other human being can contemplate—ripping the soul apart from the body (Kereszty 402-3).



Role of the Son

Jesus' death on the cross, which he has endured for our sake, enables us to use our death as the most powerful cure for our sinfulness.

As he hung on the Cross, abandoned by God, Jesus cries out in anguish and loneliness but does not cease to trust him (Mt 27:46). Facing his own annihilation, Jesus does not cling to his life but puts himself unconditionally into his Father's hand (Lk 23:45).

In facing his own death, and experiencing infinite distance from the Father, Jesus' divine love of and trust in his Father reach their most perfect and irrevocable human expression.

Through the Spirit, Jesus enables us to turn our three-fold alienation, especially our death, into a way of three-fold union, unity in ourselves, union with God and with our fellow men and women (Kereszty 404-5).



Role of the Son

In and through Jesus, the vocation of Man is accomplished:

- **By his virginal birth, Christ overcomes the opposition of the sexes—In Christ, St. Paul teaches, there is neither male or female**
- **By his death and resurrection, Christ destroys the separation that existed between paradise and the created universe: “Today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43)**
- **By his ascension, Christ unites heaven and earth through the exaltation of the human body, co-natural and consubstantial with ours, which was assumed in his incarnation**
- **By going beyond the angelic orders with his human soul and body, Christ restores the unity between the worlds of sense and of mind and establishes the harmony of all Creation**
- **Finally, as man, Christ accomplishes in all truth the true human destiny that he himself predetermined as God, and from which man had turned: he unites man to God** (Dominick)







The Graphic JP



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Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son—the Father and the Son communicate so perfectly that they are one and as the communion of the Father and the Son takes place in the Holy Spirit, so must the assumption of humankind into that communion be mediated by that same Spirit (Kereszty 416).

In effecting the incarnation, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father to sanctify the humanity of Jesus by making it into the humanity of the Son. As such, the eternal relationship of the Father and the Son is extended to the man Jesus.

The Holy Spirit brought the eternal common plan of the Father and the Son to the human consciousness of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit inspired and guided Jesus so that every action and suffering in his life might become the effective realization of God's plan of salvation upon which the Father and Son had decided in the Holy Spirit from all eternity (Kereszty 416-17).



Role of the Holy Spirit

At the moment of the resurrection, the Holy Spirit transformed the body of Jesus into a spiritual body that cannot suffer or die.

So transformed, his body became fully transparent to his divine glory such that, to see the risen Christ as he really is means to see God face-to-face—this is possible only for those who are fully conformed to the Lord by a similar resurrection from the dead.

With Jesus' last breath on the Cross, he returns the Holy Spirit to the Father and pours him out upon humankind.

Jesus continues this two-fold act through his glorified humanity: returning in love the Holy Spirit—and himself in the Spirit—to the Father, and becoming the source and sender of the Holy Spirit for all believers (Kereszty 416-17).

As St. Paul expresses this, “The Lord is the Spirit” and, “the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit” (2 Cor 3:17, 1 Cor 15:45).



Role of the Holy Spirit

The flesh of the risen Jesus becomes the source of the life-giving Spirit.

Even though the Spirit of Jesus works outside the visible Church, it is in the preaching, sacraments, and the community of the Church that the risen Christ takes form and shape.

This is especially true of the Church's Eucharist—the source and summit of our sacramental life.

“In the Eucharist the risen Christ is present as our perfect gift to the Father, intent on including us by the Spirit into his sacrificed and risen Body, so that united to Christ in the Spirit we may become the perfect spiritual sacrifice, a ‘living sacrifice of praise’”

(Kereszty 416-17).

In the Eucharist, we become aware of the overall goal of the Holy Spirit's activity to build up the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Through the Spirit's presence, Christ himself continues to be incarnate, active, and visible to those who have faith.



Role of the Holy Spirit

In the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit raises and glorifies the dead human body of Jesus so that by Jesus' death, he destroys death.

This work of the Spirit is extended to all who pass from this world in a state of grace where for us, the resurrection signifies a new submission of the body to the spirit.

Man's resurrection, therefore means restoration to what St. John Paul II calls "the true life of human bodiliness" (TOB 389).

The truth of this resurrection attests to the fact that the whole human composite is truly body and spirit—we are body persons and man's eschatological perfection and happiness cannot be understood as a state of the soul alone separated from the body but must be understood as the "definitively and perfectly integrated state of man" (TOB 390).



Role of the Holy Spirit

Man's spiritualization will free him from all opposition, in the resurrection the body will return to perfect unity and harmony with the spirit.

The spirit will fully permeate the body and the powers of the spirit will permeate the energies of the body—our bodies will be like Christ's glorified body (TOB 390-1).

“This new [state of perfect] spiritualization will thus be the fruit of grace, that is, of God's self-communication in his very divinity” (TOB 392).

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God's most personal self-giving brings forth His very Divinity to man—this is Man's perfect experience of grace whereby Man gives all that he is in return as a reciprocal self-gift .

This concentrated (beatific) vision and love on God, face-to-face, brings Man to rediscover himself in the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation (TOB 394-7).







The Age of the Church

To the extent that the risen Christ lives in the Church, and that our bodies, lives, and the visible structures of the Church express and communicate his love, the Church also becomes an effective sign of freedom, where the personalities of the members and their potential for love can freely unfold (Kereszty 416-17).

Sanctified by the Holy Spirit in the waters of Baptism, moved by self-giving love, Christians become conduits of God's grace as they work to make the Kingdom of God a reality in the world.

In Christ, through his Church, we are meant to share God's plan for the salvation of man, we are meant to attack, with holy ferocity, the abject loneliness and poverty that sin has darkened the world—we are not to be lukewarm in faith or action, we are to embrace the **Mystery.**



The Age of the Church

In the Age of the Church, we are called to share the mystery that is the Church as Fr. George Tavard states, “It is the mystery of God’s dwelling with humanity through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Reciprocally, it is the believers’ dwelling with God by Faith.

To be aware of this mutual indwelling is tantamount to perceiving the glory of God in Christ, even under the conditions of the Cross.

The existence and unity of the Church themselves pertain to this mystery” (Tavard 201).







Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

When God created Man as male and female, He ordered two different, distinct, and complimentary ways of being human—Masculine and Feminine.

Man is a unity of body and soul—we have both a natural and supernatural reality. The human body by its nature says, “I am a person, and therefore I am of infinite value.

I am to be treated with dignity and respect. The only proper response to me is love.

After the Fall, we lost our ability to live this truth as God had originally intended; in the Church, our ability to respond in self-giving love is, in part, restored through grace—through the Church as a Sacrament.



Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

Speaking about the mystery of marriage in God's plan for salvation, renowned Scripture Scholar Dr. Mary Healy writes: "Marriage is, in fact the Bible's deepest underlying symbolic key for expressing the relationship between God and man."

And quoting St. John Paul II she continues: "That mystery, as God's salvic plan in regard to humanity, is in a certain sense the central theme of all revelation, its central reality" (Healy 67).



Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

Man and woman are made for Union: The human body reveals that we are created for relationship, for interpersonal union.

God himself is a communion of Persons, a Trinity in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit pour themselves out in an eternal exchange of self-giving love.

Being made in God's image, man and woman were made for a communion of persons.

God inscribed in every human the knowledge that, "I am capable of, and made for, a communion of persons, that is, an interpersonal union in which I freely give myself to another in love and receive love in return.



Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

I am a gift...capable of giving myself freely to another person in an intimate union of love and in that union, WE are capable of revealing God in the invisible mystery of Trinitarian love.”

In this way, God reveals the dimension of gift in marriage as it relates to Christ's sacrifice for his bride the Church.

God authored the sacrament of marriage as a communion of persons, whereby the unity between man and woman is a transparent expression of their inner selves (Healy 68, 88).



Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

One can make a good case that Original Sin is a sin against marriage. With Original Sin, the unity between body and soul was wounded and the corruption of human nature so great that man lost sight of the value and dignity of the human person (Kereszty 332-35)

After Original Sin, people have been often treated as Human Capital—something to be used rather than respected.

The marriage feast of Christ and his Bride the Church restores the dignity that was lost. This is the model of the Church and of Christian marriage.



Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

Marriage as an image of Salvation in Christ becomes even clearer when we consider that as husband and wife are meant to unite their love for each other to Christ's love for his bride, the Church as they are also to unite their suffering to the suffering of Christ on the Cross.

However, this can be difficult if not impossible if husbands and wives compromise with an inherently sinful culture that often seeks to undermine the teachings of Christ and to redefine all that is holy



Marriage as an Image of the Church and Salvation

I will leave you this one last thought from Dr. Mary Healy:

“Jesus’ victory over death reveals that there is no sin against life, no matter how great, that cannot be forgiven. There is no interior wound that cannot be healed, no broken self-image that cannot be restored, no habit or disorder that cannot be set right—all by the power of the infinite love pouring out from Jesus’ pierced side. This is the message of hope that we are to bring to a world that has lost its bearings” (Healy 109)





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