

FR. LEONARD SANYU

THE  
**PERSONALISTIC  
CHRISTOLOGY**



OF CARDINAL  
**CHRISTOPH SCHÖNBORN**



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# ABBREVIATIONS

## A. BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Acts	Acts
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
Col	Colossians
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Dn	Daniel
Dt	Deuteronomy
Eph	Ephesians
Ex	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gal	Galatians
Gen	Genesis
Heb	Hebrews
Hos	Hosea
Is	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Jn	John
1 Jn	1 John
Josh	Joshua
1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Kgs	2 Kings
Lk	Luke
Mk	Mark
Mt	Matthew
Phil	Philippians
Ps	Psalms
1 Pt	1 Peter

## Abbreviations

2 Pt	2 Peter
Rom	Romans
Rev	Revelation
1 Sam	1 Samuel
1 Thes	1 Thessalonians
2 Thes	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim	1 Timothy

## B. DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH MAGISTERIUM

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

## C. OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

†	died
AD	<i>Anno Domini</i>
c.	<i>circa</i> (around)
Cf.	Confer
cf.	confer
ed.	editor
eds.	editors
HD	Henry Denzinger
ITC	International Theological Commission
nn.	numbers
no.	number
p.	page
pp.	pages
STh	<i>Summa Theologica</i>

## ABSTRACT

The Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn is centered on *the Mystery of the Person of Christ*-the Only Person among all Persons that is true God and true Man. There are three main points of attention, namely: (i) Mystery; (ii) Christology-*Chrystologia mysteryjna*; and (iii) Personalism. In the Mystery we may see three facts: (i) Mystery is a true reality; (ii) Mystery can be experienced and related with but Mystery remains over and above human reason alone. In order to properly relate with the Mystery, human reason requires supernatural revelation and faith; and (iii) Mystery was hidden for ages but is now revealed by the Person of Jesus Christ. *God is not a solitary God but The Most Holy Trinity*. The One God is Three Persons who are the Eternal communion of Divine Love. God is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Person of Christ reveals the Mystery of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. There is the truth of Divine Persons (uncreated), angelic persons and human persons (created).

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, a renowned Catholic theologian, primary secretary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and Archbishop of Vienna, Austria is conversant with the current and contemporary theological issues. Rooted in Scripture, Tradition and Experience, in his writings, he displays a unique expertise in uncovering and exposing how contemporary issues affect the human person and his or her Salvation. This research aims at presenting, exposing, analyzing and describing the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn. It is structured under five chapters preceded by a general introduction and after the chapters, a general conclusion is given. Chapter one, "God the Son-Preexistent" is on the personalistic reality of the Son of God in the inner life of the Holy Trinity-He is truly a Divine Person. Christian Personalism presents the notion of Person that helps our human mind and reason to appreciate the truth of God the Son, the truly only Son

of God, eternally begotten of the Father. This same Son of God, *for us* and for our Salvation, He became true Man while remaining true God. This leads to chapter two, titled, “The Incarnate-True God and True Man.” Cardinal Schönborn maintains that Christ who is One Subject is two natures. In the assertion “One Divine Person of Christ who is true God and true Man at once,” there is the twofold truth that (i) Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Son of man (the Christological truth), and (ii) God brought about Salvation through Him (the Soteriological truth).

Chapter Three, titled “The Son of God on Earth” analyses and describes some of the concrete moments between Christ’s Birth and Passion. Moments such as, the Epiphany, the flight to Egypt, the Child Jesus, the Baptism of Jesus, the Wedding Feast at Cana, the Transfiguration and some other mysteries of Jesus’ life on earth. Also, according to Cardinal Schönborn, there are three pillars of Christology, namely, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and Experience. All three should always be taken together. Chapter Three is more on Experience, however, not in isolation from the other two pillars. It is about the concrete experience, concrete encounter with the Person of Christ by those who met Him during His historical life on earth. At each moment there is (i) revelation of the mystery of the Person of Christ, and this in turn is (ii) revealing to the human person and is (iii) a moment of Redemption and gradual opening to Salvation. Chapter Four looks at the personalistic understanding of the Paschal mystery. In the Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, we discover that Jesus Christ chooses His Death on the Cross-He is a Person acting in full freedom and love. *In this Act, He is always a Subject and not an object.* By the Paschal Mystery, that is, events of Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit-Divine Revelation reached its peak. This chapter presents, exposes, analyses and describes the personalistic understanding of the Event(s) of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and how they affect Redemption and eventual Salvation for the human person according to Cardinal Schönborn.

Chapter Five delves into the Redemption and Salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ with keen attention to (i) the role (action) of the human person, with (ii) the help of the Holy Spirit and (iii) cooperating with grace, in the realization of Salvation. While firmly maintaining the truth of mystery, the Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn is novel in that it presents the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Christ in the personalistic

language of Cardinal Schönborn, and how the human person, cooperating with grace, can realize the gift of salvation concretely. Markedly presented, exposed, and described are three main points: (i) the truth of Mystery(ies) revealed in and by the Person of Christ; (ii) the mystery of the Incarnation – here the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Glorification are understood to be the united Act(s) of Love; and (iii) the personalistic reality – Personalism. The mystery of the Person of Christ, seen at once as a unity-lead(s) to the true, real, and coherent conception of the mystery of the Person, and this constitutes the Redemption and Salvation for the human person cooperating with grace.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians “When you read this you can understand my insight into the *mystery of Christ*” (Eph 3:4). This study is on the Mystery of the Person of Christ as presented in the Christology of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. This research is an attempt to present the mystery of the Person of Christ with a specific attention to the personalistic truth. Mystery is rendered by the Greek term *mysterion* (μυστήριον). This Greek term is translated into Latin by two terms: *mysterium* and *sacramentum*. The Latin *mysterium* refers to the hidden reality of Salvation, while *sacramentum* refers to the visible sign of this true, real, and present invisible reality. Christ himself is the mystery of Salvation (CCC, no. 774). A human person is able to enter into the mystery of Christ by a correlated passage from the visible to the invisible, from the invisible to the visible; from the sign to the mystery, from the sacrament to the mystery (cf. CCC, no. 1075). As understood and applied in this study, three elements may be conceived about any true mystery. Mystery is a true reality; mystery can be experienced and related with but mystery is over and above our human reason alone – in order to grasp the mystery, reason requires supernatural revelation and faith (cf. CCC, no. 237); and mystery was hidden and it is revealed by Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Schönborn bases his Christology on the first seven ecumenical councils, but more specifically on Nicaea and Chalcedon.<sup>2</sup> He uses the understanding of these early councils to address contemporary Christological questions.

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1 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face: The Christ-Icon*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994, p. 121.

2 The first seven ecumenical councils being referred to are: the first Council of Nicaea (325), the first Council of Constantinople (381), the Council of Ephesus (431), the Council of Chalcedon (451), the second Council of Constantinople (553), the third Council of Constantinople (680), and the second Council of Nicaea (787).

## 1. A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF CARDINAL CHRISTOPH SCHÖNBORN

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn (1945- ) is a Catholic Dominican theologian and Archbishop of Vienna, Austria; and Ordinary for the faithful of the Byzantine rite in Austria. He was born in Skalsko-Czech Republic. He studied philosophy and psychology at the University of Vienna, and theology at the Catholic Institute of Paris. At the Sorbonne he studied Slavic and Byzantine Christianity. He obtained a licentiate in theology (1971) and eventually a doctorate (1974) in Paris and was chaplain at the University of Graz (1973-1975). He taught dogmatic and Eastern Christian theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. For a considerable period of time he has been an active member of different theological commissions, which among others, include: the Theological Commission of the Swiss Bishops' Conference (1980-1991); the Swiss Commission for Dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics (1980-1987); the Swiss Commission for Dialogue between Roman Catholics and Christians (1980-1984); primary secretary of the Commission drafting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1987-1992); and since 1980 he became a member of the International Theological Commission of the Holy See.<sup>3</sup>

This long experience and working with these important theological commissions may explain the level of his expertise in theological matters. Moreover, he is a member of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF); Congregation for the Oriental Churches; Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation; and of the Cardinal Commission for the Supervision of the Institute for the Works of Religion (IOR). He is the primary co-editor with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI of the monumental *Catechism of the Catholic Church*-a sure norm for teaching the faith,<sup>4</sup> and he is renowned for his excellent and extensive work in Christology.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vatican website, [https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/documentation/cardinali\\_biografie/cardinali\\_bio\\_schonborn\\_c.html](https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/documentation/cardinali_biografie/cardinali_bio_schonborn_c.html) (Accessed on 5 April 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the importance of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* being a sure norm for teaching the faith, Pope John Paul II states, "The Church now has at her disposal this new, authoritative exposition of the one and perennial apostolic faith, and it will serve as a 'valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion' and as a 'sure norm for teaching the faith,' as well as a 'sure and authentic reference text' for preparing local catechisms" (John Paul II, *Laetamur Magnopere*, Apostolic Letter in which the Latin typical edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is approved and promulgated, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 15 August, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger/ Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two: Holy Week From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011, p. 22; Also, J. Ratzinger/



The vocational journey of Cardinal Schönborn includes being ordained a Catholic priest (1970) by Cardinal Franz König; appointed titular Bishop of Sutri and Auxiliary of Vienna (1991); ordained bishop (1991); Coadjutor Bishop of Vienna (1995); Archbishop of Vienna (from 1995 until today). He preached the Lenten spiritual exercise for the Pope and the Roman Curia (1996). He was President of the Austrian Bishops' Conference (1998-2020); created cardinal by Pope John Paul II (1998); participated in the conclave (2005) which elected Pope Benedict XVI, and also in the conclave (2013) which elected Pope Francis. Cardinal Schönborn participated in the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2014) on *The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization*, and in the Ordinary General Assembly on *The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World* (2015).<sup>6</sup> This involvement may explain why he is very much conversant with the current issues affecting the human person. In his writings he displays a high level expertise in how the contemporary crises affects the life of the person and how they can hinder the attainment of Salvation. He speaks over six languages and has published a considerable amount of theological works as indicated in the sources below. Pope Benedict XVI has praised the excellence and reliability of his Christological work.<sup>7</sup> The length of his theological studies and active theological engagements may explain the in-depth expertise in theological matters as displayed in his theological writings.

## 2. PROBLEM

In the world of theology today, different interpretations and presentations of the mystery of the Person of Christ, and different Christologies can be found.<sup>8</sup> Many remain in line with the councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon while others

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Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. 299; p. 400.

6 Cf. Vatican website, [https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/documentation/cardinali\\_biografie/cardinali\\_bio\\_schonborn\\_c.html](https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/documentation/cardinali_biografie/cardinali_bio_schonborn_c.html) (Accessed on 5 April 2022).

7 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two: Holy Week From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2011, pp. 21; 161; 304; 327.

8 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, pp. xi-xvii.

consciously or unconsciously in some respects implicitly or explicitly depart from Nicaea and Chalcedon.<sup>9</sup> The question asked now is, can the Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn help to find a coherent, not fragmented, and not adulterated true image of the Person of Christ? Is it possible to find a coherent Christology that presents the ontological, personalistic, and soteriological truth of the Mystery of the Person of Christ? What approach is suitable in doing a true Christology? Why is the Cross the means of our Redemption? Was there not other better possible means of Salvation in the Divine plan of Salvation? What can and should the human person do in order to realize, to partake of the Redemption universal, making it personal and hence concrete Salvation? Pope John Paul II has taught that “it is always necessary to maintain a certain restraint in describing these ‘ultimate realities’ since their depiction is always unsatisfactory. Today, *the personalist language is better suited* to describing [the ultimate realities].”<sup>10</sup> With this in mind, and while maintaining the truth of mystery, can we present the personalistic uniqueness of the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Christ, and the Redemption and Salvation that He accomplishes *for* the human person, in personalistic language? The problem can be further clarified by the purpose of this study and by the meaning of personalism as understood in this research.

### A. The Purpose and Contribution of the Study

The purpose and contribution of this study is to foster and further the uncovering of the comprehensiveness which was achieved by the first councils’ conception of the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ as found in Schönborn’s Christology. It is an attempt to further the description and appreciation of the truth of the mystery of the Person. Personalistic Christology helps us to see, to understand, and to avoid the error of Luther who conceived and presented Salvation as the drama of God against God for the benefit of human

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9 Cf. E. K. Bongmba, “Theology Today in Africa”, in E. K. Bongmba (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group, 2020, p. 18; see also M. Munyao, “Christology in Africa” in E. K. Bongmba (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group, 2020, pp. 412-428.

10 John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 4.

persons – a drama within God Himself; God against God for us men, the gracious God against the wrathful God for our benefit.

## B. Personalism and Personalistic Christology as Understood in this Study

According to Father Professor Bogumił Gacka, MIC, a professor of dogmatic theology, who is also the director of Christian Personalism at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and the president of the Personalism Association,<sup>11</sup> Personalism is a notion that denotes more than just mere anthropology or humanism. Humanism denotes that the human being is not just an animal because he has rationality. Anthropology recognizes the truth of faith, so that the human being is understood as a rational being (*nous*) having body and soul, and is based on faith (*emmunā*). In other words, that at the level of anthropology, the human being is a person, and he or she is not distinguished by reason alone but by faith also. Personalism is deeper, wider and higher than just humanism and just anthropology. Personalism holds the truth of Divine Persons, angelic persons and human persons. Of course personalism recognizes the truth that humanism and anthropology teach about the human being but finds these definitions not directly stretching to relation with the Divine persons. Personal reality both visible and invisible is connected in relations.

To understand the person, the use of the intellect alone is not enough. There must be also the help from supernatural revelation. This supernatural revelation is possible only when the truth of the Divine Persons is concretely upheld. So that the mystery of the Divine Person of Christ reveals the human person to the human person (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22). Personalism further upholds both equally the objective reality of the person as well as the subjective reality of the person. One negative extreme is objectivism which conceives the reality of the person only to be the objective, hence, yielding uniformism among persons. The other negative extreme is subjectivism which conceives the reality of the person to be only subjective. Personalism avoids both extremes and holds that objectivity is a reality of the person just

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. The works of Professor Bogumił Gacka, available online at <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6573-0798>. His different works taken together help us to arrive at the meaning of personalism.

as subjectivity is.<sup>12</sup> Personalism as a system is discovering and understanding reality, Creator and created, from the fact of the mystery of the Person.

The personalistic Christology as understood in this study maintains the truth of the Divine Persons, angelic persons, and human persons. In order to abridge the length of this study, angelic persons have been intentionally left outside the scope of this particular study of the Christology of Cardinal Schönborn. It suffices to mention that Virginal Conception is announced by the person of the Angel Gabriel sent by God to the person of Mary (cf. Lk 1:26-38). Personalistic Christology maintains the truth of uniqueness and relatedness at once. It maintains concreteness which acknowledges the objectivity and subjectivity of a concrete person. It maintains the sharp difference between atheistic secular humanism<sup>13</sup> which camouflages as personalism<sup>14</sup> and true Christian personalism based on the Holy Trinity, and as understood by the first seven ecumenical councils.

### 3. SOURCES

The primary sources used in this study are the major christological works of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. These include: *God's Human Face: The Christ-Icon*, translated by Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994); *From Death to Life: The Christian Journey*, translated by Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995); *My Jesus: Encountering Christ in the Gospel*, translated by Robert J. Shea (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005); *Happiness, God and Man*, edited by Hubert Philipp Weber, translated by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010); *God Sent His Son: A Contemporary Christology*, translated by Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010); and *The Mystery of The Incarnation* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) of which Cardinal Schönborn is the primary editor, is also widely used in this

12 Cf. B. Gacka, "Grzegorz Hołub, Understanding the Person: Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła," *Collectanea Theologica*, 91:4 (2021), p. 230.

13 Cf. M. Schmaus, *God and Creation: The Foundations of Christology*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 78.

14 Cf. B. Sabalasky, *The Role and freedom of Conscience*, 2000, <https://www.ourladywarriors.org/articles/conscience.htm> (accessed on 23 June, 2021).

study and his *Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Co-authored with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994).

Among the secondary sources are Schönborn's works, *Behold, God's Son!: Encountering Christ in the Gospel of Mark*, translated by Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007); *Jesus, the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, translated by Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008); *Living the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (4 volumes); *Loving the Church: Spiritual Exercises Preached in the Presence of Pope John Paul II*, translated by John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998); *We have found Mercy: The Mystery of Divine Mercy*, edited by Hubert Philipp Weber, translated by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012); *Chance or Purpose? Creation, Evolution, and a Rational Faith* (2007); *Who Needs God?* (2009); *The Joy of Being a Priest: Following the Curé of Ars*, translated by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010); *Jesus' School of Life: Incentives to Discipleship* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016); *The Source of Life: Exploring the Mystery of the Eucharist*, edited by Hubert Philipp Weber, translated by Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013); *To Know Jesus As the Christ: Incentives for a Deeper Faith*, edited by Hubert Philipp Weber, translated by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016); and *Following Jesus Every Day: How Believing Transforms Living*, edited by Hubert Philipp Weber, translated by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014). The dates indicated correspond to the publication date by the publishing house. This is intended to maintain consistency with the bibliography as quoted. Most of the original publications were done in the German language, with some in Italian and French.

Cardinal Schönborn's theology is very consistent, in that, what he preaches is aligned with what he writes in his scholarly work. The difference is just found in the language and terminologies he uses. In his theological writing he uses scholarly and classical terminology while in the books on spirituality, meditations, he uses spiritual and homiletic language and tone but in fact the content is the same. That is why, in this study, one will find the use of both sources, that is, Cardinal Schönborn's textbooks, monographs, books on spirituality, and meditations without limiting ourselves to only classical and scholarly works. This is intended to achieve a holistic exposition of Schönborn's personalistic Christology.

Exceptionally important and unique help for my study was obtained from face-to-face consultation with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn himself, in Vienna, on 9 September 2021. In this theological consultation, the Cardinal explained to me the major Christological points of emphasis in his

Christology.<sup>15</sup> He also clarified to the student the difficult points to interpret that the student had already encountered along the research process.

#### 4. STUDIES

It is true that a lot of excellent studies have already been done on the theological work of Cardinal Schönborn, however, a study of his Personalistic Christology as such, has not been done before. This dissertation specifically on the Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn is held to be the first. Examples of the studies already completed include: Russell Robert John, *A critical response to Cardinal Schönborn's concern over evolution* (2006); Cherubin Michał, *Chrystologia fundamentalna Kard. Christopha Schönborna* (2007); Kashchuk Myroslav, *Chrystologia w ujęciu Kardynała Christopha Schönborna* (2007); Martin Rhonheimer, *Teoría dell'evoluzione neodarwinista, Intelligent design e creazione In dialogo con il Cardinal Christoph Schönborn*, (2008); Przemysław Artemiuk, „On jest Obrazem Boga Niewidzialnego” (Kol 1, 15): *Chrystologia „Zstępująca” Kard. Christopha Schönborna* (2010); Augustin George (ed.), *Christus–Gottes schöpferisches Wort: Festschrift für Christoph Kardinal Schönborn* (2010); and Przemysław Artemiuk, *Chrystologia ‘zstępująca’ kard. Ch. Schönborna i teologia fundamentalna* (2010) among others.

The Personalistic Christology is presented generally by Father Professor Czesław Stanisław Bartnik (1929-2020) in his *Dogmayka Katolicka* (2 Volumes) but especially (vol. 1, Lublin, 1999, pp. 497-810).<sup>16</sup> Colin Patterson in his work *Chalcedonian Personalism: Rethinking the Human*, elicits the Personalism of the Council of Chalcedon and basing on Chalcedon proceeded to propose the human personalism. His insights from Chalcedon are very vital in aiding the gradual movement from the ordinary anthropological understanding towards a personalistic understanding of the human person (cf. Patterson Colin, *Chalcedonian Personalism: Rethinking the Human*, New York: Peter Lang, 2016).<sup>17</sup>

15 See the Letter of theological consultation personally signed by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn on 9 September 2021 at the last page of this study (p. 341).

16 See also, K. Gózdź, “Chrystologia wosobienienia-inpersonalizatio,” in K. Gózdź (ed.), *In Persona Christi*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009, pp. 507-518.

17 See also, L. Sanyu, “Chalcedonian Personalism According to Colin Patterson,” *Roczniki Teologiczne*, TOM LXVV, 2 (2020), pp. 133-135.

## 5. METHOD AND APPROACH

This study uses the analytic, expository, and descriptive methods. It also uses the personalistic method which holds the concreteness of a person as key to reality, relational truth of the person, and sign as a means of communication helping to contact with reality. The theological writings of Cardinal Schönborn have been read, analysed, and an exposition of his personalistic Christological theology made. The findings are described with the help of reference to other general theological sources so as to clarify the interpretation and understanding attained by the researcher. Also used, is direct consultation with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, both in person and by correspondence.<sup>18</sup> Through this direct consultation an explanation and clarification on many important theological questions was attained. As an approach, according to Cardinal Schönborn, the good way of doing Christology is the way of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the way of the *Catechism* is following the Creed. This approach presents the mysteries of Christ's life. And what yields a good Christology is following closely the mysteries of Christ's life, not forgetting the mysteries of His hidden life.

Schönborn distinguishes between history of Christology and Christology of the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Christ.<sup>19</sup> History of Christology starts from Scriptures and continues searching throughout the centuries what different theologians have said and stated about the Person of Christ. Christology of Mystery on the other hand is that which follows the Creed. By following the Creed, this type of Christology presents the Mystery of the Person of Christ in a concrete way, namely, the living Person, active and One that is to be related with concretely. Creedal authority is a personal and ecclesial balance that acts as a check against any of our mistaken, individual interpretations.<sup>20</sup> The Creeds

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18 See the Letter certifying theological consultation personally signed by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn on 9 September 2021 at the last page of this study.

19 When I had a personal theological consultation with Cardinal Schönborn in Vienna on 9 September 2021, the Cardinal emphasised that, today, there is a lot of theologizing but in actual sense very little is about the true Mystery (Cf. Also, J. Ratzinger, *Deus locutus est nobis in Filio: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology and the Church*, Meeting with the Doctrinal Commissions of North America and Oceania, Menlo Park, California, 9 February, 1999, no. 1, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_19990209\\_californiaratzinger\\_en.html#](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc_con_cfaith_19990209_californiaratzinger_en.html#) (accessed on 28 February, 2022).

20 Cf. C. A. Majawa, "Methodology in Dogmatic Theology", *ResearchGate*, June (2020), pp. 1-62.

have stood the test of time and in standing that test, their phrases have been proven, generation upon generation, to be an accurate summary of biblical content.<sup>21</sup> While not underestimating the role and value of history of Christology, from which Schönborn draws a lot, he prefers and actually follows the *Christology of mystery* approach, which, in this study, has also been applied. Just as it can be discerned in Schönborn's writings, fidelity to the Chalcedonian teaching of One Person who is true God and true Man in undivided, unmixed, unconfused, and inseparably united two natures of Christ, has remained the reliable compass throughout this research. While dealing with the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, it is inevitable to come in touch with a wide range of dogmatic truths because, his Christology follows the structure of the Creed, and the Creed is a dogmatic statement which is fully packed with different dogmatic truths. That is why, in this study, one finds a hint on a wide range of dogmatic questions in general.

## 6. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

This study is focusing on the mystery of the Person of Christ as is presented and described in the Christology of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, with a keen attention to personalistic elements. The novelty – *novum*, or uniqueness of this study is that, while firmly maintaining the truth of mystery, it seeks to present the personalistic uniqueness of the Mystery of the Person of Christ and the mystery of Redemption and Salvation which He affects *for* the human person, in the personalistic language of Cardinal Schönborn. The study has been arranged under five chapters preceded by a general introduction, and then after the chapters a general conclusion is given. Chapter One is about the Son of God preexistent, Chapter Two is on the Incarnate Son of God – true God and true Man, Chapter Three is about the mystery of the Son of God on earth, Chapter Four is on the Paschal Mystery, and Chapter Five is on the Redemption and Salvation merited by the Person of Christ for human persons.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. M. Y. Emerson, *He Descended to the Dead: An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday*, Downers Grove, USA: Inter Varsity Press, 2019, p. 11.



# **CHAPTER ONE: GOD THE SON – PREEXISTENT**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

What can be conceived about the eternal Son of God in His eternity? This chapter is about the personalistic reality of the Son of God in the inner life of the Holy Trinity as a Divine Person. It concerns the Son of God before the Hypostatic Union, that is, before the Incarnation of the Son of God, before His physical historical life on earth. But before the details of that, it is important to first make a clarification about the understanding of the notion of “person” as used in this study. Therefore, this chapter is arranged under four main sub-themes of: the notion of person, the Persons in the Holy Trinity, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and the eternal will of the Son of God.

## **1.1 THE NOTION OF PERSON**

In trying to present the understanding of the notion of person as applied in this study, the guiding subthemes being followed are: the historical development of the notion of person, person and nature, and person and subjectivity.

### 1.1.1 Historical Development of Notion of Person

From Cardinal Christoph Schönborn's Christology,<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI<sup>2</sup> and from Father Professor Czesław Stanisław Bartnik<sup>3</sup> the major stages of the development of the theology of person can be summarised. In the classical philosophy flowering in the cultural heritage of Greece and Rome, person is a sort of scenic role – a classical dramaturgical mask. Later under the influence of Christianity, the notion came to denote a rational *individuum* distinguished from the more general category of the species animal *rationale*. With the great Trinitological disputes of the early Church, Person functioned as a means of individualising and instantiating the abstract and general category of rational nature.<sup>4</sup> Emphasis was on a threefold individualisation in God. In patristic Christology, Person arose out of a tendency to rescue the unity of Christ as God and Man. Scenic role was replaced by a concept of the mystery, a Divine mission and a particular and unique union of Divine nature with Human nature.<sup>5</sup> Hypostasis meant the unity of the Divine Subject of two distinct natures and their respective operations – *Subsistentia, Suppositum*. The Christological concept of the Person was at odds with the Trinitological concept. For Christology, the Person was the Subject that unites natures, hence, it was the key principle of unity – *unitas in pluritate*. For Trinitology the opposite was true. The Person was a means of achieving a plurality of subjects, not Substances, in one reality – *Pluritas in Unitate*. Boethius (480-524/5) defined the person as an individual substance of a rational nature – *rationalis naturae individua substantia*.<sup>6</sup> Thomas Aquinas (1225/7-1274) also emphasised the

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- 1 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son: A Contemporary Christology*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010, pp. 142-147.
  - 2 Cf. J. Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio*, 17(1990), pp. 439-454.
  - 3 Cf. Cz. S. Bartnik, "'The Person' in the Holy Trinity," *Collectanea Theologica*, 53(1983), pp. 17-30.
  - 4 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 181-182.
  - 5 When talking about the Humanity of Jesus Christ, uppercase "H" is used in this study to indicate that, in the Human nature assumed by the Son of God, there is nothing lacking that is truly human. It points to the full integrity of His Human nature. Upper case "H" is *not* used as a comparison between the two natures of Christ.
  - 6 Improvements on Boethius' definition have been made although some elements [like subjective uniqueness] have also been obscured with time (cf. N. K. Heinz, "On the Origin and Foundation of the Concept 'The Person' Metaphysical Realism on Interpersonal Recognition?," *Sapientia*, 64:224 (2008), p. 51.

person's distinctness. For Aquinas a person is *aliquid distinctum subsistens in natura intellectuali*. Persons of the Holy Trinity were personifications of the One and the same intelligent Being. In the early Middle Ages man came to be understood as a subject full of mystery, the noblest earthly being existing in itself and for itself, whose personhood was incommunicable and whose being was auto-teleological – *compos sui*.<sup>7</sup>

With modern thought dating from Descartes (1596-1650), *person* ceased to be a scenic role or an ontological category and was reduced to consciousness, or an "I"- with the subject as a centre of activity-*conscientia sui, ego, centrum actionis*. In modern times, instead of a subject-substance, the person began to be understood as a centre of consciousness, a psyche, and a world of the subjective. This opened the way to a psychological, moralistic and activity-oriented understanding of the person. With the contemporary humanistic disciplines of psychology, pedagogy, morality, anthropology, sociology and similar disciplines, the understanding of a person is very varied, although it plays the role of an anthropological function of one sort or another. Person(ality) implies many things: a certain group of psychic characteristics, character, psychic structure, the world of the subject, the self, specified models of behaviour or activity, the psychic expression of the group, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

From the thought of Karol Wojtyła who became Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), the notion of person carries, as a summary, the following meaning: each person exists as a subject, not as an object – as *someone* and not as *something*. A person is self-determining and not just determined, not programmed as a robot. Persons are unrepeatable. A person does not exist to provide an instance of nature but exists as a unique, unrepeatable person and so stands in a sense above nature. A person is always more than an instance of nature.<sup>9</sup> This understanding helps to explain why it is in order to say "the Son is God", and not the other way round, "God is the Son."<sup>10</sup> This exchange is prohibited by the fact that person and nature are not the same reality and yet they are inseparably

7 Cf. Cz. S. Bartnik, "'The Person' in the Holy Trinity," *Collectanea Theologica*, 53(1983), pp. 17-30.

8 Cf. Cz. S. Bartnik, "'The Person' in the Holy Trinity," *Collectanea Theologica*, 53(1983), pp. 17-30. Often in contemporary humanistic disciplines there is less or no attention paid to the distinction between "person" and "personality." The two are used interchangeably which results into an error of reducing the meaning of "person" only to personality.

9 Cf. J. F. Crosby, *The Personalism of John Paul II*, Steubenville: Hildebrand Project, 2019.

10 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1998, p. 240.

together at once.<sup>11</sup> There is the interiority of each Person. This interiority always exceeds the qualities and properties that a person displays. There is an inviolability of persons, that is, none of the persons is *rightly used or destroyed* for the good of other persons. It cannot be said that God the Father “used” the Son to save the world. But it may be said that God the Father, eternally freely, sent His Son for the Salvation of the world, and that the Son, eternally freely, accepted to come and save the world.

Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II, taking from the commandment of love, has developed a personalistic norm which states, “Person is the... [one who] does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end. In its positive form the *Personalistic norm* confirms this: the Person is... [the one] towards [whom] the only proper and adequate attitude is love.”<sup>12</sup> The commandment of love given by Christ that, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself” (Lk 10:21) strictly speaking the commandment says “Love Persons” and the Personalistic norm says: “A person is one to whom the only proper and adequate way to relate is love.”<sup>13</sup> The notion of Person does not give room for all forms of coarsen that threaten a person’s personhood.

Community life is understood in a way that each person acts in own name in making the basic missions and commitments. This should not be understood as a kind of individualism leading to community fragmentation, for, there is sterility in individualism, but rather the community should be conceived as the reality of interpersonal relations in which persons live in and have their personhood. Community life is not to be thought of in terms of rights and protection against the intruders, but rather as relational existence for Divine Persons, and in terms of solidarity and co-responsibility, in the case of human persons. Self-donation is possible only in freedom and truth. There is an equality of worth because according to *communio personarum* we talk of existence of a person beside a person, which translates into an existence of a person *for* a person.<sup>14</sup>

11 Cf. L. Sanyu, “Chalcedonian Personalism According to Colin Patterson,” pp. 133-135.

12 K. Wojtyła/ John Paul II, “The Personalistic Norm,” *Personalism; Science Philosophy Theology*, 11(2006), p. 46.

13 K. Wojtyła/ John Paul II, “The Personalistic Norm,” pp. 46-47; see also K. Wojtyła/ John Paul II, *The Acting Person* (Osoba i czyn), Krakow, 1969.

14 Cf. John Paul II, *By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God*, General Audience, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 14 November 1979.

Due to the transcendence of the person, the person is a mystery. Hence, there is a real difficulty and complexity in trying to clarify the notion of person. Nevertheless, the understanding of this notion may be deepened, for example, by first taking a look at the relationship between nature and person. This will help to clarify how this notion is understood and applied in this study. Generally, this study follows the notion of person as understood and used by the first seven general councils, but especially as applied at the councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Chalcedon (451 AD).

### 1.1.2 Person and Nature

There is the principle of being. Nature is the Principle of being and acting. Yet there is also a subject. Person is a subject of being and acting. Person has reason and will, and hence is capable of loving, and is responsible for his actions. Nature cannot decide, person can decide. Nature is not acting, but is a principle, basis, or fundament of acting. Person is acting, of course on the basis of Nature. The notion of “person,” always carries with it the meaning of uniqueness and relatedness at once. These two realities of, “uniqueness” and “relatedness” go together without confusion and without separation. The “person” as name is uniqueness and relatedness in one. From the point of view of this notion’s origin, Person expresses the reality of dialogue and of God as a dialogical Existence. The notion shows God – the Being who eternally lives and exists being “I” and “You” and “We”. Such knowledge about God explains to the human person his or her own existence anew.<sup>15</sup>

How the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit could be truly three and yet at the same time, the One God? The answer lies in the distinction between Person and nature. The distinction between “someone else” and “something else”, the *who*-Person, and the *what*-being.<sup>16</sup> The concept of person entails who exists-through-himself, as an ultimate uniqueness, particularity, who is

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15 Cf. J. Ratzinger, “The Significance of Person in Theology,” *Personalism: Science Philosophy Theology*, 8(2005), pp. 33-48.

16 If not carefully considered, in the case of human persons, the “*what*” can take the form of idealist philosophy in which personal particularity is ‘identified’, and thus lost, with ideas or ideals ultimately determining the human being. It can also take the naturalistic or biological form in which procreation of human species is more or less taken as identical with

irreducible to any generality. According to Gregory of Nazianzen, “the Son is not the Father-for only one is the Father, and yet He is what the Father is-nor is the Spirit the Son, because He comes from the Father, for only one is the Only-begotten, and yet He is what the Son is.”<sup>17</sup> There is not “one nature and another” in the Trinity. Yet there are “one Person and another.” In Christ, on the other hand, in the Incarnate Son, there is *not* one Person and another, but just *One Person* and the same and yet there do exist one nature and another, that is, Divinity and Humanity. Christ is two natures but One Person.<sup>18</sup>

There is a distinction between *ousia*-essence and *hypostasis*-Person. The doctrine of faith teaches the unmixed and undivided difference of the Persons. The term *substance* sometimes rendered by *essence* or *nature* is used to designate the Divine being in that one unity. The term *Person* or *Hypostasis* is used to designate the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit in the real distinction among them. The term *relation* is used to designate the fact that their distinction lies in the relationships of each to the others (cf. CCC, no. 252). From the philosophical approach to *ousia* and *hypostasis* there are two kinds of concepts (cf. CCC, no. 251). One kind denotes many things collectively by meaning what is common to them, such as the term “man” while the other kind denotes something specific, something that is unique and particular and not common to the other individuals of the same nature. Personal names such as Peter, Paul are of this type. They do not refer to human nature in general, in which all men share in identical fashion, *homoousioi*, but to those things that make one man different from the other, to a person’s specific features. The term *hypostasis* describes the uniqueness. A general concept such as man indeed designates the nature, *physis*, of an entity but not this entity as existing in and for itself; only a proper name can do this. When it is said that man is a unit of the rational nature, it is at the same time known that the rational nature is not self-existent as a nature, it is subsisted in the person. Person is an independent subject of existence and action, qualities which cannot be attributed to rational nature. Nature is a principle of being and existence while person is the subject of being and action. Person is responsible for his actions.<sup>19</sup>

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the emergence of persons (Cf. J. D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, London: T&T Clark, 2009, p. 110).

- 17 Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* 31:9 as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 143.
- 18 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*, London: Wiley-Blackwell publishers, 2013, pp. 30-32.
- 19 Cf. K. Wojtyła/John Paul II, “Thomist Personalism,” *Personalism: Science Philosophy Theology*, 6(2004), p. 57.

Gregory emphasises the term *hyphistemi*, from which the term *hypostasis* is derived and which in Latin is rendered as *subsistere*. Hypostasis, then, is used by Gregory for that which subsists, which possesses subsistence, that is, independence and individuality. Here, attention is needed in order not to understand individuality to mean solitary because persons are persons in relation. And personalism conceives individualism as sterile and contradictory to true personhood. So, by individuality here it is meant to refer to that which gives a general nature its actual concretization. This, then, is hypostasis – not the indefinite concept of “essence”-*ousia*, which has not a specific standing-*stasis* and only denotes what is general; but the concept that delineates and circumscribes, based on an entity’s peculiar features, what otherwise is general and unspecific in it.<sup>20</sup> The choice of hypostasis for the actual individual entity, and also for person, rests first of all on philosophical reasons. The general concept of “essence” does not yet denote the specific standing-*stasis* that pertains to a particular entity based on its individual features.<sup>21</sup> Cardinal Schönborn uses the German term *charakterizein*.<sup>22</sup> He explains that whatever “circumscribes” the person is that which *characterizes* him or her as *this* man. He follows Gregory, who distinguishes between general essence and specific hypostasis. The term *perigrapherein* means the general activity of drawing and sketching certain contours, while *charakterizein* is more specific. It means to engrave and impress in some material the precise features. In a wider sense, it also means to render an exact likeness. The word *charakter* not only means distinguishing feature but also denotes an engraved, painted, or carved portrait.<sup>23</sup>

The ‘who’ is never separated from the ‘what’ much as there is a distinction, which must be always kept. And this inseparability and distinction have both to be kept. Personhood is about hypostasis-uniqueness and relatedness at once. The person simply *is*. The person is not someone else. Greek Fathers avoid giving any positive content to the *hypostases* of the Holy Trinity. They insist that “the Father is simply not the Son or the Spirit, and the Son means simply not the Father and so on, [this] points to the true ontology of *hypostasis*: that someone simply *is* and *is himself*... and not some else, and this is sufficient

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20 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 20, 193.

21 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, Saint, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2007, pp. 247-259.

22 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 21.

23 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 21-22.

to identify him.”<sup>24</sup> In God, the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. The Father and the Son are two in such a way that we do not understand their substance, but that we understand their relations.<sup>25</sup> In the case of human beings, it is possible for the same man to be a father and a son. In God the predicates Father and Son are opposite to one another. In the case of human beings, to predicate father in relation to one man as son, and son in relation to another man as father is possible. In God, it is one reality to be Father and another reality to be Son. This is so because Fatherhood and Sonship differ from one another, without the same Person being at the same time the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son differ from one another by proper characteristic.<sup>26</sup>

In summary about person and nature, it may be said that person is ultimate uniqueness irreducible to any generality while nature is not self-existent and can be general or common among distinct persons. Christ is One Divine Person subsisting in two natures, the Divine nature and Human nature. Care should be taken to explain without destroying the unity of Person. Our lower nature as such is deprived of reason, and, therefore, is never spoken of as a person. In Christ, on the contrary, the lower nature is a complete, rational and animal, Human nature, receiving its personal reality from the Person of the eternal Son. He is Divine but truly subsists in Human nature.<sup>27</sup> Care should also be taken not to understand that the Divine Person, the eternal Son, to be the soul of the human nature of the Incarnate Son. This would be tantamount to Apollinarianism. Apollinarius of Laodicea (310-390 AD) held that in Jesus Christ, the Divine Word had replaced the soul or spirit.<sup>28</sup> Against this heresy, the Church confesses that the eternal Son assumed a rational, human soul (cf. CCC, no. 471).

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24 Cf. J. D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, London: T&T Clark, 2009, p. 111.

25 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1998, p. 239.

26 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, p. 240.

27 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, Vol. II, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1899, pp. 112-113.

28 Cf. F. M. Young & A. Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A guide to the Literature and its Background*, London: SCM Press, 2010, p. 161.



### 1.1.3 Person and Subjectivity

In this study, the subjectivity of a person is understood as *not* being in opposition to objectivity. Subjectivity is objectivity in as far as it denotes the truth about a person. A person does not just have, but there is subjectivity of one's person. The person is perceived as someone and not as something. This separates him or her from any other entity in the visible world. Subjectivity becomes a synonym in some sense, to what is irreducible in the person.<sup>29</sup> Two approaches may be distinguished: cosmological and personalistic. Cosmological approach concentrates on the objectivity of the human being and as such is associated with its irreducibility. In this cosmological approach, the human being is explained as being different from non-human realities, such as animals. That the human being is not an animal. The personalistic approach is more concerned with subjectivity of the human being understood in close relation to the human interiority and the sphere of experience of the selfhood but not negating the objectivity noted in the former approach.<sup>30</sup> Depending on the angle of view at which one stands, the understanding of this subjectivity can easily veer from the specific context to another.<sup>31</sup>

For example, it is said that “many personalists have argued that an adequate account of the human person must include an account of subjectivity as irreducible to anything objectively definable.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, conscious of the varied understandings of personalistic subjectivity, in order to remain focused on the purpose and scope of this study, subjectivity as used in this study, refers to the uniqueness, to the irreducibility in a person as opposed to inclusiveness or collectivism. It also refers to a person as an active subject capable of making a free act and choice as opposed to object (utilitarianism) – something to be used or predetermined.

Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II gives the distinction between subjectivity and subjectivism. That subjectivity does not permit absolutizing

29 Cf. P. Dancak, “Personalism-The Philosophical Movement for Human Development,” *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 124(2017), p. 54.

30 Cf. G. Hołub, *Understanding the Person: Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2021, p. 22.

31 Cf. M. Scozia, “Augustine of Hippo on the Concept of Person: A Philosophical Analysis”, in James Beauregard, Giusy Gallo, Claudia Stancati (eds.), *The Person at the Crossroads: A Philosophical Approach*, Wilmington: Vernon Press, 2020, pp. 3-5.

32 M. K. Spencer, “Aristotelian Substance and Personalistic Subjectivity,” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 55:2(2015), pp. 145-164.

of consciousness but considers consciousness as merely an aspect of a person. Consciousness serves only to gain a better understanding of the subjectivity of a person in relation to the person's own acts. Subjectivism on the other hand conceives consciousness itself as a total and exclusive subject.<sup>33</sup> This was the path taken by Descartes. Subjectivism ends up in idealism. In this regard, this study follows the understanding of consciousness as defined in subjectivity but not as in subjectivism. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has clarified the philosophical and theological problem regarding subjectivity. He observes the paradoxical situation that has today arisen “in which the various human sciences demonstrate the limitations and contingency of every subjective viewpoint, while at the same time it is the unspoken assumption that all subjective perspectives are equally valid.”<sup>34</sup> Ratzinger abhors exaggerated subjectivism which believes that there is nothing more than various and competing interpretations, leading to pervasive relativism. Exaggerated subjectivity is based upon the Cartesian, “I think” which is the moment in which solitary person attains to himself, a position from which it is impossible to regain solidarity with other persons who exist outside of the self. The ego cannot reach them through the cogito.<sup>35</sup> Exaggerated subjectivism is opposed to patristic, scholastic and Vatican Council II understanding of subjectivity.<sup>36</sup> There is an indispensable reality of relationality which should never be forgotten at any moment in any discourse about a person.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, subjectivity as understood in this study does not mean individualism but rather refers in a sense to the uniqueness of each human person. The uniqueness of each person should not be understood as a stress of individualistic

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33 Cf. K. Wojtyła/John Paul II, “Subjectivity and Subjectivism,” *Personalism: Science Philosophy Theology*, 7(2004), p. 55.

34 J. Ratzinger, *Deus locutus est nobis in Filio: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology and the Church*, Meeting with the Doctrinal Commissions of North America and Oceania, Menlo Park, California, 9 February, 1999, no. 1, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_19990209\\_california-ratzinger\\_en.html#](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc_con_cfaith_19990209_california-ratzinger_en.html#), accessed on 28 February 2022.

35 Cf. Also, Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, Carol Macomber (translator), John Kulka (ed.), New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 18.

36 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Deus locutus est nobis in Filio: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology and the Church*, no. 1

37 Pope Benedict XVI, explains the metaphysical interpretation of the ‘humanum’ in which relationality is an essential element (Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate: On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 29 June, 2009, no. 55).

tendency. The individualistic tendency makes a person solitary without being in relation. It makes the individual a monad locked up in himself. Individualism has no foundation in the Holy Trinity and in the true meaning of the notion of person. A person as such must always be in relation with other persons. In order to remain within the scope of this study, we shall not go into the details of angelic persons. We shall limit ourselves to Divine Persons and more specifically to the Person of Christ and then to the human persons. As we conclude the presentation of our understanding of the notion of person, there are some pertinent issues about human persons, like social life and economic life. These remain implicit throughout this study.

Cardinal Ratzinger speaking about faith says, faith consists of a series of contradictions held together by grace.<sup>38</sup> Since, in any physical experiment the observer himself or herself enters into the experiment and only by doing so can arrive at a physical experience, there is no such thing as *pure objectivity* even in physics. Even here, the result of the experiment depends on the question and the questioner himself.<sup>39</sup> The result does not reflect nature in itself alone, in its pure objectivity, but also gives back of something of man, of what is characteristically ours, a bit of the human subject the concrete person who carried out this experiment and of course a bit of the one who asked the question. There is no such thing as pure objectivity. Whenever an answer is presented as unemotionally objective, as a statement that finally goes beyond “prejudices” and provides purely factual, scientific information, then it has to be said that the speaker has fallen victim of self-deception. This kind of objectivity is quite simply denied to man. He cannot ask and exist as a mere observer. He who tries to be a mere observer experiences nothing. Even the reality “God” can only impinge on the vision of him or her who enters into the relationship with God, not as a mere observer. This entering in relationship with God is called faith. Only by entering does one experience. Only by cooperating in the experiment, in faith, does one ask at all. Only he who asks receives an answer.<sup>40</sup> From this we get a deeper understanding of subjectivity, namely, that subjectivity-concreteness is intrinsic to the person.

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38 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 173.

39 Cardinal Schönborn observes the same problem in the so called scientific experiments of any sort. That the subject is always somehow present in the results experiment (cf. C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 159).

40 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 175-176.

## 1.2 PERSONS IN THE HOLY TRINITY

When we talk about the Holy Trinity, three main elements come to the fore. First is *mysterium*, that the Holy Trinity is a reality, and we can “experience” this Reality, but this Reality is Divine, surpassing our mind and human reason. We cannot fully grasp or encompass this Reality ultimately in our human minds. Second is *communio personarum*, that the Holy Trinity is a community of Three Divine Persons. Third is *missio*, that there are Missions in the Holy Trinity-visible and invisible missions. It is within the framework of these fundamentals, that we are able to conceive of the Persons in the Trinity. The Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life (CCC, nn. 232-237). Salvation history is the activity of how the One true God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit reveals Himself and reconciles and unites human persons to Him. Jesus Christ is the visible Image of the Father, the invisible God, and the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father in the name of the Son (CCC, no. 234).<sup>41</sup> With this in mind, it is now possible to proceed to talk of Persons in the Holy Trinity under the sub themes of: oneness of God, relational subsistence, eternal processions, time as a problem, coeternity, uniqueness of each Divine Person, and missions.

### 1.2.1 The Oneness of God

Doesn't the notion of Person affect the Oneness of God? To this question, it can be answered that God is One. However, He is One not limited to one Person. God is a plurality of an equality of nature, unanimity of will and an identity of action that converges back into the One from whom they come – something impossible to created nature. In God, though the One is distinct with respect to number, yet is not divided with respect to substance.<sup>42</sup> God is One. If God is One, is the Logos God? For Arius the Logos is a creature.<sup>43</sup> However, the Son

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41 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2018, p. 19.

42 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Five Theological Orations*, Florida: Estate of Stephen Reynolds, 2011.

43 Cf. B. Sundkler & C. Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 12.

must be God in order to be able to reveal God.<sup>44</sup> If the Son were not God, then He could not reveal God.<sup>45</sup> God is in a way a community of identical nature that we can perceive only in faint images. Yet however imperfect the language and images we have may be, the concepts involved are not left to arbitrary choice rather God Himself is in fact being addressed. Our words touch on the reality of God, yet at the same time they do not comprehend Him (cf. CCC, nn. 39-43).<sup>46</sup>

The *homoousios* is a valid and definitive statement.<sup>47</sup> Theological concepts like “image”, “nature”, and “person” are not immediately clear but they signify theologically a different reality from that in their original philosophical or everyday context. By first understanding the Nicene *homoousios*, one is safely able to understand the doctrine of two natures of the Incarnate Son of God. Before one starts to discuss the reality of two natures of the Son of God, one should first strongly hold what the Council of Nicaea (325) intended to express by using the term *homoousios*. In other words, that, as one proceeds to chapter two of this study, should keep conscious that the Son is the same Substance – the same Nature with the Father. He is God and not a creature. The Trinity and the Incarnation are not opposed to the monotheistic dogma of Israel: “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Mk 12:29, citing Dt 6:4).<sup>48</sup> Not only is there no contradiction, but on the contrary, the Christian dogma is as it were, the full blossoming and crowning of the faith of Israel.<sup>49</sup> The Oneness of the Divine Persons is built on the fact that each Person’s property consists precisely in the Person’s absolute relatedness to the other two. What makes them distinct, also makes them One. Personalistic Christology is marked with the intensive emphasis on the uniqueness of each person which is the opposite

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44 There have been some attempts to defend Arius, but with Cardinal Schönborn, in this study, we firmly understand that the view of Arius was and is completely erroneous. The defenders of Arius are for example, Stead who “...argues that Arius took a relatively higher view of the Logos, short, however, of making him coeval and consubstantial with the Father... There is no need for us to accept Athanasius’ claim that Arius regarded the Logos as merely one of the creatures, but rather as first-born and unique... [Dragas maintains that Arius argues] for a mediator who is half-way between the uncreated God and the created universe, a mythological image of the mediator-creator who is neither eternal, nor temporal, neither true God nor true creature, but a divine-creature”(cf. P. F. Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World*, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2000, p. 246).

45 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 100.

46 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 99.

47 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 99

48 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 71.

49 Cf. F. Dreyfus, *Did Jesus Know He Was God?*, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989, pp. 138-39.

of a particularising individualism, for, in the innermost core of the personal uniqueness already rests the foundation for true community.<sup>50</sup> Athanasius is the great teacher of the identity in substance of the Father and the Son, and of the Son and the Father-*homoousios*. In the third century, Sabellius sought to safeguard the Oneness of God by envisioning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit not as distinct Persons but as merely different manifestations of the one God (Modalism or Sabellianism). In God is both the Oneness of Substance-*ousia* and the distinction of Persons. The actual history of revelation shows Christ as Person always in relation to God the Father. Once again, it is important to keep in mind that the Triune God is the Mystery, the indescribable Mystery of all. Yet this is not to lead us to consider ourselves absolved from seeking a rational approach to this Mystery aided by the wing of faith.<sup>51</sup>

### 1.2.2 Relational Subsistence

In the Holy Trinity, Person should be understood as relational existence. The Three Persons existing in God are in their essence relations. They are not substances existing next to each other, but they are *truly real relations*, and nothing beyond these relations. Person in God means relation. Relation is not secondary to a Person, but is a Person. Person exists here because of His essence solely as a relation. There is not one Substance and another in the Trinity, yet there is one Person and Another.<sup>52</sup> The Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzen) especially in connection with Trinitarian theology worked out the first fundamentals of a Christian concept of Person. This concept of Person in its developed form was applied to Christology. Saint Augustine († 430 AD), and late patristic theology contended that, Divine Persons should be understood existing in relation. Without affecting the uniqueness of each Person and at the same time preserving the relatedness, in the Holy Trinity the Perfect One is Three and the Perfect Three is One.

The notion of “Person” as used in Trinitarian theology referring to the Divine Persons, belongs to its own category, namely, “Persons-in-relation” rather

50 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 27.

51 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 14-16.

52 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 143.

than “Substance.”<sup>53</sup> Persons-in-relation is truly an independent ontological category, irreducible to that of substance. Whereas accidental relations, such as “being next to” or “being employed by” presuppose two subjects moving into spatial proximity to each other, for persons-in-relation the reverse happens: two subjects only come into existence when a relation is constituted. The Father is only the Father, and the Son is only the Son, insofar as there exists the relationship Unbegotten-Begotten. The Son is only the Son, and the Father is only the Father, insofar as there exists the relationship Begotten-Unbegotten. The Father together with the Son are only the Spirator, and the Holy Spirit is only the Holy Spirit, insofar as there exists the relationship Spirator-Spirated. The Holy Spirit is only the Holy Spirit, and the Father together with the Son are Spirator, insofar as there exists the relationship Spirated-Spirator. The Divine Persons are always and ever Persons-in-relation. Because persons cannot be positively described—neither can we provide positive accounts of the relation that exists between person and nature, even though we know that they go together such that there is no Divine Person without a Divine nature, or in terms of the categories of nature, they constitute One reality.<sup>54</sup> It is not possible to conceive of a person void of nature, even if we do not describe a person in terms of nature.<sup>55</sup> This understanding of the relation between person and nature helps us to appreciate the truth of the eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Holy Spirit while maintaining the Unity of the Godhead.

### 1.2.3 Eternal Processions

In God there are real relations, because in revelation we find correlative terms, such as Father and Son. The doctrine of relations stems from the Divine processions. A Divine procession is inconceivable without a terminus *a quo* and a terminus *ad quem* in relationship between themselves. Since the processions are two, the terminuses are four and the relations between these are four. In the first Procession there are the relations of the Father and the Son. The two

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53 C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, p. 111.

54 Cf. C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, p. 225.

55 Cf. L. Sanyu, “Chalcedonian Personalism According to Colin Patterson,” *Roczniki Teologiczne*, 2(2020), pp. 133-135.

corresponding relations are Fatherhood and Sonship. The Father begets the Son and hence the relation of the Father to the Son is Fatherhood (Paternity). The Son is begotten by the Father and hence the relation of the Son to the Father is Sonship (Filiation). Even if there is a common nature, that is, the Father is God (Divine) and the Son is God (Divine), nevertheless they are two Persons because a father is always a father to someone. And a son is always of a son of someone. There is no a father that is a father to himself. And there is no a son that is son to himself. Instead the Father is always one Person and the Son another Person.<sup>56</sup>

The second Procession is Spiration, that is, of the Father and the Son together – the Holy Spirit. The two corresponding relations are Active Spiration and Passive Spiration. The Father and the Son together in a single Spiration – spirate the Holy Spirit (CCC, no. 246). Here the relation of the Father and the Son together to – the Holy Spirit is Active Spiration. The Holy Spirit is at once spirated – by the Father and the Son together. Here the relation of the Holy Spirit to – the Father and the Son together is Passive Spiration. These relations are distinct from the Divine nature only by a distinction of reason with foundation in the being itself, but are really distinct between themselves, since they are in opposition.<sup>57</sup> Saint Anselm of Canterbury shows that the relations in the Holy Trinity are in opposition because in the Holy Trinity, it is not like in human persons. Among human persons, one can be referred to as a son by one person and at the same time be referred to as a father by another person. That is, one and the same person is son to someone while he himself at the same time being a father to someone else. In the Holy Trinity Fatherhood, Sonship and being Spirated are proper characteristics respective to each unique Divine Person.<sup>58</sup> The difference between the Eastern and Western traditions is to be found in what is accented. The Eastern tradition stresses the truth of the Father is the First origin of the Spirit and so confesses that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, He comes from the Father through the Son. The Western stresses the consubstantial communion between the Father and the Son and so confesses that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son – *Filioque* (cf. CCC. no. 248)

It should be stressed that for both the Western and the Eastern tradition, God the Father is *Principium Sine Principio*. The Father is the Principle of the

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56 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, p. 242.

57 Cf. P. Parente, A. Piolanti, & S. Garofalo, *Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology*, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company 1957, p. 239-240.

58 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, pp. 233-259.



Holy Trinity. The truth of the Spirit proceeding from the Father and from the Son (*Filioque*) does not affect the understanding that the Father alone is the Origin and the Principle of the Holy Spirit.<sup>59</sup> The Person of the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father as the first principle and, by the eternal gift of this to the Son, from the communion of both the Father and the Son” (CCC, no. 264). God the Son is *Generatus*, that is eternally Begotten, and God the Holy Spirit is *Spiratus*, that is, eternally Spirated.<sup>60</sup> In other words; God the Father is He Who Generates the Son, and God the Son is He Who that is begotten, and God the Holy Spirit is He Who that proceeds (CCC, no. 248). The Son is eternally Generated while the Holy Spirit is eternally Spirated. The Persons of the Holy Trinity are three before the Incarnation and they are still three Persons of the Holy Trinity after the Incarnation.<sup>61</sup> God is a simple Substance, that is, not composed of parts. Hence, we cannot conceive of the Persons of the Holy Trinity to be parts of the same Substance.<sup>62</sup> Since this study is mainly about the personalistic Christology, more can be said about the only eternally begotten.

### 1.3.4 The Only Eternally Begotten

Cardinal Schönborn leads us to the conception of eternal begottenness by differentiating between what we can call “the God way” as essentially different from the “human way”.<sup>63</sup> The Father is ever the Father and never was or could become

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59 Cf. P. McPartlan, *A Service of Love: Papal Primacy, The Eucharist & Church Unity*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013, p. 3.

60 Cf. M. Eisenberg, “The Mirror of the Text: Reflections in *Ma fin est mon commencement*” in Katelijne Schiltz & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Canons and Canonic Techniques, 14th -16th Centuries: Theory, Practice, and Reception History*, Leuven: Peeters, 2007, p. 90.

61 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, p. 243.

62 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, p. 244.

63 Thomas Gerard Weinandy has examined how Athanasius conceived the Divine begetting. He states that, “Athanasius emphasises that the Son is begotten ‘from the *ousia* of the Father. ...Athanasius accentuates that, while creatures are made and thus they differ in kind, that is, different in *ousia* from the Father, the Son, as Word and Wisdom, is not external to the Father in that he, unlike creatures, does not differ in kind or *ousia* from him, but ‘is ever the proper offspring of the Father’s *ousia*. Therefore, the Son is ‘not foreign but proper to the Father’s *ousia*’. The heart of ‘begetting’ then, for Athanasius, is the notion that the Son is from and is equally the Father’s *ousia*. ...What Athanasius says should not be misunderstood. Since the Father is by nature ontologically Father, he must by nature ontologically beget a Son who is equally ontologically God. ...since the Father is eternally ontologically

the Son. Likewise, the Son is ever the Son and never could become the Father or a father.<sup>64</sup> This distinction is always very important if we are to conceive rightly of Divine Persons. Scripture testifies to Christ as the only-begotten Son of the Father (Jn 1:14, 18), but in order to understand the meaning of the term begotten we have to look at the One to whom it is applied. God does not beget as men do, but in God's way. For it is not God who imitates man; rather, men are called "fathers" of their children because of God who alone and in the strict sense is truly the Father of His Son, for "from Him all Fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title" (Eph 3:15). To call God the Father does not denote something accidental in Him, the way it is applied to men. God is *the* Father. He is the one and only true Father. Arius viewed this totally differently; for him God becomes Father only after having created the Word. For Arius, the title Father cannot be of God's essence.

According to Athanasius, if God is the Father, then He is so eternally, and the Son in the same way is eternal. Yet the Divine Fatherhood must indeed be understood in God's way. The Son, to be truly His Image must possess the Divine attributes of the Father. Eternal is the Father, immortal, powerful, radiant light, King, almighty God, Lord, Creator, and sculptor. All this has to be present in the Image as well, so that whoever has seen the Son has in truth seen the Father (Jn14:9). If, however, this is not the case, but if on the contrary, as the Arians hold, the Son has come into existence and was not from all eternity, then He is not the true Image of the Father, unless the Arians shamelessly contend that the attribute of Image as chosen for the Son does not denote a similar nature but is only an extrinsic way of speaking.<sup>65</sup>

Arius placed the Son on the side of creatures. The Nicene Council (325 AD) is convinced that Christ is God. All that is said in the New Testament about the origin, ancestry, and nature of Christ is to be interpreted on the basis of the eternal unity of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For Arius it is impossible for God to be Three Persons without destroying God's unity.<sup>66</sup> The creed against Arius states belief in "one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son

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the Father by nature, he eternally ontologically wills to beget a Son, because he eternally ontologically will to be who he is-the Father of the Son" (cf. T. G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction*, Washington DC: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007, p. 70).

64 Cf. T. G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction*, Washington DC: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007, p. 77, p. 54.

65 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 26.

66 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God sent His Son*, pp. 81-82.

of God, the Only-Begotten, generated from the Father, that is, from the same substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ), through whom all things were made, those in heaven and those on earth.”<sup>67</sup>

Nicaea confesses that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is first of all the Only-Begotten generated from the Father, that is, from the substance of the Father, as an explanation of what it means to say that the Son is from the Father (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς). He is begotten, not made so as to make clear what begotten means or rather, what it does not mean. He is consubstantial with the Father-*homoousios*.

There is only One God and One Lord (κύριος). This is what Paul believes, when he says, “an idol has no real existence and that there is no God but One” (1Cor. 8:4). He adds “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1Cor. 8:6). This Lord is the Son of God, the Only-Begotten generated from the Father. The Old Testament Psalm (2:7) states, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”. Also the same allusion is made by the New Testament (cf. Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5 with reference to Psalm 110).<sup>68</sup> There was a conscious move from Kerygmatic language to admit philosophical terms of substance, οὐσία and consubstantial, ὁμοούσιος. This move is clearly an elucidation as a more specific definition. But not a change in the teaching or an addition of something new. The use of philosophical language is aimed at elucidation of what is already believed and taught.

### 1.2.5 Time as a Problem in the Trinity

When did the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit come into being? To this question, it is answered that they are above *when*. When did the Father become the Father? The answer is that there was never a time when He was not the Father. When was the Son Begotten? The Son was begotten when the Father was not begotten. And when did the Holy Spirit Proceed? The Holy Spirit proceeded when the Son was, not proceeding but begotten-beyond the sphere of time, and above

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<sup>67</sup> C. Schönborn, *God sent His Son*, p. 82.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God sent His Son*, p. 83.

the grasp of reason. We cannot express this reality which is above time if we avoid, as we would like rightly to do, any expression which conveys the idea of time. Such expressions as “when”, “was”, “before”, “after”, “from the beginning” and so on are not timeless however much we may force them. The Father is the Begetter and the Spirator. The Son is the Begotten and together with the Father is also Spirator, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirated. All this is without passion, without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. There is no way of expressing this in terms altogether excluding visible things. If it were possible, the best way is an expression that eliminates any element of time and any element of visible reality.<sup>69</sup> As human persons we are always inclined to apply indiscriminately the human categories to God which end up blurring our conception of Him.

In the Trinity, we are talking about an eternal Truth that requires an eternal mind and eternal language to express. By mentioning the limitedness of language, we do not intend to mean the relativizing notion that we cannot know God that everything stated and described can only be a symbol and therefore we have nothing of certainty apart from only a glimpse in random and fragmentary ways. We do not mean the notion of great peace among religions which recognize each other as different ways of reflecting the one eternal Being and that it should be up to the individual, which path he or she will grope along to find the One who nevertheless unites them all.<sup>70</sup> But rather we are talking about the truths of supernatural revelation (*Revelatio Dei*). These truths have been revealed to human persons and can be personally experienced. Many saints, such as Saint Therese of Lisieux, Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity, Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi, have all had some special experiences of these truths.<sup>71</sup>

### 1.2.6 Coeternity of the Divine Persons

Gregory of Nazianzus asked himself the question, how then are the Persons of the Trinity not alike if they are coeternal? And his answer is, because they are from Him, though not after Him. He who is unoriginated is eternal, but He who

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69 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Five Theological Orations*, Florida: Estate of Stephen Reynolds, 2011.

70 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 20.

71 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God sent His Son*, pp. 371-382.

is eternal is not necessarily unoriginated, provided He may be referred to the Father as His origin. Therefore in respect of the Cause they are not unoriginated but it is evident that the Cause is not necessarily prior to His effects, for the sun is not prior to its light. In trying to perceive of the coeternity of the Divine Persons, one must remain conscious of the limitedness of human language and the difficulty posed by the category of time in all our existence and speech. For we are created, and if creatures, then our existence starts to be in time. We always carry with us a sense of time, even the term “originate” somehow presupposes time. And yet the Persons of the Holy Trinity are unoriginate in respect to time, since, the Sources of time themselves are not subject to time.<sup>72</sup>

### 1.2.7 The Uniqueness of Each Divine Person

The Father has no Beginning, His very Fatherhood has no beginning. The person whose fatherhood had a beginning must also have begun to be a father. But the Father had no beginning therefore, He did not then become a Father after He began to be, for His being “the Father” had no beginning. That means, He is the Father in eternity. He is the Father in the absolute sense. He is not also the Son, since the Son is the Son in the absolute sense, because the Son is not also the Father. These names do not belong to us creatures in the absolute sense because it is possible for us to be both. One can be a son of someone and at the same time become a father to someone else, that is, when he gives birth to a son or daughter. We are divided by degrees but in the Trinity there are no degrees. This duality, that is, the possibility to be son and father among human persons, creates relations without the underlying concrete existence. But in the Holy Trinity there are real relations with underlying concreteness.

Regarding the uniqueness of God the Father, it is the unique property of His hypostasis that He is the Father, and that His being is entirely “uncaused”-*hypostenai* (cf. Heb 1:3). The specific property of the Son is that He is the only begotten one. He is the only Son. Through and in himself, the Son reveals the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father, and that He, the only-begotten one,

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Five Theological Orations*, Florida: Estate of Stephen Reynolds, 2011.

shines as light from the unbegotten light-from the Father. The Holy Spirit has as His defining property that, He is known after and with the Son, and that He subsists in procession from the Father-*hyphestanai*. These Person-specific properties are the absolutely immediate and unique particularities possessed individually by each of the three Divine Persons.<sup>73</sup> It is proper to the Holy Spirit to proceed from the Father, and to be known with the Son; it is proper to the Son to be begotten by the Father and reveal the Spirit. Each Person's own property, therefore is nothing else but the specific way in which this Person relates to the other Persons. True, the properties are unmediated and unique, but at the same time, they are also the most perfect manifestation of the ineffable unity that is God. The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are a unified differentiation and differentiated unity.

The title "Son of God" signifies the unique and eternal relationship of the Son to His Father (cf. CCC, no. 454). He is the only Son of the Father (cf. Jn 1:14. 18; 3:16-18). He is God himself (cf. Jn 1:1). Christ distinguished His Sonship from that of His disciples, which is adopted sonship, by never saying "our Father" together with himself included at once. He teaches them to pray that "You, then, [here with himself excluded], pray like this: 'Our Father'" and He emphasized this distinction between Divine Sonship and adopted sonship by saying "My Father and your Father (cf. CCC, no. 443). This title also affirms the Son's eternal preexistence as is declared at the His Baptism, at the Transfiguration, and the exclamation before the crucified Christ by the centurion (cf. CCC, no. 444). In brief, we can say that the uniqueness of the Father is His Fatherhood. The uniqueness of the Son is His Sonhood. The uniqueness of the Holy Spirit is the Spirited.

In trying to deepen our conception about the uniqueness of each Person, we may seek aid from Karol Wojtyła's conception of persons. Wojtyła has spoken of the experience lived through as a fundamental reality of what it means to be a human person.<sup>74</sup> This cannot be shared and at the same time cannot be transferred to another person even if the owner of this experience was willing to do so. If he did give it out to another person there are two implications. First, it will mean annihilation of the giver of this uniqueness. Secondly, it will mean annihilation of the receiver of this uniqueness because it would imply that the

<sup>73</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 27.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. D. Savage, "The Centrality of Lived Experience in Wojtyła's Account of the Person," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 61:4 (2013), pp. 19-51.

receiver has to denounce his own uniqueness in order to create room for the new uniqueness to be received. This would lead eventually to the annihilation of both. Back to the Persons in the Holy Trinity, if the Father were to give His Fatherhood to the Son, it would mean, that He has to cease being the Father. At the same time if the Son were to receive the Fatherhood it would mean that He has to cease being the Son. Therefore both Persons, the Father and the Son would by necessity have to be annulled. With this perspective we are able to speak of the uniqueness or irreducibility in each of the Persons as a subjective reality which is objective. Subjective in the sense that it belongs only and only to that unique Person and objective in as far as it corresponds to the structure of what it ontologically means to be Person. In this line of thought we are able to appreciate the fact that in the Incarnate Son of God there is only one Divine Person but two natures, namely Divine Nature and human nature.

Yet there is another important reality of the person-in-relation. The Father is the Father in as Father as He begets the Son. Likewise, the Son is the Son since He is begotten by the Father. The Father would never be Father without begetting the Son and the Son would never be the Son without being begotten. Therefore, another irreducible element in the notion of Persons emerges, namely, that of being in relation. It is not possible to perceive of a Person void of being in relation. Taking away the relation would be tantamount to annihilation of the unique Person. Take away the relation of the Father to the Son, at once there will be no more the Father and no more the Son. The three Persons who exist in God are not substances, not personalities in the modern sense, but the relatedness whose pure actuality does not impair the unity of the Highest Being but justifies it. He is not called Father with reference to Himself but only in relation to the Son. Seen by himself He is simply God. "Father" is purely a concept of relationship. Only in being for the other is He Father. In His own being in himself the Father is simply God. Person is the pure relation of being related, nothing else. Relationship is not something extra added to the Person, as it is with created persons, angelic and human persons.<sup>75</sup> In God there are no accidents, only substance and relation. Relation is an equally primordial mode of reality.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 183.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 184.

### 1.2.8 The Holy Trinity – Missions

According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Father's acting corresponds to His existing. He *is* the Father, the Principle of the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>77</sup> In terms of relationships within the Holy Trinity, God the Father is not sent but He is sending the Son. It is the Son who becomes Incarnate. The Father, together with the Son, sends the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not sending. These relationships help us to recognize the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. In trying to perceive of the eternal life within the Holy Trinity, the missions outside the Holy Trinity reveal also the distinction of Persons in the Holy Trinity. The roles of the Divine Persons in the economy of Salvation reveal their intrinsic and original relationships.<sup>78</sup> In terms of visible missions we can say, God the Father is God in heaven – Our Father who art in heaven, God the Son is God with us, and God the Holy Spirit is God within us (cf. CCC, nn. 257-267).

Taking the mystery of the Incarnation, for example, it can be seen that, the Incarnation itself reveals the distinction of the Persons in the Holy Trinity. In his argument against the possibility of the Father, and the Holy Spirit to become incarnate Saint Anselm of Canterbury argues that only the Person of the Son became flesh, although with the co-operation of the other two persons. The incarnation of the Son does not necessarily mean that the Father also became Incarnate or the Holy Spirit became Incarnate also, simply because they are different Persons even if they are the same Divine nature. The Father is one Person, and the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another.<sup>79</sup> From Anselm's argument it can be seen that the distinction in Persons is made clear by the fact that only one Person – the Son – became incarnate and not the Father, and not the Holy Spirit.

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77 C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 122.

78 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 27.

79 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1998, pp. 241-242.



## 1.3 THE SECOND PERSON OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The Second Person of the Holy Trinity is the Son of God, who is now Incarnate.<sup>80</sup> God *the Father* calls Him *His Son*, “You are *My Son*, today I have begotten You” (Heb 5:5; cf. also Acts 13:33; Ps 2:7). God *the Holy Spirit* calls Him, *My Lord*. Speaking by the Holy Spirit, David himself declared: “The Lord said to *My Lord*, ‘Sit at My right until I put Your enemies under Your feet’” (Mk 12:36; cf. also Mt 22:44; 26:64; Ps 110:1). The Second Person of the Holy Trinity is the Divine Person who became true Man and dwelt among us human persons while remaining true God. He is the same Person whom *human persons generally* call Jesus the *Son of Mary*. Isn’t this the carpenter, the *Son of Mary* and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? Aren’t His sisters here with us as well? (cf. Mk 6:3). The rulers of that time call Him *this man*, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring *this man’s* blood on us” (Acts 5:28), but Christians call Him Jesus *the Christ*. Simon Peter answered and said, “You are *the Christ*, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16), “Yes, Lord,” she [Martha] answered, “I believe that You are *the Christ*, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” (Jn 11:27). We now consider the personalistic conception about this Person in His eternal life before the Incarnation guided by the sub-themes: biblical basis of preexistence of the Son of God, the only eternally begotten, begotten of God not from nothing, eternally generated not emanated, the Son’s consubstantial existence, eternal perfect Image of the invisible God, and the eternal will of the Son of God.

The only Begotten Son is generated from the Father. The expression, μονογενής (Jn 1:14.18; 3:16.18; 1Jn 4:9) as much as to say “only”, “only-begotten” but can also mean “only-beloved.” John the evangelist states literally that, “The Only-Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father” (Jn 1:18). This articulates Jesus’ eternal “Being-God.” In the New Testament, Jesus calls God Abba, Father, that He is thus the Son.<sup>81</sup> No-one has ever seen God except the one who

80 According to Tertullian the name “Second” comes from the relation of being begotten. Since the Son is the begotten, then He is referred to as the Second Person and since the Holy Spirit is Spirited at once by the Father and the Son, He is then referred to as the Third Person of the Holy Trinity (cf. chapter 9, adv praxeian).

81 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 83.

is from God (Jn 1:18; 6:46), the One who is in the bosom of the Father. It is this being of the Father that makes it possible for Jesus to know and speak about heavenly truths (Jn 3:12-13; Mt 11:27). This Word made-flesh, Himself God, is nevertheless distinct and unique. He is God's incarnate self-expression, He has made God known.<sup>82</sup> This Father-Son relationship is very essential in Jesus' understanding of himself and of His Person. This relationship comes to us through Jesus' revelation that God is His Father.

### 1.3.1 Biblical Basis for the Preexistence of the Son of God

The Preexistence, Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection should always be taken together at once in order to grasp a complete revelation of the Son of God. The doctrine of Christ's personal preexistence as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is taken for granted by most Christians. For more than a century, however, biblical scholars and theologians have increasingly questioned this doctrine, and this has resulted in a God who differs radically from the biblical God. This has ruinous consequences for Christian faith and practice. The way preexistence of Christ is understood determines how one speaks about God and human Salvation. Preexistence of the Son of God is inseparable from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and other Christological truths. It is also indispensable to soteriology and pneumatology.<sup>83</sup> From this connection of doctrines, it is possible to appreciate why the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn takes, very serious and important, the question of the preexistence of the Son of God. At this stage of chapter one, on the biblical basis of preexistence, it suffices to point out some of the most prominent texts of Scripture that help us to conceive of the preexistence of the Son of God. Further texts and explanations will be encountered spread along the rest of the sections of this study, but especially, in chapter two on the biblical basis of the Hypostatic Union.

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82 Cf. D.A Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991, p. 135.

83 Cf. D. McCready, *He Came Down from Heaven: The Preexistence of Christ and the Christian Faith*, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2005.

Saint John the theologian states that, “In the beginning was the Word” (Jn 1:1). “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son... For God sent the Son into the world” (Jn 3:16-17); “and the Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14). Saint Paul says “God sent His own Son” (Rom 8:3); “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son” (Gal 4:4-5). That, “He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us” (Rom 8:31-32), “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Phil 2:10). Saint Paul, a believing Jew, who clearly knows “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Mk 12:29; Dt 6:4) calling for kneeling before Jesus clearly points to the preexistence of this Son of God. He is God worthy of worship. Paul must have had a very strong certitude indisputable that Jesus truly is God.<sup>84</sup> What is true in Paul and John is also found in the Synoptic Gospels. In the parable of the wicked tenants Mark writes, “He had still one other, a beloved Son; finally He sent Him to them” (Mk 12:6, 8). Here we see the coming into the world. In the parable, the Son stands in the succession of men sent by God, yet with two essential differences: He is not one of the servants, but the beloved Son; and He is the last one God sends. He is the beloved Son.<sup>85</sup>

From the Letter to the Hebrews is written, “But in these last days He has spoken to us by the Son...through whom also He created the ages” (Heb 1:1-2). The preexistence is here boldly proved by placing the Son above creation, or before creation. He himself is, in this sense, doing the Act of creating. It is through Him that all is created. That means He is not a creature but pre-existing before creation. The Messiah is present at the creation of the world. It is not the idea that a being pre-existing alongside God is sent to us, but the pre-existing, the One sent to us, was and is God (Jn1:1).<sup>86</sup> We can compare with Enoch to understand this better. Enoch is taken up to God (Gen 5:24) and obtains the throne next to God, above all angels; he becomes the vizier of God, he is a fully authorised representative, he is even called a “lesser Yahweh”. The rabbinic warning against confusing him with God is that much weightier. Rabbi Aquiba interprets the two thrones in Daniel as being one for God and the other for the Messiah (cf. Dn 7:9). Rabbi Jose the Galilean indignantly contradicts him: “Aquiba, how long will you continue to profane the Shekinah (dwelling place

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84 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 66-71.

85 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 68.

86 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 68-73.

of God)?”<sup>87</sup> All these texts in one way or another emphasize the Preexistence of the Son of God before creation and before the Incarnation.

### 1.3.2 Begotten of God Not From Nothing

The personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, keeping in the tradition of the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) and in line with Athanasius, clarifies the double moment against the Arian Heresy. The Son is begotten not created and the Son is from God not from nothingness. For Arius, the Son came from the Father, just as every creature comes from the Father. That He came from the Father’s will, for, God creates of His own free will. For Arius, begotten means created from nothing-*ex nihilo* like any other creature. But the correct understanding of begotten is that the Son was not begotten from nothing, but from God. He is the Word and the Wisdom, not a being that has been created or made, but the Father’s own Generation. According to Athanasius, the Council of Nicaea decided in favour of the expression “from the same substance (οὐσία) of the Father” in order to express the fact that the way in which creatures come from God is essentially different from the coming forth of the Son. It cannot be said of any creature that it comes from the substance of the Father; rather God creates it from nothingness in accordance with His will.<sup>88</sup> The expression, “from the Substance of the Father” is meant to reject the Arians’ equating of the begetting of the Son with creation. The Son is begotten not made. The Logos is God not on the side of creatures.<sup>89</sup>

Arius argues that, anything, anyone begotten or born has ultimately come into being, by human reckoning. God, however, has neither come into being nor been begotten. Thus Arius draws the conclusion that when Scripture says of the Son that He is begotten, is the only begotten Son, that He has also come into being and thus is not God. God cannot beget an equally eternal Son of the same nature as Himself, so Arius maintains, otherwise we would be asserting that within God there are two similar eternal principles. Arius is unable to imagine

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87 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 73.

88 Cf. Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaeni synodi* 19 (ed. Opitz, 2/ 1:15-16) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 84.

89 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 84.

the begetting of the eternal Son as a purely spiritual and immanent. Hence he states, “Before the Son was begotten or created...he did not exist, since he was not unbegotten.”<sup>90</sup> For Arius, God first became Father when He produced the Son. The name Father cannot refer to the substantial and eternal characteristic nature of God, just as the name Son does not reveal an eternal relationship but merely denotes the particular quality of a creature that God has adopted as Son. Arius radically distinguishes between God and the Word. He states “So long as the Son does not exist, God is not Father. Before, the Son was not, but he came into being through the will of the Father.”<sup>91</sup>

Calling God “Father” does not mean attributing something contingent to Him as is the case with man. God is the Father. He is the only One who is truly *the* Father. Christ is Son from all eternity, before all creation and that is why He is not created. According to Schönborn following Athanasius, If God had not always had His Wisdom and his Power as Scripture refers to the Word, then there would have been a time when He was without Wisdom and Power. The Father alone is the origin of everything-*Principium sine Principio*. Yet, in this origin as the source, is also the Son. Of His nature the Son is what the Origin is. For God is the Origin, and the Word that is in the beginning is God. Also following Gregory of Nyssa († 395), he uses the expression “the substance of the Father.”<sup>92</sup> The Only begotten Son of the Father is elucidated as meaning that the Son comes from the Substance-*ousia* of the Father in the sense of not being made and is not created.

#### 1.3.3 Eternally Generated not Emanated

The relationship between God and the Son is not that of the Platonic *one* to his first emanation.<sup>93</sup> The eternal Generation of the Son of God is never to be looked at as involuntary. It is not like some natural overflow. Emanation by no means befits the conception of this Generation. It is not a rapture. It is not a big bang.

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90 Arius, *Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia* in Athanasius, *Werke*, ed. Opitz, 3/ 1:5.

91 Athanasius, *The Blasphemies of Arius* 19-22, in Athanasius, *De Synodis* 15 (ed. Opitz, 2/ 1:243) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 85.

92 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 86.

93 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 102.

Within the limits of human language, it is possible to speak of the Unbegotten, and the Begotten, and the One who Proceeds as God the Word himself says. It is a Generation out of eternal Love not carnal love. This Generation is passionless. This is so because it is incorporeal. For if corporeal generation involves passion, Incorporeal Generation excludes passion. The Persons of the Trinity are God because they are not created, since what is created is not God. Taking a close scrutiny of creation, it is possible to come to a conclusion that, passion just like time, desire, imagination, thought, hope, pain, risk, failure, success, all find a place in the creature not in the Persons of the Trinity. The Generation of the Son excludes all conceptions like of marriages and times of pregnancy, and dangers of miscarriage, as if the Father could not have begotten at all if He had not begotten thus. Also the Generation of the Son excludes modes of generation of birds and beasts and fishes and amoeba. All these forms of generation do not apply to the Divine and Ineffable Generation. Moreover, the birth of the Son according to the flesh differs from all others, for nowhere and no one among human persons has an ever-Virgin Mother. Therefore, the eternal Generation differs even more from our generation since His Existence in eternity is not the same as ours.<sup>94</sup>

### 1.3.4 The Son's Divine Consubstantiality

The question here is how to distinguish each of the Divine Persons, through each one's proper Personal attributes without ceasing to see them in their Oneness? Arius used subordination of the Son under the Father as the distinction.<sup>95</sup> However, most important is to begin from the differentiation of the Persons as they are revealed to us. All the good that God bestows on us is the effect of grace, yet this work of the all-effecting grace is not anonymous. Scripture tells us that all is done by One and the same Spirit, who gifts each one personally, according to His will and pleasing (1 Cor 12:11). But the Spirit in turn is not the only ultimate source of these salvific gifts. Scripture leads to faith, according to which it is God the only-begotten Son who is the author and source of every good thing prompted

94 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Five Theological Orations*, Florida: Estate of Stephen Reynolds, 2011.

95 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 22.

in us by the Holy Spirit. For all things came to be through Him (Jn 1:3) and in Him all hold together (Col 1:17). Still, even the Son is not the ultimate source of God's gifts. For, Scripture teaches that all that exists is created, through the Son, out of nothing; but not as if the Son were the unoriginated origin of it all.<sup>96</sup>

From Cardinal Schönborn, who follows of Gregory of Nyssa, it is made clearly possible to see that the Son is not created. He is not originating out of nothing. All creatures are created out of nothing through the Son. Therefore the Son is not created. And therefore, the Son is not a creature since He is not from nothing. He would also be a creature if He were from nothing. He is true God from true God, begotten not made, as the Catholic Creed clearly states (cf. CCC, nn. 184-185, 195). This Origin is the power that exists by itself (*kyphestosa*) unbegotten and unoriginated, the power that is the causative cause of all that is. This unoriginated Origin is the Father. It is to Him that revelation leads to as the ultimate Source, the unoriginated Origin.<sup>97</sup> The ascent to this Origin is the path onto which revelation itself guides us. From the Spirit as the Giver of God's gift through the Son as the Mediator of these gifts, to the Father as the ultimate Origin. Taken from above: from the Father originates the Son and in whom the Holy Spirit is always and inseparably recognized. One cannot think of the Son without having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. The order of revelation corresponds to the order of existence. God's actions are revealed to us in a certain order, an order that originates from the Father, is mediated through the Son, and finds fulfilment in the Spirit. From this analysis we come to a conclusion that the Son is not created, likewise the Holy Spirit is not created. Thus the Three Divine Persons are of the same Substance (*ousia*).

What is it that defines the Divine Persons in their mutual relations? The Father, and the Son imply a certain relation, one in which the Person of the Father generates, or communicates the Divine essence to the Son. And because the Son is eternal as the Father is, this relation does not have a starting or stopping point, hence we talk of eternal Generation.<sup>98</sup> A Logos that is created can reveal only created things, and the chasm between God and the world remains unbridgeable. Neither the Logos nor the Spirit subordinated can reveal God completely and make known God's inner life. From the beginning the faith

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96 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 25.

97 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 25.

98 Cf. M. Y. Emersion, *He Descended to the Dead: An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday*, Downers Grove, USA: Inter Varsity Press, 2019, p. 14.

and the experience of the Church was that, the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on a believer, is the gift of God himself, and communion with Christ is communion with God. From this experience originates the Nicene *homoousios* because the Son and the Holy Spirit are consubstantial with the Father – and only under this reality – can they make known and reveal God. The salvific activity of the Son and the Holy Spirit reveals also this consubstantiality. Then, it is true that God acts in the way He is, and since His activity is Trinitarian, He is Trinity. It further follows that the specific activity of each Divine Person corresponds to each one’s specific existence as a Person. For this reason are we able to make the step from God’s revelation to his essence.<sup>99</sup>

The Son of God is Consubstantial with the Father. This is not a matter of statements about the work of Christ – the economy of Salvation, but is about the relation of the pre-existing Son to the pre-existing Father. It is about the Immanent Trinity. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. This is different from creatures. A creature’s participation in Divinity cannot make it true God. All these statements have as their content the singular connection, the unique relationship of the eternal Son with the eternal Father. The personalistic reality is that, Divine Persons are *Relational Persons*. They are ever from all eternity to all eternity true concrete relations, namely, Persons. Here we are able to see how the notion of Person helps us to appreciate the eternal Divine consubstantiality of the Son. At the same time preserving the same Single Divine nature. Just as the Nicene statement “from the substance of the Father” stresses the origin of the Son, so “Consubstantial” stresses the Divine nature of the Son. The term “Consubstantial” is directed against the idea of participation.<sup>100</sup> The Son does not participate in the Substance of the Father but is Consubstantial.

### 1.3.5 Eternal Perfect Image of the Invisible God

The statement about Christ as the perfect Image of the invisible God is revelatory in character. Every image has an archetype, and is always relational to the

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 26.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 87.



original. Therefore, when it said that Christ is the perfect Image, this reveals the Persons of the Holy Trinity simultaneously. Saint Paul says of Christ: “He is the Image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15), and Christ Himself says to Philip: “Whoever has seen Me, has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). In the Son we see the Father;<sup>101</sup> for “nobody has ever seen God; the Son, the only-begotten One, who is in the Father’s bosom, He has made Him known” (Jn 1:18).<sup>102</sup> The Son is therefore, in this understanding, the Image of the Father and so, in the Son we see the Father.<sup>103</sup> In the “Image” the distinction of the Persons of the Father and the Son is revealed. In the Holy Trinity, God has the most complete and perfect Image of Himself – the Son, the eternal Word. This is an intrinsic Divine Image.<sup>104</sup>

Even still, in His Incarnation, it is possible to see real God (cf. Jn 1:9). Christ being referred to as perfect Image of the Father is very fruitful in revealing the Persons of the Holy Trinity (cf. CCC, no. 1701). First, there is no image without an archetype, that is, there is no image without the principle. In this sense, Christ as the Image of the Father, reveals to us the Person of the Father. Secondly, this Christ is simultaneously revealed in the same statement as a distinct Person from the Father, distinct from the Principle. The Son is the Image and the imprint of the Hypostasis of the Father. In the Letter to the Hebrews it is written, “He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being” (Heb 1:3). Christ is the reflection of God’s glory and the imprint (*charakter*) of His Person (*hyposteos*). This scriptural passage introduces the concept of Hypostasis. This is very credible because it is used in the authority of Scripture. If a Hypostasis is the person’s individual properties, why then, does this text apply the concept of Hypostasis to the Father alone, and why does Scripture say that the Son is the imprint of (the Father’s) Hypostasis marked, not by His own properties, but by those of the Father? Does this passage not take away the separate existence of the Son? The concept of *charakter* employed in the Letter to the Hebrews, has the connotation of “image”, “engraving” and “imprint”. It can be said that the concept of “*charakter*” is likened to that of “form.” The Son inseparable from the Father whose “imprint” He is. If we contemplate the character of the Son, then we will in the end conceive of the

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101 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One*, 2007, p. xi.

102 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 3.

103 Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, March 4, 1979, no. 7.

104 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 4.

Hypostasis of the Father. The principle intention of the text in the Letter to the Hebrews, therefore aims at emphasizing the intimate and immediate unity between Father and Son. Consequently, He who has seen the Son, has also seen the Father. For this reason the Letter to the Hebrews states that the Son is the imprint of the Father's Hypostasis.

Now, if the term *charakter* means the Son, and the term *Hypostasis* means the Father, then we might ask whether this formulation is not denying the Son His own Hypostasis. However, on the contrary, the Son can be character or imprint of the Father only if He is a separate Hypostasis. "He is the Image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). How can the Person of the Son be the Image of the Person of the Father? The image is the same as the original (*prototypes*), even though it differs from it. The concept of "image" could not be sustained at all if it would not imply imprinted and unchangeable characteristics. He who contemplates the beauty of the image will also arrive at the knowledge of the original. And he who has seen, as it were, the form of the Son, in the Spirit, has also grasped the imprint of the Person of the Father. We see, after a fashion, the one in the other.<sup>105</sup>

The Son being the Image and the imprint of the Hypostasis of the Father means that the beauty of the Son is also the beauty of the Father. This one beauty of God is seen in the Father in the ungenerated Fatherhood, while in the Son this same one beauty is seen in the Sonship. The Image is the same as the Original, even though the Image differs from the Original. The Son therefore, is really the Image of the Father, even though He is different from Him in as far He is His own Hypostasis. Since He is an individual unique Hypostasis, He is able to be the imprint, the *charakter*, of the Father's Hypostasis.

We can conclude that Cardinal Schönborn, by interpreting Gregory of Nyssa, suggests that one of the uniqueness of the Father is to have the Son as a distinguished Person from the Father himself. The *charakter* of the Image would not be preserved if the Image were simply identical with the Original. Still, He is the same as the Original, that is, beauty from beauty, God from God, light from light, even though He differs, being begotten and not ungenerated. He is the imprint of the Father's Hypostasis. To conclude that the Father alone is a Hypostasis, then one would deny that the Son is truly the Image of the invisible God. It is precisely proper Hypostasis of the Son that makes us see the

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105 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 30.

Hypostasis of the Father.<sup>106</sup> He who knows the Son receives into his or her heart, together with the knowledge of the Son, the imprint of the Person of the Father. For everything that the Father is, is also seen in the Son, and everything that is of the Son is also proper to the Father, because the Son remains completely in the Father, and on His part completely reveals the Father. For this reason the Person (Hypostasis) of the Son is, as it were, form and countenance (*prosopon*) of the perfect cognition of the Father. The Person of the Father is seen in the form of the Son, while there yet remains the established properties of each to allow the distinction of the Persons. The contemplation of the countenance of the Son imprints in our heart the seal of the Person of the Father, because He is the Son of the Father. The Father becomes visible in Him. As the Son, the Word is the Image and countenance of the Father.<sup>107</sup>

From Cardinal Schönborn's interpretation of Hebrews (1:3), we are able to see the relation between us human persons and the Father through the Son. It is only through the Son that we are able to have access to the Person of the Father. This is the mediatory role of Christ for our Salvation. Without this Son we have no way to the Father. It makes us also understand what Christ means when He says to Thomas "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn 14:6). Christ is the only way to the Father. Person is not just an abstraction or idealistic terminology empty of meaning, but an acting or living reality. Hence the Person of the Son is conceived not as an idea of human mental gymnastics, or mental constructions and abstractions but the Son is truth, living and Active. He himself says "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6).

#### 1.3.6 Challenges Affecting the Correct Understanding of Image

The International Theological Commission, reflecting on the question of *imago Dei* – human persons created in the image of God, observes that rationalism, empiricism, and secular humanism affect the correct understanding of Image. Rationalism privileges the role of *idea* at the expense of image. Empiricism

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 30.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 31.

makes experience to be the ultimate criterion of truth without reference to the role of the image. Secular humanism makes it difficult to affirm the human orientation to the Divine.<sup>108</sup> Our study here is not discussing *imago Dei* but these same factors, if not checked, may affect or at least blur our conception about the eternal perfect Image. We are trying to understand in what sense is the eternal Son the perfect Image of the eternal Father. In what sense is the Incarnate Word still the perfect Image of God, even after the Incarnation?<sup>109</sup> To the three challenges we can add the challenge of a correct understanding of the concept of “possession.”

The Perfect Divine Image is one in whom nothing of the original is lacking. God has an Image of Himself who is altogether His equal in dignity and nature. This is the quite concrete meaning of Christ’s words: “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30), and “All that the Father has is mine” (Jn. 16:15).<sup>110</sup> The Son is really in the Father since the whole being of the Son is the Father’s own Substance, like the rays from a light, so that anyone who sees the Son is also seeing what is the Father’s own and understands that the existence of the Son, just as it is from the Father, is thus with the Father. The Father is also in the Son, because what comes from the Father and is His own is the Son, just as the sun is in its rays. Whoever looks upon the Son looks upon what is the Father’s own Substance, understands that the Father is in the Son. Since there is no gradation of the Divine Being, then the concept of image in the Trinity loses any appearance of inferiority, no subordination. The Son is the Image of the Father and is consubstantial with Him. There is no aspect of sharing. The Word does not have a share of God, but He is God. The Word is not similar to God but He is God. He is an Image that comes from God Himself and yet possesses everything that God Himself possesses. God Himself is a Perfect Image of Himself.<sup>111</sup>

Between the Father and the Son exists a complete community of Being. The Son is true God from true God. The Son of God is Divine. In Him there is not any gradation of the Divine. The Son is the image of the Father with a meaning that he is consubstantial with him. This concept of an image that is

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108 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, no. 3.

109 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 4.

110 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 101.

111 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 102.

the same being as the original excludes any aspect of sharing. The Word does not have a share of God. He is God. The Word is not similar to God through obedience and merit.<sup>112</sup> It is an identity without confusion between the Father and the Son. The Son has His origin from the Father without this origination implying that He is in any way lesser. The use of the concept of “possession” differs from everyday use. In normal conversation we use the concept to indicate ownership or control over something. However, in a personalistic sense the concept “possession” refers to the fact that the unique person is associated with specific nature as a fundament of operation or action. Due to the limitedness of human language, it is difficult to clearly articulate boldly the relation between persons and natures. Yet takes full account of the fact that persons and natures go together, but do not necessarily mean the same thing. Persons and natures always exist together. In relating these two realities, we need to draw upon terminology that ensures that inextricable linkage. The term “possession” is appropriate as long as it does not carry with it any sense of control or inherence.<sup>113</sup>

For Arius († 336 AD), when Saint Paul speaks of Christ as “the image of the invisible God” since God is absolutely one and only, nothing can resemble Him. The Son can be His Image only in the distortion of utter dissimilarity. The Trinity, therefore professed by the Christian Faith, is for Arius a triad, not composed of three equal dignities. The substance of the Father is of infinitely greater dignity than that of the Son. Arius speaks of three hypostases, yet understands this term in the classical sense of substance. Thus he declares about the Son that nothing in his own substance (hypostasis) is inherently of God; for he is not God’s equal, nor is he of the same nature. God cannot beget a Son who would be equally eternal and whose nature would be identical to his, lest one should proclaim the presence in God of two equally eternal principles and divide the Divine “monad” the way Sabellius did. Arius cannot conceive the begetting of the eternal Son to be purely spiritual and immanent generation. Before the Son was begotten or created he was not; for he was not unbegotten.<sup>114</sup> God became Father only when he generated the Son. The name of Father, therefore, cannot denote the essential and eternal nature of God, just as the name of Son does not proclaim an eternal relationship but merely the attribute of someone who was created and who was adopted by God as Son.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 102.

<sup>113</sup> C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, p. 147.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 5.

Here we can clearly see what is lacking in Arius' perception is the personalistic conception of the truth about Divine Persons. A personalistic conception would help Arius to maintain the Divinity and at the same time conceive the distinctiveness of Divine Persons. This is because persons are not substances and yet there is not such a person void of substance (nature). This personalistic fact is lacking in Arius' conception.

Cardinal Schönborn quotes Arius' mistake as follows,

Know, then, that there was the *monas*; but the *dyas* [twofold existence] was not until it came into being. As long as the Son is not, God is not Father. At first the Son was not but then began to exist by the will of the Father; he alone is the God who came into being, and each of the two is dissimilar one to the other... He, then, is known by countless names, such as spirit, power, wisdom, God's radiance, truth, image, Logos.<sup>115</sup>

Indeed, Arius seems to see the uniqueness of each of the Persons of the Trinity, that is, the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. But because he has no clear personalistic perception, he falls into the error of considering Persons as the same as Substances. Arius sees the attribute "image of God" as one of the gifts the Son has received from the Father when the latter created him out of the void. The Son can be God's image only within the limiting confines of his own created nature, so thinks Arius. The difficulty that accrues from Arius position is that, because the Son is unable to know the Father as to his intrinsic nature (for the Son is unable to know his own nature) he is even less able to make the Father visible, to be his perfect image. Therefore he cannot be the perfect revelation of the Father. He cannot reveal more than what he himself is as a created being. Arius' God remains captive in his impenetrable solitude. He is unable to confer his own life fully on the Son. He has no Divine Love. To safeguard God's transcendence, Arius fashions the one and supreme God into a prisoner of his own grandeur. He has no Divine Love.<sup>116</sup> He is unable to confer his own, since he has no Divine Love. It is important to remember what we said earlier about persons, namely, that the notion of person does not mean the protection of one's rights and

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 6-7.

individualism that sees all other persons as intruders.<sup>117</sup> The Arian God sees the other as an intruder.

It is the unique property of each of the Divine Persons to reveal each other, since each one's most unique property consists in revealing the other two. For the particular property of each Divine Person is nothing else but each one's particular way of relating to the others or else of proceeding from them. When in the order of revelation, they reveal their specific unique properties, their "ultimate Person", then this becomes the revelation also of the other Divine Persons, especially of the Father who is the unoriginated Origin of the other Divine Persons. Of course when we talk of "unoriginated origin" here we do not refer to creation, for the Divine Persons are not created. Faith teaches that the Son alone knows and reveals the Father (Mt 11:27; Jn 1:18), and that the Spirit alone confers the knowledge of Christ. "All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him" (Mt 11:27). It is, therefore, the specific property of the Son to reveal the Person of the Father, to be His Image.<sup>118</sup> From this personalistic perception of "Image of the Father" we come to recognize why only the Person of the Son is Incarnate. And why the other Divine Persons cannot, by their uniqueness, be incarnate. Because, it is the property of the Son alone in His uniqueness to reveal the Father. If the Incarnation is to serve its purpose, namely, the revealing of God, then it is proper only for the Son to Incarnate and not the other Divine Persons.

#### 1.4 THE ETERNAL WILL OF THE SON OF GOD

The Son in His Will, that is, the Son's Will is the eternal perfect Image of the Father's Will. The Son's Will is a Will that is not contrary to that of the Father. This is so, because, since the Son is begotten without being of a lesser nature

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117 Cf. K. Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II, *Sign of Contradiction*, New York: The Seabury Press 1979, p. 124. Here Pope John Paul II, explains that the dignity of the human person, has to be defended but that dignity must not be made to consist in unbridled exercise of one's own freedom. As an example is the freedom or "rights" sought after in favour of abortion is a freedom at the service of pleasure unrestrained by norms of any kind.

118 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 28-29.

than the Father, then His activity and His work is Divine. It is not possible to have in God any contradiction between the free Will of the Father and the eternal begetting of the Son. Likewise there is no contradiction to be found between the free Will of the Father and the free Will of the Son. There is unity and harmony of the Divine Will.<sup>119</sup> There is unity, or one Divine Will but each Divine Person is concretely in this One Divine Will, and is hence each Divine Person's Will concretely. It is very difficult for human persons in our state of sin to conceive the truth of this unity and harmony in diversity. But our inability to apprehend this truth at once does not necessarily mean that it is non-existent. In sinful condition(s) we are used to differentiating the wills among human persons by the criterion of contradiction. That is why having harmony and unity of free will while maintaining the difference among Divine Persons is hard for us because the criterion is not of contradiction but that of perfect free and total agreement (unity). The passage of Saint Paul, "all realities were created through Him" (Col 1:16) does not mean that the Son (Word) was the passive instrument of God in the creation of the world.<sup>120</sup>

The Son is the Image of God in accordance with the beauty of the Original. When one sees himself in a mirror, the image resembles in every way the original that produces the image in the mirror. The image in the mirror cannot move unless the movement comes from the original. And if this latter moves, then the movement of the mirror image follows necessarily. This mirror image should however, be understood with caution. It does not mean that the image is passive. In talking about the Divine Will we use this analogically. This mirror image should be understood as a combination of unity and distinction. It emphasises the complete unity of the Father and the Son. It must preserve the existence of two real Hypostases. This mirror image is only a step towards understanding Christ's title of "Image of God." The Son is the Image of the Father precisely in His will, a Will that is not contrary to that of the Father.<sup>121</sup> The image in the mirror cannot move unless the movement comes from the original. Original here does not mean to say that the Son is a replicate. For, Persons as such are unique and irreplaceable.<sup>122</sup> The Son's activity as the expression of His own Will demonstrates nothing other than the Will of the Father, yet not in the

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119 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God sent His Son*, p. 102.

120 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 41-44.

121 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God sent His Son*, p. 103.

122 Cf. C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, pp. 139-142.



way of a passive instrument, but rather in that the Son freely chooses and makes Himself an expression of the Will of the Father. There is no contradiction if the Father alone is the source and origin of the Divine Will, and yet the Son Himself and personally wills exactly the same.<sup>123</sup>

The mirror image used by Cardinal Schönborn following Gregory of Nyssa († 395), should really be used with utmost caution to avoid any implications of passivity in the Will of the eternal Son. We can emphasise that it should be understood only analogically, keeping in mind that analogies always leave out some truth of reality unexpressed. This mirror analogy is intended to point out the perfect harmony and unity that there is between the eternal free Will of the Father and the eternal free Will of the Son. Once again, the statement “the Father alone is the source and origin of the Divine Will” should not be understood in temporal terms but rather should be understood in terms of eternal outside the space of time. We use the terms “source” and “origin” because of our finite nature as creatures and limitedness of language influenced by the category of time. Otherwise, if not careful, one might conceive a kind of a subordination of the Will of the Son to the Will of the Father, which is not true.

What was for the Arians evidence of the subordination of the Son, namely his obedient activity, is the very reality of the mystery of the communion of wills of the Divine Persons. The Arians talk about obedience and mean coercion while precisely the obedience of the Son is an image of the Father, since the Son takes up into the whole of His existence as Son the entire Will of the Father so much so that it is His will. That is why the unity of Divine Will does not exclude the distinction of Persons but brings it fully to bear since the Son is, particularly in His own Will, in what is most himself, most a Person.<sup>124</sup> Out of Divine love, God sent His only begotten Son into the world (1Jn 4:9). God first loved us and gave up His Son for us. God acts out of love and freely gives out His Son. At the same time the Son is also active Subject. He is acting of His own free Will, when “He emptied Himself” (Phil 2:7),<sup>125</sup> not that He was emptied by another. Yes, He is sent by God the Father, yet He freely accepts to empty himself. He freely accepts to be sent. This helps us to appreciate the perfect unity of God

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123 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 103.

124 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 103-104; see also B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1998, pp. 244-245.

125 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 116.

without subordination of nature or Will. Everything is done in perfect union and in perfect freedom. This is the personalistic reality that Schönborn's personalistic Christology helps us to grasp. The limitation for the Jewish theology is that there is no Son of God as subject of the Kenosis. According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Kenosis of the Son is in reality the self-abasement of God the Father, who gives us everything, that of the Son, who gives himself and lets himself be given, and that of the Spirit, who lets himself be "poured out" and sent.<sup>126</sup>

Cardinal Schönborn makes an important and interesting observation that there is a limitation in Jewish theology. In *Jewish theology* but not *Old Testament Scripture* there is a limitation, namely that the Jewish theologians do not have the Son of God as Subject of the Kenosis.<sup>127</sup> According to the Church Fathers', especially Hilary of Poitiers, discussions on On the Holy Trinity, hold that Theophanies of the Old Testament are actually Christophanies.<sup>128</sup> For example, when the Lord visited Sarah; He who is the Angel of God is also God the Son of God. The visit to Abraham by three men, though Abraham sees three, he worships One and acknowledges Him as Lord. In the Judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah – He who came was God and Lord. In the wrestling with Jacob – He appeared as Man to Jacob but at the same time it was certainly God who wrestled, for Jacob wrestled with God, and Israel saw God. In the apparition to Moses, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses from the bush, but he states that "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"; God is to be glorified by the Angels of God, and He says "For I am the Lord, and there is no God beside Me". For He is God the Only-begotten, and the title 'Only-Begotten' excludes all partnership in that character.<sup>129</sup>

The Old Testament maintains that God the Father is invisible. They [Church Fathers] explore the Old Testament and they conclude that in the Old Testament self-abasement of God, we actually have Christophanies as prefiguration of the Incarnation. Before the Church Fathers, Saint Paul had earlier already stated and taught Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15). Now according to Cardinal Schönborn, the limitation for the *Jewish theology*, here we have to emphasize, "Jewish theology" and not "Old Testament Scripture",

126 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 116.

127 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 116.

128 Cf. Augustinian Patristic Institute, *Patrology*, Vol. IV, edited by Angelo Di Berardino, Christian Classics, Rome, 1986. pp. 39-43.

129 Cf. C. L. Beckwith, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2008, pp. 203-207.

the limitation is that there is no Son of God as Subject of the Kenosis in Jewish theology. The Kenosis of the Son is in reality the self-abasement of God the Father, who gives us everything, that of the Son, who gives himself and lets himself be given, and that of the Spirit, who lets himself be “poured out” and sent.<sup>130</sup> In this statement emphasis is that the Son is of the same Substance with the Father. He is God and not a creature. Christ is true God. But at the same time Christ is true Man. This we cannot say of the Father – we cannot say that the Person of the Father is true Man.

### 1.5 CONCLUSION

As we come to the conclusion of this chapter about “God The Son – Preexistent” we can say that, according to Cardinal Schönborn, it is very important to have a correct conception about Person and Nature if one is to talk about life in the Holy Trinity. This helps to maintain the Unity and the distinction of Persons. Christian Personalism with the right understanding of the notion of Person, helps our human reason and faith to appreciate more the truth of God the Son as truly the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father and yet remaining a Person free and not subordinated or submerged in the Father. This same Son God for us human persons and for our Salvation, came down from heaven and by the Holy Spirit became incarnate of the ever-Virgin Mary and became Man.<sup>131</sup> With this understanding in mind, it is now possible to proceed to the second chapter and look at the mystery of the Incarnate Divine Person.

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<sup>130</sup> C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 116.

<sup>131</sup> In this study, when writing true “Man” as the nature of Christ, upper case “M” is used not lowercase “m” to emphasise that the Son of God assumed a true, complete, perfect human nature lacking in nothing that is truly human. Upper case “M” is not used to compare the Divine with Human nature.



## CHAPTER TWO: THE INCARNATE – TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Pope John Paul II, “the central nucleus of the Christian faith is constituted by the twofold truth that Jesus Christ is Son of God and Son of Man (the Christological truth), and that God the Father brought about the Salvation of man in Him, His Son and Saviour of the world (the Soteriological truth).”<sup>1</sup> From this Christological truth expressed by the Pope and which has always been believed and expressed by the Church, it can be seen that Christ is One Subject subsisting in two natures. The Perfect One Person of Jesus Christ is Perfect Divinity and Perfect Humanity at once. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives a summary of the heresies to be avoided when talking about true God and true Man at once. Among these heresies include: Gnostic-Docetism, Arianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism (cf. CCC, nn. 464-469). This chapter is about the doctrine of One Divine Person of Christ who is truly God and truly Man at once. To be able to correctly perceive of this mystery, without mixture and without confusion, a special language is required. This language has been traditionally called the language of communication of idioms (*communicatio idiomatum*). Therefore, this chapter is arranged to start with a mention about this type of language, followed by the biblical basis of the Hypostatic Union, being and hypostasis, credibility of the Hypostatic Union, two wills of the Incarnate, further conceptions about the Incarnate, the Incarnate reveals man to man, and finally the “why?” of the Hypostatic Union-redemptive perspective.

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1 Cf. John Paul II, *Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, General Audience, 14 January 1987.

## 2.1 COMMUNICATIO IDIOMATUM

Jesus Christ is truly God (*vere Deus*) and at the same time truly Man (*vere Homo*).<sup>2</sup> This is the faith of Chalcedon. That Christ is One Person, the Son of God, subsisting in two natures, Divine and Human.<sup>3</sup> This Jesus Christ is the very One and the same to whom the Father makes everything subject (1 Cor 15:27). This understanding has foundation in the Pauline formula, “according to the Spirit” and “according to the flesh” (Rom 1:3-4) as a criterion for talking about Christ. Christ is far from being less human because He is Divine. He is fully human simply because He is the fullness of Divinity (Col 1:19) incarnated in the flesh, with a true Human body. We should avoid two wrong tracks: first is seeking the most thorough possible distinction between Divinity and Humanity. Secondly, is an approach toward a kind of mixture of the Divinity and Humanity.<sup>4</sup> These should be avoided because any schematic characterization distorts. We should also avoid an impression that the flesh (σάρξ) was a passive instrument (ὄργανον) of the Logos who acts alone. We should avoid a Christology that carries within it the danger of dividing Christ into two subjects and at the same time avoid that also which tends to unify the *Logos* and *Sarx* to such an extent that they seem to be mixed together. Each extreme position should be avoided. Right from the kerygmatic time, there was a constant understanding that Jesus Christ is true God and true Man. He is at once the One and the same. The One Son of God in true Humanity. To be able to express this mystery of Christ, special terminology had to be sought in Christological history that would be capable of testifying to both the unity of Christ, and the two distinct natures – God and Man in Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The Council of Nicaea (325 AD) stated quite clearly that Jesus Christ is not a creature but He is the Son of God and is thereby himself God.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the Council held the fact that He was born of the Virgin Mary and suffered under Pontius Pilate.<sup>7</sup> The language of the communication of idioms

2 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 131.

3 Cf. T. J. White, “Why Catholic Theology Needs Metaphysics: A Christological Perspective,” *Teologia w Polsce*, 13:2 (2019), p. 41.

4 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 132.

5 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 133.

6 Cf. L. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 19, 85-88.

7 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 133.

is essential to theology, to the life and practises of the Church because, we affirm properties of Divinity and Humanity present in the One Subject, the Word made flesh. These affirmations are made without a confusion of the two natures or their mutually distinct attributes. The affirmation that there is a Divine and Human nature in Christ is possible, only if we think coherently about the Divine nature analogically, and human nature, univocally. Otherwise it is not possible to receive understanding of the Divine nature of Christ into the human intellect intrinsically and the revelation would remain wholly alien to natural human thought, even under the presumption that such understanding originates in grace. Likewise, we can only think coherently of the eternal Son's unity with us in human nature if we can conceive of a common human nature present in all the individual human persons.<sup>8</sup> Communication of idioms helps us in speaking about the Incarnation of God. God the Son, the eternal Word of the Father, has become Human, One hypostatic Subject subsisting in two natures. Required is a coherent thinking about the Divine nature conscious that we cannot capture wholly into our finite human mind the Divine life. There is a need to transcend our ordinary way of viewing reality to a kind of "super sensual" perception about Divine nature. This transcendence to the supernatural realm is aided by supernatural Revelation (*Revelatio Dei*). Therefore, even when using this language of communication of idioms we must keep the supernatural Revelation and the analogical dimension at hand, otherwise we fall into a risk of a mistaken perception about the Person of Jesus Christ who after the Incarnation is at once true God and true Man forever as we shall see in Chapter Four, that, He remains true God and true Man forever, even, after the Ascension.

The idioms are attributed hypostatically only to One Person subject, that of the eternal Son and Word of the Father subsisting in two natures. When we say rightly that the Son of God personally suffered, died and was buried, in virtue of His Human nature we denote the Person of the Son who died a Human death. In the same way, we can rightly say the human being Jesus Christ rose from the dead. We attribute to Him the Divine characteristics that are proper to God alone and human characteristics that are proper to Man alone.<sup>9</sup>

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8 Cf. T. J. White, "Why Catholic Theology Needs Metaphysics: A Christological Perspective," *Teologia w Polsce*, 13:2 (2019), p. 41.

9 Cf. T. J. White, "Why Catholic Theology Needs Metaphysics: A Christological Perspective," *Teologia w Polsce*, 13:2 (2019), p. 41.

The unity of the Divine and Human in Christ is not in the sense of simple coexistence, which would lose sight of the infinite distance between uncreated and created freedom. The mystery is that “all that we know of Christ, not only as Divine but also as Human, can be ascribed to the Divine Person, otherwise we would have to introduce some kind of distinction within the Person of Christ.”<sup>10</sup> This attribution is known as the *communicatio idiomatum* – the designation of properties. It is possible to come across Mary’s motherhood included among the communication of idioms. For example that “the *communicatio idiomatum*... is expressed in such statements as ‘Mary is the Mother of God,’ ...the *communicatio idiomatum*, allows us to say that Mary is also the Mother of God, *Theotokos*.”<sup>11</sup> However, in light of the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, it seems more credible to suggest that Mary’s motherhood does fit properly in the scheme of *communicatio idiomatum* because Mary is simply the Mother of God, *Theotokos*. Conception and Birth is connected with the Person of Jesus Christ, hence the motherhood of Mary is rightly the mothering of the Person. The Blessed Virgin Mary conceived and gave birth to the Person of the Son of God. This Person conceived and born of the Virgin Mary is a Divine Person. He is God. Therefore, Mary is rightly called Mother of God at once, without going through the scheme of *communicatio idiomatum* (cf. CCC, no. 509).

The uniqueness of the Gospel according to Mark, and as analysed and presented by Cardinal Schönborn can help us to grasp the need and meaning of *communicatio idiomatum*. Mark presents Jesus Christ truly Man and truly God at once. Cardinal Schönborn “shows how no other Evangelist speaks in such a human way about Jesus as does Mark. Anger and sorrow, Jesus’ passionate emotional responses, are more explicitly mentioned in Mark than in the other Gospels. Though however strongly Mark portrays the Humanity of Jesus, it is this evangelist in particular who also strongly emphasises His Divinity. Believing in Jesus Christ, having faith in Him as God made Man, is the message put forth by Mark.”<sup>12</sup> This Marcan style of presenting Jesus Christ should be the way of perceiving the mystery of the Incarnate. In his own words

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10 C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, p. 12.

11 C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, p. 12.

12 C. J. Chaput (Archbishop of Denver) commenting on Cardinal Christoph Schönborn’s work, *Behold, God’s Son! Encountering Christ in the Gospel of Mark*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007, back cover commentary.



Cardinal Schönborn writes, “Mark is not afraid to give expression of Jesus’s feelings, his occasional ‘holy wrath’, his sorrow, the urgency he feels to the point of being impatient. At the same time, Jesus’ divinity breaks through quite clearly in Mark, time and gain. The one who seems so human to us is also indivisibly the Son of God”.<sup>13</sup> This should be the understanding when one perceives of the Person of the Son Incarnate. Jesus Christ is not to be conceived as Almighty God in human dress. He is not to be conceived as a first century sage preaching reverence of God and love of neighbour. He is not an angel-like being with semi-divine powers. He is not a simplistic, religiously deluded individual crushed by Roman authorities, but He is true God and true Man.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 BIBLICAL BASIS OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

The cognizance of Christ, who is One Subject subsisting in two natures has Biblical foundation. The Hypostatic Union is foretold and prepared for in the Old Testament. When it was made concrete, this opened the New Testament.

### 2.2.1 Old Testament

In the Old Testament it is possible to talk about an inclination of God to humble Himself and to come down to men. But at the same time God is whole the other. God’s providence goes so far that the Lord humbles Himself and carries out duties of a slave for Israel, His servant. For example “the Lord went before them by night in a pillar of fire to give them light” (Ex 13:21).<sup>15</sup> God is like a lord who carries the torch in front of his slave. In the Old Testament there is God’s growing closeness, the Shekinah, and there are God’s dwelling places. Even the Torah as a whole points to God sojourning with His people.

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13 C. Schönborn, *Behold, God’s Son!: Encountering Christ in the Gospel of Mark*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2007, p. 47.

14 Cf. M. Neuman, *Christology: True God, True Man*, Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002, p. x.

15 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 112.

### 2.2.1.1 Growing Closeness

In the Old Testament, God is a God who saves. He is not an “unmoved mover”, a distant and transcendent God who rests in Himself, not bothering about men. But there is a *growing closeness* between God and the people He calls His own. This *growing closeness* is a history of a progressive revelation and thereby, of a growing communion of God Himself with His People Israel. At the climax of the prophetic preaching, in Hosea and Deutero-Isaiah, this communion is spoken of in the metaphor of the bride, of the wedding.<sup>16</sup> The central point in the Old Testament is “God’s dwelling in the midst of Israel (1 Kgs 6:13), His presence among the Israelites (Hos 14:5-8), which means joy for him (Is 49:18; 62:5), and also, corresponding, that God suffers when Israel is unfaithful.”<sup>17</sup> The prophets also speak of God’s repentance, His anger (Hos 11:8), His sorrow, and His joy (Zeph 3:17). In all this Old Testament understanding of God, it is possible to see a great preparation and pointer to the possibility of the Incarnation. These descriptions will later, after the actual Incarnation, take on the name “*communicatio idiomatum*”, in expressions like, *God suffers*.

The prophets’ gaze is increasingly directed towards a time that is coming, in which God himself, in His Love, will recreate Israel. “I myself will” (Jer 50:19), God himself will pasture Israel. Himself will heal her wounds (Is 57:18), He will marry Israel and He will himself fight for Israel (Josh 11:6; 13:6; 1 Sam 17:46). In all this we see the actions of God – the Subject of these actions united with His People Israel. God is depicted acting or ready to act in union with human beings. At the same time, the God travelling with His people, dwelling in their midst is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not dwell in idols but is everywhere. Heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool (Is 66:1). In these two seemingly opposite positions we already see the Hypostatic Union of God and Man. He who dwells in the heavens also dwells among His people. In a word we see echoes of One Subject who is at the same time simultaneously true God and true Man. God dwelling among men is concretized at the Incarnation in the Person of Jesus Christ. God became Man (Jn1:14). In the Old Testament anthropomorphism in talking about God is not merely an imagery but the reality of God.<sup>18</sup>

16 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 110.

17 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 110-111.

18 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 111.

### 2.2.1.2 Shekinah

In the self-abasement, God comes down. He conforms himself to man, and He makes himself small. Rabbinic theology calls this kind of presence “indwelling”- *shekinah*. Shekinah always refers to God himself as He comes to man.<sup>19</sup> He himself is present among men, dwelling among His people Israel. Whenever God is doing something with His *shekinah*, He lets it descend or depart, this refers to God’s free action. He freely determines when and from where He humbles himself and brings himself to man. Here we are able to see the personalistic truth of free will and free action of God. In His Action, God is freely choosing to bring himself among men. God’s self-abasement is interpreted as descent.<sup>20</sup> He does not remain within His transcendence but graciously descends to men to save them. In that way God actually dwells among men. He goes “before them by night in a pillar of fire to give them light” (Ex 13:21).<sup>21</sup> If it were not written in Scripture it would be forbidden to say such things, that a father carries a torch before his children, a master before his slave. Shekinah is God’s indwelling, His glorious nearness. The Shekinah is both distinct from God and yet Himself. And it is emphasized that God’s dwelling in His people was the ultimate goal of the Divine plan of creation.<sup>22</sup>

The *shekinah* also has a temporal dimension. There is a coming and going of this indwelling of God. Couldn’t this be a prefiguration of the Incarnation connected to the Ascension? We could also ask, “Does the *shekinah* bring to an end the eschatological age?” or after the Incarnation, is there still another waiting? To these questions Cardinal Schönborn would answer that, “Not until the eschatological age will there be definitive presence of God, which is the goal of entire creation.”<sup>23</sup> There is a revelation history that has to be fully realised in Christ, who is the Alpha and Omega.<sup>24</sup>

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19 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 112.

20 Cf. K. H. Menke, *Inkarnation: Das Ende Aller Wege Gottes*, Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2021, pp. 34-36.

21 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 112.

22 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, pp. 18-19.

23 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 113.

24 For a detailed explanation of Salvation history, cf. G. O’ Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology: Toward a New Fundamental Theology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 56-231.

### 2.2.1.3 Places of God's Presence

There are also places of God's presence. For example, the burning bush (Ex 3),<sup>25</sup> Mount Sinai (Ex 19), the Tent of Meeting (Ex 33: 7-11), the Temple (1Kg 8:13; 2 Chr 7:12), the Tabernacle dwelling place of God (Ex 36-39).<sup>26</sup> The fundamental experience of deliverance from Egypt, which is an experience lived through and one that gave Israel the certainty and an ever-new hope that God is not afraid to come down into the midst of His people in order to lead them up to the Promised Land. It is written "the Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness" (Zeph 3:17). Jewish theology never ceases to be amazed at this descent of God. There continues to be new experiences of God's nearness, but also of His withdrawal and turning away from man, and so the hope is always rekindled so that, in the end, God will dwell among men permanently. A time will come when "My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezek 37:27; Rev 21:3). This final and definitive dwelling of God among men remains the great promise of the Old Testament. It is the faith of Christians that God has finally pitched His tent among men.<sup>27</sup> God's self-abasement (*descensus*) and man's exaltation (*ascensus*) converge in the Hypostatic Union-the Incarnation.<sup>28</sup>

Saint Basil the Great in his Christmas homily celebrates the fulfilment of the Old Testament promise in the physical Birth of Christ. That "God on earth, God among men, not in the fire and to the accompaniment of trumpets, not on the smoking mountain giving laws, but communicating in bodily form, gently and kindly, with those like himself. God in flesh, so that, related to us by his flesh, He can lead all mankind back to God."<sup>29</sup> In Exodus is found the theme of God's coming down in order to lead His people up to Him (cf. Ex 3:8). He is the one who descends to lead mankind back to God. He is the Son of God – the Father's eternal Word, the Word become flesh and has pitched His tent among us (Jn 1:14). The Son sent by God when the fullness of time had come (Gal 4:4), is himself, according to Christian belief, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.<sup>30</sup>

25 Cf. J. M. Gray, *The Concise Bible Commentary*, Albany: Ages Software, 1999, p. 82.

26 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 113.

27 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 19.

28 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 120; C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of Incarnation*, pp. 31-37.

29 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 21.

30 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 21.

### 2.2.1.4 The Torah

In the Torah as a whole, is found an outstanding expression of the self-abasement of God. God himself has allowed this. God has put himself in the Torah at men's disposal. God makes himself like the lowliest of men so that man can give assent to God in complete freedom and not be overwhelmed by the greatness of His majesty. Free will and freedom are very important personalistic realities. God respects them. He does not use his majesty to coerce human persons. He is the God of love. And love is possible only where there is freedom. For example, the intrinsic experience of love existing in persons is only possible when there is no coercion. God refrains from being an imposing figure and freely chooses a low stature so as to respect the free will and freedom of the human person. God respects man's freedom to such an extent that He addresses the freedom of man through self-abasement. God even dares to make Himself dependent upon man. That is why Joseph had to take the Child Jesus and His mother Mary to Egypt for the Child's safety. Was the Child Jesus – who is true God – not able to defend Himself? He humbles Himself and then relies on men to make room for Him on earth. That is why it is reported that “He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not” (Jn 1:11).<sup>31</sup> His disciples are not ready yet to humble themselves as the true God does, they want to use power to destroy, “When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, ‘Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’ But He turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village” (Lk 9:54-56). Now, more concretely, what does the New Testament tell us about the One eternal Son of God who became true Man and yet remains true God?

### 2.2.2 New Testament

In the New Testament, the reality of true God and true Man is presented first of all in the infancy narratives. The infancy narratives in Luke and Matthew indicate that the promised Child will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 113.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Lk 1:32-33). Here there is a coexistence of Divine birth and Human genealogy. The psalm “You are my Son, today I have begotten you” (Ps 2:7) is frequently applied to Christ. An extraordinary uniting of Divine and Human. In Isaiah it is prophesied that, to us a child is born, to us a Son is given and the government will be upon His shoulder (Is 9:6). The physical birth and the enthronement as a Divine birth are brought very close together. Even more explicit is, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His name Immanuel – God with us” (Is 7:10-17). It is no longer a biological son only, but rather a new coming king who will be called “God is with us.”<sup>32</sup> Attention should be drawn to the promise that God himself will come. God will descend in a definitive way. God will save His people and will himself be the peace (Mic 5:5). This is the meaning of His enthronement. In retrospect, the primitive Church, at the beginning of the New Testament, could recognize that all this finally converged in the birth of Jesus.<sup>33</sup> Obviously, this later was very difficult to express in precise human language and culminated in many Christological heresies, all struggling to express this truth.

The New Testament reports that the only eternally begotten Son of God is conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary (Lk 1:29-35; Mt 1:18, 24-25). From now on, He is true God and true Man forever and ever. Pope John Paul II insists that “Mary was a virgin before the birth of Jesus, and she remained a virgin in giving birth and after the birth. This is the truth presented by New Testament texts and was expressed both at the Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (553)...by the Lateran Council (649), the Mother of God...conceived her Son through the power of the Holy Spirit without human intervention (Gal 4:4-5).”<sup>34</sup> John Paul II gives a summary of the account of the concretization of the Hypostatic Union. This concretization marks the beginning of the New Testament. Therefore, in this sense, it can be broadly said that the whole of the New Testament is about the Incarnate Son of God. From the personalistic dimension, the actualization of the Incarnation takes place amidst a “network” of persons in actual relation. The Person of God the Father sends the Person of His Son. The Person of the Son is conceived by the power of the Person of the Holy Spirit. The message is delivered by the person

32 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 127.

33 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 128.

34 Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience-Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, 28 January, 1987.

of the Angel to the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary who is betrothed to the person of Joseph. The Virgin Mary conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit not knowing man. Here is a reality of a Divine action involving a concrete human being, the Virgin Mary. The Son who is conceived is called Holy, the Son of the Most High – the Son of God. The Son of God is becoming truly human from a concrete human being the “Virgin Mary”, who freely consents to this action, for she is a person not to be coerced. And God is respecting her freedom. At the same time God is not forced to choose her, God freely chooses her. The preexistence and subsequent Incarnation of Christ is affirmed as the Son who, though He was in the form of God took the form of a servant and as Man became obedient unto death. He was exalted in the Resurrection (Phil 2:6-11).<sup>35</sup> The descent of the Son of God is clearly shown by the New Testament. The fact that every knee will bend in adoration of Him suggests that the prophecies of Isaiah (Is 45:5-23), concerning the recognition of God by all nations is passing on to the recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as Lord who is both God and Man.<sup>36</sup> How should this “both God and Man” be understood and expressed? This Mystery of true God and true Man but one Person leads to the question of being and hypostasis.

### 2.3 BEING AND HYPOSTASIS

The concepts of οὐσία (being) and ὑπόστασις (hypostasis, person) in profane philosophy were used differently, οὐσία was used to describe what is, and ὑπόστασις what subsists. Both of them meant the essence, the *what* of a reality. The Cappadocians developed these terms by continuing to understand οὐσία to mean the *what*, but ὑπόστασις to mean the *who*, that is the individual subject who is called person. The *who* of Christ was called His Hypostasis, while the *what* was called οὐσία-*substantia, natura*.<sup>37</sup> Person is understood as subsistence,

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35 Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *A Christological Catechism; New Testament Answers*, New York: Paulist Press 1991, pp. 34, 82, 150.

36 Cf. T. J. White, “Why Catholic Theology Needs Metaphysics: A Christological Perspective,” *Teologia w Polsce*, 13:2 (2019), p. 43.

37 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 143.

as independence, as existing-from-oneself. “I” is more than my characteristics and also more than my self-awareness. Christ is true God and true Man. This statement does *not* mean that in Christ there are two persons – the Divine Person and the human person. If we conceive of a person as being exclusively the sum of the particular characteristics of an individual then in Christ there are not only two natures but also two persons. However, if we conceive of a person as a name that is fundamentally distinct from the characteristics the person has, then we come to a conclusion that Christ is two natures but not two persons. For example, in case one’s voice changes, this does not mean that the person has changed. The person as name is uniqueness and relatedness in one.<sup>38</sup>

Nestorius taught two πρόσωπα in Christ. Apollinarism makes no distinction between the one Hypostasis and the one *physis* (nature) of Christ. Cyril of Alexandria († 444) speaks of one Incarnate nature of the Logos God and he understands Christ as a concrete, individual existence. For Antiochenes Jesus’ being truly Human is safeguarded if the Human nature is clearly distinguished from the Divine. Alexandrians are more interested in Incarnation and so understand nature as a living process, and talk of one *physis* in a Monophysite way. Antiochenes look at the Divine and Human existence in Christ more as two conjointly given realities, hence as two natures in the metaphysical sense. Since they pay more attention to the nature of being, it is understandable that any talk of Christ having one nature is unacceptable for them.<sup>39</sup> God is the Godhead, but “we cannot say ‘God is Christ.’”<sup>40</sup> It is also not possible to say that God is the Son, or, God is the Holy Spirit, and yet this does not mean parts of God.<sup>41</sup> This is because of the reality of real distinction between nature and person, but which are never separated. It is important to remain conscious of the distinction between Nature (*physis*) and Hypostasis. Nature is the “*what*” while Hypostasis is the “*who*”. This distinction is indispensable as far as the conception of One Subject but two natures is concerned. Personalism further holds that the notion of person is not limited by the categories of the “general” and the “particular”, it is not limited too by external properties, but rather sees the person as the subject of these properties. The person is seen as an independent self, as subsistence.<sup>42</sup>

38 Cf. von Balthasar, TD 3: 203-20; Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, pp. 175-78.

39 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 147.

40 Cf. C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, p. 19.

41 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 240.

42 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 22.



At the same time, we are to desist from perceiving the notion of “person” as meaning an independent self in the “air” without substance. For always a person is bound with Substance at once but without confusion. With this perception of the binding between person and substance we come to conceive uniqueness and relatedness at once proper to each person.

In trying to understand the oneness or unity of Person it is said, “the unity of the person is neither an empty one nor one of finite and exclusive parts nor even that of an organic whole and its mutually dependent parts. It [unity of person] transcends any unity of parts and is one of *self-expression*, *self-enactment* and *self-differentiation*.”<sup>43</sup> In this understanding one is enabled to see that the incarnation of the Son of God does not diminish or undermine His Divinity and yet does not make His true Humanity less human. From this distinction we come to appreciate that the Son of God became Man but not that He assumed a human person. This distinction is further very important to conceive of the universality of Redemption and Salvation accomplished for human persons by Christ, because if the eternal Son were to assume a particular human person, “called Jesus,” and not human nature, then his Salvation would in way remain fixed and limited only that particular human person, “Jesus” that the Son of God could have assumed. Thanks to the fact that He became Man and did not assume the human person “called Jesus”, His Redemption is open and Universal to all human persons. Humanity, assumed by the Word, is not limited to one human person. Another nature, not another person, has been assumed.<sup>44</sup> Hence it is open for every human being to partake of “ontological” adoption.

### 2.4 CREDIBILITY OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

According to the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, the Hypostatic Union is a reality and not an idea. It is concrete. Some arguments have been advanced rejecting the reality and historicity of the Incarnation. That Jesus

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43 Cf. R.T. Allen, “The Unity of the Person”, *The Pluralist*, 4:1(2009), pp. 77-78.

44 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 237-238.

is the Incarnate Son of God should not be taken literally but rather should be understood symbolically, metaphorically and in a mythical sense. That Jesus was and is, God the Son incarnate is not literally true, since it has no literal meaning, but it is an application to the man Jesus of a mythical concept. That it is a myth which only offers a way of declaring his significance to the world.<sup>45</sup> Humanity cannot without ceasing to be humanity, be the expression, embodiment, contingent form of God. It is impossible for God to become man, because a God who did so would not be a genuine man. The Incarnation of God-God becoming a creature contradicts God's being as God. That the notion of Incarnation of God is just absurd, like a square circle. Therefore, what Christians say about "the Son of God coming down" can only be understood as a myth in the sense of something that is not literally true.<sup>46</sup>

In response Cardinal Schönborn points out that it is being mistaken to reduce the historical reality of the events of Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection to a merely symbolic significance as Gnosticism did. Rather it must be said that the myth has become reality. The distinction between myth and Christian history is not simply that of between true and false. The relationship between myth and Christian history is the difference between a real event on one hand and blurred dreams and intimations of this same event on the other hand. The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact. The Old myth of the Dying God, without ceasing to be myth, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history. It happens at a particular date, in a particular place, followed by definable historical consequences. Jesus Christ, a historical Person is crucified under Pontius Pilate.<sup>47</sup> In God's Incarnation, the power of symbolism of images such as "came down from heaven", "born of the Virgin", "became Man," rests precisely in the fact that here symbol and reality, myth and life, coincide (Is 64:1-4).<sup>48</sup> Keeping in mind that faith and reason have to be taken together, some further arguments for credibility of the Hypostatic Union can be advanced, to enable the human person's mind to have a more profound appreciation of the mystery of the Hypostatic Union. First, is the Virginal Conception; second, is Love; and thirdly, is no biological earthly father.

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45 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 13.

46 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, pp. 15-16.

47 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 14.

48 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, pp. 15-18.

### 2.4.1 The Virginal Conception and Birth

The Virginal Conception and Birth is an important help to the human mind, in order to appreciate the truth of the Divine nature of the Son. The Blessed Virgin Mary is a virgin before conceiving, a virgin during birth, and a virgin after birth. She remains ever-virgin. This is a witness to the reality that the One born of her is truly Divine (cf. CCC, nn. 484-512; Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 57).<sup>49</sup> Conception and birth is the conception and the birth of a concrete Person, not the conception and birth of a Nature alone without the person. Saint Luke, writes that, “you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High” (Lk 1:31-32; cf. CCC, nn. 437, 486; Gal 4:4). The conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit could have been known in two ways. Matthew and Luke mention the Virgin Birth and give details in Christological prologues (Lk 1-2; Mt 1-2).<sup>50</sup> Studies on the question of the Virgin Birth highlight the major contemporary controversies which include: the consideration of the Virgin Birth as a theological opinion which is not a historical fact (*theologoumenon*); the mythological theory; controversy rising from empirical sciences which reject the truth of mystery; denial of transcendence and supernatural realm by modern man. He highlights that the Church Magisterium has constantly held the historical, physical and non-mythological character of the Virgin Birth.<sup>51</sup> The Magisterium strongly emphasises that Mary’s virginity is a Christological truth.<sup>52</sup> From the words spoken by the woman of the crowd who called to Jesus: “Blessed is the womb that bore you” (Lk 11:27), we get the reality of Mary’s Motherhood. It clearly professes and expresses the real birth, and, hence, the real humanity of Christ.<sup>53</sup> God has actually become Man.

Cardinal Schönborn notes that, in the Gospel according to Matthew, it is reported so soberly that Mary is engaged to Joseph (Mt 1:18-24). According

49 Cf. T. Perna, *Faith Basics: Understanding Catholic Teaching on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2015.

50 Cf. G. O’Collins, *The Tripersonal God; Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*, Landon: Geoffrey Chapman 1999, pp. 36-37.

51 Saint Luke emphasises that the Incarnation is a historical fact (Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, p. 25-26).

52 Cf. W. F. E. Mahoney, *The Virgin Birth of Christ: Contemporary Controversies Surrounding the Mystery*, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012.

53 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 41.

to Jewish law, the two engaged people are already regarded as husband and wife, even though they have not yet lived together. Before the wedding, Joseph notices that Mary is pregnant. The Child is not from him. At that time the punishment for adultery is death by stoning. In the midst of gnawing questions an angel – a messenger of God – appears to Joseph, and tells him that the Child Mary is expecting is not from another man, but from God. Joseph accepts and trusts the humanly unacceptable. He accepts that this Child is from God. And trusts Mary. The question of relation is real, Joseph receives a message from the angel which he personally accepts. At the same time he is related to Mary the one he has betrothed and this relation has impact and changes his life. The One to whom Mary gives birth in Bethlehem's stall really is true God and true man, whom the angel calls "Emmanuel", "God with us". Joseph is the first to believe in this. He is the first to venture the leap in opening himself up to the reality of God himself coming in this Child. And he agrees to take in Mary and the child she has conceived and to be a father to Him. The name that he is to give this Child is "Jesus" which means God saves.<sup>54</sup> The Apostolic tradition gives a wealth of testimony all through the second century that professes belief in the Virgin Birth. They were convinced of the reality of the Virgin Birth. In the early Roman Creed, every candidate for baptism had to recite, the words *natus est de Spiritu Sancto et Maria Virgine* – was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Along with the belief in Jesus Christ's Death and Resurrection, there is belief in Virgin Birth as one of the essential truths of the Christian faith.<sup>55</sup>

Ignatius of Antioch († c. 117) counts the virginity of Mary among the three mysteries of renown, that is, the virginity of Mary, her offspring, and the death of the Lord.<sup>56</sup> For Ignatius, our Lord is truly of the seed of David according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin, truly under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch nailed to the Cross for us in His flesh. Ignatius presents that belief in the Virginal Conception did not need to be asserted but already formed part of the apostolic foundation of the creed. Jesus' being born of Mary is very essential as a clear indicator that Jesus was truly Man. The denial of the Virgin Birth was understood as equivalent to the denial of the reality of Incarnation. The Virgin Birth is not invented, because one does

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54 C. Schönborn, *My Jesus; Encountering Christ in the Gospel*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005, pp. 30-32.

55 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 121-122.

56 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 122.

not invent something that provokes only derision and misunderstanding all around. The fact that there was a solid tradition in the primitive Church that Jesus' conception was the work of the Holy Spirit is the starting point for all attempts to understand, to interpret, and finally to proclaim this reality that was so difficult to comprehend and indeed so offensive. Only this reflection unlocked the relationship to Old Testament promises and made clear the inner connection between Jesus' life and His conception by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>57</sup> The Virgin Birth is too unexpected, too strange, to have been constructed as a "*theologoumenon*." Instead, the Virgin Birth is a truth that had happened because in that way it made the most sense. No one could derive and construct that fact.<sup>58</sup> Cardinal Schönborn helps us to appreciate the fact of the Virgin Birth, as a help given to the human reason, so as to understand that Jesus Christ is the true Son of God. Here, it can be seen that the role of the truth of Mary's perpetual Virginité is given by God to help human reason to accept the Son born of Mary to be the true and same Son of God. In other words, the Virginal Conception and Birth is revealing that the One born is not only Man, but true God and true Man. This, further, in a way, helps human reason to also appreciate the fact of Baptism as a supernatural act, makes us adopted sons and daughters of God.

According to Cardinal Schönborn, at an early date the Church Fathers, such as Justin, Hippolytus, Irenaeus, Tertullian and many textual witnesses, read the prologue of John, "He who was born, not of blood but of God" and interpreted this text as witnessing to the conception of Jesus as the act of the Holy Spirit. This confirms the profound consciousness of the primitive Church that a special kind of relationship existed between a Christian's experience of the Holy Spirit as rebirth through Baptism and the beginning of Jesus' life on earth brought about by the Holy Spirit. The reality of Jesus' conception brought about by God's Spirit thus became the pledge that being, "born of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5) really did grant a new life.<sup>59</sup> Through her faith and through her undivided gift of herself to God's will, Mary is the prototype of this new life.<sup>60</sup> Through her faith she shares in the mystery of the Incarnation (cf. CCC, no. 56). For Schönborn, Mary is not a surrogate mother who simply

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57 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 124.

58 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 124-125.

59 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 126.

60 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 26.

makes her body available physically. Mary is a real and true Mother of Jesus. The conception of Jesus makes a demand upon her as a whole integral person and requires her willing acceptance in faith. The reality of free will of Mary, which is a personalistic notion, plays a very fundamental role in as far as Mary becoming the Mother of God is concerned. Objectively, Mary could only know that she had conceived Jesus without the help of man. The Christians' holding of the Virgin Birth was not a blind apologetic for some irrational oddity rather it was at one with the reality of God's Incarnation and the reality of the newness of this human life.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.4.2 Love is the Personalistic Argument of the Hypostatic Union

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, with whom Cardinal Schönborn co-edited the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, has fully developed the explanation showing Love is the personalistic argument for the Hypostatic Union. The Person of Jesus Christ's *love for other* proves that He is true God and true Man. Love is a very deep notion regarding the perception of person. Love is part and partial of what it means to be a person. From this notion of love we are able to see how the Son is true God because this Love is a love open to other persons. From this openness *for others* – of the Son – we are able to perceive how the Son is true Man. A Christian's Yes to Jesus affirms that He is the Christ. Christ here means the One in whom Person and Act are identical. The "I" of Jesus Christ is an "I" that is complete openness, all Word, all Son. Word and Son convey the dynamic existence that is pure *actualitas*.<sup>62</sup> Word comes from someone and is therefore to be heard and is therefore meant *for others*. Word is from and for. Christian faith is centered on a person, an "I", one who is Word and Son, that is, total openness. This "I" as pure openness is wholly from the Father. His whole existence is Son-*actualitas*. His existence not only *has* but *is* love. Therefore, He is identical with God, who alone is Love. Therefore, Jesus Christ the Only Son of God is Himself God. The Word was with God and the Word is God (cf. Jn 1:1).<sup>63</sup>

61 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 126.

62 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 210.

63 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 210-211.

But at the same time, He is all He does. He is all He says. He is all for others. In such self-abandonment He is no longer completely with Himself. For He is the one who in losing Himself has found Himself (Mk 8:35). He becomes therefore, most Human. He has the fullness of Humanity. In this way we see that Jesus Christ is truly Human.<sup>64</sup> From these two lines of understanding we come to an observation that we cannot perceive of the Son of God as true God alone and at the same time we are not allowed to perceive of Him as true Man alone. He is properly as such real God and real Man at once. This way of understanding about the Son of God is consonant and loyal to the original confession by the early Church as the Christ. In this way we see that the Christship of Jesus presupposes the Sonship and that the Sonship is inseparable from the Godship only if thus is understood does He remain true God and true Man. The truth of the Bible empower us to conceive the Sonship of Jesus in this way. Jesus Christ who is true God and true Man, is not so because of being half-Divine and half-human. He is fully God and fully Human.

In the Bible a distinction must be made between the designation “Son of God” and the designation “the Son”.<sup>65</sup> The designation “Son of God” has its foundation in Psalm 2:7 “I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’”<sup>66</sup> This dictum belongs in the context of the enthronement of the kings of Israel, coming from ancient oriental coronation rites in which the king was declared the son begotten of God. The king was regarded as a being mythically begotten by God. In Babylon, the same ritual was largely demythologized and the idea that the king was the son of God was already conceived as the conferment of a legal sanction. When the formula was taken over by the Davidic court, the mythological sense was certainly set aside completely. Physical begetting of the king by the Godhead is replaced by the notion that the king becomes the son here and now. The king is son not because he has been begotten by God, but because he has been chosen by God. The reference is not to a physical event but to the power of the Divine Will that creates new being. In this way the Chosen People, Israel, was earlier already conceived as Yahweh’s firstborn, beloved son (Ex 4:22). In the consciousness of Israel there was a further transformation of this election (being chosen) theology into a theology of hope in the king to come. The coronation oracle became

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64 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 211.

65 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 216.

66 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 207.

more and more a reiteration of the promise that one day that king would come of whom it could rightly be said: “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.”<sup>67</sup>

The first Christians applied this Psalm to Jesus in the framework of the belief in His Resurrection. The Resurrection of Jesus was conceived by the first Christians as the moment at which the happenings of this Psalm had become a factual reality. They know that Israel’s royal hope is fulfilled in Him who died on the cross and rose again from the dead. There is a conviction that Him who died on the Cross and who renounced all earthly power, Himself went to His Death for others. In Him the meaning of human existence is not in power and self-assertion but in existing utterly for others. To Him and to Him alone God has said “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” The Son of God designation in this way and in this form is the explanation of the Cross and Resurrection by Psalm 2. It has nothing to do with the Hellenistic idea of the divine man and is not to be explained in any way from it. It is now the second stage in the demythologization of the oriental concept of kingship, an idea already partly demythologized in the Old Testament.<sup>68</sup> Jesus Christ is the only true begotten Son of God. Jesus Christ did not jealously cling to equality with God that is proper to Him but accepted the humble position of servant, right to the point of complete self-emptying (Phil 2:5-11). He emptied Himself and surrendering existence for Himself entered into the pure movement of the *for*. The willing subject is the true ruler who humbled Himself to utter abasement of emptying Himself of His own being is for that very reason the ruler of the world. He who does not cling to Himself but is pure relatedness coincides with the absolute and thus becomes Lord. The Lord before whom the universe bows is the slaughtered lamb, the symbol of existence that is pure act, pure *for*.<sup>69</sup>

From this personalistic love as clearly seen in Christ, a Love that enables Him to become truly fully Man while remaining truly fully God; it can be concluded that following this personalistic understanding of love *for*, it is possible to have subjectivity and objectivity at once without lessening any of the two. Uniqueness and relatedness at once is possible without making any of the two less. As clearly demonstrated by Christ, a person can and indeed should remain unique and at the same time ontologically be in relation with other persons without lessening any of the two sides. This helps to bridge the gap between

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67 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 218.

68 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 219-220.

69 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 221.



individualism and collectivism (communism) without creating an amorphous intermediate mixture. Without giving rise to a relativistic position in between individualism and communism. Without generating a new situation between subjectivity and objectivity. But instead being able to keep both pure and fully subjectivity and objectivity united in one subject we call the person. Just as the Incarnation does not give rise to an intermediate mixture, no confusion and no separation, it is also possible to perfectly have a unity between uniqueness and relatedness at once without separation and without confusion.<sup>70</sup> Of course, just as in the Incarnation there is need for supernatural grace to realize this. There is need for the Holy Spirit who makes this unity among human persons possible. This understanding helps us to realize how we are always to be related as human persons but not independent (as having nothing to do with Divine persons – God) or alien to the Divine Persons. Remaining only at the natural level with no need of supernatural intervention, it will never be possible to realize a true unity of subjectivity and objectivity, for always one wants to override the other.

### 2.4.3 No Biological Earthly Father

The eternal Son of God has no earthly biological father but has a truly biological Mother, her name is the Virgin Mary. In spite of the Incarnation, the Person of Jesus Christ remains truly the Son of God. We are able to see this from the private story of Joseph and Mary. Joseph is said to have been a just and honest upright man (Mt 1:19). There was a secret between Joseph and Mary. While she was still betrothed, she had become pregnant – but not by him (Lk 2:41-52). He had simply been thinking about separating from her quite quietly, without exposing her, until he was let into the secret, namely: the Father of this Child is not another man. It is God who has made this gift. He believed, and trusted her, and gave God credit for something that is humanly incomprehensible.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Saint Padre Pio in his meditation on the agony of Jesus shows that, the human nature of Christ suffers a truly human suffering without any interference or being overridden by the Divine. Padre Pio writes, “He deprived his ... humanity of the strength bestowed on it by His Divine Person, submitting it to indefinable sadness, extreme weakness, to dejection and abandonment, to mortal anguish” (Cf. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Saint, *The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane*, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1981, p. 12).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 38.

For Cardinal Schönborn the experience of Joseph and his betrothed wife Mary helps us to accept the reality that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. He is not conceived from Joseph and not from another man. From the story of Joseph's dealing with Mary and the revelation to Joseph we come to a conclusion that Jesus has no biological earthly Father. Having no biological father and yet having a biological Mother points to the reality of true God and true Man.

## 2.5 WILLS OF THE ONE PERSON INCARNATE

Since the Son, He Himself is God, eternal and in union with God, the Son can freely become man and freely communicate the Divine life.<sup>72</sup> This leads to the question of the two wills of the Person of Christ, that is the Divine will, and the Human will since He is truly God and truly Man.

### 2.5.1 Divine Will of the Incarnate

The investigation here is whether after the Incarnation, the Divine Will still maintains its integrity, or whether it becomes now subordinated, or corrupted? The response to this is that the Hypostatic Union does not bring about a mutation in the Divinity of Christ. He remains fully and truly Divine. The Union does not lessen in any way the Divinity since there is no mixture, no confusion and yet no separation of the Divine from Human after the Incarnation. This means, the Incarnate's Divine Will is still the same eternal Will of the One Son. This was discussed in chapter one (cf. chapter one section, 1.4). Here we add some further explanation in relation to Salvation history. In chapter one, the discussion was mainly centred on the Immanent Trinity. Now here, the Centre is on the Economic Trinity, that is, on what happens to the Divine Will as a result of the Incarnation.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 78.

<sup>73</sup> There is a distinction between theology (*theologia*) and economy (*oikonomia*). *Theologia* refers to the mystery of God's inmost life within the Blessed Trinity while *oikonomia* refers to all

The Son's being God, that is, His Divinity, consists in not willing anything different from the Father's Will. We are to avoid the perception that, if the Son's Act of Saving consists in doing the Father's Will, then the Son would by necessity be obedient to the Father. For, this would mean subordination of the Son. We need to have a correct notion of obedience. The obedience of the Son extends only to the Salvation history of His Incarnation and to His obedience unto death on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:18).<sup>74</sup> In this we find the obedience of the Son, because prior there was the disobedience of man. In contrast, regarding the work of creation we can no longer say that the Son accomplished it in obedience as Eunomius holds, otherwise, the Scripture could not have said that the Son "upholds the universe by His word of power" (Heb 1:3). Even less can we speak of the Son's obedience when considering the Inner Life of the Trinity. Within the perfect unity of Essence and Will of the Trinity there does not exist command and obedience, there exists only the perfect harmony of Wills of the Divine Persons which can be rightly seen as a Common Will by those persons outside of the eternal internal Life of the Trinity.<sup>75</sup>

The text, "Through Him all things [realities] were made" (Col 1:16) does not mean that the Son is an instrument of the Father. For Eunomius, the Son is generated in such a way that His nature is destined to do nothing else but obedience. However, if this were to be the case, then the Son would be inferior even to man, He would be a mere tool (*Organon*), able to work only passively and within the narrow confines of His instrumental purpose. Man at least has a free soul, which according to its independence and proper ability determines its own choices. He who is by nature subject to necessity follows the requirements

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the works by which God reveals himself and communicates His life. Through the *oikonomia* the *theologia* is revealed; but conversely, the *theologia* illuminates the whole *oikonomia*. God's works reveal who He is. The mystery of His inmost being enlightens our understanding of His works. So it is, analogously, among human persons. A person discloses himself or herself in his or her actions, and the better we know a person, the better we understand his or her actions (cf. CCC, no. 236). For further details about the Immanent Trinity and Economic Trinity, see also, P. Coda, *From the Trinity: The Coming of God in Revelation and Theology*, Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020, p. 75.

74 Salvation history refers to the story of God's self-disclosure. Right from creation to all God's saving action in history (Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, pp. 8-10). The Catholic Church teaches that, "the whole history of Salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men and reconciles and unites to himself those who turn away from sin" (CCC, no. 234).

75 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 41.

of obedience, and even should he try to escape, his nature would not permit it. To reduce the Son to a mere instrumental power would amount to denying Him the freedom that distinguishes even man. It is not possible to speak of obedience without including freedom.<sup>76</sup> The Father working through Him can only mean: the inseparable unity of both in one identical will; in a will that proceeds from the Father. The Father works through the Son, and for this reason the Father is known through the Son. The mystery of the Trinity goes beyond the limits of our own limited conceptual frame work. We can approach it only gropingly, in darkness enlightened by our Faith. God as Father and complete equality of essence means: a perfect union with an order but without domination; a union in which each exists totally *from the other and for the other*, and yet remains absolutely free.<sup>77</sup> Human persons behold in proper and logical fashion the reflection of God's glory through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; through the Christ (Heb 1:3), then human persons are lifted up to the glory of the Father to whom belong both the imprint (the Son) and the printing block (the Holy Spirit).<sup>78</sup>

In like manner, it can be concluded that, even after the Incarnation, Christ's Divine Will is still free and acting Divinely. Otherwise, it would still remain ever impossible for human persons to reach God through Christ, who would now have become corrupted-less Divine or deprived of Divine Will. He would not be a true mediator between God and Man.<sup>79</sup> To be a true mediator between true God and true humanity necessitates that the Divine Will of the Incarnate, maintains its integrity even after the incarnation, without confusion, without change, without mixture, without division, and without separation with the Human will of the Son of God.

### 2.5.2 The Two Wills and Acts

The Son of God, now incarnate, has two truly acting wills, Divine and Human, which are not in opposition. The third Council of Constantinople (680/681)

76 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 42.

77 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 43.

78 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 44.

79 Cf. T. J. White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015, p. 287; Also See, E. L. Mascall, *Whatever Happened to the Human Mind?: Essays in Christian Orthodoxy*, London: SPCK Publishers, 1980, p. 28.

teaches two wills and two natural modes of activity, without division, without change, without separation, without confusion. These two wills are not opposed to each other. But His Human will is obedient; it does not oppose or resist the Divine Will. It freely submits to His Divine will.<sup>80</sup> It is not only when Jesus' Human will is relinquished that God's will is able to act and determine everything. In His decisive point of the mission of Jesus, in the sacrifice of His life, it is His free Human will that reveals His oneness with the Father. Here it is possible to see the personalistic reality in that the free Human will of Jesus Christ is intrinsic to His Person in as far as it reveals His relation and oneness with the Father.

Maximus the Confessor put it: "Thus the Lord carried out in deed and truth – through his suffering as man, in an obedience that never overstepped the line, what he himself had predetermined, as God, to be carried out."<sup>81</sup> Christ's words "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt 26:39) had been used by the Monothelites as a biblical basis for denying the Human will in Jesus. Julian of Halicarnassus († c. 528) and Severus of Antioch (465-538), "believed in the single dominating divine *energeia* of Christ. He developed the initial Severan concept of the single *energeia* and single property into an original teaching about Christ's incorrupt body."<sup>82</sup> But Maximus showed that these words are in fact the expression of Jesus' Human will. Maximus contemplates the ultimate act of the Human will of Christ, and this act is "the ultimate assent." It is complete conformity with the Divine will.<sup>83</sup>

### 2.5.3 Freedom of the Human Will of the One Person of Christ

Christ's Human will is free just like any other human will. And this freedom is at the heart of the redemptive Act. The act of Redemption rests, not in relinquishing His Human will, but in His wishing, willing and accepting, even

80 Cf. The Sixth Ecumenical Council-Third Council of Constantinople (680/681): D.H 556.

81 Cf. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigourum Liber* 10:41 as quoted by Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 198-199.

82 C. Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008, pp. 28-29.

83 Cf. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigourum Liber* 10:41 as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 198-199.

as Man, to fulfil the Fathers' Will.<sup>84</sup> The Council of Constantinople III (681) teaches that, Christ's human will submits to His Divine will.<sup>85</sup> Following this Council, the Catholic Church teaches that, "Christ possesses two wills and two natural operations, Divine and Human. They are not opposed to each other, but cooperate in such a way that the Word made flesh willed humanly in obedience to His Father all that He had decided divinely with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our Salvation" (CCC, no. 475). This submission does *not* mean passive determination on the side of the Human will by the almighty Divine will which would tantamount to coercion. His free Human will, freely decided to submit to His Divine will. The true relationship between the Divine and Human will is that, the self-determination of the Human will is not abolished, even if this Human will entirely freely submits to the Divine will.

The Divine will perfectly respects the freedom of the Human will. This is contrary to Wolfhart Pannenberg when he says that the determination of the Human will in Christ by the almighty Divine will – excluded the independence of Jesus' Human voluntary capacity.<sup>86</sup> If Pannenberg were to be right, then the Divine and Human freedom would not be compatible. The Monothelists had to deny the Human will of Jesus because they were unable to conceive of a free human will other than as being in competition with the Divine will.<sup>87</sup> This freedom of the human will originates from an understanding about the Trinity. In the Holy Trinity, the Divine Persons as Divine – all possess one Divine acting and willing, yet each Person actuates this one and essential acting and willing according to that Person's specific uniqueness. The Son does not own an activity and a will different from the Father, but He acts and wills in identity with the Father's will, only in a way different from the Father, namely, in the way and manner of being the Son. Since the Word, in His Incarnation makes His Human nature His very own, to such an extent as to become true Man, it will then be meaningless to say that the Son exerts His power over His Human nature. The Son does not exert some kind of extrinsic causality upon His Human nature, the way Eusebius thought, but He operates in both His natures.

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84 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 199; C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 117-124.

85 Cf. H. Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 30th Edition, Fitzwilliam: Loreto Publications, 1955, nn. 289-293.

86 Cf. W. Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, 2nd edn., Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977, p. 294.

87 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 200.

It is not the nature-specific modes of acting that are united, but the way and manner in which both act as one in perfect harmony. In the Person of Christ, there exists the Divine and the Human acting and willing in mutual correlation, in reciprocating permeation (*perichoresis*), yet not on the level of the natures involved but on the level of the One Person Subject.<sup>88</sup>

#### 2.5.4 The Trinity, and the Two Wills of the Incarnate

That which distinguishes the Person of the Son from the Father and the Holy Spirit, unites him with His humanity. The Son, is united with humanity precisely through this distinguishing uniqueness of being Son. He is God within the communion of the three Divine Persons. His Divine Nature is wholly generated from the Father and “possesses” the entire Divine Nature without diminution or shortfall. Each of the Divine Persons is God according to the character of His respective originating relationship. The Father by being Unbegotten is unoriginated Origin. The Son is the Begotten. And The Holy Spirit is the Procession. The defining quality of each Person consists in His respective relation to the other two Persons. What is specific to each is the character of His originating relationship. This mode of existence proper to the Son in turn becomes, through the Hypostatic Union. The Divine Person in the One Divine Nature is not coerced but subsists in Divine freedom of mutual self-giving. The Incarnation means that Divine freedom, in which the Son “owns” His Divinity in mutual giving and receiving, becomes also the mode of His owning His Humanity. The relationship in Christ of Person and Nature is incomparably free. He does not become Man under conditions of necessity of created beings, the way our own existence as humans is determined. The Son became Man by His own will to such an extent that His mode of being Man is marked by the same freedom with which He eternally receives and gives Himself. In this lies the ultimate reason why the human self-giving of Jesus can be for us the perfect human translation of His eternal self-giving to the Father. Only the Incarnation of the Divine freedom in the human condition can result in such total self-giving.<sup>89</sup>

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88 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 117-124.

89 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 113-116.

It can be concluded that, the “possession” of the two Wills that the Son now has, does not make Him in any way alien to Divine Will and consequently also not alien to Divine Nature. He remains in full Communion of eternal Love of self-giving with the other two Divine Persons even after the Incarnation. All this is possible to conceive of the Son when the personalistic understanding of One Subject of the Divine Person of Christ is maintained, who now subsists in two Natures. Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, interprets Cardinal Christoph Schönborn on the question of the two wills, he says, “the transition between the two wills from opposition to union is accomplished through the sacrifice of obedience. In the agony of Gethsemane, this transition occurs. Thus the prayer “not my will, but yours” (Lk 22:42) is truly the Son’s prayer to the Father through which the natural human will is completely in the “I” of the Son. Indeed, the Son’s whole being is expressed in the “not I, but you”- in the total self-abandonment of the “I” to the “You” of God the Father.”<sup>90</sup> This same “I” has transformed humanity’s disobedience so that we are all now present within the Son’s obedience. All human beings are invited into sonship, a sonship which when freely accepted, gives us communion to the life of the Holy Trinity.<sup>91</sup>

### 2.5.5 Living Nature and Act

In Christ the human mode of act and willing is not absorbed into His Divinity but operates in union with the latter, in the way of unity without the one eliminating the other. Monotheletism rejects the possibility that Christ’s Humanity could be the formal expression of the Divine Person of the Son. To be able to conceive of the operation of the two wills, it is important to first understand something about living nature. Every living nature, in order to be truly an individual nature, has to be its own moving self, has to possess its own individual motion, which is constitutive of it. The motion produced by every living nature according to that nature is its specific energy, its mode of acting, which characterizes the essence of that nature. Since the mode

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90 Cf. Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two: Holy Week From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, transl. Vatican Secretariat of State, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2011, p. 161 Commentary on C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 126-27.

91 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two*, p. 161.



of acting follows nature, it is therefore the constitutive and defining element of every nature.<sup>92</sup>

Two personalistic elements can be discerned. First, every person acts but has a mode of acting which can be Divine, angelic, or human.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, nature and action are inseparably connected. Everything of the same nature also acts the same and vice versa. When two different natures are united in One Person, then the mode of action specific to each nature is not to be changed by this union; otherwise the two natures themselves would be changed. The union of the two modes of action, however, is only possible as a Hypostatic Union, on the level of the Person, not of the natures involved. This the adherents of Monoenergism did not or would not see this unity in One Person Subject. Here we come to appreciate how a correct notion of person and true Personalism can help the human mind to conceive of the truth of two wills of One Subject. As already seen earlier, correct Personalism, helps to conceive of eternal Begottenness, it also helps the human mind and consequently faith to accept and to believe the Incarnation. More specifically, Christian Personalism helps to conceive about the *way* of the Incarnation (about the two wills of one Incarnate Divine Person) in as far as it is possible for human beings to do so without reducing the mystery into mere knowledge or hypothesis.

The mode of acting is inherent in a respective nature, for every nature acts as its own self.<sup>94</sup> The Person does not possess such a mode of action, but rather determines the way and manner (*tropos*) of its specific, proper, and essential mode of action.<sup>95</sup> Here Cardinal Schönborn dives into a very important distinction between person and nature in relation to Action. Person determines, specifies, realizes, and concretises this mode of action. In other words, it is the person who realises or puts this energy, inherent in nature, to action. Divine will without Persons is docile and cannot act. Likewise human will without Person is also equally docile and cannot act. It is not actualized, much as it exists. It is the Person that concretizes the will. The Person brings this mode

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92 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 117-124.

93 Cf. M. Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of the Acting Person*, W. F. Murphy (ed.), Washington D.C: Catholic University of America Press 2008; Also K. Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II, *The Acting Person*, A. Potocki (transl.), Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company 1979.

94 Cf. B. Davies & G. R. Evans (eds.), *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1998, p. 241. The Mode of acting does not belong the proper characteristics themselves of the person (uniqueness), but it belongs to the substance (nature).

95 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 117-124.

of acting in action. Act is the reality of Person. For the Incarnate Son of God it is the Divine Person of this Son, this One Subject that actualizes these modes of acting. Yet the nature defines the mode of this action. In the different manner (*tropos*) of operating, we see the difference of Persons in their actuality, while in the nature of the operation we see the natural mode of acting common to all. In the *nature* of the act, we see the nature of him who acts, while in the *manner* of acting shows the individuality, the uniqueness, of the acting Person. Christ's Human deeds reveal His Human Nature, in the same way as His supernatural deeds reveal His Divine Nature.

## 2.6 MORE CONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE INCARNATE

The Hypostatic Union is the unity without confusion, without mixture, without separation – of the Divine and the Human nature in the One Person of Christ. This remains the key in any attempt to perceive of the mystery of the Incarnation. As regards to His Humanity, “The Son of God [as true Man] worked with human hands, He thought with a human intellect, He acted with a human will, and He loved with a human heart” (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 22, 2; cf. CCC, no. 470).<sup>96</sup> His true Humanity, however, did not and does not in any way lessen His true Divinity. To further explain this, it is helpful to look at more notions and conceptions such as: no circumscribing, icons and images, personal countenance, the Heart of Jesus, and Christ's Human Body.

### 2.6.1 No Circumscribing

Cardinal Schönborn agrees with Emperor Constantine V († 775) that Jesus Christ is this One Personal Countenance of two natures, the immaterial and the material, through the unmixed union. Christ's *Prosopon* or *Hypostasis*

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<sup>96</sup> J. Ratzinger & C. Schönborn, *Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994, p. 52.

cannot be separated from the two natures, one of His two natures cannot be circumscribed, in this context, it is therefore impossible to circumscribe the Prosopon of Christ. At the same time we should desist the temptation of separating the two natures. Separating the humanity of Christ from the eternal Word with whom, this Humanity is in essential union, is to reduce Christ to the level of created beings. There are two extremes on one side Monophysitism and Nestorianism on the other.<sup>97</sup> Nicholas of Cusa expresses well the Divine-Humanity of Christ. Cardinal Schönborn found that which is similar to the Christological key in Nicholas of Cusa († 1464) who speaks of “the relation of finitude to infinity, of time to eternity, of freedom and contingency, of God and world.”<sup>98</sup> In Christ is this unity of what is Infinite-Divine and what is finite-Human. According to Schönborn, “Christ is that ‘*maximum concretum*’ in which [Whom] the relationship between God and the world becomes ‘tangible’ as the independent existence of what is finite, in what is entirely... infinite.”<sup>99</sup> This understanding is very central since it helps to maintain the truth of the Incarnation.

From Cardinal Schönborn’s presentation of the Emperor Constantine V’s theology, a conclusion can be made that, we are not to understand the Incarnation to mean the circumscribing of the Divine nature by the Human nature, or the Divine nature as if it were swallowing up the Human nature. This is so because, it is impossible for the infinite to be circumscribed by the finite. It is not possible for the finite to contain the infinite. This conception helps to conceive, and to maintain the reality of the two Natures of the One Person Incarnate. This maintenance of two natures without one circumscribing the other and without mixture but also without separation leads to the conception of why Christ rightly fits the name Son of God and Son of man at once. Still from this, we come to see why the Virgin Mary is true Mother of God.<sup>100</sup> True

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97 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 173-175.

98 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 13.

99 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 13; cf. Also, Peter J. Casarella (Ed.), *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

100 Accordingly, the Virginal conception brings us to conceive of the Divine Motherhood. The gospel according to Saint Matthew stressed this, “Matthew...strongly insists on Mary’s unique virginal conception: ‘...before they lived together she was with child through the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 1:18) ... , this belief in her virginal conception would bring Mary an honoured title, the Mother of God” (V. Hoagland, *Mary the Mother of God*, New York: The Regina Press, 1999, p. 37.

Mother of God, not that she begets the Son as the Father does, but because she conceives and gives Birth to the One Person who has become inseparably two natures, true God and true Man in One Person. There is no “mutation” in God the Son but at the same time He truly became Man without any lack in His Humanity. The personalistic distinction between nature and person becomes therefore, very key to the reality of the conception about the Divine Person of Jesus Christ and His Mother.

When we say that the Divine nature cannot be circumscribed, we also intend to say that it is beyond our grasp, that is incomprehensible, but at the same time in the concrete sense of the word, that it cannot be outlined fully neither in writing nor in drawing.<sup>101</sup> This helps to preserve the truth of mystery in our discourses and conception about the One Person of Jesus Christ – the eternal Son of God but Incarnate. This keeps us humble and prevents us from the parade of “I have finally circumscribed the mystery,” “I have finally defined God exhaustively.” If so, then this would become bare naturalistic knowledge which gives no room for Faith. Without the notion of the impossibility of the finite to circumscribe the infinite, the human person can easily error by taking the human person’s self for omniscience, all-knowing, and making oneself god. There would be no more need of Faith on the side of human persons. For, “why Faith if one has full knowledge?” We can here also remember that a human person is a mystery who defines other realities except self. Hence, the Person of Christ is indispensable since He is the only one that can define, or better to say, He reveals man’s self to man’s self (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22).

### 2.6.2 Icons and Images

There exists an intimate connection between the whole concept of the arts and the concept of the mystery of Christ who is God and Man. Iconography presents the Human and yet is at the same time a transparent image of the Divine.<sup>102</sup> The Incarnation not only transformed our knowledge of God, it also changed man’s view of the world, of himself, and his activity in the world. The affirmation of the

<sup>101</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 173-175.

<sup>102</sup> Office of Papal Liturgical Celebrations, *Iconography and Liturgy*, Vatican: Vatican Press, 20 January, 2005, no. 4.

intimate connection between art and religious ritual between image and faith, turns out to be an affirmation of the mystery of the Incarnation (cf. Vatican II, Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 39-46; 122-130). The face, the eyes, the voice, the Countenance of the Man, the One who is God and Man, has become God's own Word, His personal gesture, His self-expression – this we believe without a full understanding.<sup>103</sup>

The argument against icons and images may be that, “it is impossible to paint an image of Christ; for this would amount to the attempt of depicting and grasping the Divine nature of Christ.”<sup>104</sup> However, if the Word has truly become flesh and has dwelled among us (Jn 1:14), then this Word Incarnate is a reality that can be depicted, described, and represented in an image.<sup>105</sup> Art in the early Church drew its life from the constant meditation on the Mystery of the God-Man. The iconographic art of the Eastern Church, even in its painting technique, in its formal and structural elements, leads to beholding an image, what is Divine in Man and what is now, since the mystery of the Incarnation, “human in God.”<sup>106</sup> This should not be understood to mean that now, since the Incarnation, there is a change in Divine nature. The Hypostatic Union does not yield to any mutation in either of the natures of Christ. In the image of Christ, in the icon of Mary and of the saints, we encounter the world to come, humanity redeemed, the new man standing upright in the light of God.<sup>107</sup>

In his work, *God's Human Face*, Cardinal Schönborn has deeply and extensively elaborated the theology of the icon. In our study, we have devoted little space to the icon and its meaning because what Cardinal Schönborn does is to first treat the Christological foundation of the icon, and then, from this foundation he proceeds and concludes to the truth and legitimacy of the icon. In order to tame the size of this research and to remain focused on the research problem little space has been dedicated to the icon which is based on the Christology. Specifically, more space has been devoted to the Incarnation, which according to Schönborn, is the basis of the icon. In other words, much as we know and acknowledge that the result (theology of the icon) in turn enriches

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103 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 238.

104 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 3.

105 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 3.

106 C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 239.

107 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Man, the Image of God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2011, section IV The Icon: A Vision of the World to come.

our understanding of the source (Incarnation), we have wanted to tame the size of the work and to remain focused on the mystery of the Person.

### 2.6.3 Personal Countenance

Jesus Christ reveals the Father's Countenance to human persons.<sup>108</sup> The Fatherhood of God is revealed to us by Jesus Christ. For Jesus, God is not merely "the Father of Israel, the Father of mankind," but "My Father", "All things have been delivered to me by My Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him" (Mt 11:25.27; Lk 10:21-22).<sup>109</sup> There is a strict relation between Paternity and Sonship in virtue of generation: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You" (Heb 1:5).<sup>110</sup> God is revealed in the fullness of His Paternity by the Son (Heb 1:2-3). God the Father "possesses" His Personal Countenance, and God the Son "possesses" His Personal Countenance, and God the Holy Spirit "possesses" His Personal Countenance. Every Person "possesses" their own Personal Countenance. Jesus Christ is One Personal Countenance of two natures. Christ's Humanity does not "possess" its own personal Countenance. The Personal Countenance of Jesus Christ reveals to human persons the Personal Countenance of God the Father. At this point, it is necessary to peruse a little further the notion of personal Countenance as understood in relation to One Subject of the Son, who is now true God and true Man forever.

Before Christological development, there was only the distinction between essence and person. The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is a new

108 According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, "Countenance" as a noun is the translation of a variety of Hebrew and Greek expressions, *panim*; *prosopon* being the most frequent. Besides these, there are found *mar'eh*, "appearance", "shape," comeliness, visage, *ayin*, the eye, *to'ar*, appearance, figure (Cf. Orr J., Nuelsen J. L., Mullins E. Y., & Evans M. O. (eds.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. II, Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915, pp. 723-724. The King James Version translates in the Transfiguration text, "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening" (Lk 9:29). But for our discussion here, we are looking at the revelatory mission of the Son of God.

109 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Catechesis on God the Father*, General Audience, Wednesday, 23 October 1985, no. 1.

110 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Catechesis on God the Father*, General Audience, Wednesday, 23 October 1985, no. 1.

development in the awareness of the Christian theologians of the fourth century. It was unknown to Pre-Christian philosophers. To them both concepts had the same meaning. In the Holy Trinity is the Oneness in essence, and yet at the same time the distinction of Persons. The differentiation of essence and hypostasis does not suffice. One other concept is needed which relates to these two. The notion of *prosopon* which in Latin is rendered as *persona* than to the philosophical concept of hypostasis. The Hypostasis of the Son is the form and countenance (*prosopon*) of the perfect cognition of the Father (cf. Heb 1:3). In this is the approval of using the term *prosopon* for person, but implicitly also shows its ambiguity especially when used in isolation. *Prosopon* here has the meaning of “countenance”, yet the term itself comparable to the Latin *persona*, can also denote mask or role-playing.<sup>111</sup>

For Sabellius, God is one according to His Hypostasis, but Scripture depicts Him through different faces or masks, depending on the specific circumstances so that He speaks now as the Father, then as the Son, at another time as the Holy Spirit. Sabellius took these different *prosopa* simply as metamorphoses, different manifestations of a God whom he conceived as one and unique, real subsistence (*Hypostasis*). In opposition to this conception, Saint Basil pointed out repeatedly that a *prosopon*, understood as countenance in a concrete sense is no countenance at all if it is without its own subsistence, its own selfhood, its own personhood, if it is, *anhypostaton*, without hypostasis. It does not suffice to point to the faces (*prosopa*) as Sabellius did; no, in addition we have to assume that each face has its selfhood in a real Hypostasis.<sup>112</sup> In order to employ the term *prosopon* to the full extent of its meaning, that is, in the sense of proper face and personal countenance, we must make sure that any restricted use only as mask or role is avoided, and that this *prosopon* is the expression of a concrete person (Hypostasis) and not merely a mask hiding this person. The Human Countenance of the Word is paradoxically the complete expression of the Person (*Hypostasis*) of the Word. Every *prosopon* must be supported by a hypostasis, every “countenance” by a person, in order to be the imprint of that person. If every *prosopon* expresses the person sustaining it and giving it existence, then this will also be true of the *prosopon*, the Human face of Christ. In this way then, it is possible to understand that the Person of the Son is the form and

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<sup>111</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 32.

Countenance of the perfect cognition of the Father, and the Person of the Father is seen perfectly in the Son.<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that, Cardinal Schönborn prefers to use the notion “Countenance” when talking about the revelatory Act of the Son, that is, when the Son, Hypostasis of the Son is spoken of in the context of revealing God the Father. This notion is preferred because it reduces the conception of “mask” or just role-playing. The Hypostasis of Christ is not a mask of the Father. Likewise, the Humanity of Christ is not a mask of the Divinity of Christ. It can be observed that whenever Cardinal Schönborn is talking of the revelation of a person – a hypostasis, he uses the term countenance, for example he mentions that the Human Countenance of Jesus reveals the Hypostasis of the Person of Christ, who is true God and true Man at once. And wherever the human mind would be drawn to the perception of “circumscribing” for example where one would be tempted to say, the humanity of Christ “circumscribes” the Divinity of Christ, Schönborn quickly uses the terminology of Countenance, he would say the Human Countenance of Christ reveals the Divine Person of Christ.<sup>114</sup> In this way Schönborn achieves the goal of describing the Mystery as depicted by the Title of his book, namely, *God’s Human Face: The Christ-Icon*. In this approach he emphasises the personalistic reality of One Person-One Subject who perfectly is present with us and at the same time perfectly revealing the Person of the Father.

#### 2.6.4 The Heart of Jesus Christ

Without the mystery of Christ’s Human heart, “the contemplation of the aspects of Jesus’ Humanity would be incomplete.”<sup>115</sup> The heart of Jesus does two things: it shows His true Humanity, and the personalistic love of God. There is a connection of Divine Love and human love in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He who is true God and true Man, loves truly from His heart. Saint Paul says, “The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Christ has loved all with a true Human heart. For this reason, His Heart, pierced by human sins and

113 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 33.

114 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 33.

115 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 214.



for our Salvation, is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that love with which the Divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human persons without exception (CCC, no. 478). The love of the heart is in a certain sense carnal because it stirs the heart of man for the Bodily Christ and for what Christ did and commanded in the flesh. Also Jesus' prayer, His suffering, sadness, and Death are evidence of His true Humanity.<sup>116</sup> Christ's Human nature as He assumed it was not annulled. He possesses a true Human body, a true Human consciousness, a true Human will, and a true Human heart. For, "He worked with Human hands, He thought with a Human mind, acted by Human choice, and loved with a Human heart" (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22).<sup>117</sup> The question of true Humanity of Jesus is not "confined to the fourth century. It is still a live question, even if the context is different."<sup>118</sup> That is why exploring this aspect of the Heart of the Person of Christ is still very important even today to enhance a deeper appreciation of the true Humanity of Jesus Christ.

The heart is the seat of the inner life, the seat of thoughts, the seat of the acts of will, for Christ has a truly Human will, and it is the seat of feelings. Since, He is true Man He feels just as every man feels. Jesus' true Human feeling is expressed, for example, when He met a widow, who was going to bury her only son. He "was deeply moved with compassion and spoke to her the gentle human words of consolation, 'Do not weep' (Lk 7:13).<sup>119</sup> Mary's sorrow at the death of her brother Lazarus had such a great effect on Jesus that He wept with her (Jn 11:33-35). He was angry with the money changers desecrating the Temple. He was not happy with the Apostle's slowness to understand (Mt 16:5-12). He showed courage by standing against false teachers.<sup>120</sup> Because of fear, He sweated blood (Lk 22:44). Some Docetic heretics tried to explain away Jesus' suffering as being merely apparent, but Irenaeus decidedly contradicted such ideas by wondering why Christ exhorted His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him, if He himself had not truly suffered the Cross. According to Cardinal Schönborn, The Heart of Jesus first and foremost reveals the true Human nature of Jesus Christ, but secondly it reveals the Heart of God's feelings. God

116 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 221-222.

117 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 214.

118 Cf. M. Sharkey (ed.), *International Theological Commission: Texts and Documents 1969-1985*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989, p. 312.

119 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 214.

120 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, p. 36.

suffers because He loves (cf. Ex 32:10; Josh 24:19-20; Ex 22:27), hence “all His feelings, whether compassion, anger, indignation, or jealousy, must always be read against the background of His personal love *for us*.”<sup>121</sup> The personalistic reality of love is underlined here by the Heart of Christ.

### 2.6.5 Christ’s Human Body

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “Since the Word became flesh in assuming a true Humanity, Christ’s body was finite” (CCC, no. 476). And that, “in the body of Jesus ‘we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see.’ The individual characteristics of Christ’s body express the Divine Person of God’s Son. He has made the features of His Human body His own” (CCC, no. 477). True humanity should be both body and soul. Moreover, “our bodies are so closely connected with our souls.”<sup>122</sup> We cannot conceive of the human being as being soul alone as Origen tends to perceive. At the same time we cannot conceive of a human being as body alone. Actually, the complete conception should be of body and soul at once, but also a better view of a human being would be that of spirit-*pneuma*, soul-*psyche* and body-*sarx, soma* (cf. CCC, nn. 363-368).<sup>123</sup> This understanding is very important because many times the pneumatical reality of the human being is forgotten. Where it is not forgotten, it gets dissolved with in the understanding of the psyche and hence is not given the rightful attention. Back to our question of the Human Body of Jesus Christ, in order to be able to unravel the personalistic dimension of the Body of Jesus, following Cardinal Schönborn it is worth considering three important theologians regarding this question. Origen sees the Body of Jesus as a shadow. He also had an instrumental view of this Body. Eusebius sees the Body of Jesus as swallowed up into the Divine while Saint Cyril of Alexandria had the rightful personalistic view. Cyril sees the Body of Jesus united with the Divine Person without mixture, without confusion

<sup>121</sup> C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 215.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. P. J. Kreeft, *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Beliefs based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2001, p. 54.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. The Divine Liturgy in Alexandria attributed to Saint Apostle and Evangelist Mark, the Disciple of the Saint Peter, *Missa catechumenorum*, makes allusion to understanding of the human being.

and without separation. For the purposes of comparison, a closer look at each of these theologians' conception about the Body of Jesus is obliging.

### 2.6.5.1 Origen on the Body of Jesus

Origen (c. 185-254 AD) sees the Body of Christ, as belonging to the world of sensory perceptions, and therefore assigns it to the realm of shadows and images as opposed to the truth. For him, Christ on earth is not the way He is in heaven; for since the Word became flesh, He *manifests* himself by means of shadows, likeness, and images. Human persons are instructed through the shadow of the Word and not by the true Word of God, who is in the immensity of heaven. Origen sees the Incarnation as God's pedagogical adaptation to the level of our human capacities. If, then we have to understand the Incarnation in a pedagogical sense, we ought to look beyond this body. Thus Origen holds that Jesus, while here on earth, and according to this pedagogy, manifested himself under varied appearances adapted to the different capacities of different people.<sup>124</sup>

Much as this thought of Divine pedagogy connected with the Incarnation may appear to be profound, it is defective in that, it implies the events in Jesus' life mean nothing more than mere representation. This conception becomes even more disturbing if it considers the suffering and Cross of Christ as merely the lowest level of this initiation process, whose highest level would be Christ's Resurrection. The Incarnation is the simple transition, after which the Word returns to His original state. Knowledge of Christ is to behold the Logos uncovered without the wrapping of the flesh. The task is to loosen the sandal straps in order to see the Word without sandals, stripped of everything inferior, and in His true intrinsic reality as the Son of God.<sup>125</sup> In this perspective, the body of Jesus is but the earthly image of the higher reality, that is, of the Word, who appears to us in Jesus. Origen leaves something of a distance between the Man Jesus and the Word. Jesus is not entirely identical with the Word; He is its instrument. The Word uses the man Jesus in order to avoid working in His naked Divinity.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 47-56.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 47-56; Origen interpreting John the Baptist's confession that he is not worthy to loosen the sandal straps of Jesus (Jn 1:27).

<sup>126</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 49.

Jesus is the *manifestation* of the Word. He is not himself the substance of revelation. Origen applies the Scripture, “Whoever sees me, sees the Father” (Jn 14:9), to the theophanies like of the Old Testament. But quoting it in the context of the Incarnation, he resolutely refuses to understand it as a reference to the physical beholding of Christ.<sup>127</sup> No rational person would ever affirm that Jesus referred to His physical body and the beholding by human eyes when He said, ‘Whoever sees me, sees the Father.’ Otherwise, even all those who yelled, ‘crucify, crucify Him!’ would then have seen the Father (Lk 23:21). Origen, for this reason, instead of the all-too-physical concept of seeing, prefers the more spiritual concept of contemplating (*theorein*). He who looks at the body of Jesus with his physical eyes does not yet in this alone, see the Father, His God. Time and practice are needed to see Jesus in such a way as to see the Son and thus contemplate the Father. Seeing here would not mean a physical perception but cognition. For he who has known the Son, has known the Father. Origen represents a tendency to see in Jesus more the revelatory form of the Logos, marked by this accidental appearance, than the authentic Subject of revelation Himself.<sup>128</sup>

Origen’s mistake lies in a lack of a correct notion of the person. A person is irreducible and irreplaceable. For Origen, the Divine Son is *replaced* by the man Jesus, and the man Jesus is replaced-subsumed, abrogated by the Divine Word. This is against the personalistic understanding of the uniqueness of every person. Secondly, it implies the possibility of replacement of the person which is impossible without the annihilation of either persons (that is, the replaced person and the one replacing). For the one replaced must by necessity be annihilated to give way for the replacement. At the same time the one replacing by necessity has to annihilate his original self in order to be able to replace. The end result is very absurd for both the replaced and the one who replaces are both cancelled and remain with no person. And we cannot assume the emergence of a new person from this exchange. One person that is half the one replaced and half the one who replaces is an impossibility for the two original persons by necessity have to be annihilated.

With Origen’s conception of the Incarnation of the Word, the New Testament, which is the written testimony about Jesus’ words and deeds as well as the Body of Christ, will appear merely as shadows of spiritual realities. For

127 Cf. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John Book 13*, J. W. Trigg (ed.), New York: Routledge, 1998, no. 52.

128 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 49-50.

Origen, it is not sufficient to go by the bodily meaning of the Gospel one has to go beyond in order to arrive at the spiritual or eternal Gospel, of which the bodily Gospel is but a shadowy image. Origen downgrades the importance of the New Testament texts that depict Jesus' coming into this world as fulfilment, completion and perfection of revelation which the Old Testament offered only as a promise. Origen prefers to interpret such fulfilment passages (Rom 5:16; Heb 10:1; Jn 1:17, 6:55, 15:1 and he never quoted Col 2:17) as predictions of the good things to come in the world. This spiritual exegesis sees the earthly life of Jesus mostly as a shadowy image of the hidden truth of the eternal Word. The words of Scripture remain dead unless we enter into their spiritual meaning.<sup>129</sup> This also extends to his view of the human persons. For him the Christians, who have imprinted in their souls the beauty of the Divine virtues – the true image of God is within. The most serious shortcoming of this view of human persons consist in its inability to assign a clear and positive meaning to man's physical nature within God's plan of creation and Salvation. In this thinking, the human person is primarily the soul, the interior man. For this reason, all material visual expressions are considered occasions for distracting the human person from his or her true destiny, for they divert the eyes of the soul away from God and toward the world.<sup>130</sup> For Origen, the human person is not the image of God but created *in* the image of God. He interprets (Gen 1:26) that man could not possibly be in God's image if based on his body since the body is corruptible, nor based on his soul, otherwise one would have to think of God as also being composed but only based on the interior person (Eph 3:16) – the soul. Only the soul is able to become imitator of God (Eph 5:1), able to assume God's qualities (*charakteras*) and thus to become the image of God. Scripture calls the body, the "temple of God" (1 Cor 6:10) not his image. Thus, only is the soul in the image of God.<sup>131</sup> Clearly here the body is despised as being a not important ontological reality of the human being.

There is a tendency to see what is visible only as shadows of what is invisible to emphasize in the image primarily the shortcomings in relation to the original and to deemphasize its function of being revelation of the original. According to Pope John Paul II, the actions which are visible reveal and make a person which means the visible actions are intrinsically of the person as

129 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 51-52.

130 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 52-56.

131 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 52.

a whole.<sup>132</sup> A person is not divided in parts. The heavy emphasis on the invisible threatens to lessen the importance of Jesus salvific Incarnation and His true Human nature. This tendency in its extreme leads to the rejection or at least to the disparaging of all that is sacramental and symbolic, even of the embodiment of the Faith in institutions, dogma and Church. In general a rejection of everything that is Incarnational.<sup>133</sup> The use of signs is very important in personalistic understanding. Because of the vastness of the work of Origen, it is also true that in his work though he displays without doubt a tendency toward spiritualization not even foreign to the apostle Paul (2 Cor 4:18). Origen should be seen in conjunction with the opposing tendency toward embodiment. He sometimes emphasizes indeed the interiority of the Christian ritual, but he also goes beyond and explains that God is practically incarnated in human virtues, and that the human person completely can incarnate within himself or herself the will of God, becoming the perfect statue of God, the true image of God.<sup>134</sup>

#### 2.6.5.2 Eusebius of Caesarea on the Body of Jesus

For Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 264-340 AD), the Divine is ineffable and inscrutable, the humanity has been swallowed up as it were, by the glory of the Divine. Christ is now glorified. Christ's earthly form has been transfigured, rendered immortal, incorruptible. From that moment on the servant has been transformed, entirely and thoroughly into ineffable and intangible light, the same light that equals God, a marvellous and unfathomable form. He appeals to Saint Paul, that Paul taught, now we no longer know Christ according to the flesh (2 Cor 5:16).<sup>135</sup> It is not proper to say that the Divine undergoes change and assumes a Human form and Countenance. Since God is Himself inscrutable. He uses an instrument in His dealings with man. Thus the visions seen by the prophets in their bodily existence were all human forms yet it was God who as through an instrument spoke by means of these visible forms. According

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132 Cf. K. Wojtyła/John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility*, Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013, pp. 3-12.

133 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 47-56.

134 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 57.

135 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 57.

to Eusebius, the Son is subordinate to the Father, in that, He is not always God. He has been made God by the Father.<sup>136</sup> Through His Divine power of reason, the Logos scans everything, accomplishes everything, without ever being polluted in His own nature. In the same manner, He dwelt among men; at one time, He appeared only to a few, to prophets and the just in manifold ways. In these last times, however, He offered himself as the Saviour to all, to those who are evil and godless, the Jews and the Greeks, thanks to the overflowing kindness of the Father. Thus the Incarnation for Eusebius is part of the sequence of *manifestations* on the part of the Logos, which is the *living instrument* of the Father.<sup>137</sup>

As the entire cosmos is seen as the obedient instrument in the hand of the Logos, so also Eusebius now interprets the body too, a part of the cosmos and assumed by the Logos as, an instrument of the Logos. The Logos generously calls and heals all men by means of the human instrument He carries, like a musician who proclaims his wisdom by means of the lyre.<sup>138</sup> The everlasting and inscrutable Father has brought forth the Logos to be the mediating power in the creation and governance of the world. The Logos reveals himself not primarily in His Divine, incomprehensible, immaterial, and invisible essence, He rather makes himself visible and knowable by *using bodily instrument*, to make possible His dealings with the human race. This is so because for Eusebius, the corporeal eyes could not behold what is incorporeal. The mortal nature could not discover something that is hidden and invisible which was not discovered even in the multitudes of created things. For this reason the Logos needed a mortal instrument as an appropriate medium to deal with men; for this was to their liking. It is correctly said *all love what is similar to themselves*. The Divine Logos need a medium, an interpreter as it were, and a bodily vehicle, as He made ready to heal the souls in the bodies of men and to appear on earth. This was to be a Human instrument through which He revealed to mankind the nature of the mysterious depths of God.<sup>139</sup>

Cardinal Schönborn rejects Eusebius' view of the Body. By this rejection he therefore, ushers in a Personalistic Christology. The Human body of Christ is intrinsic to what it means to be true Human. The true human body is intrinsically inseparable from being Human. Because of this intrinsic truth, it

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136 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 60.

137 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 65.

138 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.

139 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.

cannot therefore, be used also as an instrument as a tool as Eusebius claims.<sup>140</sup> For Eusebius the Incarnation appears above all as a connection to human weakness. The purpose consists in leading the human person to a higher level of knowledge where the instrument is no longer needed, where he will have reached reality itself.<sup>141</sup> Schönborn insists that Christ concerned himself with the bodies no less than with the souls. Christ made sure that the bodily eyes of man would behold what He was doing in the body. Astonishing miracles and Divine signs and powers. To the bodily ears, then, He proclaimed the message, in the flesh, by means of the tongue. All this He accomplished through the body He has assumed, as if through an interpreter, for those who in this way and in this way only, are able to perceive his Divinity.<sup>142</sup>

For Eusebius, since the Logos is not touched nor polluted while filling the entire cosmos with His presence, neither is He affected by the things His body, His instrument, is made to suffer. The One without a body was not polluted through the birth of the body, the One who could not suffer was in His essence not affected by suffering when the mortal part, the body, was again separated from Him. It is the same as it would be for a musician who would himself not experience pain should his lyre or its strings tear. Eusebius is thus able to describe the entire Passion of Christ as the sole affair of the human instrument employed by the Logos, after having rendered the required service to the Logos, the instrument was allowed to die. Yet in order to prevent this death from being considered a weakness of the Logos, the instrument was not to remain in death. The life-giving Logos of God determined to show the mortal instrument used for the Salvation of man to be superior to death, and to be participating in His own life and immortality, the Logos arranged the events, appropriately and eminently and as a benefit for us, in this way, the Logos departed from the body for a short time and surrendered what was mortal to death in order to show proof of its mortal nature, yet shortly afterward, He raised this mortal *thing* out of death to show proof of the Divine power through which He revealed the eternal life – He proclaimed to be superior to death.<sup>143</sup>

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140 Cf. K. Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility*, Boston: Pauline Books & Media 2013, pp. 18-24. Here Wojtyła gives a very detailed explanation why utilitarianism is against the dignity of a person. For it sees the other as simply an object to be used. There is no room for personalistic love in a utilitarian view.

141 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.

142 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.

143 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.



Schönborn comments on Eusebius that, Christs' suffering is presented here like the triumphant parade of a king who went into battle already a victor, but allowing some time in order to make his sovereignty all the more obvious.<sup>144</sup> For Eusebius, in death the Logos leaves the flesh, which without the Logos is conquered by death. According to Cardinal Schönborn, Eusebius gives the impression that the Logos simply stands for the soul of Christ. The flesh without the Logos would remain without reason and motion. Moreover it would mean that the Divine Logos returned to being God, the way He was before He had become Man, and that the Logos subsumed His Human nature into His Divine nature as the first fruits (1 Cor 15: 20) of our hope. Eusebius comes to this unfortunate conclusion by interpreting Paul, that the whole was swallowed up by the Divinity (1 Cor 15:55). The flesh, after the Resurrection is no longer bound by its own weakness but is swallowed up entirely by the Divine life, a total transformation, the ineffable transformation of the Saviour into Divinity after Resurrection.<sup>145</sup>

Cardinal Schönborn concludes that Eusebius' Christology moves entirely within the context of his cosmology. His doctrine of Salvation is part of his cosmology. The Logos through the instrument of His flesh, has manifested himself above all in order to instruct, to move man's free will toward conversion. The aspects of Redemption, of ransom, of the gift of grace, are substantially deemphasized. What remains is mainly an ethical and intellectual interpretation of the Christian life. The abyss between God and creation is never bridged. True God appears in the world of man through the manifold theophanies of His Logos, yet never does God truly become man. That the supreme God, in Christ, should himself have appeared on earth is an impossibility. How could this supreme God, who himself is the denial of all limitations, ever be confined within the limited form of a man? This is not only impossible but also unnecessary. Mankind is not so much in need of liberation from death on the contrary, death renders the soul the invaluable service of freeing it from the oppressive clay of the body. Mankind is in need of being lead to a genuine knowledge of the Divine. In order to mediate such knowledge a being inferior to the supreme God is quite sufficient. The Logos provides this knowledge without really and ultimately becoming man, rather by using the flesh as instrument.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 65-72.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 73-77.

Eusebius insists that, through Christ's Resurrection, His flesh has lost its own real reality, it has been as it were, swallowed up by His Divinity. Christ's Humanity has lost its own subsistence. A fundamental personalistic error can now clearly be seen in Eusebius view of the Body as just an instrument instead of perceiving this body as intrinsic to the Person of Christ. He does not recognise that in the Incarnation, the Body becomes intrinsic reality to the One Divine Person of Christ. This is what constitutes the mystery of God becoming Man. He does not put on the human body as one would do with the cloth. We can suppose that if Eusebius had a personalistic conception of the human being, he would not have erred.

Cardinal Schönborn observes that, while Genesis speaks of the creation of man, Eusebius only mentions the creation of the soul, as Eusebius speaks of the light of men he immediately speaks of the soul, he seems to identify man with his soul. The body does not appear to be part of his definition of man. What constitutes the image of God in man by comparing the properties of the soul with those of the Logos, Eusebius shows that the soul is the image of the Logos, because the soul like the Logos, is spiritual and rational.<sup>147</sup> In Christian personalism a rightful conception about the human being is always important.<sup>148</sup> True humanity is spirit (*pneuma*), soul (*psyche*) and body (*sarx-soma*). Yet these are not parts of the human being, but one human being. Personalistic Christology which sees Christ as One Subject but subsisting in two natures at once without confusion, now becomes a key to our understanding of the Humanity (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22). Just as there is no confusion in Christ of natures and there is perfect unity, so also perfect unity without confusion can be conceived of the human being as the unity of body and soul.

### 2.6.5.3 Cyril of Alexandria on the Body of Jesus

Cyril of Alexandria († 444 AD), the faithful disciple of Athanasius, like him holds the eternal Son to be perfect and consubstantial with the Father. The Son cannot be an intermediate entity the way He was for Arius. God Himself

<sup>147</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 73-77.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *In the Beginning...: A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, p. 16.

became Man, and this Incarnation does not represent merely one, among many revelations of the Divine Son. The Incarnation is not one among many irruptions of the absolutes into this finite world, rather this Incarnation means the true identity of the Son who is now a historical, specific man.<sup>149</sup> The humanity assumed by the Word does not remain foreign and accidental to this Word but becomes one with Himself. The flesh is not an extrinsic cover, but belongs to the very identity of the eternal Son. The Lord Jesus Christ is one undivided Identity (2 Cor 4:6) for the Word did not dwell in a man but He became Man. The image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), the reflection of the Father's substance (Heb 1:3) has become the form of a slave (Phil 2:7), not by adding a man unto Himself, as the Nestorians teach, but by making Himself into such a form and yet at the same time preserving His likeness unto the Father.<sup>150</sup>

The Humanity of the Son is not an instrument, a garment, an extrinsic dwelling place, but rather is the flesh of the everlasting God. The flesh is intrinsic to the Word, and the Word remains consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father, then the Word, even in His Incarnation preserves His likeness to God the Father. Eusebius was concerned with transcending the human instrument of the Logos in order to reach the Logos himself, which was hidden in this instrument. Cyril sees the mystery of the Incarnation to consist in the very fact that on the human face of Jesus, there irradiates the glory of God. Cardinal Schönborn quotes Cyril of Alexandria that "For God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine (Gen 1:3), has shone in human hearts in order to irradiate the knowledge of God's glory that shines on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).<sup>151</sup> The only-begotten Son reveals in Himself the glory of the Father, even after having become Man. Only in His and in no other manner He is recognized and named *the* Christ. If not, then how could an ordinary man ever reveal to human persons or make known to human persons the light of God's glory. Surely, we do behold God in just any man, except He be the Word Incarnate, having become one like us, who even in His Incarnation still preserved the true nature of the Son. If the Word assumes the flesh, the flesh in its entirety, then this flesh must be of the innermost essence of the Son, in His Hypostasis. We behold in the Incarnate Word the glory of God. Jesus does not reject the faith that is directed at Him in His Incarnation rather He accepts it without making a separation between

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149 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 80.

150 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 81.

151 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 82.

His Divinity and His Humanity, as faith in His Person (Jn 12:44). Believing in Jesus of Nazareth is the same as believing in the Person of God's Son. Those who see Jesus in faith, see God's Son Himself.<sup>152</sup>

According to Cardinal Schönborn, Cyril's interpretation of Jesus' encounter with the man born blind shows the reality of this union. Schönborn quotes Cyril that, "Do you believe in the Son of God? When he exclaimed, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in him?' Christ answered: 'You have seen Him; the One who speaks with you is He.' The other then said, 'I do believe, Lord!' and he worshiped Him" (Jn 9:35-38). It is evident to everybody that the Divine nature is invisible – 'Nobody has ever beheld God' (Jn 1:18). If the Son of God the Father would have separated His Humanity from Himself like a phantom form, and if He would have wanted to be believed uncovered and unveiled, why then did He not ask the one who was healed to explore the nature of God, by way of analogy and reflection, instead of pointing to his bodily reality, implying that the very eyes can see it? Does He not say, 'You have seen Him; the One who speaks with you is He'? Should we therefore not say that the Logos has shown His flesh? – Of course, we do! – But then, how could the Logos himself be in the flesh, except if we assume that through this union, He became the very same body He had made His own?"<sup>153</sup>

Christ's flesh does not merely represent an opportunity, a suitable circumstance in the area of created things, through this analogy, to ascend to the creative Logos as He is in Himself. Faith has no need to strip Christ of his Humanity in order to discover his Divinity, faith rather concentrates on His Person – the one and inseparable reality of the God-made-Man. Christ's Humanity thus is not a veil concealing His Divinity, instead, it is the flesh of God, it is in a certain sense the Son of God Himself – to such extent does the Word Identify Himself with the flesh. The Word became flesh not to liberate souls from the shackles of their bodies, but to save the whole human person who through the disobedience of sin was condemned to death. The Act of Salvation is voided if the Word did not become flesh; if there was no death then there was no Resurrection either. The Son must obtain what belongs to humanity, in order to give to humanity what belongs to Him.<sup>154</sup>

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152 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 81-86.

153 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 83-84.

154 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 86.

Christ by becoming man, has entered into a union with all mankind. All of humanity by means of His Humanity have been made his kin (*syngeneian*) and because of this kinship have been given a new access to the glory of the sons of God (Rom 8:21), to which glory they had been called from the beginning. In Him the whole fullness of the Divine nature dwells in Bodily form (Col 2:9). The gospel according to Saint John reveals this sublime mystery when it is stated that the Word has dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). The Word has dwelt in all through the One, so that the dignity of Divine sonship might come from the One true Son of God to all mankind (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 32), through the Spirit of sanctification, and that through the One among us these words should come true, “I said, “You are gods and sons of the Most High’ (Ps 82:6).<sup>155</sup>

To extend the Divine Sonship to us, it was necessary for the flesh of the Word himself to share first in the Word’s Divine Sonship. There cannot be two Sonships in Christ, the eternal Sonship of the Word, and the temporal “of the Humanity”. Rather the human flesh of Christ is the flesh of the Son of God: there is only One Sonship; and the Word’s freely willed self-abasement consists in the eternal Sonship’s becoming intrinsic of the Word’s Humanity. In Christ, being the only-begotten Son became intrinsic of his Humanity, because of this humanity’s union with the Word and conversely, being the Firstborn of many brothers (Rom 8:29) became a property of the Word, because of the Word’s union with the flesh.<sup>156</sup>

According to Cyril, the Hypostatic union is a real and true union. There are not two hypostases in Christ. There is only One Son, the Word who become Man. It is to Him everything is ascribed: words and deeds, Divinity and Humanity. Cyril has the conviction that all of Christ’s attributes refer ultimately to One Subject only, the Person of the eternal Incarnate Son. This understanding enables us to encounter the Person of the Son. The body was not added to the soul because of sin; rather, the body and the soul form one unity because they were created together. The grandeur of creation lies specifically in the fact that, that same flesh is destined for the immortality of Divine life. Before the fall, man possessed immortality through grace, in spite of his being mortal nature. The flesh, in order to regain immortality, had to be revived again by means of the union with the Word. The identity of One Person of the

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 87.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 86-87.

Son of God makes possible the conception of a real and individual Humanity of Jesus Christ which is this very Humanity of the eternal Son of God. This maintains the uniqueness of Christ's uniqueness and prevents him from being an instance or an example of the humanity.

#### 2.6.5.4 The Mystery of the Face of Jesus Christ

Christ's Humanity does not have its own personal face. Since the Incarnate Son of God, the one πρόσωπον cannot be separated from his two natures, we cannot say that the communicant receives only Christ's human nature. But rather, the communicant receives Christ. By Christ we mean neither the Divine nature alone nor the Human nature alone but the one πρόσωπον, the one Hypostasis. Christ's Humanity has no personal face.<sup>157</sup> Yet at the same time right from the Incarnation, Christ is not Monophysite. The face of Jesus is the face of the Incarnate Person of the eternal Word. The Body of Christ is the face that does not "circumscribe" the Divine nature, not even circumscribe the human nature but the one πρόσωπον, the person of the Word. It is neither a Divine nature nor a Human nature but the face of the Person of Jesus Christ -a face not separated from its person.

At the Ascension, the angels say to those 'men of Galilee' that this Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen him go into heaven (cf. Acts 1:11). The prediction that He would return "in the same way" as they had seen Him ascend implies the task for the disciples left behind, really the Church, to keep alive the remembrance of his face. They are to keep a living remembrance. Not merely a man from the distant past, but Him who as Man was glorified through suffering and the Cross, who is alive now and intercedes for humanity with the Father, and whose return has been promised. In the time between Incarnation and the return, between the first and the last coming of the Lord.<sup>158</sup> There is this One single face, the Face of Jesus Christ, there is this One Jesus whom the apostles knew, with whom they ate and drank, whom they saw transfigured and saw abused, radiant with

<sup>157</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 209.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 137.

glory on Mount Tabor and scourged and crowned with thorns. It is that one unique face, that of Jesus the Son of Mary, the Son of God, which stuck in Peter's memory. It was the gaze of the One whom Peter had just denied and who was looking at him in a way that nothing on earth was able to erase from Peter's memory or remove from his heart.<sup>159</sup> This connection and inseparability of the Body of Christ from the Person of Jesus Christ gives a glimpse on the perception of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body (cf. CCC, no. 686). That since the concrete human person is soul and body, it is not possible to separate the soul of the human person from its unique and irreplaceable person. Likewise, it is not possible to separate the body of the human person from its unique and irreplaceable person. What happens at death, is separation of the body from the soul. But not separation of the soul from person, and not separation of body from person.

The immortal soul and the body, in spite of being separated, remain related to and connected to the same unique person (cf. CCC, no. 1016). Although the person, "I" subsists in the soul, "...it can and ought to be said that the 'human I' itself subsists in the separated soul."<sup>160</sup> With this personalistic conception the doctrine of the resurrection of the made becomes very credible since both the body and soul are the single unique person's face. Personalism helps us to see the reality of these three notions: body, soul, and person. Soul and body belong to one and the same person. Therefore, by necessity, true resurrection must involve the reunion of body and soul since they are a face of one and the same person. In this line of thought we can conceive when Christ says, "But not a hair of your head shall be lost" (Lk 21:18). With personalistic eyes it is possible to appreciate why the Paul (Rom 8:11) and the Catholic Church teach that, "The resurrection of the flesh means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our mortal body will come to life again" (CCC, no. 990, also no. 1015). We can say the same allusion is made to this when the Church teaches, "We believe in the true resurrection of this flesh that we now possess" (CCC, no. 1017). If we were to ask, who possesses this body? Or in other words whose body is it? Certainly the answer cannot be "of the soul". We can think of a better answer as being "of the person". So, once again, whose body? The body "of the person". And whose soul? The soul "of the person."

159 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Man, the Image of God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011.

160 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Some Current Questions In Eschatology*, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992, no. 5.4.

The subsistence of the person in these two guarantees the resurrection of the mortal body to immortality; “We sow a corruptible body in the tomb, but he raises up an incorruptible body (cf. 1Cor 15:42-44; CCC, nn. 1017; 999-1000). For the purpose of this chapter, here we shall not delve into the nature of this incorruptible body, it suffices to see that the resurrection of the body is rooted in the person.

### 2.6.5.5 Summary About the Body of Jesus

After considering these three theologians, the following can be said as a conclusion about the Body of Jesus. The Body retains its own proper nature, without itself becoming God. Christ says, “The words I spoke to you are Spirit and life” (Jn 6:63). In this He calls His flesh spirit but without denying that it is flesh. Since the flesh cannot give life of and by itself, by being united with the Word without confusion, without separation; Christ therefore, declares his flesh to be life-giving. Through Christ Himself, therefore, is his Body life-giving. This Union should not be interpreted to mean Monophysitism, which holds that the flesh loses its own identity as it is totally permeated and determined by Christ’s Divinity. It does not mean Monoenergism, which conceded in Christ only one power and one mode of action – the Divine. It does not mean the flesh of Christ is passive. It is not that flesh of Christ is totally permeated by Divine energy that its own reality is all but lost. Both natures are active in the unity of the One Subject accomplishing all the actions be they Divine or Human. For example the healing of the leper, “Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately the leprosy left him.” (Lk. 5:13). Christ is acting at the same time Divinely and Bodily. Divinely as regards his will so that everything He will does happen and Bodily in his human gesture of extending the hand-since Christ is one and the same in both.<sup>161</sup>

Perception of Christ as an instrument deprives Christ of His Sonship. Christ’s Humanity understood only in an instrumental sense would not be the flesh of the Word. It would remain extraneous to the Word, as extraneous as a lyre to the musician. Eusebius used the example of the lyre in order to show

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 93-101.



that the Logos remained untouched by the suffering of His instrument, the flesh, the same way the musician is not hurt when the strings of his lyre snap. For Eusebius we can say the Logos himself is already the instrument of the Father; the flesh of the Logos, insofar it is his instrument, remains extraneous to him, a mere tool. Cyril in contrast sees the intimate union of Word and flesh in the fact that the flesh does not remain extraneous to the Son. The flesh as it is intimately united to the Son who is consubstantial with God the Father, thus becomes the flesh of God. It is this absolute union that makes it necessary not to degrade Christ's Humanity by seeing it only as a purely passive instrument nor simply to transpose it into God Himself.<sup>162</sup> Soul and body in humanity are not two distinct natures. It is because of the spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living human body. But spirit and matter, in humanity, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms the single nature—the human nature (cf. CCC, no. 365).<sup>163</sup>

At this point, it is also worth making note of the erroneous position of Julian of Halicarnassus (died after 518) who held that “the manhood of Christ was the manhood of Adam before the fall.”<sup>164</sup> The *phantasiastae* or *incorrupticolae*, followers of Julian, “held that the body of Christ, from the very moment of His conception, was incorruptible, immortal and impassable, as it was it was after the resurrection, ... suffering and death on the cross was a miracle contrary to the normal conditions of Christ's humanity.”<sup>165</sup> Severus of Antioch († 538) and his followers we came to be “termed as *corrupticolae*, believed in Christ's voluntary subjection of his body to death and decay according to the normal human condition”<sup>166</sup>

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162 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 93-101.

163 Cf. P. J. Kreeft, *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Beliefs based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001, p. 59.

164 C. S. Vilakovelil, “The Manhood of Jesus Christ in the Tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church” in Demetrios J. Constantelos, Nikos A. Nissiotis & T. Paul Verghese (eds.), *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol. XIII, Brookline Massachusetts: Holy Cross School of Theology Hellenic College, Inc., 1968, p. 159.

165 M. Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 43

166 M. Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 43-44.

## 2.7 THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION REVEALS THE MYSTERY OF THE HUMAN BEING

Teaching about the Mystery of the Trinity, the Catholic Church states that “His inmost Being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s faith before the Incarnation of God’s Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit” (CCC, no. 237). We can take as the point of emphasis that mystery *in itself* is inaccessible to reason alone. It is also possible to generalise that any true access to any true mystery without God’s Son Incarnate is not possible. The human being is created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Human persons are not Divine but human. They have a special uniqueness not granted to other creatures. Human beings have a living soul and a spiritual longing.<sup>167</sup> This uniqueness may not simply just lie in being rational. For, angelic persons too are rational and, have intellect and free will. Then what remains as a uniqueness for human persons? After examining the sources used in this study as a whole, it may be concluded that the ultimate uniqueness of human persons lies, first and foremost, in the fact of being created in the image of God. None of all other visible creatures are created in the image of God. But the explanation given of this “created in image of God” is sometimes taken out of its precise understanding, mainly by, rationalism, empiricism, and secular humanism.<sup>168</sup> Agnosticism is also a humanism.<sup>169</sup> The uniqueness of humanity must be in some reality more. This is so, because the only Son of God is incarnate, true God and true Man. Not true God and true Angel. The mystery of the Person of Christ is the only right key to understanding about a human being. Christ is “the definite revelation to man of his own human nature: ‘it is only in the mystery of the Word that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.’”<sup>170</sup>

167 Cf. G. Murphy, “On Nepsis and the Spirit of the Age” in, *American Theological Inquiry*, January 15, 2010, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 3.

168 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, no. 3.

169 Bernd Growth, “Agnosticism” in René Latourelle & Rino Fisichella (Eds.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994, p. 4

170 J. Ratzinger, *Deus locutus est nobis in Filio: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology and the Church*, Meeting with the Doctrinal Commissions of North America and Oceania, Menlo Park, California, 9 February, 1999, no. 1, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_19990209\\_california-ratzinger\\_en.html#](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc_con_cfaith_19990209_california-ratzinger_en.html#), accessed on 28 February 2022.

This is the emphasis, as has always been in Christian tradition, re-emphasized by Vatican Council II, and constantly re-echoed by great contemporary theologians like Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI.

Saint Augustine presents a personalistic understanding of the *imago Dei*, following the “Trinitarian structure, reflecting either the tripartite structure of the human soul (spirit, self-consciousness, and love) or the threefold aspects of the psyche (memory, intelligence, and will).”<sup>171</sup> It is the image of God in man that orients the human person to God. The International Theological Commission, after a long reflection on *imago Dei* arrived at a conclusion that *imago Dei* “helps to present a relational – and indeed personal – conception of human beings. It is precisely this relationship with God which defines human beings and finds their relationships with other creatures. Nonetheless, the mystery of the human person is made fully clear only in the light of Christ who is the perfect image of the Father and who introduces us, through the Holy Spirit, to a participation in the mystery of the triune God. It is within this communion of love that the mystery of all being, as embraced by God, finds its fullest meaning.”<sup>172</sup> Therefore, while not underestimating the reality of *imago Dei*, it is above all, by looking at the Person of Jesus Christ, who is the perfect Image of the Father that helps us to deepen our conception about the mystery of the human person.

According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Hypostatic Union and thus the unity of action is possible only with human nature and [not with any other nature (for example angelic)]. This is so, because of the unique gift that man alone has received from the Creator: the gift of freedom, which makes man a true image of God.<sup>173</sup> Cardinal Schönborn presents freedom as indispensable if man is to be truly an image of God. This is very true. However, he does not make mention of the freedom of the angelic persons in this regard, for angels also possess the gift of freedom. In other instances he speaks of this gift as capacity to love and to know God. But this is true also of angelic persons. When he mentions the angelic persons, he looks at the dignity of human persons

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171 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, no. 15, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20040723\\_communion-stewardship\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html).

172 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, no. 95.

173 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 93-101.

as resemblance to God and dominion over all created things.<sup>174</sup> He does not explain what this resemblance means. Nevertheless, he widely opens the way to the intuition that in human person there is a mystery. There is something more not found in Angels.<sup>175</sup> It cannot just be the reality of reason, freedom, and capacity to love and to know God, since these are all true also about angelic persons. He awakens this intuition when he states that “the Hypostatic Union is possible only with human nature.”<sup>176</sup> Therefore, it may be concluded that, being created in the image of God is more than just being rational, and possessing free will, and dominion over other creatures.<sup>177</sup> The human being is the only creature whose life is initiated by the breath of God (Gen 2:7).<sup>178</sup> There is some more reality and this reality, which is a mystery, may be sought from the concrete Person of Christ who in the Hypostatic Union, unites two natures Divine and Human, without mixture, without separation, without confusion. This concrete person, very unique among all, with no example of him or replica, very unique indeed among persons but not individualistic.

The philosophy of the human person, as developed by Karol Wojtyła/ John Paul II, leads to a discernment of the movement from the philosophy of the human being to the philosophy of the human person.<sup>179</sup> It also helps us to discern

174 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Man, the Image of God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011.

175 Cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What is Man? (Ps 8:5): An Itinerary of Biblical Anthropology*, Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2019, no. 45. That the Divine breath makes man different from all other creatures (Gen 2:7).

176 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 93-101.

177 Mueller Chris in his work, *What It Means to Be Created in the Image of God*, observes that “image of God” atomized into a particular human characteristic or as an attribute is insufficient. Identifying the image of God as human dominion is revealed also to be over simplification of the understanding. Thus, he extends the meaning to be the holistic human being as displayed in relational fellowship with God; dominion over creation; and intimate union with each other. He adds that, this reveals four conceptions about God Himself: that He is seeking to have relationship with human being, that He (God) has a Kingdom in which humankind is invited to live and work, that there is a unified plurality in the Godhead, and that He has an intimate love for humankind (Cf. C. Mueller, *What It Means to Be Created in the Image of God*, Virginia: Liberty University 1999, p. 3). Nevertheless, the uniqueness raised here and the way Mueller explains each-can still in one way or the other be applied to angelic persons also.

178 Cf. C. Mueller, *What It Means to Be Created in the Image of God*, Virginia: Liberty University 1999, p. 25.

179 “The philosophy of the human being constitutes a starting point for Wojtyła, and it leads him to the philosophy of the human person. However, the latter does not exclude the former and they partly overlap. ...the philosophy of the human being is absorbed by the philosophy of the human person to such an extent that they are indispensable from each other...there are not two separate levels concerning the human being but various aspects, which in the end constitute a large personalistic project” (G. Hołub, *Understanding the Person: Essays*

the metaphysical structure of the human person and leads to an understanding of some of the person's faculties such as consciousness and emotions. Also, from Wojtyła, aspects of the action of the human person and personal dignity can be seen.<sup>180</sup> A human person chooses freely to affirm his or her identity in things like art, in unconditional love, in forgiveness, and the like, elements which cannot be found among non-personal things.<sup>181</sup> John Paul II stresses also the mystery of the Incarnation as revealing the incomparable worth of the human person. By the mystery of the Incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every human being.<sup>182</sup>

There is only one Person who is true God and true Man at once. He is the Incarnate Son of God – Jesus Christ. This uniqueness ought to be correctly understood, hence, the unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that He is the result of a confused mixture of the Divine and the human. He became truly Man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true Man (cf. CCC, no. 464). Therefore, from the uniqueness of the Person of Jesus Christ, it can be learnt that a person is one, but not individualistic.<sup>183</sup> A person is irreplaceable. A person has no replica. A person is unique. A person has no example. A person is always one but not individualistic. The Incarnate Son of God did not replace the human person – the so called “the man Jesus”. It was not necessary for Him to replace a human person. If by the Incarnation the Divine Son of God had divinized the “human man Jesus” then

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on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła, Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2021. p. 23). It is an approach to the human reality taking the objective and subjective realities simultaneously as a single reality of being human.

180 Cf. G. Hořub, *Understanding the Person: Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2021.

181 Cf. J. D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, London: T&T Clark, 2009, p. 110.

182 Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life, *Evangelium Vitae*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 25 March 1995, no. 2; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22.

183 When talking about Divine Persons, it is said, Divine Person are *Relationes Subsistentes*. A Divine Person is *Relatio Subsistens*, that is, is a Relational-Subsistence. But when talking about other persons, who are not Divine, it is said that, a person is a subsistence-in-relation. This is aimed at safeguarding against the tendency to individualistic perception of, or about, a person. Where as a person is unique, with no example, no replacement, he or she is not individualistic but is always a uniqueness and relatedness at once. There is always objectivity and subjectivity occurring at once (cf. P. Coda, *From The Trinity: The Coming of God in Revelation and Theology*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020, pp. 359-360).

his Redemption and consequently Salvation would be limited to only this one “human person-the man Jesus” who would have been divinized by the eternal Son of God. His Redemption could not be universal.

The human person is not uncreated. He or she is a creature. In other words, he or she is not a Divine Person. The human person is corporeal, he or she possess a body and a soul. The human person is not an angelic person, but he or she has a spiritual reality, which is at times, or at most times neglected by the psychological or naturalistic sciences. It may be said that, also the human person has or is a physical reality, psychological reality and spiritual reality which may not be reduced to the level of active physical consciousness. For example, a baby<sup>184</sup> or a very little child before the age of reason may lack moral consciousness and hence lack moral responsibility, but nevertheless, their selfhood is real and active, for, to each human being there is a deeper reality than what is just made manifest by the self and hence recognised by others.<sup>185</sup> All these elements are to be born in mind while discussing the question of Salvation of the human person, as understood in chapter five of this study.

Pope John Paul II talks of an “inward mystery of man, which in biblical and non-biblical language is expressed by the word ‘heart.’”<sup>186</sup> Following Vatican Council II he further teaches that “only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light...Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of His love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling.”<sup>187</sup> Christ is indispensable because He “the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his heart.”<sup>188</sup> Human nature was assumed, but not absorbed in Him. This act and fact has raised humanity to a dignity beyond compare. For, by His Incarnation, He, the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man.<sup>189</sup>

In man, there is a lot that is invisible, a lot of mystery, but this is made known to the human person by looking at Christ. Our human nature is like

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184 In this study, the life of a concrete human person is understood as to be concretely starting at the moment of conception. The soul of each human person is immediately and directly created by God, not produced by the parents (cf. CCC, nn. 366, 382).

185 Cf. L. Sanyu, “Chalcedonian Personalism According to Colin Patterson,” *Roczniki Teologiczne*, 2(2020), p. 135.

186 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8.

187 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8.

188 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8.

189 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8.

that of Christ and not vice versa. Therefore, to correctly understand our human nature we have to make recourse to the Humanity of Jesus.<sup>190</sup> The Christian view of man, the understanding of society, culture, and art finds its locus on Christ. He is really the midpoint, and Alpha and Omega.<sup>191</sup> The theandric mystery of Jesus is the key. In the Son of God who became Man shines forth the glory of God in human words and deeds of Jesus, in His life and Death, and in His Resurrection. It is in Christ, that it becomes possible to see the unconditional dignity of every person. Here alone is the ultimate protection of human dignity guaranteed. The uniqueness of the human person is anchored in God's unconditional Yes to every man.

## 2.8 WHY THE HYPOSTATIC UNION – REDEMPTIVE PERSPECTIVE

The Hypostatic Union of the One Subject – the Son of God, inaugurates three main missions. First, the Person of Christ who is now true God and true Man is the full revelation of God. Secondly, this same Person effects Redemption. And thirdly, He gathers all, those ready to freely heed his voice, together under One Head. Regarding revelation, according to Schönborn, following Saint Paul's teaching, the Incarnate Son – true God and true Man – reveals God, in that no human person knows God since in His eternal perfection God transcends the ability of earthly creatures to comprehend (1Tim 6:16). In His Incarnation, Christ reveals the infinite God to human persons of a finite ability. He does this through His words from a human mouth and His works done by human hands. He reveals the inaccessible mysteries of the Creator. In Him is seen our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot comprehend and see. The Incarnation of the eternal Word brings to the eyes of human persons a new and radiant vision of God's glory (Heb 1:3).<sup>192</sup> Eusebius's claim that, the Divine Logos returned to being God, the way He was before He had become Man, and that the Logos subsumed His human nature into His Divine nature

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190 Cf. C. Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, pp. 169-170.

191 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Man, the Image of God*, H. Taylor & M.J. Miller (transl.), San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2011.

192 Cf. Christoph Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 226.

as the first fruits cannot be true because, Jesus Christ is One Subject but two natures, that is, the Divine nature and Human nature (cf. CCC, nn. 480-481). The two natures of Christ are in perfect union and harmony. Incarnation means the Word became flesh, *De verbo incarnato*, God sent His own Son (cf. Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4, CCC, no. 483). The Incarnation is the privileged truth of God's revelation<sup>193</sup> and Redemption because "man cannot of himself learn to know the entire wealth of the personal life of God, nor can he by himself attain it. For this reason, God has to come forth to man, reveal Himself to man and help him to achieve the goal which is the everlasting personal union of man with God."<sup>194</sup> Hence the need for revelation. This kind of revelation of God to man is a personalistic revelation because the Divine Person enters into direct contact with the humanity.

Regarding the gathering of all human beings together under One Head, Cardinal Schönborn holds that the goal of the Incarnation is man's "divinization." The preferred term is "adoption" and not "divinization" or "deification" as is explained in chapter five of this study. However, for the time being in this chapter we may for a while use "divinization", since it is the term used in the primary sources, but in quotation marks. The Incarnation brought about a wondrous exchange. He became a mortal Man, and, through Him, with Him, in Him mortal men receive His Divine life. This is the "wondrous exchange."<sup>195</sup> Through Christ one enters the order of relationship with God that responds to the demands of God's holiness and of the very nature of man. It is an order of righteousness, of freely subordination to the Divine Will, of obedience to the Divine Law, an order that is freely given by the Son of God.<sup>196</sup>

Cardinal Schönborn observes that this doctrine, of wondrous exchange, is opposed vehemently by psychoanalyst Richter, the philosopher Topisch and in theology by Hans Küng. These oppose the longing to be "like God". However, the call to resist the longing to be like God becomes problematical if the only alternative offered is the abandonment of every yearning for the "Wholly Other."<sup>197</sup> The wondrous exchange gives the direction of how man can become "like God." Saint Paul already put it: "You know the grace of our

193 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 3.

194 M. Rusecki, "Divine Revelation-Personalistic Aspect," *Personalism: Science Philosophy Theology*, 11(2006), p. 20.

195 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 33.

196 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Redemption*, General Audience, 1 March 1983, no. 2.

197 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 36.



Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9). The Christian path of “divinization” can only be a path that makes man like God, like him in his “self-emptying” (Phil 2:7), which makes human beings rich. The goal of God’s Incarnation is man’s “divinization.” And as for the path to this goal, it can be none other than the path taken by the Son of God in becoming man for us.<sup>198</sup> Schönborn follows Gregory of Nyssa that God takes on the poverty of man’s flesh so that man may receive the richness of His God Head.<sup>199</sup> In the “deification” of man, Christ Himself is the form and content of this deification.

The Incarnation made immortality of the human being possible. In the Incarnation, Divine nature is united with Human nature. Here, there is, the reality of supernatural grace. At the same time, human nature too cooperates with this grace.<sup>200</sup> The power of the Divine Person makes this unity a reality.<sup>201</sup> Cardinal Schönborn, following Athanasius, explains that, if the Logos had become man as a mere creature, then the human being would nonetheless have remained as he or she was. The human being would remain mortal because of not being joined to God. For a creature cannot join other creatures to God. And certainly a part of the creation cannot become Salvation for creation, since it too, would be in need of Salvation. The Logos became Man so that as creator He might renew creation, unite creation with God in Himself, and thus introduce all human persons after His likeness, into immortality. Man would not have been immortal if joined to a creature, if the Son had not been true God. That is why the Hypostatic Union took place so that He might join together the Divine Nature and Human Nature and so that human nature’s Salvation and union with God might be assured.<sup>202</sup> This does not make man God but enables man’s “participation” in the holy life of God.

If Jesus Christ were not God, then God would not have spoken to us, would not have disclosed Himself. Our knowledge about God would never have reached beyond our natural limitations to the supernatural reality. Secondly, the Son of God became Man upon earth in order that man might be able to enter the realm of God. If Christ were not God, then He would not have been able

198 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 34.

199 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, p. 34.

200 Cf. J. Maritain, *Integral Humanism*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1968, p. 27.

201 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 273.

202 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 105, following Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos* 2, 67-70 (ed. Tetz 1:244-47).

to bring human persons the “divinization”.<sup>203</sup> This “divinization” is understood to mean the becoming of adopted sons and daughters of God through, with, and in the Son. It is not a reality foreign, thanks to the unity of the two natures in the Person of Christ, the human being is becoming adopted ontologically.

## 2.9 CONCLUSION

Keeping in mind the fact that human words, human experience and human reason alone, without faith, are always inadequate for making statements about the Mystery of the Incarnation in its fullness, we can conclude that according to Cardinal Schönborn, Christ’s Humanity is not as such an instrument of use by the Divine Son of God but it is the Son Himself Incarnate. Just as He is Himself in his Divinity, so is He also now Himself in his Humanity. Christ is not different from his two natures. He is of them. He is in them. He is these natures. Christ is God, and He is Man, and remains such forever. Christ’s Humanity is His human existence, which at no time subsists by itself, that is, without being united with the Divine Person. Christ Incarnate is not several hypostases or acting subjects, rather, He is One Hypostasis – One acting Subject. The Hypostatic Union makes neither the Son’s Divinity less or corrupted, nor does it make His Humanity less or swallowed up. In this union the Human existence of Christ is not absorbed by His Divine existence. Likewise the Divine Existence is not absorbed by the Human existence. The Divine and the Human is the united single existence from now and forever without confusion and without separation.

If man is to avoid repeating what has gone wrong in the history of man, a personalistic attention to the Incarnate Son of God is indispensable. When the first man Adam sinned, God in His eternal wisdom deemed it necessary that there be the Incarnation – true God and true Man in order to restore order, not only just restoring to the first Adam but to adoption as sons and daughters of God. It is therefore, of absolute necessity to always rediscover this Incarnation in daily progress of the world so as to maintain and even better

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<sup>203</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 100.

to move to a better dignified order. Again and again there is to be fresh recourse to the incarnational mystery. Human persons need always to be sensitive and attentive to this mystery. It is important to keep cultivating among human persons the awareness of the mystery of the One who is both God and Man at once. Having this in mind, it is now possible to proceed and consider the experience of the Son of God on earth. This experience presented in the next chapter is of Himself but also of the human persons He encountered in his physical earthly history. Chapter five will consider the human persons outside the historical time of Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER THREE: THE SON OF GOD ON EARTH

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Cardinal Schönborn, there are three pillars of Christology, namely, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and Experience. These three should always be taken together. This chapter focuses more on the personalistic experience of the Person of Christ, however, not in isolation from the other two pillars. Other than the concrete mystery of the Incarnation, the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, there are other concrete moments during the historical life of the Son of God on earth. From the swaddling clothes at His Birth to the vinegar of His Passion and the shroud of His Resurrection, everything in Jesus' life reveals some reality of the Person of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Even if, not much is written about His early life, the little written especially by the evangelists Matthew and Luke is quite revealing about the Person of Christ and His mission. At the Annunciation (Lk 1:35, 38), it is clearly shown that the ever-Virgin Mary became the Mother of God and the spiritual mother of all those that follow her Son. When Matthew and Luke write that Jesus is born in a humble stable in Bethlehem during the reign of Herod the Great, they point to His Birth being a historical fact. Jesus' circumcision means His incorporation into the Chosen People and His humble submission to the Law. The Magi from the East (Mt 2:1-12) reveals that Jesus is not the Messiah of Israel alone but that He is God's Son, the saviour of all nations and peoples.<sup>2</sup>

The flight to Egypt together with the killing of the innocents indicate how the forces of darkness oppose the Light. The Presentation in the Temple

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1 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 224.

2 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. 38.

shows Jesus' background as a faithful and devoted Jew. Him growing up in the village of Nazareth, His foster father Joseph taught Him carpentry. He is true Man having to learn and work as all men do. He accompanies His parents to the great religious feasts in Jerusalem. At only twelve years, His intelligence astounded the Temple teachers. But nevertheless, He advances in wisdom and age and stature and in favour before God and man (cf. Lk 2:52). The hidden life of Jesus shows the Saviour who shared human daily life, humble and out of attention of the people. His obedience to His parents shows an ordinary upbringing like every human being.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is possible for every human being to identify with Jesus. The temptation in the desert (cf. Lk 4:1-13) shows that Jesus is the New Adam, who remains faithful to God when He rebuffed Satan.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the Old Adam who gave in to Satan, the New Adam opens a new order of obedience. According to Schönborn, Saint Augustine grasped the theological significance of the mysteries of Christ clearly in their three-fold dimension as *revelation of God*, *Redemption of man*, and *recapitulation*.<sup>5</sup> In evaluating anthropocentric view of the Redeemer and Redemption in the legitimate sense, it is possible to discover the truth of the Person of Jesus Christ who is true God and true Man. What is visible in His earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of His Divine Sonship and redemptive mission (cf. CCC, no. 515). The whole life of Jesus should be seen and read as a whole as revelation, as a saving event, and as the enduring archetype of Christian life. The Christian life is also founded in a sacramental congruence with the earthly life of Jesus. It is important to remember that historicism and individualism are not absolute basis for the encounter of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

The Incarnation is treated under chapter two; the Passion, Death and Resurrection is discussed under chapter four. This chapter three is about the personalistic dimension expressed in some of these other concrete moments between His Birth and Passion. Moments such as, the Epiphany, the flight to Egypt, the Child Jesus, the Baptism of Jesus, the Wedding feast at Cana, the Transfiguration, and some other mysteries of Jesus' life on earth. In looking at these mysteries we keep trying to elucidate the personal experience or encounter

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3 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, p. 38.

4 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, pp. 33-35.

5 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 220.

6 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 223-224.

of different human persons with the Person of Christ. For, experience lived through is one of the indispensable pillars of Christology. The chapter presents some of the concrete experiences of those who had a concrete encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ. Spread along the chapter are some of these experiences: experience of the wise men; experience of Joseph, husband of Mary; experience of the chosen disciples at the Transfiguration; experience of Matthew as a tax collector; experience of the Temple guards among others. In addition, this chapter also touches the questions of Jesus' knowledge, Consciousness of himself and His Mission.

### 3.1 THE EPIPHANY

In contemplating the mysteries of Jesus Christ, we find that, the heavenly world always appears in scenes when Christ is especially humbled. The angels sing about Jesus' poor Birth. The Father's voice reveals the Son on the occasion when He is humbled in Baptism. The Father glorifies the Son when the Son is taking the road to Jerusalem to die there. The Father always glorifies the Son at decisive turning points in His life when the Son is particularly humbling himself. It is like as if Easter is the hidden form of the whole of Jesus' life. The glory of Easter already shines forth time and again during Jesus' lifetime.<sup>7</sup> The prayers of the liturgy on the Solemnity of Epiphany story suggest that God is active in the people called into the Church by Baptism. The theology of light has been characteristic of the imagery of this feast from the early Church. The word and feast of "Epiphany" is the celebration of the revelation of God's presence to humanity. It also emphasises the universality of the faith borne by the narrative of the Magi's visit. In the second reading of the day of Epiphany (Eph 3:2-3.5-6), the Church is proclaimed as the "body", as the incarnate, revelatory presence of God in the world.<sup>8</sup> In order to explore the personalistic dimension of the Epiphany let us start by looking at the star of Bethlehem.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 241.

<sup>8</sup> "Father of light, unchanging God, today you reveal to men of faith the resplendent fact of the Word made flesh...Today you revealed in Christ your eternal plan of Salvation and showed him as the light of all peoples. Now that his glory has shone among us you have

### 3.1.1 The Star of Bethlehem

From the star of Bethlehem, we come to realize that, human persons can come to some knowledge of God through reflecting on nature. But nature alone is not enough, needed also is the help of the Sacred Scriptures and how these Scriptures have been traditionally interpreted and understood. And yet, there is another more important decisive moment of a personal subjectivist consciousness and free choice. All these elements have to work together in perfect harmony in leading the human person to the discovery and encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ, and hence to communion with God. The Feast of Epiphany celebrates the encounter of the “heathen” with the light of God’s revelation. There was a long-lasting very rare alignment of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. And the report in the Gospel according to Matthew is reliable and credible in all its details (Mt 2:1-12).<sup>9</sup> God speaks to man not only through the Bible which is the word of His revelation (*revelatio Dei*), but He first speaks through the book of nature (*manifestatio Dei*). God is the Someone that wrote this book.<sup>10</sup> The Act of worshiping of this Baby by the wise men points to who this Person is. He is truly God worthy of worship and adoration. From the Epiphany event we can say, the revelatory role is conclusively manifested when the shepherds and the Magi, who worship the Baby lying in the manger, see God, who choose what is weak in the world to shame the strong (1 Cor. 1:17).<sup>11</sup>

The wise men were guided by both the Scriptures, that the Redeemer was supposed to be born in Bethlehem, and by the star (nature) and they were able to find and to reach the infant Jesus. Astrology is not rejected in the Bible.

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renewed humanity in his immortal image” (M. Connell, *Eternity Today: On the Liturgical Year Volume 1 On God and Time, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Candlemas*, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2006, pp. 184-198).

- 9 An eminent Austrian astronomer Professor Conradin Ferrari d’Ochieppo, who was chair of the Institute for Theoretical Astronomy at the University of Vienna from 1955 to 1978, devoted many years of his life to researching ancient astronomy, and on that basis, he pointed out a particular conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the year 7 B.C., probably the genuine year of Christ’s birth; *Der Stern von Bethlehem in astronomischer Sicht: Legende oder Tatsache?* (1999) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 43; C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 48. Also, that Jesus was actually born earlier than the year zero has been known for a long time, because the early medieval calculation of this date of birth, on which the Christian calendar is based was incorrect. Today the date of his birth considered most likely was, according to tradition, exactly January 6 in the winter of the year 7 B. C.
- 10 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, pp. 45-46.
- 11 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 226.



The astrologers assumed according to the astonishingly accurate knowledge of their time that the rare planet alignment had to point to a special event in the Jewish nation, for instance, to the birth of a very special king. In Jerusalem, however, they referred to the prophecies of the Bible according to which the Messiah, the Redeemer, was supposed to be born in Bethlehem. Both things, nature and the Bible, showed the human persons the way to God. And when they found the Child, they fell down before Him and paid homage to Him. They did not worship the star but they worshipped the One to whom the star pointed. The fate of the human persons does not hang on the stars, because the stars and everything in the entire universe point ultimately to the Creator in whose hand the life of human persons is.<sup>12</sup> Here we see an interesting personalistic element. Human persons, if considered attentively in their created physical nature, can come to discovery of God. It is good to remember that human persons are created in the image of God. Attentive reading of their true human nature will consequently lead to God in whose image they are created. As already mentioned, it will be erroneous to remain starrng at the human person's nature without proceeding beyond this "natural nature" to the supernatural reality implied or pointed to by the nature. The stars and everything in the entire universe point ultimately to the Creator. Guided by nature and the Scriptures, the simple shepherds and the wise men from the Orient find God in the small Child of Bethlehem, who has come among men.<sup>13</sup> However, unlike the stars and other creatures, the human being who is created in the image of God provides the best moment of *manifestatio Dei*. Moreover, human nature was in its full integrity assumed by the Son of God, hence giving it a higher dignity.

#### 3.1.2 The Reaction of the Wise Men

The reaction of the wise men is that, guided by nature and the Scriptures, they make a conscious decision to set out, search and discover the Person of Christ. The wise men have a feeling that a turning point in the history of the world has arrived.<sup>14</sup> Gazing at the star is not enough. It is a matter of setting out to travel

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, pp. 42-44.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 49.

personally as an active subject capable of a real conscious human act. The wise men from the East *freely* venture on a long journey. They are prepared to be guided in their search by the star and the message of the prophets. According to the message of the prophets of old, the One they are seeking is to be born in Bethlehem. God's word helps them on their way. The Holy Scripture points out the way for them. They are not deterred by being sent to this miserable little town of Bethlehem.<sup>15</sup> Here, it is very interesting to notice how Cardinal Schönborn blends the guidance by nature (the star) inseparably with the written word of God, the Holy Scriptures, and a conscious decision of cooperating with this guidance. In perfect harmony, nature (star or reason) and the supernatural revelation (Sacred Scripture or faith) together lead man to the discovery of the Person of Jesus Christ. We can say that the human person in his or her nature, if he or she freely accepts and chooses to be guided by the Word of God he or she will be led to the Person of Christ – the Messiah.<sup>16</sup>

The human persons should not end at the nature, but the nature (star or natural reason) is to lead the human persons to a finding of the Person of Jesus Christ. This is what Vatican Council II teaches when it states, "God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things, by the natural power of human reason."<sup>17</sup> The Council adds that, "God directed human beings to a supernatural end, that is, a sharing in the good things of God that utterly surpasses the understanding of the human mind [1Cor. 2:9]."<sup>18</sup> Nature (reason or star) leads the human persons to the supernatural, to the meeting of who surpasses the understanding of the human mind, namely the eternal Son of God present as true God and true Man concretely and in history at Bethlehem. In this line of thinking we can say that, a correct discourse on the mystery of the human person in his authentic nature can lead to a better discovery of who the human being is. And above all, as already indicated earlier in chapter two by looking attentively at the Person Jesus Christ who is the Incarnate true God and true Man at once, the human person is enabled to enter into his or her own mystery and into the mystery of God. Not to comprehend these mysteries but to go in as far as it is possible for human persons. The reward for this entry will ultimately be Salvation when

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15 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 49.

16 C. Schönborn, *Behold, God's Son!*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007, p. 44.

17 Cf. Vatican Council I, Chapter 2, no. 1.

18 Cf. Vatican Council I, Chapter 2, no. 4.

the human person freely follows the authentic discovery he or she encounters (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22).

### 3.1.3 The Dream and the New Route

The dream that guides the wise men to take a new route to which they pay heed is understood as a subjectivistic moment. Normally, dreams are subjective. Cardinal Schönborn sees this dream as the inner voice of conscience which guided the wise men to make a decision to take a new route. The star gives them light. And this simple star in the sky draws them towards a different light, which is radiating from the place to which they are travelling. Soon they find the house, the Child, and His Blessed Mother Mary. The wise men kneel before the Child Jesus and offer Him the treasures they have brought. On their way home, they are no longer guided by a star but by a dream, which they obey. The stars may give the human person general guidance because they are God's creatures. Yet the future does not lie in the stars but in the hand of the Creator. God speaks to the human persons in many different ways: through the inner voice of conscience, like the dream which guided the wise men to make a decision to take another route.<sup>19</sup> This points to the reality of each one's subjective moment for Salvation.

God speaks to human persons through nature and its laws, through happenings – whether joyous or painful, and through His written Word in the Scriptures and above all through His only begotten Son whom He sent into the world. All these are objective moments of God revealing Himself and talking to man. God speaks to the human persons objectively in all these ways. Yet, there is still a personal subjective moment. After all this objective speech, the human person must set out himself or herself to seek the way. He has to take trouble to find the way and the goal. More so, actively and consciously the human person has to take a decision of moving by the new route, following the inner voice of conscience which has been properly formed, guided and helped by the objective speech and revelation of God. With a sure and certain hope, the wise men did not let themselves be deterred by Herod. They found the new-born King of Peace, Christ

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 49.

the Child, and Mary, His Mother and they subjectively decided to take another route.<sup>20</sup> With a concrete personal free decision and choice, we find in Jesus our personal Salvation with the help of Divine grace.<sup>21</sup> With this Divine grace the human person has to freely cooperate (cf. Phil 2:12-13).

### 3.2 THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

The main question of this study is the Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. That means, the Person of Jesus Christ is very central for this study. But it is not a study of the Person of Christ in solitude, the study naturally also picks interest with other concrete persons in concrete relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ. Before the flight, Matthew emphasizes the Divine origin of Jesus. Mary “was found with Child by the work of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 1:18).<sup>22</sup> He nevertheless, presents Joseph acting freely as human person with the freedom to accept or refuse. In the flight to Egypt, is the concrete human person, Joseph who freely acts. What does the action of Joseph reveal to us about the personal encounter with this Person of Jesus Christ? The Gospel account according to Matthew presents to us concrete persons: Joseph, the Child Jesus and His Mother, and Herod (Mt 2:13-15, 19-23). The Son of God is called by the wise men, the new-born King of the Jews. The reaction of Herod is that of seeking to kill Him. God’s coming to earth as a Child frightens powerful people. Herod the tyrant who was drunk with power, had exterminated half his family because of fears for his power – three sons, his wife, his brother-in-law, and his mother-in-law. He does not want to lose anything from himself and his power. He does not want any disturbance of his existing balance of power, even if this came from God, bringing Salvation and hope to mankind.<sup>23</sup> Herod is determined to fulfil his desire to kill the Child Jesus but there is an enemy to Herod himself which he cannot kill. That is, his own death, which day by

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20 C. Schönborn, *Behold, God’s Son!* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007 p. 44.

21 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 49.

22 Cf. M. Miravalle (ed.), *Mariology: A Guide for priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, Goleta: Seat of Wisdom Books Queenship Publishing, 2007, pp. 78-79.

23 C. Schönborn, *Behold, God’s Son!* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007, p. 45.

day moves closer, which relentlessly seeks to take his life and will one day take it from him. Joseph reacts in a different way from that of Herod.

Joseph's attitude and reaction indicates to us the personalistic norm of love.<sup>24</sup> A love that gives one's life freely for the good of another. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). First of all Joseph has already accepted the Child who came, not from himself, but from God, not as a possession at his disposal or as someone to use for his temporal benefit (a person is not an object for use), but as a responsibility entrusted to him by God. His whole life is now freely focused on this mission. His own self-realization is not his purpose in life, rather, it is his service to this Child, who is the Redeemer of all men. Joseph lets himself be led by God, but God always shows him only the next step, and this step Joseph must then take himself, freely, bravely, wisely, and resolutely. Joseph has no hesitation in doing his role which he has freely accepted. So he flees; he turns back with the Child and his Mother; he settles down finally in small, insignificant Nazareth. One would expect that after accomplishing such a great mission of the flight to Egypt on return he would be rewarded with a magnificent home in a first class city but this is not the case.<sup>25</sup> Joseph's attitude is very personalistic in the way he responds to his call as a foster-father of Jesus. He does this out of love. A love that freely offers one's life to another. In the person of Joseph, human persons are invited to give up self-centeredness and let themselves be drawn into the mystery that is beyond human comprehension: that God has become Man out of love *for*.<sup>26</sup> In Joseph, Christian love which is personalistic is manifested.

### 3.3 THE CHILD JESUS

The truth of the Person of Christ as true God and true Man makes it possible to look at His life in such a way as to discover and appreciate His innermost mystery. Saint Luke tells us about the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the

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24 Cf. K. Wojtyła/ John Paul II, "The Personalistic Norm," *Personalism; Science Philosophy Theology*, 11(2006), pp. 45-48.

25 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 38.

26 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 43.

Temple (Lk 2:41-52). Luke gives us a very interesting statement about the Child Jesus that can lead to a better understanding of who this Person is. He states, “And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man (Lk 2:51-52).”<sup>27</sup> Later, when He comes back to Nazareth to teach in the synagogue, the inhabitants of His home town ask questions like, “Where did this Man get all this? What is the Wisdom given to Him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” (Mk 6:2-3).<sup>28</sup> This shows that Jesus is truly Man by the fact of obedience, of family, increasing in wisdom and stature, and of work. But at the same time He is Divine by the fact of His Wisdom surpassing all human understanding, reckoning and explanation.

The two natures of One Divine Person of Christ are perfectly revealed in this youth, Jesus. God’s Son assumed Human nature to save the world. This inner mystery was already recognized in the Baby Jesus by a few, that is, Mary His Mother, also recognized in some way by Joseph His foster father, the shepherds, the Magi, Simeon and Anna. Right from the Incarnation He possess all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom (Col 2:3) and yet as true Man He has to grow in knowledge and wisdom through obedience to His parents. The Sonship of Christ, His complete obedience to the father, the expression of His infinite love, confer an infinite value upon even the least of His gestures (in this case his obedience to His parents and growing in stature, knowledge and wisdom) even if they remain forever hidden from the eyes of men.<sup>29</sup> Jesus willingly and freely submitted to the law, so as to overcome the disobedience of the earthly man by His obedience (Rom 5:15). He, for whom God has put all things under His feet (Eph 1:22), the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim 6:15), willingly submitted to Joseph and Mary. In doing so, He was in particular fulfilling the fourth commandment, the commandment of love and obeying of one’s parents in a perfect way. In this way, He shows how a human person should authentically grow. This growth and development should be immersed in love which is an ontological trait proper to persons. His Holy Family of Nazareth is united in respect and love. This is how human persons – as true

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27 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 230-31.

28 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 231.

29 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 231.

persons – have to live among themselves. The only appropriate disposition towards another person is that of love and respect.

Another important truth revealed is that, Jesus' submissiveness to His mother and His foster father was the image of His filial obedience to His Father in heaven. The everyday obedience of Jesus to Joseph and Mary both announced and anticipated the obedience of Holy Thursday (cf. CCC, no. 532). He willingly submitted to His earthly parents out of love and thus by meekness and humility He won their love. Human persons can now learn from the Person of Christ how hard-heartedness is to be overcome. That is, through looking at, the willing submission of the Son of God. This attitude enables God's love to pour into human hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to human persons (Rom 5:5), so that human beings become obedient from the heart (Rom 6:17-18).<sup>30</sup> From the life of the Child Jesus we see the revelatory role, when the inhabitants of Nazareth see in the young and carpenter's son a glimpse of the Father who is working in a way surpassing their human understanding (Jn 5:17).<sup>31</sup> Saint John the evangelist writes, "And the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). "Flesh" is a Jewish biblical expression for "man".<sup>32</sup> God's eternal Son, became a Man of flesh and blood. He is the little Child in the stall of Bethlehem. The Christmas story is mainly that "The Christ Child is God's Son, who became Man. The Child to whom Mary gives birth in Bethlehem's stall really is true God and true man, whom the angel calls 'Emmanuel', 'God with us.'"<sup>33</sup> Cardinal Schönborn continually identifies this Word with "the little Child in the stall of Bethlehem" to emphasise the historicity of Jesus Christ, as true God and true Man.

### 3.4 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The Baptism of Jesus is very important for this personalistic study because, there is an explicit mentioning of all Three Divine Persons of the Trinity.<sup>34</sup>

30 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 232.

31 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 226.

32 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 35.

33 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 31.

34 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2018, p. 34.

Schönborn sees the Baptism of Jesus as the concrete identification with the sins of man (Lk 3:15-22). He shows human persons the significance of the new path to be taken. He is going about in the midst of people. He lines up along with the great crowd of sinners. His intention is to become one of them, yet not so as to become a miserable sinner like men are. For the sake of man, He is becoming one of men. He intends to carry human burdens and human sins – the personal burdens and personal sins.<sup>35</sup> He takes them upon himself and carries them into the Jordan, to wash them away. He does not despise the people among whom He is taking their place.<sup>36</sup> Much as he takes away their sins, they remain moral persons and so free to cooperate with Him or not. If they cooperate they will actualise their Salvation, with the help of grace. By taking John's baptism, He accepted the mission of God's Suffering Servant. The descending of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove bears witness that He is the Messiah.<sup>37</sup> His Baptism indicates the relationship of His Person with sinners in this world (Mt 3:13-17). When John the Baptist made the call to repentance, many went down to him to the Jordan for the repentance of their sins. Luke gives a vivid account of all who came to receive the baptism of repentance: soldiers, prostitutes, tax collectors, and in general, people of all occupational strata. And then suddenly in their midst, Jesus! John shrinks back: What are you doing in such company? After all, you have no need of repentance! I need baptism not you, John protests. Nevertheless, Jesus insists on receiving baptism in the midst of this assorted, sinful crowd of people. What moves Him to take this step? For thirty years He has lived a completely inconspicuous life as a manual labourer. Now He sets out on His own. And His first step is to go to John in the midst of the penitents.

Jesus' first official act is something like His life agenda. Right from the beginning Jesus takes up the place that expresses the mission of His life. In the midst of people who are sinners. His name expresses this mission: Joshua, Jesus, in Hebrew means God saves. The angel had explained to Joseph that this was the reason for calling the Child that Mary was expecting Jesus: For He will save His people from their sins. This connects Jesus' Birth with His Baptism. He came to free people from their sins. That is why He, the Son of God, became

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35 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, p. 50.

36 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 51.

37 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p. 34.



Man; that is why He comes to the Jordan, in order to place himself in the midst of sinners and to take their burden of guilt upon himself. God straight away adds His approval “You are My beloved Son” (Lk 3:22).<sup>38</sup> At this moment, the Father teaches that He has a Son.<sup>39</sup> In the approach of Jesus, can be seen, His conscious Love. He is beginning His mission by associating with sinners out of love and compassion for them. He knows that these are persons worthy of love in spite of their sinful condition out of which they are to be led out by Divine love. He knows clearly that, it is love and not hate or judgement that leads the sinner to conversion.

God’s Spirit comes down upon Him like a dove. A voice proclaims: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” In this scene is also a glimpse into the Trinitarian Love. God’s Spirit comes down upon Him, followed by the utterance “You are my beloved Son.” The path of Jesus that God attests goes downward to human persons, down among sinners. And God is well pleased with this. That is what Jesus came for. Yet the aim is not to remain down below. Human persons come up again refreshed, from a bath. The person who was laden down with sins emerges from baptism like one newly created. The aim of baptism is to come up again renewed, like this. Jesus came down into the water of baptism with human beings, so as to draw human beings up out of the old burdens and sins, with Him. That is the meaning of baptism to this day. It is possible to renew it every day.<sup>40</sup> Schönborn’s descending and ascending Christology is clearly shown here.

### 3.5 THE WEDDING AT CANA

Jesus had just begun His public ministry. His name was not yet well known. His healings of the sick, which made Him famous far and wide, He had not yet begun. Only a small group of disciples had gathered around Him – among them

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38 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 47.

39 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2018, p. 19.

40 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, p. 52.

John, who reports this story (Jn 2:1-11). A wedding was taking place in a village near Nazareth. It was a great feast with many guests. Among them was Mary of Nazareth, the Mother of Jesus. Her Son and His friends had been invited along with her. Cardinal Schönborn admires the hospitality here. We know nothing about the couple. They may well have been poor people, otherwise the wine would not have run out so soon. Being unable to offer anything to one's guests is deeply shameful. Mary grasped the unfortunate situation. She is on the lookout for every difficulty.<sup>41</sup> Mary approaches Jesus in a very personal way. She knows personally who Jesus is and that He is able to remedy the situation. Mary knows this personally, the other people at the wedding do not know that Jesus is able to do something but Mary His Mother knows. She makes no demands. She does not lay down what He should do. Mary respects the free will and freedom of her Son Jesus Christ. She simply points out to Him the unconformable situation and nothing more. Her self-restraint is marvellous. She certainly could have put pressure on Him: "Do something to help these people!"<sup>42</sup> She did nothing of the sort. The Blessed Mother respects her Son's freedom. She sets us fellow human persons a great example here.

However, Jesus' reaction seems rather harsh: "O Woman, what have you to do with Me?" that sounds far from friendly.<sup>43</sup> He does not call her "Mother" but "woman" – almost as if she were a stranger. By acting so, Jesus is clearly marking the path He knows He has to follow. Yes, Jesus has His reasons for refusing His Mother's request: "My hour has not yet come" it is not yet time for Him to be revealed through wonders and signs. Indeed, He probably did not see His mission as being primarily that at all. He does not want people to run after Him on account of healings and miracles. He wants human persons to repent, to change our hearts and to turn our lives around. He is looking for faith, not admiration. But Mary does not allow herself to be dissuaded. She keeps insisting that the bridal couple must be helped in their difficulty. And so she is confident that Jesus will certainly do it. She says to the servants "Do whatever He tells you," (Jn 2:5).<sup>44</sup> And Jesus lets himself be moved by this confiding trust. He changes gallons of water into exquisite

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41 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 56.

42 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 56.

43 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 56.

44 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 57.

wine – more than enough for a large wedding feast. What does this reveal about the Person of Jesus Christ?

First, that He rejoices in rejoicing – otherwise, He would not have come to the wedding feast. Second, that even quite ordinary material concerns move His heart. He does not always solve all difficulties quite as beautifully as He did at the wedding in Cana, yet He can always work the miracle of transformation whenever He transforms the water of human persons' everyday life, by faith, into the wine of joy and hope. Only, the human persons have to play their part-following Mary's advice, doing what He asks.<sup>45</sup> The activity of the Person of Jesus is directed towards the Salvation of the human person. Of course, He is not indifferent to the concrete temporal existential concerns, that is why He intervenes, but most important is Salvation.

### 3.6 THE TRANSFIGURATION

At the Transfiguration there is revelation and prefiguration of many mysteries. The Transfiguration points to our own resurrection. It gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when He will change our lowly body to be like His glorious Body (Phil 3:21). But it also recalls that it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God (cf. CCC, no. 556; Acts 14:22). Because of the richness of what the Transfiguration, has to say about the Person of Jesus Christ and the Salvation of the human person, it is good that the personalistic dimension of this Transfiguration, be discussed under five points. First, by paying attention to the setting of the scene, secondly the Trinitarian dimension, thirdly the Son of God is always in a relational subsistence, fourthly the Divinity of the Son, and finally the Salvific dimension.

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45 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 57.

### 3.6.1 Setting of the Scene

Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain before three witnesses chosen by Jesus himself: Peter, James, and John (Mt 17:1-8).<sup>46</sup> Jesus' face and clothes became dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking of His departure which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem in order to enter into His glory (Lk 24:26). Moses and Elijah had seen God's glory on the Mountain. The Law and the prophets had announced the Messiah's sufferings (Lk 24:27). Christ's Passion and His salvific Death is the will of the Father. The Son freely acts as God's servant (Is 42:1). The cloud indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit. The whole Trinity is present. The Father's presence is evidenced by the voice, the Son is the transfigured true Man, and the Holy Spirit evidenced by the shining cloud. Jesus is transfigured so that His disciples could have a foretaste of the Son's glory and that when they should see Him crucified, they would be able to understand that His Passion and Death is voluntary (cf. CCC, nn. 554-556). From the setting of the scene and what happens, we can rightly say that this Transfiguration is a preamble of what is yet to be fully revealed in the life of the Person of Jesus Christ. The details of what comes next after the Transfiguration event in the life of Christ, are treated in the next chapter, Chapter Four, of this study.

### 3.6.2 The Trinitarian Dimension of the Transfiguration

The Holy Trinity is present and is revealed at the Transfiguration. The Father in the voice, the Son is true God and true Man, and the Holy Spirit in the Shining cloud. The Love with which the Father loves the Son is shown by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Father's voice repeats the message already proclaimed at the Baptism: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 17:5). The Father is confirming Peter's profession made earlier, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" to which profession Jesus responded with the beatitude, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,

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46 Cf. A. Andreopoulos, *This Is My Beloved Son: The Transfiguration of Christ*, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2012.

but My Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17). Only the Father, who knows His Son, can reveal Him to human persons. The voice of the Father confirms to the disciples the uniqueness of this Jesus of Nazareth, and so they are to continue paying unique attention to His words and acts.<sup>47</sup>

The main personalistic reality which can be detected in the Transfiguration, is the relation of the Father to His Son, and the relation of the Son to His Father, and the relation to the Holy Spirit. And then also is revealed the fellowship of the Holy Trinity with Human persons. He is the Only Son of the Father. Much as, in this sense, the Transfiguration is about the eternal relation of the Father to His Son and the relation of the Son to His Father, when however, connected with Peter’s confession, it can be seen that the Holy Trinity does not remain closed in the Self’s Immanent inner life, but is ready to and indeed opens up to human persons out of love as evidenced by the Father opening up the mystery to Peter, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17). In the second sense then, the relation(s) of the Holy Trinity to the human persons, and the fellowship of the human persons to the Holy Trinity are revealed. “And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him” (Mt 17:3). Moses and Elijah who are human persons are seen talking with Him.

#### 3.6.3 The Son of God is Always in Relation

Another interesting personalistic element of the Transfiguration is that the Son is always in relation. The Son is always in relation with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. What He accomplishes He does so always in relation with His Father. He is never separated from this relation. He is not only in relation to the Father alone but also at the same moment in relation with the Holy Spirit. The Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity are in real relations always. Secondly, Jesus Christ – true God and true Man – is at once related to human persons. This is evidenced by the presence of concrete human persons living on earth, Peter, James and John. His relation is not bound by time, it extends even before the concrete precise Incarnation when the angel of the Lord declared unto the

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 243.

Blessed Virgin Mary. The Law and the prophets attest to this reality. The third element is that of the free will. He has to freely suffer many things even be killed but He will be glorified. Why will He be glorified and why should the disciples believe this? Because the Son is always in relation with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The disciples should not therefore be scandalized by the sufferings which He is going to encounter ahead of Him. He accepts all these sufferings freely without any coercion and that is also the will of His Father.

### 3.6.4 Revelation of the Divinity of the Son and Not Divinization

The Transfiguration is the anticipation of the Resurrection and Ascension. From the day when Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Mt 16:16), Jesus begins to talk about the fact that He has to go up to Jerusalem and to suffer greatly. He speaks to the disciples about His Death and His Resurrection and tells them that they, too, must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him. Jesus' disciples do not understand, and they reject this warning.<sup>48</sup> Against this background, Jesus takes His three favourite disciples, Peter, James and John with Him and leads them up Mount Tabor where He is transfigured. In the Transfiguration, the Divinity of Jesus is shown to the three chosen apostles. During His earthly life, this Divinity is not yet fully recognized in the weakness of Human flesh. The Transfiguration does not change the Person of Jesus Christ. Nor does it add any accidental element. Rather it allows the revelation of that which is already present in the humbleness of the manger. There is no external splendour added to the body, but an inner splendour revealed forth from the Divinity of the Son of God, hypostatically united with His Humanity in ineffable unity.<sup>49</sup> The personalistic truth emphasized by Schönborn is that in Christ there is only One Person – the Divine Person, who is now, the Hypostatic Union of Divine nature and Human nature. This Transfiguration is *not* a moment of the Father *adopting* the man Jesus, but rather it reveals the ontological reality of the Son of God, who is true God and true Man. This personalistic understanding is very important in our

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48 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 241.

49 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 241-42.

contemplation about the Transfiguration if we are to avoid the risk of falling into Adoptionism, Docetism or Monophysitism. The Son is not divinized but is true God and true Man at once.

#### 3.6.5 The Salvific Dimension at the Transfiguration

Numerous salvific realities are revealed in the Transfiguration. Jesus Christ is revealed the beloved Son of the Father. The way chosen by God to establish His Kingdom is founded on self-giving and love. The prefiguration of full adoption to sonship of human persons is given, that is, making human beings coheirs through the Son, with the Son, and in the Son. In the Transfiguration there is allusion to the glorified body because His body was filled with the greatest splendour, that Human body which is His, and is true body, is filled with greatest splendour. Also, there is a “sacrament” of the second regeneration, our own resurrection, since the first regeneration was already done through Baptism. At the Transfiguration there is also, a pre-taste of Christ’s glorious coming, the Parousia, when He will change our lowly human bodies to be like His glorious body (cf. CCC, no. 556). Saint Mark writes, “and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them” (Mk 9:3). Clothes are not the person, but things. They are nevertheless, transformed also. They become dazzling white, that is, changed, transformed such as *no one on earth* could bleach them. Could this be a revelation of the cosmic dimension of the Parousia when things will be transformed so as to conform with and to the glorious state? It is interesting to note that, *no one on earth* could actualise this transformation, as if to emphasise that, this is a supernatural Act, an Act of God alone. All these different mysteries at the Transfiguration guide us to conceive of something about the meaning of Redemption and Salvation, which is described ahead in Chapter Five.

The interrelationship of all Salvation history is shown by the presence of Moses and Elijah who speak with Jesus. The Law and the prophets of the Old Covenant who announced in their prophecies the coming of the Messiah, speak with Jesus.<sup>50</sup> The Old Covenant and the New do not contradict each other. Rather

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. G. O’ Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, p. 56.

they confirm each other. In the Transfiguration, it becomes clear that the prophets are speaking of Christ and that the words of the prophets are still valid. Moses and Elijah belong to Christ forever. Jesus is the Centre of the Torah that Moses received at Mount Sinai (Mt 17: 1-9). There is perfect harmony in the witness to the same Divine Person of Jesus Christ present in Old Testament and the New Testament. This Divine Person who is the eternal pre-existent Son of God does not change. Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus about the Exodus that He is to accomplish at Jerusalem (Lk 9:31). The Father to whom He has just been speaking in prayer, answers Him through the Old Testament witnesses and confides His mission to Him through them. This concerns on one hand the end of Jesus' earthly life (2 Pet 1:15) and on the other hand He is returning to the Father, from whom He came (Jn 16:28).<sup>51</sup> The relations that exists among the Persons can now be clearly seen. One is witnessed to by the other Persons and in this relation the identity of the other Persons is made evident. The personal, "I" sees itself in the other personal "I". This personal "I" is not an individualistic "I" but rather a personalistic "I", an "I" that is always in relation with the other "I's".

The disciples are drawn into the cloud and thus, in the saving event. In a sense we can say the human persons Peter, James, and John are "drawn" into the Holy Trinity. While in the Old Testament, people were only allowed to observe from a distance (Ex 24:1.14), at the scene of the Transfiguration, the disciples are standing in the middle of the cloud. Only He, Jesus Christ offers His disciples the chance to see God's glory. Through the Person of Christ, and with the Person of Christ, and in the Person of Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit (shining cloud) the disciples are led to the Father, and indeed to fellowship in the life of Holy Trinity. The disciples, first fall to the ground in fear at the voice of the Father, like Moses in the Old Covenant (Ex 34:8), but then they are helped from this weakness by Christ as He leads them to glory. Rise, and have no fear (Mt 17:7).<sup>52</sup> More so, it is the Son who knows the Father, and to all who believe in His Name He grants the power to become children of God (Mt 11:27; Jn 1:12). Hence the Transfiguration reveals the mystery of the promise to be Christ's coheirs. Jesus promised His disciples that, at the end of the world, the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father (Mt 13:43). Jesus is concerned to place the hope of His disciples and of His Church for

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 242.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 242.



that matter on secure ground so that they may know what transformation is awaiting them, namely, becoming adopted sons in the Son.

Another important salvific element at the Transfiguration is that the Person of Jesus Christ is the only true Mediator between God and human persons.<sup>53</sup> This is indicated by the command to listen to the Son. The Father clearly states, "Listen to Him!" (Lk 9:35). As soon as the Voice of the Father has said, "Listen to Him", Moses and Elijah, and even the cloud with the heavenly voice disappear as if to say, from now on, He is the only way that leads to the Father. Hence Luke reports, "And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone" (Lk 9:36). The Person of Jesus Christ is for all time, the sole Mediator. He alone fulfils the prophecies and sums up the Law. For God sent His Son to redeem those who were under the Law, so that human persons might receive adoption as sons (Gal 4:5),<sup>54</sup> through Jesus Christ, the only Person who is truly Divine and truly Human. He is the only true Mediator between God and Man, and between Man and God.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.7 JESUS CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE

The notion of person directly implies intellect. This is so because there is no person without intellect. Be Divine Person, or angelic person, or human person – all have intelligence. By the fact of being person, means having intellect,

53 Cf. Saint Anselm insists and tries to demonstrate by using reason alone that man's Salvation by Christ is necessarily possible. And without Christ, no Salvation is possible for the human person. He writes in chapter xxv, of *Cur Deus Homo*, that "Is it not sufficiently proved that man can be saved by Christ... and it has been sufficiently shown that, leaving Christ out of view, no Salvation can be found for man? For, either by Christ or by someone else can man be saved, or else not at all. If, then, it is false that man cannot be saved all, or that he can be saved in any other way, his Salvation must necessarily be by Christ" (Anselm Saint, *The Works of St. Anselm*, translated by Sidney Norton Deane, Global Grey books, 2018, p. 276).

54 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 243.

55 God the Father is never incarnate. Likewise, God the Holy Spirit is never incarnate. It is only God the Son that is Incarnate. Saint Justin the Martyr (c. 100-165 AD) in his *Dialogue with Trypho* chapters 60-62 demonstrates that God the Father cannot be Incarnate. It is God the Son that became Incarnate. He demonstrates the uniqueness of the Person of the Son of God while maintaining that He is true God (cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Thomas B. Falls (translator), Michael Slusser (Ed.), Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2003, pp. 82-96).

at the same time, the intellect is directly connected with knowledge. That is why in our study of the Personalistic Christology, the question of knowledge of the Divine Person Jesus Christ becomes very important. Since He is true Man, He is endowed with true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge in itself could not be unlimited. Hence the Son of God could, when He became Man, increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man (Lk 2:52). He learned from experience. He would even have to inquire for Himself about what one in human condition can learn only from experience (cf. CCC, no. 472). The *Catechism* adds that, at the same time, this truly human knowledge of God's Son expressed the Divine life of His Person (cf. CCC, no. 473). In order to be able to delve deeper in this question of Christ's knowledge, it is better to first take a close look at the imminent expectation.

### 3.7.1 Imminent Expectation

Regarding the question of imminent expectation variant views have been developed. First is, that Jesus shared with His Jewish contemporaries the apocalyptic view of the world. That, during the time of Jesus people lived in apocalyptic tension, expecting the early irruption of the end times in a cosmic catastrophe. This was supposedly the expectation of the Kingdom of God. In this we can discern three elements. First, it is assumed that people were expecting the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God. Secondly, that Kingdom of God was an eschatological-apocalyptic concept. And thirdly, people were expecting the end of the world. Against liberal theology, which turns Jesus into a teacher of moral behaviour, Jesus' apocalyptic world view was emphasized. Jesus is supposedly a radical apocalypticist who shared the feverish expectation of the end times common in His day. That was supposedly a mistake; the end of the world did not come but, instead, the Cross. And even after Easter, when Jesus' disciples were still hoping for the coming of the Kingdom of God, there was only disappointment. The Parousia was delayed. Instead of the Kingdom of God, the Church came. The attempt, to reinterpret the historical-temporal imminent expectation in the timeless of existential immersion is also inadequate.<sup>56</sup>

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56 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 168.

However, the question is, did Jesus understand the Kingdom of God eschatologically to such an extent that He identified it with the impending end of the world? The Kingdom of God is present now in mystery.<sup>57</sup> The Qumran texts call into question the assumption that in the time of Jesus, people did generally live in eschatological tension and expectation of the end of the world. Moreover, current exegesis casts doubt on whether, when Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God, this was primarily an apocalyptic image. In fact, this appears not only as a future reality, but also as something now present, something that has already come. Jesus Christ himself says, "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Lk 11:20). It is there like a hidden treasure that one can dig up; like a pearl that one can buy (Mt 13:44-46). It is in your midst (Lk 17:21). It is also important to realize that Jesus gives no definite information about time with regard to the future. Nowhere with Jesus is a deadline fixed. The proximity of the Kingdom of God is not established as a temporal proximity as for instance with John the Baptist, where the Day of Judgment is directly imminent (Lk 3:9, 17).<sup>58</sup> By doing many miracles and mighty works, wonders and signs, Jesus revealed the presence of God's Kingdom in His Person. He demonstrated God's power and love in concrete actions as He healed those possessed by the devil. He has power over evil.<sup>59</sup> With all this in mind about the imminent expectation, we can now proceed into the details of the question of Jesus' knowledge.

#### 3.7.2 Contemplation of God by Jesus Christ

Right from the start, it is important to avoid interpreting all the texts that suggest Jesus' lack of knowledge pedagogically. If, for instance, Jesus asks the sisters of Lazarus, "Where have you laid him?" (Jn 11:34), then this will be supposedly only a trick question.<sup>60</sup> Also, the statement of Jesus that even the Son does not know the hour when the world will end (Mk 13:32) is interpreted to the effect that Jesus did in fact know the hour but did not wish to reveal it. This view about

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57 Cf. A. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expanded edition, New York: Doubleday, 2002, p. 106.

58 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 169.

59 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2018, pp. 35-36.

60 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 167.

Jesus' knowledge is to be avoided. At this point it is important to remember the correct use the language of *communicatio idiomatum* which was discussed above in Chapter Two. The Divine truths that Jesus knew in Human nature He did not acquire knowledge of those realities, from, or through Human nature. Being true God and true Man at once, His knowledge is Divine and Human. He has to have true Divine knowledge, otherwise there would be no revelation of God in Him. Christ who is a Divine Person, the Son, sees everything in the Father, receives everything from the Father, knows everything in the Father, not in the way of discursive knowledge, but in that direct view.<sup>61</sup>

Christ is able to be the one who brings complete and final revelation of God because He is looking upon God, that is because He has that direct relation to God without which human perception can never grasp what is infinite. Without being directly in relation with the other Persons of the Holy Trinity, Christ would only perceive finite reality and could never reveal God to human persons. From this soteriological and revelatory motive, the Middle Ages unanimously taught the contemplation of God by Christ. Because only thus can Christ bring us truly directly in touch with God. Christ is the Way that can lead all human persons to the Goal, to the *Visio Beatifica*. But in order to lead us there, Jesus Christ must be not only *viator* on the way to the Goal, but must also already be there Himself *comprehensor*.<sup>62</sup> The *visio* doctrine is based on the earthly life of Jesus. In the actions and the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, the whole Salvation came about once and for all.<sup>63</sup> And the whole revelation of the mystery of God is offered to human persons once and for all.<sup>64</sup> Definite Revelation and definite Redemption was realized by the Incarnate Son through His Human will and through His Human mind. It was therefore a requisite that Christ should know in His Human soul the entire revelation to be borne and the whole Salvation to be effected. Jesus knew why He was dying. When He was dying, Jesus must have known in a mysterious but real way for whom He was dying. Otherwise it is not He who saves the human persons and His Death remains an external event in relation to human persons.<sup>65</sup>

61 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 180.

62 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 181 quoting, Thomas Aquinas, STh III, q. 15, a. 10

63 Cf. B. Körner, "Christus – das einzige Wort der Heiligen Schrift" in Augustin George (ed.), *Christus – Gottes schöpferisches Wort. Festschrift für Christoph Kardinal Schönborn*, Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2010, pp. 197-214.

64 Cf. John Paul II, *Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, 14 January 1987.

65 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 176.

Saint Paul says, He loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal 2:20). The revelation of Jesus is unique in that, He is not only one who receives revelation like the prophets, but He is Himself the Revealer and the Revelation in one. In the Mystery of the Incarnate Son was revealed God the Father and the dignity of each human person. His union with God presupposes a knowledge and a consciousness *sui generis*. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him (Mt 11:27).<sup>66</sup> The Gospel according to Saint John presents Christ who comes in the Father's Name (Jn 5:43). He is from above. He receives everything from the Father. He knows everything from the Father and teaches on the basis of Him. The consciousness and knowledge of Jesus is a unique and incomparable consciousness which is the source of Christ's work of Revelation and Redemption. Jesus Christ during His historical life on earth had the *visio*, the loving knowledge, the *amantissima cognitio* with which He comprehends everyone and everything.<sup>67</sup>

### 3.7.3 The Three Manners of Jesus' Knowledge

Jesus had three kinds of knowledge. First is *scientia acquisita* which is human knowledge that has been acquired. Saint Thomas Aquinas († 1274) first taught this in his *Summa Theologica* so as to safeguard the integrity of Jesus' true Humanity. Second is *scientia infusa* which is a prophetic knowledge arising from supernatural communion. And thirdly, is *scientia visionis*, the Vision of God that other humans will have only in eternal life, in heaven.<sup>68</sup> A great mistake is made when one in Christ stresses one type of knowledge at the expense of the other types or when one fails to recognize one or another of the forms of knowledge in Jesus Christ. For the purpose of clarification and for the purpose this research, mentioning the three kinds of knowledge in this way, does not in any way, imply the subordination of His Divinity. He is truly

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66 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 176.

67 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 182; Pius XII († 1958), encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* (29 June, 1943, in: AAS 35,) and *Haurietis aquas* (15 May, 1956, in: AAS 48).

68 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 178-179. This teaching was held by the great teachers such as Aquinas and Bonaventure.

Divine and so possesses true and complete Divine knowledge in its entirety, lacking in nothing that is truly Divine knowledge.

The *visio*, which is Christ's vision of God, does not mean the same as *comprehensio* -understanding. The soul of Jesus Christ, who is true Man and true God, was not able to comprehend fully the nature of God. The *visio* is thus certainly a contemplation, and a comprehension, since God remains – even for the soul of Jesus – inexhaustible. Secondly, the *visio* is immediate, that is, neither allegories nor concepts or images are necessary. All our objective knowledge is mediated through *species*, that is, sensual images, and mental concepts. Without such mediation there can be no objective knowledge. Knowledge of God cannot be of such a kind that the Trinity would be one object of knowledge among others. It can only be a knowledge in which God grants Himself directly to our mind, in that God Himself is both Who is known and the medium through whom He is known. God can be known only through God; “In your light do we see light” (Ps 36:9). According to Saint Paul, only the Spirit knows the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10-11). It is important to remember that, here we are not talking about God's self-revelation which is possible even through creation (*manifestatio Dei*) as the First Vatican Council points out. But rather, we are talking about a complete or full knowledge of God in Himself not in self-revelation. We are talking about ontological knowledge of God in Himself. It is not even *Revelatio Dei* but rather the direct knowledge of God in Himself. Thirdly, there is a misunderstanding of the New Testament Johannine, “You know everything” (Jn 21:17). Christ in His human soul has a “relative omniscience”. Conceptual prejudices prevent a correct understanding of this statement. Just as eternity is imagined to be an unending duration, so Divine omniscience is as an unlimited amount of knowledge. Once again, *Visio* means that the soul of Christ sees everything in the Father, receives everything from the Father, knows everything in the Father, not in the way of discursive knowledge, but in that of direct view.<sup>69</sup>

According to Biblical testimony there is only one way of knowing God as He is: looking at Him. In the understanding of the Bible, “looking on God” is seeing Him Himself, not just “his feet”, not just his works, but God Himself. Looking at God is too powerful for this life. If Moses (Ex 33:20) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:11-13) see God and are still alive, that is an unusual grace. Even Moses, however,

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69 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 180-182.

sees Him only from behind, and Elijah veils his face. Thus John can rightly say that, "No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is the bosom of the Father, has made Him known" (Jn 1:18). No one has seen the Father except Him who is from God; He has seen the Father (Jn 6:6; 1 Jn 4:12).<sup>70</sup> According to the New Testament, human persons cannot look upon God in Himself until they do so in the perfection of the Kingdom of God (*status gloriae*): "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12; Mt 5:8). From this, we are able to see that in Christ there is really One Person, the Divine Person and no human person but Human nature. If there were in Christ a human person then this human person could not see (know) God and so could not bring full revelation of God. Of course, this should not be confused with Human nature. The Second Divine Person of the Holy Trinity truly became Man when He assumed Human nature. He assumed the Human nature in all its integrity, entirety and fragility. And this *is His* true Human nature. He experienced difficulties like all human beings. He was tired and even fell asleep. He cried. He felt pain. He shared joy of being Human as seen in sharing meals with friends, attending the wedding at Cana (cf. CCC, nn. 514-515). Being true God and true Man, Jesus went about doing good and healing those oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him (cf. Acts 10:38).<sup>71</sup>

It is sometimes proposed that the eternal Son, after the Incarnation, now has what may be called the Hypostatic Vision of God. That "in the hypostatic vision, the Son comes to *humanly* know himself as Son, thus explaining his self-consciousness in a way that is more akin to common human experience. The hypostatic vision, then, seems a better alternative in preserving the Son's shared ontological status with the Father, as well as his shared nature with us."<sup>72</sup> In this proposed Hypostatic Vision, may be detected the dangers hidden there in, especially in as far as it may be against Chalcedon. Chalcedon is against trying to find the middle ground between the two natures of Christ. In the face of this question of vision of God by Christ, we may once again find the solution in the *communicatio idiomatum* as was already used by Saint

<sup>70</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 180.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, p. 35.

<sup>72</sup> W. Chami, "Did Jesus Possess the Beatific Vision During His Incarnation?: A Comparative Essay on the Perspectives of Thomas Joseph White and Thomas G. Weinandy," *Aristos*, 4:1(2018), pp. 1-15.

Ignatius of Antioch.<sup>73</sup> Christ, having a hypostatic vision of God might imply a certain confused or resultant vision of God possessed by Christ subsisting in two natures intermingled. It might imply implicitly a proposition of a new intermediate nature rising from the Hypostatic Union. Hence, it seems better to maintain the *communicatio of idiomatum* in this matter other than trying to level out and trying to find a middle ground, namely, the Hypostatic Vision.<sup>74</sup>

While not abrogating His true Human knowledge, in this study, it is observed that Christ's knowledge of God is inseparably correspondent to His being Divine Person. That is why Pope John Paul II teaches that "Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his heart."<sup>75</sup> This truly human knowledge of God's Son expressed Divinity of His person. The Human nature of God's Son, not by itself but by its union with the Word, knew and showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God. The Son in His Human knowledge showed the Divine penetration He had into the secreta thoughts of human hearts (cf. CCC, nn. 473-474). For human persons, looking upon God can only mean endless happiness, *beatitudo*, hence *visio beatifica*. Christ is able to be the One who brings complete and final Revelation of God, because He is looking upon God, that is, because He has direct relation to God without which human perception can only ever grasp what is finite.<sup>76</sup> In Personalistic terms, it is possible to speak of God face to face, *prosopon to prosopon*, but we cannot further scrutinize this Hypostatic Union. It remains a mystery but which has been revealed and is true.

From Cardinal Schönborn's Christology we can deduce an eschatological understanding of the beatific vision in as far as human persons are concerned. That, this Beatific Vision consists in an endless happiness not a full grasp of the who God is in Himself, because this would mean becoming God. The Beatific Vision hence does not destroy the reality of human persons being created. It rather maintains the reality of the human being – being a creature but who enjoys eternal happiness with his or her Creator. Hence, in as far as human

73 Cf. J. F. Keating & T. J. White (eds.), *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009, pp. 214-217.

74 Holding firmly to the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon (451), Cardinal Schönborn, is against reductive versions of Christology. In this regard he states, "Fidelity to the Chalcedonian teaching of 'true God and true man' in 'undivided and unconfused unity' remains the reliable compass along all the paths of Christology" (C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 13-14).

75 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8.

76 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 180.



persons are concerned, Schönborn's personalistic Christology gives us a clue for understanding of the "divinization" of the human person, a "divinization" that does not transform a human person into a Divine Person – God, but which makes man share in the eternal blessedness. This is different from that of Christ who is true God and is direct relation to the Godhead.

### 3.7.4 Jesus Christ's Self-Awareness

The question of Jesus Christ's self-awareness is the central problem of the historical life of Jesus. It is not correct to maintain that Jesus was mistaken in imminent expectation or that He was not always conscious of being the Messiah. In order to understand what the Gospels say about Christ and His consciousness, one must read them in the spirit in which they were written. Historical analogy alone is inadequate, unless one wishes to reduce the Mystery of Christ to a phenomenon existing strictly within history. The analogy of faith and reading within the living tradition of the Church are necessary for an appropriate understanding of the Gospels (cf. Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 12).<sup>77</sup> Wherever we meet Jesus Christ in the Gospels we also always at once touch on His mystery. All the Gospels from Mark to John already presuppose that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (Mk 1:1; 8:29), they all lead to the faith that this Jesus Christ is the Messiah (Mk 15:39; Jn 20:31). They all show that Jesus Himself reveals who He is. They all presuppose that He knows clearly that He is the Messiah; just as He is aware and conscious of His mission to reveal the Father whom He alone knows, who has handed everything to Him and whom He alone can reveal (Mt 11:27). He is who alone that leads human persons to the Father (Jn 14:6).<sup>78</sup>

Because He is conscious of who He is, He forgives sins. He is clearly aware of His mission to set sinners free (Lk 5:31). Jesus' behaviour, words and deeds show a clear awareness of Who He is, namely, the Son of God and true God. Jesus Christ in carrying out His mission of the Redeemer is perfectly aware that He is Divine. He makes this clear in different ways and statements, for example He states "Something greater than Jonah is here,...something greater than

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 179-182.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 183.

Solomon” (cf. Mt 12:41-42), greater than the Temple (Mt 12:6), “Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn 8:58),<sup>79</sup> “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30; CCC, no. 590).<sup>80</sup> Also during the trial, the way Jesus responds to the questions clearly displayed that He knows His identity and He is aware of His mission of the Messiah. For example when He is asked, “Are you the Christ, the son of the God?” (Mk 14: 61), His response is “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the Right Hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mk 14: 62).<sup>81</sup>

Jesus Christ, who is true Man, His integral knowledge that is experiential, prophetic and beatific (blessed) was animated and grew through a spectrum of historical encounters with the Scriptures. He had a humble hearing and reading of the Scriptures, attended the liturgies, and this aided the infusion of supernatural grace and light actual graces always configured to the normative shape of the Scriptures. The Son lives by every word that falls from the mouth of God. The Human nature of Christ is filled unceasingly with the truth to its utmost depth.<sup>82</sup> Each person is unique, that is, irreducible and irreplaceable. It can be seen that Jesus Christ is aware of His uniqueness in as far as revealing the Father is concerned. Apart from Him, no other person is able to reveal the Father. In personalistic terms it is possible to say that Christ in His Personal mission is irreplaceable. There is no other valid replicate that can assume His Person and mission of revealing the Father and saving human persons. And Jesus Christ is Himself conscious and aware of this.

### 3.8 THE MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST

The mission of Jesus Christ can be summarized as: revelation of God and establishing His Kingdom, the Redemption of human persons and uniting them to God, and recapitulation.<sup>83</sup> In order to be able to present and describe how

79 Regarding the “I am” Cf. K. H. Menke, *Inkarnation: Das Ende Aller Wege Gottes*, Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2021, pp. 24-40.

80 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 250-251.

81 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 252-254.

82 A. Giambone, “Scripture as Scientia Christi: Three Theses on Jesus’ Self-Knowledge and the Future Course of New Testament Christology”, *Pro Ecclesia*, XXV: 3 (2016), p. 290.

83 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 220.

this mission is present and fulfilled in the Person of Christ on earth, we take a look at “fulfilment of the prophecies,” “judgement with Divine love,” “serving,” “defeating Satan and his kingdom,” and “forgiving of sins and destroying death.” These will help us to see the Revelation of God, and Redemption of human persons present in and accomplished by the Person of Jesus Christ. The Paschal mystery will be seen in the next chapter.

### 3.8.1 To Fulfil the Prophecies

According to Cardinal Schönborn, Jesus Christ is the God-Man, the Incarnate Word, not a human person that had a strong relationship with God. Christ Himself is the fullness of time (Gal 4:4) because the boundless fullness of the love of God has come in him. The eschatological situation is not the already predetermined temporal period in which Jesus arrives, rather His coming is itself the coming of the end time. Jesus knows that He has been sent to fulfil the eschatological gathering together of Israel (Mt 15:24). At the same time, from the perspective of the Old Testament, Christ is conscious of being sent to renew God’s covenant as a constant call that Israel should be perfect and holy as God is perfect and holy. Jesus Christ himself has brought about the eschatological situation of separation. With reference to him, eschatological Salvation or doom is now being decided (Mk 8:38).<sup>84</sup> If He calls for recognition of the signs of the times, this does not only mean any outward cosmic, or historical phenomena. The Person of Jesus Christ is the sign of the times. Those who follow accept his preaching and follow him are the eschatological Israel (Lk 12:32).

### 3.8.2 Judging with Divine Love

In Cardinal Schönborn’s Christology, Divine love is transforming love. In addition to fulfilling the prophecies, another important peculiarity of Jesus’ consciousness of his mission is judgement. Although his preaching on judgement

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84 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 171.

broadens to include the cosmic dimensions, judgement is to be seen in reference to Himself. His judgment, or separation is unique in the sense that He does not carry out a separation between the children of light and the children of darkness but rather, weeds and wheat are left to grow together until the end of time when they will be separated (Mt 13:30). This is so because God is merciful and just.<sup>85</sup> He refuses to have fire come down from Heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans (Lk 9:54). The Judgement is not anticipated rather it takes place in his self-offering on the Cross. On the basis of the Cross we are able to understand the eschatological mission of Jesus. This is how the Kingdom of God comes. Jesus knows He has been sent to save, not to judge.<sup>86</sup> It is important to note that “judgement with Divine Love” is meant as judgment happening now in history. Even though inseparably related and connected, it is not exactly the same as the judgment at the end of history – the Parousia.<sup>87</sup> Judgment with Divine Love is taking place in the history of the human person when cooperation with grace is still open and possible. God wills Salvation. Christ came not to judge but to save.<sup>88</sup>

For Cardinal Schönborn, the unique feature of Jesus’ mission is that, in spite of the growing enmity, He does not instantly discriminate and exclude His opponents. His concern is always to save, not to judge. Christ respects human freedom of choice as long as man is still sojourning in history. That is why Christ says, “I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (Jn 12:7). From the consciousness of His mission to Save, He declares, “I say to you that love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you” (Lk 6: 27-28).<sup>89</sup> In this episode are two key elements. First, Jesus Christ is revealing Divine Love. Secondly, He is preparing His bride, the Church, to be the icon, and sacrament, and the presence of Divine Love. The language used by Christ reveals Divine Love and the Divine nature

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85 Cf. J. Grzywaczewski, *The Biblical Idea of Divine Mercy in the Early Church*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, 2016, pp. 10-27.

86 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 172.

87 Cf. Section 5.7 of this study on “the Final Arrival-Parousia,” presents judgement concerned with the historical aspect of the end, coming from below. This slight distinction, but which is real, between judgement in history and judgement at the Parousia is pointed to when James the Apostle writes, “For judgement will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgement” (James 2:13).

88 Cf. C. Schönborn, *We have found Mercy*, pp. 133-148.

89 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 172.

of God. The disciples are to be the icon of this Divine Love by loving all human persons including their enemies. This love is the love that brings Salvation to all including conversion of enemies after meeting with this Divine Love. A personal encounter with Divine Love is the moment of Salvation. All human persons are to meet personally this Love.

There are many other examples of those who experienced a personal and unique encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ. The likes of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-11); the sinful woman who anointed Jesus (Lk 7:37-39); the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1-11). Here, it suffices only to take the example of Matthew the tax collector. According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Gospel according to Matthew looks at the experience of faith in Christ. This vital experience can be found also in the other gospels, but Matthew gives an expression of the concreteness of the reality of Jesus. Matthew knows like no one else what change the encounter with Jesus brings into his life (Mt 9:9-13). The religious people do not immediately see the change in his life. So they get upset about the fact that Jesus is invited by this tax collector into his home and holds a banquet for him and his friends. Here, Matthew has a personal encounter with Jesus which the Pharisees and other people are not able to take part in for it is personal, special, particular and unique to Matthew. It becomes a moment opening Salvation for Matthew.<sup>90</sup> Experience is certainly an essential theological *locus* in Christology, but not primarily and solely as the experience of a single person in isolation, but rather, as that of the great and exemplary disciples, the saints, while remaining concrete for each unique human person. The experience of the saints remains very important as locus of Christological verification.<sup>91</sup> Something always comes forth from Jesus – a power (Lk 6:19; 8:46), a charisma, and a fascination that causes amazement.<sup>92</sup> The crowds “were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” (Mt 7:28-29).<sup>93</sup> Jesus was recognized as different from other religious teachers. It is a personal concrete recognition, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom

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90 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus; Encountering Christ in the Gospel*, Robert J. Shea (trans.), San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2005, p. 77.

91 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 286.

92 Cf. P. J. Achtemeier, *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition*, Eugene: Cascade Books-Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008, p. 24.

93 Cf. Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis; with an introductory essay by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. xxi.

do you seek?”... ‘Jesus said to her: Mary.’ First of all he called her by the title common to all her sex, and she did not recognize Him. So now he calls her by her own name, as if to say plainly: ‘Now recognize the one who recognizes you. For I know you, not in some general way along with other people, but personally.’ Addressed by her own name, Mary recognizes her maker and straightway calls him ‘Rabboni’, that is Teacher.”<sup>94</sup>

Schönborn observes that Saint Luke tells three parables about the way that God’s love patiently seeks men: the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost penny, and the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15).<sup>95</sup> Luke has preserved the deeply disturbing short scene in which Jesus, after Peter’s betrayal, turns around and looks at him, “And he wept bitterly” it says about Peter. That is how it is for everyone who meets that gaze in his or her heart, that gaze free of all accusation, which brings tears of repentance for the betrayal of love (Lk 22:61-62). He also refers to the way that Jesus forgives not only Peter, His disciple who denied Him, but also those who crucified Him: “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34). Luke tells the marvellous transformation brought about in the righteous thief by Jesus’ loving forgiveness: “Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power” – “Today you will be with me in Paradise (Lk 23:42-43).<sup>96</sup> All these examples from Luke emphasize in a particular way Jesus’ turning towards sinners, as well as His love for the poor, the sick, and those who have lost their way. Luke did not invent all that but rather he discovered it. This is because Luke who was a doctor by profession and whom Paul calls “beloved” (Col 4:14), undertook thorough researches for his Gospel and was able to uncover many truths concerning Jesus. Even at the hour or point of death one can still experience Divine Love. The example of this is the good thief (cf. Lk 23:39-43).

The way Schönborn presents Luke alludes to the uniqueness of each human person. He recognizes the uniqueness of Luke related to his profession as a doctor and as an active subject Luke is able to consider important truths about Jesus Christ which other evangelists do not consider to be of great importance. Subjectivity is a reality. Thanks to this subjectivity, we can understand how

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94 Homily of Pope St. Gregory the Great on the Gospels, (Hom. 25, 1-2.4-5,) in *The Divine Office III*, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2014 edition, p. 121\*, 22 July, Feast of Saint Mary Magdalen.

95 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 13.

96 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 14

for Luke, the doctor, Jesus' concern for every kind of suffering was especially important.<sup>97</sup> It may also be connected with his calling as a doctor that Luke is such an accurate and reliable historian who went into everything carefully, so as to be able to talk about Jesus and His activity as reliably as possible (cf. Lk 1:1-4).<sup>98</sup> Normally doctors have the capacity to examine the smallest details as far as possible.

We can say that the mission of Christ consists in saving the human person in his or her concrete situation as a person. Just as the personalistic norm states, a person is one to whom the only proper attitude is love,<sup>99</sup> Christ is aware of this as He tells his disciples to love all persons in their concrete existence even if they be enemies (while still in this life on earth because conversion is still open and possible), they remain persons to whom the only possible and appropriate dimension is love. Jesus Christ is really loving sinners as concrete persons and He wants to bring them Salvation. Jesus Christ as the perfect revelation of the Father (the unseen God) is revealing that God the Father is loving sinners. The Disciples of Christ in the same way are becoming the icon of this Divine Love. They are becoming a sign of the Universal Sacrament of Salvation. As human persons, we are revealed when we are experiencing Divine Love and radiating this Love. And this Love is giving Salvation to human persons. The mission of the Church (disciples) is to reveal and to radiate this Divine Love and Love is connected to Persons. The Church then, in this way, is understood as the sacrament of Salvation. Those who have met Divine Love are in turn to become an echo of Divine Love. When one person has met Divine Love, he or she is able to give it to another. This chain reaction of Divine Love throughout ages and geography makes human beings adopted children of God. The Church is the sacrament of Divine Love and Life present in history. The Church is in history giving birth to children of God. These children grow in waters of the visible world. These waters are the visible signs of God's invisible grace that give Divine life. The Church in this way is then seen as the universal sacrament of Salvation.

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97 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, p. 14.

98 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician: Reflections on the Gospel during the Year of Luke*, trans. Henry Taylor, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 2008, p. 16.

99 Cf. K. Wojtyła/ John Paul II, "The Personalistic Norm," *Personalism; Science Philosophy Theology*, 11(2006), pp. 45-48.

### 3.8.3 Serving

Service is another personalistic dimension, “But I am among you as one who serves” (Lk 22:27). He goes so far as to wash His disciples’ feet (Jn 13:4-6). He is among His disciples as one who serves. Yet the same Jesus Christ calls with authority, makes promises, instructs, sends out and grants authority. At the same time He clearly states to His disciples that, a disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master (Mt 10:24-25). Because Jesus as the master is the One who serves, the disciples are invited to serve. This is an essential aspect of Jesus’ understanding of Himself. “When did we not minister to you?” (Mt 25:44). Whoever must be great among you must be your servant. The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life being the true ransom for many (Mk 10:42-45).<sup>100</sup> This service is not simply a moral appeal for an attitude of humility. It is an essential part of the mission of Jesus that His whole existence is such service.<sup>101</sup> Suffering is bound together with Jesus’ mission. He promises His disciples hardships, persecution, mistreatment, (Mt 5:39). He promises them the lot of the prophets pointing to the possibility of death (Mt 10:28). He warns them against success as the sign of a false mission (Lk 6:26).<sup>102</sup>

### 3.8.4 Defeating Satan and Overcoming His Kingdom

From Jesus’ own understanding of the expulsion of demons, the Person of Jesus Christ has come to establish the beginning of the ultimate reign of God. In the New Testament there are various names for chief demons. We find names like, Satan, Beelzebul, Belial which are all understood as powers that belong together.<sup>103</sup> The Son of God is sent to establish the rule of God which becomes effective in this One and same Son’s actions which forces the crumbling of the

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100 The expression “for many” means that the *One* Christ is dying for *all* human beings. It is not restrictive but contrasts the whole humanity with the unique Person of Christ-the Redeemer (cf. CCC, no. 616).

101 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 173.

102 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 174.

103 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 237.



rule of Satan. That is why Jesus Christ banishes the demons. Jesus' proclamation and works are unique in that, before Jesus, no substantive connection had ever been established between the work of exorcism and the working of miracles. Secondly, no connection had ever been made between the end of the world and the beginning of the new world. Jesus does this connection when He heals people and sets them free from demons. His action is fundamental pertaining to history and the world as a whole. Only with Jesus does driving out devils acquire a new dimension.

Most exegetes agree that the exorcisms done by Jesus Christ are a historical fact, but they explain them from the mentality of Jesus' period. Thus, they are often interpreted as psychological, parapsychological, or psychosomatic phenomena. Yet, Jesus saw His proclamation of the Kingdom of God, His good news to the poor, His granting of God's forgiveness to sinners bound together with the act and fact that He cast out demons. He is the stronger One who vanquishes, binds, and plunders the strong man (Mk 3:27; Lk 11:21). That is why exorcisms forms a characteristic part of His preaching and works.<sup>104</sup> Jesus' revelatory role is made manifest, when the lepers, the lame, and the blind who are healed experience God. When Jesus passes by, they experience God who is the God of Salvation, to whom belongs escape from death (cf. Ps 68:20). Jesus' life shows to them and indeed to us human persons the Father's face.<sup>105</sup>

In the preceding section we have just seen Jesus Christ loving sinners. Love is a very special trap that captures the devil. The devil has knowledge which is higher than that of human persons but the devil cannot perceive or understand Divine love. That a sinner is loved by God is beyond the comprehension of the devil. This is the mystery which has been hidden for ages which is revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ and given to the human persons as a tool to fight the devil – the fallen angel (cf. Col 1:26). From the personalistic perspective we can say the fallen angels lost this love which is proper to persons. The fall consists in the failure to grasp this Divine love. Jesus uses this Divine love by having mercy and compassion on the sinners and in so doing over powers and vanquishes the devils. By the same love He performed the healings.

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 238.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 226.

### 3.8.5 Forgiving Sins and Destroying Death

Forgiveness of sins is another personalistic trait of Jesus' mission. Jesus knows that He has been sent to sinners. He Himself grants forgiveness of sins (Mk 2:1-12; Lk 7:36-50), not just in words but most especially in acts. In words we have examples of the parable of the enormous debt that is remitted (Mt 18:27), the Pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18:10-14), three parables of the lost sheep, the lost penny and the prodigal son (Lk 15). In actions we see Him eating with sinners and tax collectors, He eats with them not to leave them in their sins but rather to gradually lead them to conversion and eventually to forgiveness of their sins. This is the direction of His mission which is constant in the attitude and preaching of Jesus. It has its origin in Jesus' personal consciousness of His mission. He relates with human persons concretely in their sinful situation conscious of His mission, namely, which is to lead them to God. Of course, He does not sin like them but His personalistic relation with them draws them to repentance and conversion as we see in the story of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). Thus even on the Cross He forgives those who crucify him: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). Jesus Christ as Divine Person knows Himself to be the One who carries out and proclaims God's will, God who forgives through His unfathomable mercy, just like the father of the prodigal son. As a Person He is conscious and fully aware of His actions. He really acts freely doing what He is conscious and aware of without any compulsion from anyone. Jesus reveals God's own will in His conscious acts of pardon and it becomes manifest who the God that sent Him is.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

In Schönborn's Christology, the life of the Son of God on earth has three basic features. First is the revelation of God, second is the mystery of Redemption which is accomplished by and in this Son of God, and thirdly the mystery of the Recapitulation (*recapitulatio*) of everything under One Head. These

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 172.

three main features correspond to the ways in which we human persons share in the mysteries of the life of the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus' life is revealing our person to our self. This revelation of our person to our self by the mystery of the Person of Christ (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22) should be correctly understood. It does not mean that Christ is just only an example of good life, an example to emulate. No! Jesus is *the Christ* – the Messiah. He is the Saviour of the human person and the world. It is He that died to take away the sins of the world and by His redemptive Death defeated death. When it is said “Jesus' life is revealing our person to our self,” this means following in His footsteps. Jesus *the Christ* lived His life on earth *for* us human persons, and He lets us live in Him everything that He lived and He lives it in us.<sup>107</sup> In this relationship, my personal irreducible uniqueness finds its fulfilment in relation with the personal irreducible uniqueness of Christ, and this relation with the irreducible unique Person of Christ makes me at once related to the other irreducible unique Divine Persons (the Father, and the Holy Spirit) and to other human persons. Everything in the life of Jesus is a fulfilment of His words, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). Hence, “Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the Mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22). In the Person of Jesus Christ's life on earth we find characteristics which are a perfect revelation the Holy Trinity. Christ's wisdom against which no one can prevail, His power which astounds the multitude, His unprecedented mercy towards sinners, His burning zeal for justice, and His self-surrender and self-sacrificing love are all a perfect revelation of God. The revelatory role, is double fold. It is not only a revelation of God but also a revelation of who human persons are. This is the dual-purpose of the Epiphany, the Flight to Egypt, the Mystery of the Child Jesus, the Baptism of Jesus, the Wedding at Cana, the Transfiguration, Jesus Christ's knowledge, and this is the mission of Jesus Christ on earth. That being said, it is now possible to proceed and concretely look at the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

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107 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 225.



## CHAPTER FOUR: THE PASSION, DEATH AND GLORIFICATION OF THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD

### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

The Holy Trinity was fully revealed in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, along with the coming of the Holy Spirit. By the Paschal Mystery, that is, events right from Holy Thursday, then Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit – Divine revelation reached its peak. This revealed God the Giver, the Given, and the Self-Giving. It is personalistic Love that makes God suffer. The Paschal Mystery means the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Glorification, Ascension, of Jesus Christ. Through the Paschal Mystery, Jesus “passes over” from this world into the Father’s glory. Through the Paschal Mystery all human beings have been redeemed, but not yet saved, from slavery to sin and evil. The Paschal Mystery reveals perfectly the true meaning of Love, that true Love is self-giving unto death. From this love the Father bestows superabundant life. This Paschal Mystery is present in the Eucharist (cf. CCC, nn. 654-658).<sup>1</sup> This chapter is about the personalistic understanding of the Event(s) of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and how they bring about Redemption and Salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, p. 55.

## 4.1 THE LAST SUPPER

It may be asked: Why begin this chapter on the Passion, Death, and Glorification with the Last Supper? To this question it can be answered that because the sacrificial offering of the Eucharist, which is instituted at the Last Supper, is *intrinsically* connected with Jesus Christ's Death on the Cross.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, "to understand the full meaning of Christ's Death it is important to recall the Passover sacrifice of the old law.<sup>3</sup> From the writings of Cardinal Schönborn, it can be seen that the Last Supper reveals four important truths about the Person of Jesus Christ. These four elements are namely: Jesus Christ's Death is connected with His coming reign; Christ's imminent Death is the seal of the New Covenant; He is the Messiah of the eschatological Covenant people; and Jesus Christ is taking upon himself the sins of all.

The connection between Christ's Death and His coming reign is that, unlike other rulers, Jesus Christ rules by giving His life. The Last Supper reveals the mystery of His Messianic rule. He is the Messiah because He matches with the already existing hope in Israel that the Messiah would come in the night of the Passover (cf. CCC, no. 133), "In that night you were redeemed, and in the same night you will be redeemed in the future" (Ex 12:42).<sup>4</sup> Regarding the second element, that is, seal of the New Covenant, first of all this Covenant is new, and secondly, it is eternal. Jesus interpreted His imminent Death as the seal of the New Covenant. He clearly states "This is my blood of the covenant" (Mk 14:24; Mt 26:28 cf. Ex 24:8). At the Last Supper, Christ gave the instruction to repeat it in memory of Him.<sup>5</sup> Hence He indicated that He is the Messiah of the eschatological Covenant people. He himself is the food and the drink. He

2 Cf. R. Ryan, *Jesus and Salvation: Soundings in the Christian Tradition and Contemporary Theology*, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015, p. xxii.

3 D. W. Wuerl, *The Catholic Way: Faith for Living Today*, New York: Doubleday-Random House, Inc., 2001, p. 76.

4 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 346.

5 By commanding His disciples "Do this in memory of Me" Christ intends two things: First, a remembrance that makes present. Second, we remember God, and God remembers us. The disciples are to remember a concrete specific moment, namely, Jesus Christ's Last Supper and the Passion, Death and Resurrection that followed. In this remembrance, the past becomes present. This remembering is more than a mere act of recalling things from the past. It also involves making these realities present. They become in a certain way present and real. The second meaning of this remembrance is that God does not forget His people as the prayer, and the response to it, of the 'good' thief who was crucified with Christ shows.

is the daily bread of the people of the Covenant. He gives His body and blood as the source of life. The mystery of His messianic rule is that people will live through Him (cf. Jn 10:10). The repeating of the Last Supper is an anticipation of the perfected Kingdom (Lk 22:16).<sup>6</sup>

Also Schönborn understands the Last Supper to mean the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He underlines this by giving the title “Present in His Eucharist” to the section under which he discusses the Last Supper.<sup>7</sup> Whenever this sacrifice is celebrated the work of our Redemption is accomplished (cf. CCC, no. 1364).<sup>8</sup> The Cross and the Eucharist are the single Paschal Mystery that sums up God’s love story with the human persons.<sup>9</sup> The Church teaches that “At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood...in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he comes again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection” (CCC, no. 1323). It seems that according to Schönborn, there is no Eucharist where there is no Church. He seems to emphasise this by interpreting Paul that “Paul expressed this communion of the faithful with Christ. He identified the body of the Risen One with the Eucharist and with the Church (cf. 1Cor 10:17).”<sup>10</sup> The identification of the Eucharist with the Church came from Paul’s personal encounter with the Risen One. The Church is none other than Christ himself (Acts 26:14-15).<sup>11</sup> At the Supper, which after the Death and Resurrection of Christ, is now the Eucharist, Christ comes again. It does not only make Christ present now but also longs for His future coming. In fact, Christ is present now, and will come in the future, for the glory is to come. The Eucharist recalls what He did, makes it present, and opens for what is still to come.<sup>12</sup> All in all, the Lamb’s Supper is no doubt the institution of the Eucharist, given by the High priest on the eve of His sacrificial Death.<sup>13</sup> The

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This remembrance encompasses the past making it truly present and effective, but also in, and, for the future (Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Source of Life*, pp. 42-47).

- 6 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 346-348.
- 7 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 346.
- 8 cf. C. Schönborn, *The Source of Life*, p. 46.
- 9 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 138.
- 10 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 347-348.
- 11 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 348.
- 12 cf. C. Schönborn, *The Source of Life*, pp. 42-53.
- 13 Cf. S. W. Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, New York: Doubleday-Random House, Inc., 1999, p. xii.

setting of the Last Supper in the context and time of the Jewish Passover points out Christ as the true Lamb, and the living Temple of the new Passover.<sup>14</sup> The Last Supper stresses the remembrance of the past, which past becomes present and real, and a remembrance in the future; “Jesus, remember me in when you come into your Kingdom, Jesus answered him, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise’” (Lk 23:42-43). We remember Him, and He remembers us. The Last Supper is the proclamation of the Lord’s Death.

## 4.2 THE CROSS AND THE PERSON OF CHRIST

A distinction has to be made between the glorious Cross of Christ and the cross without Christ. A cross without Christ is the heaviest and the most unbearable, terrible at times to the point of tragedy. Could this explain why some people commit suicide? According to Pope John Paul II, the Cross with Christ is the great revelation of the meaning of pain and the value it has in life and in history. Whoever understands the Cross, whoever embraces it, begins a very different journey from that of the trial or contestation of God. One finds the reason for a new ascent to God. The way of Christ, is precisely the *Via Crucis*, the path of the Cross.<sup>15</sup> This conception about the Cross necessitates a consideration about question of the Cross and the problem of evil.

### 4.2.1 The Cross and the Problem of Evil

According to Cardinal Schönborn, Jesus does not promise a Salvation that does away with all troubles. Yes, He is the Messiah and Saviour, but we are not to be offended if He *seems* to be powerless. Jesus does not save John from prison and death. He does not save himself from the Cross nor does He prevent the human person from encountering trouble and sorrow. But He does give us the power

14 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 148.

15 Cf. John Paul II, *The Holy Cross*, General Audience, 30 March 1983, no. 3.



of faith. He shows how great John the Baptist was because he built on God and not on comfort.<sup>16</sup> When we observe the world around us, “the cross belongs to our existential condition, as experience proves to us every day...why evil, why pain, why this human cross that seems co-essential to our nature, yet, in many cases so absurd?”<sup>17</sup> The Cross is the proof of an infinite Love which, precisely in that Act of atonement and conciliation, has placed the principle of universal restoration and especially of human Redemption – Redemption from sin, and at least at its root, from evil, pain, and death. Christ’s Paschal Mystery shows how God draws out of the depths of evil the victory of the Risen Christ and His transforming love.<sup>18</sup>

The Catholic Church teaches that “God is not in any way-directly or indirectly-the cause of evil. He illuminates the mystery of evil in his Son Jesus Christ who died and rose in order to vanquish the great moral evil, human sin, which is at the root of all other evils.”<sup>19</sup> It adds that, “Faith gives us the certainty that God would not permit evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil. This was realized in a wondrous way by God in the death and resurrection of Christ. In fact, from the greatest of all moral evils (the murder of his Son) he has brought forth the greatest of all goods (the glorification of Christ and our Redemption).”<sup>20</sup> This understanding helps us to reconcile the problem of evil, and the reality of the Redemptive Cross in the Divine plan of Salvation.

#### 4.2.2 The Incarnate, Even When on the Cross, is Still the Perfect Image of God

Even after the Incarnation, even when on the Cross, the Son is still the Perfect Image of the Father, because He is still Love. He is still loving, and He radiates, and He concretely gives this Love. In the mystery of the Son’s self-abasement,

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16 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 29.

17 Cf. John Paul II, *The Holy Cross*, General Audience, Wednesday, 30 March 1983, no. 2.

18 Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, New Edition, Manila: ECCCE Word & Life Publications, 1997, no. 309; Also Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22.

19 *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005, no. 57.

20 *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 58.

in His Incarnation, His Sonship became a property, a reality, of His Humanity. For this reason it is in truth possible to behold the true Son of God when beholding Jesus of Nazareth. This is the meaning of Jesus' remark to Philip, "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (Jn 14:9). No one can see the Divine in itself, for it is entirely invisible and beyond all comprehension and power of reasoning. The Divine is known in itself only by itself. This very truth is expressed by Christ: "Nobody knows the Son except the Father; nobody knows the Father except the Son, and to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). The Only-begotten Son reveals the exceeding beauty of God the Father whose radiant Image He himself is. For this reason He says, "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (Jn 14:9). It is true, that human persons behold the Son above all with the eyes of the heart, but also with bodily eyes; for He has humbled himself and has descended among human beings, while at the same time dwelling in the form of God and equal to God the Father, because according to His two natures He is born of God the Father and born of a Woman – the Blessed Virgin Mary (cf. Phil 2:6-11).<sup>21</sup> He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even Death on the Cross (Phil 2:8).<sup>22</sup> His being on the Cross does not annihilate His being God. In fact, it instead reveals His Divinity, for, the holy Trinity was fully revealed in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, even when on the Cross, He is still the Perfect Image of God.

Because of the Incarnation, human beings behold the Son even with human bodily eyes. Which of course does not mean that we would be able to recognize Him as the Son of God immediately through our bodily sight alone. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, without faith, and without human cooperation, human persons are not able to see that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Christ. For Christ's Humanity remains a common humanity with regard to its properties, it is not remade into God by becoming the flesh of the Word. The Son is the Perfect Image of the Father because He is perfectly like the Father, not based on the characteristics of the flesh, nor on the form of His body,

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21 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 87-92.

22 Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *A Christological Catechism; New Testament Answers*, New York: Paulist Press, 1991, p. 34.

23 For explanation on how the Holy Trinity is revealed in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, see chapter five section (5.1) of this study on Redemption as the Work of the Holy Trinity.

but in view of His Divine power and glory. Still, His humanity should never be considered without reference to His being God's Son. The flesh of Christ is not made into the Image of the invisible God, for no nature be it Human or Divine can ever be an image but only the *Person*.<sup>24</sup> The Son – who is a Person – is the Image of the Father.

If Christ is to be Image of the Father as Man as well, then this is possible only because, through the self-abasement of the Incarnation, the properties of His Humanity reveal the qualities of the eternal Son as well. In the Son we behold the Image of the Father. God the Father is by nature Good, so is the Son. Even when He is hanging on the Cross, He is still the Son of God. He is still Good and not destroyed because He has willingly accepted such a humiliation. He has come into this world to save sinners. He has given His life for them. Mighty is the Father, and so is the Son. The Father is life itself, and so is the Son. He gives life to those who are perishing. He destroys the power of death and raises the dead. With good reason, therefore, He tells Philip, "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (Jn 14:9). For in Me, so He says, and through Me you can see the Father. It is especially in His becoming Man, in His work of Salvation, in His sacrifice, that Christ is recognized as the Image of the Father. Whoever sees His love for all people, sees the Father. His deed reveals the Love of the Father. He is still full of Love even when on the Cross. That is why He shows this Love by praying for forgiveness for those who kill Him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). To the repentant thief He promises the paradise, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). He is still Love even when on the Cross. God is Love. He is still the Perfect Image of God even when on the Cross. Thus the very immensity of His self-abasement reveals the immensity also of the Father. It is true, the flesh as such is somewhat opaque. The Incarnation veils and hides His glory. However, the self-abandonment even to the point of the ugliness of Death makes visible the Love of the Father, a love willing to give the Son in sacrifice. Thus the Son reveals the Father through the very lowliness of taking the form of a slave. The One on the Cross is the Image of the Invisible God (Col 1:15).<sup>25</sup>

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24 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 87-92.

25 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, pp. 87-92.

### 4.3 THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS

Christ's Death is unique. It is the redemptive Death. It is not a result of natural causes. It is unique because it is willed, and freely permitted by the Father. It is willed, and consciously freely accepted by the Son. And it accomplished in communion with the Holy Spirit. It is not fate because it was foretold by the Scriptures. It is an Act in the truest sense of the word because none of the Persons involved is passive. All are active. All are truly doing an Action. For this reason it is truly a redemptive Death in God's plan of Salvation (cf. CCC, nn. 595-623). This redemptive Death of Christ on the Cross is mightier than sin and death because with the sacrifice of His life Christ has re-established the order of relations between humanity and God, overcoming sin and accomplishing Redemption *for* human persons far more powerful than the power of sin and death.<sup>26</sup> With this in mind, it is now possible to proceed to the question of historicity of this Act.

#### 4.3.1 The Cross is a Historical Fact and a Deeper Symbol

According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Death of Jesus on the Cross is so offensive to all mankind, not only to Jews and pagans, but also to Christians, that it must be based on *historical fact*. This alone can explain why people try to understand and to interpret it, and even preaching it. Fact comes before interpretation. Because it is so hard to grasp such a stumbling block, the fact acts as a spur to interpretation. The Cross could never be deduced from Jewish or Hellenistic models. It is the *fact* that Jesus died an accursed Death on the Cross of shame that has made it possible to see a meaning in this terrible Event, a meaning foreshadowed far back in the Old Testament.<sup>27</sup> The gospels in the passion narratives report an *actual* event, but with the primary purpose of providing its theological significance and meaning. Historically, Jesus was arrested, tried, sentenced, executed by crucifixion and was buried and rose from the dead.<sup>28</sup>

26 Cf. John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Redemption*, General Audience, 1 March, 1983, no. 2.

27 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 22.

28 Cf. D. W. Wuerl, *The Catholic Way*, p. 75.

Cardinal Schönborn insists that, the Cross should never be dissociated from its unique, concrete, and historical reality. It should never be spiritualized into a symbol in a general sense. At the same time, this historical Event should never be dissociated from the symbolic implications. As a symbol, the Cross signifies the fulfilment of Jesus Christ's mission.<sup>29</sup> Christ's question, "But you, who do you say that I am?" (Mk 8:29) has to be answered. For human persons to be able to say who Jesus is, they need to consider the mysteries of Jesus' life, the message of his ministry, the scandal and tragedy of His redemptive Death, and of course the Resurrection and ascension.<sup>30</sup> From Cardinal Schönborn's way of presenting the mystery of the Cross, that is, as physical, historical, and spiritual, we get clues or keys for our trying to understand, in as far as it possible for human mind, of who this Person Incarnate and Crucified is. The crucifixion is taking place at a concrete particular time in history (about 33 AD) but does not end at that, but rather points to a deeper truth, yet at the same time maintaining the historical truth. In a word, it can be said that the effect of the Cross of Jesus Christ does not remain in the archives of history but is ever true and living as much as it is historical. In history "no other symbol has had the widespread and important significance of the cross. It is the supreme emblem of Christianity, symbolic of sacrifice and Redemption."<sup>31</sup> For the sake of suffering humanity the Son of God came down from heaven to earth. It is He who became Man, He who was hung on the Cross, He who was buried in the earth, raised from the dead, and taken up to the heights of Heaven.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.3.2 The Cross is not Fate but Willed and is in the Divine Plan

The events preceding the Cross indicate that the Cross was not a result of fate. It is willed. He wills the Cross being true God and true Man. He does not face the Cross being Divine alone but being Divine and Human united at once. It is true that Greek philosophy had a keen sense of the dignity of the person. But the

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29 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301.

30 Cf. E. P. Flynn, *Why Believe?: Foundations of catholic Theology*, Franklin: Sheed & Ward, 2000, p. 99.

31 George Willard Benson, *The Cross: Its History and Symbolism*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005, p. 11; cf. also p. 15.

32 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 66-67.

Greek fate is non personal power deciding the destiny of everything impersonally. Sophocles tried to replace blind fate by divine justice endowed with discernment. Socrates' "know thyself" is the first great personalist revolution. But this could have only a limited effect against the surrounding resistances. There are also elements in Nichomachean ethics, and the Stoics with their *caritas generis humani*.<sup>33</sup> The way Cardinal Schönborn describes and explains the event of the Cross does not in any way point to any sentiments of the Greek fate which is impersonal. On the contrary, the Cross is embraced by Christ willingly, in total freedom, and choice out of love for human persons. It is willed. Freedom is the control of oneself, and over things over which one is really the sovereign ruler.<sup>34</sup> In the same way Christ could freely accept the Cross without being driven to it by fate. In Christianity, freedom is not predetermined. It is universal to every person.<sup>35</sup> The person achieves freedom only in exercising it. Looking at Cardinal Schönborn's presentation of the Cross, it can be rightly said that Christ goes to the Cross in total freedom, because by so doing He was conferring and confirming the freedom of the human persons – human persons who had freely committed sin.

The Passion and the Cross of Jesus reveals some truth about the inner ontological reality of the Person of Christ. He is truly God and truly Man. As true Man, "He also knows fear, the terribly profound fear of death that leads him to sweat blood in the garden of Gethsemane, this extraordinary physical manifestation of his inner [ontological] reality (cf. Lk 22:44)."<sup>36</sup> As true God, He knows exactly that the Passion and the Cross is necessary for the Redemption and Salvation of human persons. He perfectly knows that it is in the Divine plan of Salvation for the saviour to suffer all these things. According to Saint Alphonsus Liguori, Jesus suffering shows His Love.<sup>37</sup> Saint Padre Pio refers to Christ's suffering as, this mystery of love and suffering of a God, Who, "with our humanity, suffers, agonizes and dies for the love of the creature."<sup>38</sup> Therefore,

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33 Cf. E. Mounier, *Personalism*, p. xii.

34 Cf. P. Dancak, "Personalism-The Philosophical Movement for Human Development," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 124(2017), pp. 53-54.

35 Cf. E. Mounier, *Existentialist Philosophies; An Introduction*, E. Blow (trans.), London: Rankin Bros. Ltd., 1948, p. 129.

36 C. Schönborn, *With Jesus Every Day*, H. P. Weber (Ed.), B. McNeil (trans.), New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2006, p. 79.

37 Alphonsus Liguori, Saint, *The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ: The Aesthetical Works Volume V*, Isaac M. Kassock (Ed.), Kassock Bros. Publishing Co., 2014,

38 Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, *The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane*, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1981, p. 6.

with the main motif of love running through the whole mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, it becomes possible now, for the human person to proceed with the reality of the glorious Cross of Christ full of admiration, acceptance and eagerness to take up his own cross and follow Him out of the same motive of pure love.

The Cross was permitted for the purpose of accomplishing God's plan of Salvation. Christ himself says to Pilate, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (Jn 19:11). And when Peter tries to counsel Him against taking this path He responds, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as men do" (Mt 16:23), and when Peter tried to defend Him during the arrest He rebukes him to put back the sword in its sheath (Jn 18:11). And knowing that His time had not yet come many times He escaped from His enemies when they wanted to stone or to kill Him. Here we also remember the flight to Egypt. When the right time came, God permitted the suffering and Death of His Son. It was foretold. Christ himself many times foretold of it (cf. Mk 10:33-34).<sup>39</sup> The Scriptures had foretold this plan, as a mystery of universal Redemption, through the putting to Death of the righteous One, who is God's Servant. His Death is the ransom that frees men from the slavery of sin. It is not fate or natural death. This Death was not a result of chance in an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances, but it is part of the mystery of God's plan. Jesus is delivered according to the definite plan and eternal knowledge of God (Acts 2:23). He is active not passive. He is Subject and not object. It is true that Jesus is handed over according to the definite plan of God, but this does not mean that the acts of those, involved in His death, who handed Him over and executed Him (Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, peoples of Israel-Jews who gathered together against Jesus) were merely passive players in a scenario written in advance by God (Acts 3:13). They were actively involved and not passively. The Cross is connected with human sins, freely committed. As sinners, human persons are killing the Son of God (cf. CCC, nn. 595-23).

Pope John Paull II has taught that "through the fact of having *taken this suffering upon his very self*... Christ goes towards his Passion and death *with full awareness* of the mission that he has to fulfil precisely in this way... by means of his Cross he must strike at the roots of evil... by means of his Cross he must accomplish the work of Salvation. This work, in the plan of eternal Love, has

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39 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 244.

a redemptive character.”<sup>40</sup> Where there is no will – allowing, it is not possible to talk of an Act. The will is inseparable from what it means to be a person. This personalistic reality also applies to the Act of the Cross. The Cross is at the centre of God’s plan of Salvation. It is not an arbitrary or accidental historical event, but the decision of God. At the same time, the Cross is an event that did not occur necessarily but was absolutely willed, caused, and carried out by human persons. The Cross is the point of intersection of historical human actions and the Divine plan of Salvation (cf. CCC, no. 598).<sup>41</sup> Jesus clearly knew that His activity leads up to the Cross. He says to His disciples, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will mock Him, and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him; and after three days He will rise” (Mk 10: 33-34).<sup>42</sup> This clearly indicates that the Cross was not fate for Jesus Christ, since He clearly knew what He had willed and decided. Moreover, He knew clearly why He was going to die.

Jesus was aware both of man’s responsibilities for His Death on the Cross, which He would have to face following the sentencing by an earthly tribunal. He clearly knew the fact that through this human condemnation the Divine eternal design would be fulfilled. He knew His Death on the Cross to be the pleasing sacrifice offered for the world’s Redemption. Even if Jesus, God himself, did not wish or will the evil committed by man, nevertheless, He accepted, He permitted this evil. In the mystery of evil, God in His omniscience and omnipotence knows and has power to derive the good from evil. From this evil of crucifixion committed by human persons, He obtained the good of the world’s Salvation.<sup>43</sup> Saint Paul says we crucified Christ. Jesus was crucified by my sins. Jesus died for my sins (1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4). “This dreadful truth, that Paul shared in the responsibility for Jesus’ Cross, was something of which he first felt certain in the light of the truth that he enumerates in the letter to the Galatians as the sum total of his conversion: ‘The Son of God...loved me and gave himself for me’ (Gal 2:20).”<sup>44</sup> It is very interesting to discover how Cardinal

40 John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 11 February 1984, no. 16.

41 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301.

42 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 244.

43 Cf. John Paul II, *Christ’s Sacrifice fulfils God’s design of Love*, General Audience, Wednesday 7 September 1988, no. 4.

44 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301; The Eucharistic Prayer II at Holy Mass clearly express this willingness of Jesus Christ regarding the Cross, when it reads, “At the time he was betrayed and entered *willingly* into his passion.” (cf. Eucharistic Prayer II).



Schönborn points out the willing of the Cross from both sides. On the side of the Divine, it is willed as a fulfilment of the Divine plan of Salvation out of God's love. While on the side of human persons, it is willed in as far as human persons have sinned and even gone ahead to carry out the crucifixion of Jesus Christ themselves. This is clearly evidenced by the confession of Saint Paul (Gal 2:20). The Cardinal shows us the bad use of the will on the side of human persons, by sinning, and the good use of the will on the side of God for the Redemption of human persons. This way of presenting the Cross by Cardinal Schönborn as willed by human persons, further informs us about our person, in that we can use the free will to do good or to do evil. In as far as Cardinal Schönborn identifies, he explains the Cross as fitting correctly in the Divine plan of Salvation, and willed, then any traces of the Cross as fate are completely erased.

Also when the high priest asked Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed?" (Mk 14:62). Jesus' firm and assured reply expresses His self-awareness and His claim, namely: "I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the Right Hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk 14:62).<sup>45</sup> Even a purely historical examination shows that in the life of Jesus a reality greater and more holy was underlined. Jesus cannot be considered just as a kind of revolutionary who had come into conflict with the ruling powers. Jesus had a very clear and most personal understanding of His mission, which He consistently followed.<sup>46</sup> His path is clearly marked out. The announcements of His Passion, which the disciples did not at first understand (Mk 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34), merely express this orientation of the whole path Jesus followed. Christ's path is not a matter of chance or fate. It is not accidental, but it is what God wills (cf. Mk 8:33). It is the path already marked out by God. The surrender and the violent death is hence an act "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). This Act finds its completion in the Resurrection of Jesus.<sup>47</sup> The whole of Salvation history was straining toward the Cross and the interpretation of this Cross was given beforehand by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper.<sup>48</sup>

One might also ask, was it really necessary for Christ to come and suffer all that He suffered when there was the Old Testament Law which is from the

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45 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 253.

46 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 253.

47 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 254.

48 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 153.

same God? Could not this Law have been sufficient to bring about Redemption? To such a question Cardinal Schönborn together with Cardinal Ratzinger would answer that, the Old Testament Law was not sufficient for Redemption. “God gave men the Torah...as a preparation, as something [not as some One] that would lead to the day on which He himself, in splendour and glory, would deal with the people of Israel through His Servant, the sole Righteous One [some One].”<sup>49</sup> The personalistic reality, then becomes very clear here. Redemption, is not effected by *something* but rather is effected by *some One*. This some One, has to be a Person. This Person is Jesus the Christ, true God and true Man.

### 4.3.3 Not Crucified for Breaking the Law But Because of a Love for

Jesus accomplishes everything *for* our Redemption in relation to Father and human persons. In obedience to the will of the Father, He submits to the Law in every detail of His life so as to redeem men (Gal 4:5). As an Infant when the rites of circumcision and presentation in the Temple were fulfilled in accordance with the Law, He was taking the yoke of the Law upon Himself in order to free others from that yoke (Gal 4:4-5).<sup>50</sup> Here it is important to notice that Christ is crucified between two robbers. He who was declared innocent by Pilate, is crucified with law breakers. Isaiah states “and [He] was numbered with transgressors. For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors” (Is 53:12). Christ is numbered with the transgressors by being crucified between two robbers (Mt 27:38), but in fact He himself was not a law breaker, He was not a criminal. Moreover, in His hour of Death, He made intercession for the transgressors by praying, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).<sup>51</sup> At face value, there is no place for the Cross in the eyes of the Jews especially regarding the Messiah dying on the Cross. That is why Peter summons Jesus, it will not happen to You (cf. Mt 16:22). But Jesus knows there is a place for the Cross. How is Jesus going to reconcile the Jewish vision of the Messiah that cannot be crucified and the true Messiah himself who has to face

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49 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 247.

50 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 229.

51 T. Marshall, *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity*, Dallas-Texas: Saint John Press, 2009, p. 33.

the Cross? Hence the respect to the Torah is observed on the basis of Jesus' knowledge of His mission. He is more than a rabbi. Himself is the Righteous One who truly brings justice (Is 2:3), who takes upon Himself everything that divides men from the covenant with God, and makes the many righteous by taking their guilt upon Himself (Is 53:11). The Cross is understood to be in line with the Law and with Israel. He Himself takes the law farther, and He Himself is the One who leads Israel to God.<sup>52</sup>

In the parable of the wicked tenants, "the monstrous, heinous murder of the son and heir should be repaid by a draconian punishment: 'What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants, and give the vineyard to others' (Mk 12:9). That would be the logical solution to the tenants' guilt."<sup>53</sup> However, God Himself transforms the rejection of His Son by sinners into the forgiveness of their sins. Not the resolution of guilt by the punishment deserved, but Redemption from the guilt itself. Instead of condemning the tenants to the punishment for their crime and destroying them, the owner of the vineyard does the inconceivable: he himself delivers his son into their hands; their crime brings about his act of benevolence. The Son dies at the hands of His murderers, yet the Father has delivered Him into their hands that He might die *for* them.

We can deduce that Cardinal Schönborn shows that Jesus Christ was executed because of breaking the Law – the Torah, since the Torah is of great meaning to Jesus. He keeps it and He attaches great importance to its being kept. "Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:19)."<sup>54</sup> The Law has for Him an incomparable importance and He is also quite familiar with its interpretation in the rabbinic form (cf. Mt 5:1).<sup>55</sup> The Cross has an innermost solidarity with the Law. He takes the Law farther. His Death redeems the Israelites from the transgressions under the first covenant (Heb 9:15).<sup>56</sup> That is why Christians read the Old Testament not for its own sake but always with Christ and through Christ.<sup>57</sup> Jesus keeps the Torah and teaches people to keep it. And

52 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 247.

53 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 302.

54 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 246; CCC, no. 579.

55 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 247.

56 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 247.

57 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *In the Beginning...: A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, p. 16.

yet His horizon is different and new. To understand Him, conversion is requisite. It requires that one freely personally entrust oneself to Him.<sup>58</sup> While, talking about the Cross, in Schönborn, it can be seen that, the Cross is willed by the Father, the Cross is willed by the Son, the Cross is willed by the Holy Spirit since the whole Paschal Mystery is willed by the Holy Trinity. The Cross is caused by sins committed by human persons. Saint Peter expresses this when he says, “He himself bore our sins in His body on the Cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pt 2:24; cf. also Rom 5:8). The New Testament kerygma speaks of the Cross of Christ as an Act of God, “He gave Him up for us (Rom 4:25; 8:24; Acts 2:23)”.<sup>59</sup> It is an Act of Love. It is faith that enables the human person to recognise that it is love which led Christ to the Cross and not breaking of the Law.<sup>60</sup> The Sacrifice of Christ is a Divine mystery.<sup>61</sup> A mystery of Divine love. That is why it is unique. It is the redemptive Sacrifice.

Pope John Paul II teaches that “Love is: also the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering. This answer has been given by God to man in the Cross of Jesus Christ.”<sup>62</sup> Whereas the Cross is willed by God in the sense of being permitted, the case is different with the human persons in as far as causing the Cross is concerned. The human persons are not causing the Cross because they are able to derive greater good out of evil, but instead human persons cause ruin for themselves. And so, on the side of human persons the Cross is a consequence of sin.

Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) explains the Cross as a submission full of love. The story of the human person on earth is marked by disobedience towards God, Creator and Father. Therefore, the Son who makes us free (Jn 8:36) makes us free by means of His obedience unto Death. He did it, showing to the very end His submission full of love. Father into your hands I commit my spirit (Lk 23:6). In this self-offering, in this total self-abandonment to the Father, the simultaneous Divine union of the Son with the

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58 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 249.

59 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 266.

60 John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 11 February 1984, no. 20.

61 Cf. S. W. Hahn & D. Scott (Eds.), *Liturgy and Empire: Faith in Exile and Political Theology*, Steubenville: St. Paul Centre for Biblical Theology-Emmaus Road Publishing 2009, p. 93.

62 John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 11 February 1984, no. 12.

Father (I and the Father are one, Jn 10:31) is affirmed above the whole story of human disobedience.<sup>63</sup>

Pope John Paul II further teaches that Christ's Sacrifice fulfils God's design of Love perfectly well so much so that, "When Peter tried to deny this eventually ('This shall never happen to you,' Mt 16:22), Jesus reprovved him in words of particular severity: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men" (Mk 8:33). The eloquence of these words is impressive. Jesus wished to make Peter understand that to be opposed to the way of the Cross was to reject the designs of God Himself. Satan is indeed he who from the beginning is opposed to that which is of God.<sup>64</sup>

Christ's Passion and Death is announced in the Old Testament not as the end of His mission, but as the indispensable passage required in order to be raised up by God. "Behold, my servant shall prosper, He shall be exalted and lifted up... and shall be very high" (Is 52:13). Jesus Himself, when He pointed out that the "Son of man... must be killed," also added that "after three days he will rise again" (Mk 8:31).<sup>65</sup> All this indicates that in the Cross God is not impersonal. In other words, the Cross does not point to a God who is impersonal devoid of Love. In all the mystery of the Cross God remains a personal God with true Love – that Love which exists among persons. We can dare to boldly say that, in the Cross, God demonstrates the ontological love coherent among persons. It is important at this point to remember that evil is not ontological. For all what God created and He did and does (Act) in His Divine plan is good.

#### 4.3.4 The Death of Christ on the Cross is Not a Natural Consequence of His Birth

Jesus Christ's path to Death was not the natural consequence of His birth as ours is. He walked toward Death because His life was not in any way self-centred. He was never individualistic, but He was personalistic – unique,

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63 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, General Audience, Wednesday 24 August 1988, no. 6.

64 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Christ's Sacrifice fulfils God's design of Love*, General Audience, Wednesday 7 September 1988, no. 3.

65 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Christ's Sacrifice fulfils God's design of Love*, General Audience, Wednesday 7 September 1988, no. 7.

and at the same time in relation. Since He was completely open to and *for* everyone, the guilt of everyone fell upon Him. Surely, He has borne our grief and carried our sorrows – so Matthew interprets the openness of Jesus in the light of the Suffering Servant (Is 53:4; Mt 8:17). Since He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary’s unreserved “Yes,” His Death too is a dying *for* us (1 Cor 15:3) and that is why death could have no power over Him (Acts 2:27). Right from His conception, death could find no foothold in this new, Spirit – wrought life.<sup>66</sup> By exposition and explanation, Cardinal Schönborn brings to light the personalistic dimension of the Redemption and Salvation achieved *for* us human persons through Christ’s openness to “the other” as a Person.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Necessity of the Cross in the Divine Plan of Salvation

Jesus asks His disciples, “Was it not necessary that *the Christ* should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” (Lk 24:26).<sup>68</sup> The Man delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, was crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men (Acts 2:22-23). What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled (Acts 3:18).<sup>69</sup> The necessity of *the Christ* to suffer these things lies in the soteriological significance of the Cross. The truth of God is greater than human reason and human mentality. In mere human mentality without the grace of faith, there is the rejection of the Cross. However, in God’s Divine plan of Salvation, God looks for the most appropriate way to redeem the human person, so that what is good in creation might be realized in the best way and the radiance of Divine truth and love might shine forth precisely in the Cross.<sup>70</sup> The new covenant is made in the blood of Christ which is shed on the Cross.<sup>71</sup> Christ Crucified is

66 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, pp. 32-33.

67 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 33.

68 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 244.

69 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Christ’s Sacrifice fulfils God’s design of Love*, General Audience, Wednesday 7 September 1988, no. 6.

70 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 300.

71 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 138.

the irrefutable revelation of God's love *for us* and the definite revelation of His mercy.<sup>72</sup>

Jesus Christ says, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (Jn 12:32). Thus the Cross is the pillar of shame but yet the throne, the tree of the curse but yet the tree of Redemption. The exaltation of Jesus at His crucifixion is His exaltation to the Father. He says, "Father glorify thy Son" (Jn 17:1). For Saint Paul, the whole of what is preached as the Gospel is Christ crucified (1 Cor 1:23).<sup>73</sup> Christ goes to the Cross very conscious and aware that it rightly fits, and it is necessarily in the Divine plan of Salvation. According to Cardinal Schönborn the question of Jesus Christ, "'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say that I am?'" (Mt 16:15) is completely a direct and personal question. Not, what do "people" say, what does "everybody" think, but you, personally. It requires a real personal answer. Peter gives the answer, "You are the Messiah, the Christ" (Mt 16:16). It is not merely a neutral observation but rather is the declaration and confession of love. It is the confession of faith that turns into the expression of personal loyalty, an expression of hope. After this confession Peter still has to learn about the correct understanding of the Messiah that the Messiah has to suffer. When Peter does not understand this he is given a sharp rebuff: "Get behind me, Satan!" (Mt 16:23). The path of the Cross is the way by which the Messiah effects and accomplishes His mission of liberating people. Not by armed force, but by the powerlessness of love. Not even death can touch love, for after three days He will rise again.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.3.6 Jesus Christ's Death on the Cross is a Perfectly Free Act

The Person of Jesus Christ meets His Death on the Cross acting in full freedom. Christ offered Himself on the Cross being the true and proper sacrifice. Isaiah foretells not only the Passion and Death of the future Messiah, but also that He would *voluntarily, willingly* accept it being the "guilt-sacrifice" *for* the sins of mankind (Is 53:7-12). John the Baptist, the last of the prophets sees in Christ,

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72 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Redemption*, General Audience, Wednesday, 1 March 1983, no. 3.

73 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301.

74 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Behold, God's Son!*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007, pp. 119-120.

the Lamb of Sacrifice, who took on Himself the sins of all mankind, in order to atone for them. Hence he announces “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (Jn 1:29). Saint Paul clearly bears witness to the sacrificial character of Christ’s Death on the Cross (Eph 5:2). Christ has loved us and has delivered Himself *for* us, the oblation and the sacrifice to God being the pleasing sacrifice (1 Cor 5:7). Christ Himself intended and revealed His Death on the Cross being the true sacrifice for the sins of human persons by using the biblical sacrificial terms, “giving up of life” and “shedding of blood” (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45). The Son of Man has not come to be administered unto but to minister and to give His life to be the Redemption for many (Lk 22:19). He says, “This is my body which is given for you” (Mt 26:28); This is my blood which is given for you for the remission of sins.”<sup>75</sup> In all this, it can be recognized that Christ is freely acting. He freely gives His body, He freely gives His blood. Since it is out of free will, it is a real Act proper to a person. He goes for Death on the Cross a free Divine Person. He is not compelled by the Father or compelled by necessity, much as it was necessary that He should suffer these things, He freely chooses to die. He is not coerced into this Death but accepts it freely. We may ask: But why does He Act this way? Because of personalistic love. He has Personal love for human persons who are in sin. That is why, because of this personalistic love He freely gives His life for the Redemption of human persons besieged by sin. A person is one to whom the only proper attitude is love. This is exactly the attitude of Jesus Christ as He freely accepts the Cross.

Also the Fathers from the very beginning regarded Christ’s Death on the Cross a free Act of sacrifice for the sins of mankind. For example, the author of the Barnabas Letter (7:3) says, “He Himself wished to offer the vessel of life a sacrifice for our sins.”<sup>76</sup> The sacrificial character of Christ’s Death on the Cross may be established speculatively, in that all the demands of a sacrificial act were fulfilled. The Person of Christ being true Man is at the same time the sacrificing priest and sacrificial gift.<sup>77</sup> Christ being true God together with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, He is also the receiver of the sacrifice. The

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75 Cf. L. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, J. C. Bastible (ed.), P. Lynch (trans.), Fort Collins: Roman Catholic Books 1954, p. 184.

76 Cf. L. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, J. C. Bastible (ed.), P. Lynch (trans.), Fort Collins: Roman Catholic Books 1954, p. 184. Also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, 3: 23:1; St. Augustine, *De Trin.* IV 14, 19 .

77 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Joy of Being a Priest: Following the Curé of Ars*, translated by Michael J. Miller, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010.



act of sacrifice consisted in the fact that Christ, in a disposition of the most perfect self-surrender, voluntarily gave up His life to God by permitting His enemies to kill Him, although He had the power of preventing it (Jn 10:18).<sup>78</sup> The glorious Cross of the Risen Lord is the sign of Divine Love. The Cross is a dreadful instrument of execution yet Jesus Christ freely accepted it in order to heal human persons.<sup>79</sup>

For an act to be worth the name should involve the intellect and will. By act here it should be understood as an event involving intellect and will. The questions now phrased in other words, whose intellect and will gave rise to the Act of the Cross? In this regard, in Cardinal Schönborn's Christology we find the "Cross stands at the centre of God's plan for Salvation. It is not an arbitrary or accidental historical event, but the decision of God. And yet it is also an event that comes about through individual human actions and omissions, which did not occur 'necessarily,' but was an event that was absolutely willed, caused, and carried out by men. Thus, the Cross stands at the point of intersection between historical human actions and the Divine plan of Salvation."<sup>80</sup> God is a community of Three Divine Persons. God who is One and Three Divine Persons at once, does whatever He does out of Divine Intellect and Divine Will. Out of His Divine Intellect and Will He permits evil to happen in order to defeat it by getting greater good from the evil. In this dimension then we are able to understand when Cardinal Schönborn says the Cross "is not an arbitrary or accidental historical event, but the decision of God."<sup>81</sup> It is a decision of God in as far as He permits it out of His Divine providence and Divine plan of Salvation. It involves His Divine Intellect and Divine Will, not in the sense of being a cause of evil but in the sense of permitting it. In this way we are able to talk about the Cross as the will of God. In the same dimension we can also understand the prayer of Jesus Christ when He prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You Will" (Mt 26:39). Here we see Christ's explicit reference to the Will of the Father in this mystery of the Cross. Christ also says, "You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above" (Jn 19:11). When He rebukes Peter, "Put your

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78 Cf. L. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, p. 185.

79 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Behold, God's Son!*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007, p. 219.

80 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301.

81 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301.

sword in its place, or do you think I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (Mt 26: 52-54).

### 4.3.7 Into your Hands I Commend My Spirit

Jesus abandoned His life to the Father because of the relation that exists between God the Father and God the Son. "Into your Hands I commend my Spirit" (Lk 23:6). He died praying, that is, in dialogue of filial intimacy with the Father. He died praying Psalm 22, which is the song of a righteous man.<sup>82</sup> Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him Who was able to save Him from Death, and He was heard. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered (Heb 5:7-8). This statement signifies that Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled the Father's will, God's eternal design concerning the world's Redemption at the price of the supreme sacrifice for love. According to John's Gospel this sacrifice was not only a glorification of the Father by the Son. It was also a glorification of the Son, in accordance with the words of the priestly prayer in the upper room: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him power over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given Him" (Jn 17:1-2). This is what was fulfilled on the glorious Cross. The resurrection after three days confirmed and expressed the glory with which the Father glorified the Son (Jn 17:1).<sup>83</sup> This reveals to us concrete Persons in relation.

Jesus' own consciousness of His mission is always in relation to the Father, On the cross He forgives those who crucify Him in relation to His Father, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do" (Lk 23:34). Jesus knows Himself to be the One who carries out and proclaims God's own Will, God who forgives through His unfathomable mercy, just like the father of the prodigal son, and knows that precisely in doing this, He is the Kingdom of God. Jesus reveals God's own will. Not His individualistic will but the Will of the

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82 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 145.

83 Cf. John Paul II, *Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, General Audience, 24 August 1988, no. 8.

Godhead. In His free acts of forgiveness it becomes revealed, who the God that sent Him is, and what His Kingdom looks like.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4.3.8 Personal Responsibility for the Crucifixion

Once again we may ask, who is responsible for the Cross? Is it a result of fate or it is an act? Generally human persons by their sins “are all responsible for Christ’s Passion.”<sup>85</sup> According to Cardinal Schönborn, God alone knows who was directly to blame for the trial and its outcome. He quotes Vatican Council II that:

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures.<sup>86</sup>

This kind of presentation of who was directly responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ preserves the reality of mystery of the Cross. It cannot be relegated and locked up in the museum of history, but rather remains ever living as a present event today much as it happened in a concrete definite history. Even people living today can be in this sense directly responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The one directly guilty of the crucifixion lived at that time of the historical moment of the crucifixion as much as he or she lived before or after the crucifixion. In other words, following Cardinal Schönborn’s analysis, it can be concluded that the cause and hence effect of the Cross much as is grounded in concrete historical time, the cause and effect of this Cross surpasses the concrete historical time.

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84 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 172.

85 Cf. D. W. Wuerl, *The Catholic Way*, p. 77.

86 Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, no. 4, as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 256.

Furthermore, the rejection of limiting responsibility only to the Jews (cf. CCC, no. 597), clearly indicates to us the universality of the glorious Cross of Jesus Christ. Those directly guilty of this crucifixion are not limited to a particular nation, but rather are to be understood as coming from all nations. In the same way, it can be understood that the effect (s) of this glorious Cross is not limited to a particular nation but rather is universal. All nations can benefit from the effect(s) that accrue from this Passion, Death and Glorification of Jesus Christ. This is also true of the whole the Gospel. The universality of Jesus Christ's message "arises from the identity of Jesus himself, who is Lord of all."<sup>87</sup>

It was necessary that the Christ should suffer all these realities Himself (Lk 24:26; cf. CCC, no. 601), that is, go to His Death, take up the Cross Himself, because it is connected with knowing that man is imprisoned by sin, the slave of sin. Since all, without distinction, are bound together in this sin, only God can reverse this disastrous situation by coming into the world Himself, becoming man, in order to bring men out of death to life, out of darkness into light. Jesus opposes sin, and it is sinners who hand Him over (Heb 12:3). Sins which are committed personally are directed against Him personally (Mt 25:45). The sins of us all hurt Christ personally. They brought Him to the Cross. It is not others whom we can call to account for it. Certainly not the entire Jewish people, even if some of them were directly involved in the actual events.<sup>88</sup> Guilty are all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our personal sins made the Lord Jesus Christ suffer the Cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew. In this case, it can be seen that our crime is greater than that of the Jews, since for them, "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2:8). We, however, profess to know him. And when we deny him by our deeds, we [...] lay violent hands on him."<sup>89</sup> Knowledge of personal involvement in Jesus' suffering and Death leads to the realization that Jesus consciously went to His Death for all sinners. It is only the Cross that discloses the full weight of sin. My sin cost God His life.<sup>90</sup> This

87 L. Magesa, "Theology of Inculturation: History, Meaning and Implications", in Elias Kifon Bongmba (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group, 2020, p. 44.

88 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 256.

89 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 257.

90 Cf. C. Schönborn, *With Jesus Every Day*, p. 130.

casts light on the personal dimension of Redemption which eventually leads to personal realization of Salvation in the glorious Cross of Christ. According to Saint Paul, we crucified Him. This shattering insight was granted to Paul, only after meeting the Resurrected One. Jesus was crucified by my sins. This awareness was received by Paul at the moment when he received the knowledge that, Jesus died for my sins (1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4).<sup>91</sup>

#### 4.3.9 Examples of the Living Power of the Glorious Cross – Not Limited by Time

The Cross of Christ has got a living power, not limited to the historical time (c. 33 AD) when it historically took place. Its power and effect is ever old and new. To demonstrate this, from Cardinal Schönborn's Christology we take the following examples. According to Cardinal Schönborn, right from Saint Paul, the gospel is the message of the Cross. Only in the Cross does he wish to glory (Gal 6:14). Only the crucified One does he wish to know (1 Cor 2:2). The Cross is a stumbling block for the Jews, foolishness for the pagans, but for those who believe, the power and the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18, 23-24). Saint Dominic († 1221) said of himself that he learned more from the book of the Cross than from the books of theologians.<sup>92</sup> The power of the Cross is experienced by Saint Thomas Aquinas († 1274) before the cross in Naples. It is experienced by Saint Francis († 1226) in his vision when he received the stigmata on Mount Alverna. By Edith Stein († 1942) on her path to conversion and in her science of the Cross. We may add Saint Padre Pio († 1968) who received the visible signs of the stigmata and had to endure all kinds of humiliations.<sup>93</sup> It can therefore, be clearly seen and concluded that from the beginning we encounter the Cross (1Cor 1:18) in all its power.<sup>94</sup>

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91 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 301.

92 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers from the Early Church Through the Middle Ages*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011, pp. 249-252.

93 Cf. Memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina on 23 September in: *The Daily Missal*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2013.

94 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 258-259.

#### 4.4 THE PEACE OF THE GRAVE (THE SABBATH)

This is about the silence of the Holy Saturday. Christ goes to everyone, even to the dead, in order to break the power of death.<sup>95</sup> The peace of the grave points to the reality that Jesus Christ is true Man, His Redemption is universal to even those who lived on earth and died before the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God. The salvific effectiveness of the *descensus ad inferos* in the life of Jesus consists in the fact that, in His Death Christ meets every human being (cf. CCC, no. 634). Here is a reality more than solidarity. God turns directly to the dead.<sup>96</sup>

##### 4.4.1 Jesus Christ is True Man

Jesus experienced human death as all humans do. By rising from the dead, He defeated death and the grave.<sup>97</sup> The saving actions of Jesus Christ are actions of the Person who is both wholly God and wholly Man.<sup>98</sup> Jesus was really killed. Jesus died, was buried and rose again (1Cor 15:3-4). Holy Saturday – the period from Death on the Cross to the Resurrection, also emphasizes Jesus' true Humanity and solidarity with humanity. Just as the corpses of all humans are laid in the grave after death, it is the same for Him. In death too, He is like one of them. He descended into the realm of the dead – hell (*descent ad inferos*). For humans' Redemption, Jesus "tastes" death. He really experiences the state of being dead. It is also the mystery of Holy Saturday, when Christ, lying in the tomb, reveals God's great Sabbath rest after fulfilment of man's Salvation, which brings peace to the whole universe.<sup>99</sup>

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95 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 244.

96 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 310-311.

97 Cf. M. Y. Emersion, *He Descended to the Dead: An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday*, Downers Grove, USA: Inter Varsity Press, 2019, p. 18.

98 Cf. D. W. Wuerl, *The Catholic Way*, p. 75.

99 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 293-301.

## 4.4.2 Hell as Sheol

The idea of the realm of the dead, an underworld beneath our living space, a “hell” that contains the souls of the dead, seems completely remote from our modern rational consciousness. Here, “hell” should be understood as Sheol, that is, the realm of death, the underworld. Hell does not mean the place of eternal damnation, but the place where the dead dwell, which in Hebrew is called *Sheol* and in Greek, *Hades* (Acts 2:31; cf. CCC, no. 633). Before the reformation, before Calvin, “descended into hell” did not mean “descend into the place of torment.” The creedal Latin varies between *ad inferna*, “descended into hell” and *ad inferos*, “descended to the dead ones”, but these are synonyms until the Reformation.<sup>100</sup> Here we do not mean to negate the existence of hell as eternal damnation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes it clear that, “...all the dead [before Christ’s Death], whether evil or righteous...does not mean that their lot is identical, as Jesus shows through the parable of the poor man, Lazarus who was received into ‘Abraham’s bosom’: ‘It is precisely these holy souls, who awaited their saviour in Abraham’s bosom, who Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell. Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him” (CCC, no. 633). But rather we are now here concerned with the interpretation of the realm of the dead as we have it in the Sacred Scripture and as understood by the first Christians. That is the realm where the souls of those who have died are after death. Peter’s Pentecost sermon includes reference to this. Psalm 16 is presented as announcing the Resurrection: “He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption” (Acts 2:31; Ps 16:10; cf. CCC, no. 627).<sup>101</sup> Paul says, “Who will descend into the deep?” (Rom 10:7; Heb 13:20, Rev 1:18; 1 Pet 3:22; 1 Pet 3:18; Rom 4:25). That is, to bring Christ up from the dead. Here we see an inseparable part of Jesus’ death on the Cross is also being dead, thus, going into the realm of death. Also, the descending to the dead is associated with ascending to the Father – thus, with the beginning of the eschatological consummation (cf. CCC, no. 631). The personalistic reality here is that persons are persons in relation. Even as He experiences death, the Divine Person Jesus Christ is in relation to the Father. This is a very personalistic fact

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100 Cf. M. Y. Emerson, *He Descended to the Dead*, pp. 3-6.

101 Cf. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 304-305.

within His descent to the realm of the dead. He does and experiences everything as a true person. He who descended is He who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things (Eph 4:10).<sup>102</sup>

The Biblical witness confirms that Christ's descent to the dead was a genuine experience of death, the most profound expression of solidarity with men. During the three days from His Death to Resurrection, Jesus experienced the state of death, that is, the separation of the soul from the body (cf. CCC, no. 624). Jesus Himself announced this when He compared His own path to the account of the prophet Jonah: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Mt 12:40). Peter says, "He went and preached to the spirits in prison" (1Pet 3:19). Here the context in which Peter speaks is very important. Before this verse, it says: "for Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit" (1 Pt 3:18). The body is dead, but the spirit is alive and contemplating God. In this condition, Christ went "to the spirits" which means here that his authority is extended to everyone, even to the spirits in the underworld. He is dead according to the body, but according to His spirit, He goes down into the underworld, although in doing so He is enjoying the eternal relation to the Other Divine Persons.<sup>103</sup> On the basis of this relation, He can confidently face those spirits in the underworld and also preach to them.<sup>104</sup> Jesus Christ, a true Person, is in relation to other human persons in the experience of His Death. Just like any other human being so He also dies. The person of Jesus Christ is able to be raised from the dead because of the personalistic reality of being in relation. Without this relation to the Father and to the Holy Spirit which is constant, Jesus' resurrection would not be possible.

The descent into Sheol is tied in a peculiarly intimate way to the revelation of God, and in particular to the Person of Christ and His redeeming work.<sup>105</sup> Christ's descent into the dead is the pinnacle of the Trinity's

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102 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 305.

103 Cf. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 305.

104 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 306.

105 Cf. L. A. Pitstick, *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007, p. 1.



self-revelation in Salvation history. God's love remains unscathed by His descent into and real union with what is most not Himself, sin and the abandonment by God that is its punishment. The sovereign freedom necessary to punish sin and embrace this justice in love for the world's Redemption reveals God's Trinitarian Divinity.<sup>106</sup>

#### 4.4.3 One Divine Person of Jesus Christ and Descent into the Underworld

The Death of Jesus Christ does not make Him less Divine, because every unique person is only one and can only be one. A person is uniqueness and relatedness at once and is irreplaceable. In the One Divine Person of Jesus Christ there are two natures, Divine Nature and Human Nature, but there are not two persons in Christ. The common understanding of death is that of separation of soul from body. Consequently, Christ's body and soul separated at death. However, the unity of God and Man was maintained even during this separation of soul and body. For Saint Thomas Aquinas, it is important that the correct view of the *descensus* question not be obstructed by too dualistic a picture of man. As in Personalism, the dualistic view of subjectivity and objectivity of the person can be destruction if the two are not understood simultaneously as a single reality of what it means to be a person, namely uniqueness and relatedness without separation, without division, and without confusion. Therefore, it must be said that during three days of Christ's Death, the whole Christ was in the tomb, because the whole Person was there. How was he there? He was there through His body united with Him (Here we are already seeing hints on the reality of the resurrection of the body). Similarly, Jesus was wholly in the underworld because the whole person was there by reason of the soul united with Him.<sup>107</sup>

This kind of understanding of the connection between body and soul of the same one person is very important for our understanding of Redemption

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106 Cf. L. A. Pitstick, *Christ's Descent into Hell, John Paul II, Joseph Ratzinger, and Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Theology of Holy Saturday*, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2016.

107 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, STh III, q. 52, a. 3 (DThA 28:173) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 308.

and Salvation. That the sins I commit while still living on earth are not sins of the body but my sins as one and the same person who commits them. Also the sins I commit in my soul, or in thoughts (generally within the faculties of my soul) are not sins of the soul alone but my sins as one person. Likewise the joy of union with God is not only the joy of the soul alone but the joy of my person as one person.

#### 4.4.4 Jesus Christ Truly Died a Human Death

Jesus Christ did *not* seem to have died but rather He actually died a human death. Those who hold to Docetism, argue that Christ only seemed dead but in actual sense He did not die. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Redemption does not extend to the realm of damnation, but even then, the realm of damnation does experience Christ's victory but has no share in it.<sup>108</sup> For Balthasar, it is a truth of the redemptive event that Christ really and completely became Man-with-us. He has become united in solidarity with every man. He is a man to the point that He dies and was dead as a man. At death, Jesus' experience of being abandoned by God, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46; Ps 22:1). He must experience, in solidarity with those who have gone to the underworld, their ultimately hopeless separation from God, and only then has Jesus also truly suffered human death.<sup>109</sup> The interpretation of being abandoned by God is the "ultimate powerlessness of dying and being dead". It is not the power of the victorious Christ that overcomes the power of death, but the powerlessness of the one who loves (the Lamb), who in the encounter with death, with Adam, with hell (understood as the realm of the dead – not realm of damnation, cf. CCC, no. 633), descends ever deeper. This love is so strong that we really see the real Person and Act of true real love that should exist among persons. The love that one gives freely his life for another. The dead Lord does not descend out of or into chaos but descends because of love.<sup>110</sup>

108 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *STh III*, q. 52, a.3 (DThA 28:173) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 309.

109 Cf. Von Balthasar, *Spirit and Institution*, p. 408, as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 309.

110 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 309.

Holy Saturday, the Death of Christ, has nothing triumphal about it in the first instance. We experience that, too, with the liturgy of Holy Saturday. It is kept extremely simple; there is no celebration of the Eucharist; everything is concentrated in silent prayer and the liturgy of the daily offices, especially the readings of Tenebrae. The Church is bare of all ornaments; the altars have been stripped. Christ's Death leaves His disciples – and thus the Church – at first in bewilderment, sorrow, and fear. The believer should be still, should stop and adore. The Salvation that comes about in the descent into hell (underworld) is still hidden on Holy Saturday; death still has the power that is about to be taken from him.<sup>111</sup>

This should be understood correctly that, the central idea is that Christ, in perfect self-alienation brings home the dead from the deepest. God Himself enters into the most extreme state of distance from God and abandonment by Him in order to lead into His presence even the very last people. However, this view over emphasizes the lowliness and yet both aspects of glory and lowliness are important. Jesus Christ really died, but in this Death He was already the Blessed One, who calls into the blessed communion all who are dead with Him. God freely chose lowliness, in order to snatch men from death and to lead them to the heights. "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb 2:14-15). Cardinal Schönborn by quoting the letter to the Hebrews together with the interpretation he gives, helps us to appreciate the reason why Jesus Christ had to die. Namely, to destroy death by His Death through His Resurrection. His lowliness becomes our exaltation. Thus the salvific power of the sacrificial Death of Christ, which has achieved Redemption on behalf of all mankind, is revealed and actualized.<sup>112</sup>

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111 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 310; the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, teach that, "It is the mystery of Holy Saturday, when Christ, lying in the tomb, reveals God's great Sabbath rest after the fulfilment of man's Salvation, which brings peace to the whole universe" (CCC, no. 624).

112 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 310.

## 4.5 THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The resurrection is a work of the Holy Trinity, but also the truth of Jesus' Divinity is confirmed by His Resurrection (cf. Jn 8:28; CCC, no. 653). The Divine Person of Christ, who assumed a true Humanity, with a true Human body and soul, is glorified in the Resurrection (cf. CCC, no. 650). The Resurrection is a transcendent event – Christ is a Man of Heaven. The Father's power raised up Christ and perfectly introduced the Son's Humanity, including His body into the holy life of the Trinity (cf. CCC, no. 648). By the Resurrection, Jesus' Divine Sonship is revealed in the power of His glorified Humanity. He is indeed the Son of God as evidenced by His Resurrection from the dead. Hence, the Apostles behold His glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (cf. Jn 1:14; CCC, no. 445).

### 4.5.1 The Holy Trinity and the Resurrection

The question here is: what does Jesus' resurrection reveal about God Himself? Cardinal Schönborn's understanding of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in relation to the Holy Trinity highlights the subjectivity of the Divine Persons. Following Cardinal Schönborn's explanation, it can be recognized that, in the Resurrection there is no Divine Person presented as an object in the Act of Resurrection. All the Three Divine Persons are present as Subject of the Resurrection, that is, all the Three Persons, Act, with no one being acted on as Object. The Father is presented as the First Subject of the Resurrection, The Son is the Second Subject of the Resurrection and The Holy Spirit is the Third Subject of the Resurrection. They are all Acting Persons, or better expressed as, they are All, Person and Act. In the Resurrection event, God reveals Himself as the Holy Trinity.<sup>113</sup> Scripture describes this event sometimes as the work of the Father, sometimes as the work of the Son, and sometimes as the work of the Holy Spirit. Although the Work of the Holy Trinity is undivided, just as

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. P. Coda, *From The Trinity: The Coming of God in Revelation and Theology*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020, pp. 222-278.

the substance of the Trinity is undivided, the Church is accustomed to attribute works of power to the Father, works of Wisdom to the Son, and works of Love to the Holy Spirit. In the Resurrection, the Father demonstrates His power by rising Christ from death to new life. He is the First Subject of the Resurrection. The Father showed “the working of His great might which He accomplished in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and made Him sit at His right hand in heavenly places” (Phil 1:19-20). The Father exalts the Son to be *Kyrios* in glory (Phil 2:9-11) because He has the reverence and the glory of the eternal name of Son of God.<sup>114</sup>

Yet, Scripture also speaks of the Resurrection of Jesus by His own authority, as a direct action of the Son. Jesus mentions that the Son of man has first to suffer much and to die but He will then rise again (Mk 8:31). In the Gospel of John, He says explicitly: “I lay down my life, that I may take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (Jn 10:17-18). The Resurrection is the fullness of Christ’s revelation of Himself. During Jesus’ earthly life, the glory that He had with the Father before creation (cf. Jn 17:5), remained mysteriously hidden. “Like the Gospel of John, Augustine highlights Christ’s active role in his own resurrection.”<sup>115</sup> In the Resurrection, it is revealed that in Christ the whole fullness of God is present (cf. Col 2:9).<sup>116</sup> The Resurrection understood as Jesus raising Himself by His own authority reveals not that from now onwards Jesus is become God, or will be, at one with God which would be Adoptionism, but rather reveals that He already is God and was God for all of His earthly life.

Regarding the Holy Spirit in the mystery of the Resurrection, Cardinal Schönborn observes that, when Saint Paul says that, “Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” (Rom. 6:4), he is alluding to the role of the Holy Spirit in the Resurrection. For the Old Testament, the glory of God was closely associated with the Spirit (Ex 24:17; 40:34; Ezek 10:4). The way of talking about the power of God also refers to the Holy Spirit. For He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God (2 Cor 13:4). The Holy Spirit is the giver of life. He makes everything new. Raised by the power of the Holy Spirit to new life, Christ Himself becomes the dispenser of the same Holy Spirit,

114 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 321.

115 G. O’Collins, *Saint Augustine on the Resurrection of Christ: Teaching, Rhetoric, and Reception*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 1; cf. also, pp. 4-6.

116 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 321.

the life-giving Spirit (Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 4:14). Jesus came to His disciples, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). Just as God breathed life into Adam (Gen 2:7), so after Resurrection Jesus Christ breathes new life into the disciples. Cardinal Schönborn observes that with the Resurrection, Jesus’ prophecy is fulfilled, for before the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn 7:37-38, 39). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the Resurrection quenches man’s infinite thirst for eternal life, since “this is” eternal life to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent” (Jn 17:3). The Holy Spirit is also a Truth here, for one cannot claim to know God and Jesus Christ whom He sent without the Working and knowledge of the Holy Spirit.<sup>117</sup>

Back to our question posed at the beginning, namely, what does Jesus’ Resurrection reveal about God Himself? We can give the answer: Jesus’ Resurrection reveals that, the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God since they all Act, in the one Work of Resurrection. God is God – Who Is and Who Acts. By God’s personalistic Act(s) we come to see the truth of God, God who is the Holy Trinity – Divine Persons. Secondly, in God there is no Object but Subject. Thirdly, there is no Subordination among the Divine Persons since none of the Three Persons is Object of the Act of Resurrection but rather they are all Subject of the Resurrection. Fourthly, there is no Adoptionism in the Holy Trinity, for rising and glorification of Jesus does not mean making Him glorified as taking Him from what He was not to becoming something completely new and originally alien to Him. This also tells us that the resurrection of Jesus Christ cannot be understood as Docetism, or Modalism (applied only to the Second Divine Person) or Seballianism but rather should be understood as a real and true Resurrection in as far as there is a restoration in full light of the glory which the Second Person of the Holy Trinity had from all eternity.

It is better to give a further explanation about what we mean by the assertion that, “in God all the Divine Persons act as Subject but not object.” Let us take a few examples of how we employ our speech about God. God created the universe, but He is not created, for He is Creator of everything visible and invisible. He gives existence but does not receive Existence, for He is Existence Himself. All that He created was created good, but He does not receive Goodness

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117 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 322.

for He is Goodness Himself. He gives perfection but He does not receive Perfection, for He is Perfection Himself, and so on. All these examples point out to God as always Subject, that is, as always Acting and never being acted on by any subject. With this understanding we are able to conceive a better image of the Holy Trinity in our mind and heart, and thus are enabled to appreciate the Faith in the Holy Trinity.

#### 4.5.2 Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ

A personalistic dimension of the resurrection of the body can be arrived at from Cardinal Christoph Schönborn's Christology. The resurrection of the body is connected to the person and not to the soul alone. The characteristics of Christ's body express the Divine Person of God's Son (cf. CCC, no. 477). In true man, the reality of the body is indispensable. That is why the question of the Christ's bodily resurrection becomes very important. But how are we to understand this body? The correct understanding of the Body avoids the errors of Manicheism which makes a radical division between spirit and matter as the principles of good and evil. By submitting to insults and ignominy, suffering injustice, being scourged and tortured, and suffering the shameful death on the Cross, Jesus showed how easily the body submits to the soul if the latter subjects itself to God.<sup>118</sup>

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, "proves the divinity of Jesus and verifies his salvific sacrifice."<sup>119</sup> Cardinal Schönborn presents the credibility and necessity of the resurrection of the body from the reality of creation. All that God created was and is good. The body too is a created reality and therefore it is good. Judaism, insofar as it shared the Pharisees' belief in resurrection, deemed the Resurrection of Jesus as unacceptable because it would thereby be an acknowledgement of His messianic and eschatological significance. Resurrection happens only in the last days. If Jesus, however, had risen again, then His status as Messiah would have been confirmed.<sup>120</sup> For Greeks, resurrection

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118 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 220.

119 K. B. Osborne, *The Resurrection of Jesus: New Considerations for Its Theological Interpretation*, Eugene Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, p. 2.

120 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 312.

of the body was an absurdity. The immortality of the soul was accepted but not a resurrection of the body. For, according to them, what human soul could still long for a decomposed body? The body is for them a prison of the soul. Saint Paul teaches that, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Cor 15:14, 19). If Christ died but did not rise again, then the Catholic faith lacks any basis. If Christ remained dead, then His Cross was a senseless and horrifying death that did not redeem human persons. Love for Jesus Christ would be directed toward a dead man, a corpse, and faith would be a remembrance of a man from the past, and not of Him who said, “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20).<sup>121</sup>

From the perspective of Creation, the resurrection of the body is reasonable and necessary. The resurrection points towards creation in a way that, if everything that exists, spiritual as well as material, has been created and, thus willed by God, then none of God’s works is in vain. It is held that “the dignity of the human body derives from being created by God (Gen 2:7), from the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God as well as from the Redemption of the body by Jesus Christ.”<sup>122</sup> Basing on Scripture (Gen 2:7), and on the Catholic Church teaching (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 14; CCC, no. 1700) it can be stressed that the human body is dignified at three important moments. These moments are: first, the body being created by God, second, from the Incarnation – God became Man with a human body, and thirdly, from the Redemption of the body by Jesus Christ. Cardinal Schönborn points out that, in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the body and the soul are glorified. God makes both of them new. Since Christ took flesh upon Himself, it has become the central point of Salvation. The flesh is capable of receiving God’s gift. Hence, in the realm of eschatology is the conviction that God cannot allow anything that He created as good to fall prey to destruction.<sup>123</sup> Of course, here care should be taken not to be led into error of thinking that there is no possibility of damnation since all are created by God, one may think then that it is automatic to be saved. Because of the respect of the free will and freedom of persons, one can freely reject the invitation of God, one can reject the gift of Redemption which God has prepared for all. And this way one can end up damned.

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121 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 313.

122 B. Gacka, “The Personalism of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński”, *The Pluralist*, 4: I (2009), p. 88.

123 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 312.



### 4.5.3 Uniqueness of Jesus Christ's Resurrection

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ's resurrection is that: it is not a return to the earthly mortal life but to a glorified state. Saint Luke reports various miracles not only by Jesus but also by the Apostles. They healed just as Jesus Himself healed. They drove out demons and even brought the dead back to life (cf. Acts 3:1-10; 5:14-16; 8:4-8; 14:8-10). However, it is never reported that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles brought about a Virginal conception. From the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles it can be seen that the Virginal conception and the Glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ stand apart as unique actions of God that may not be repeated. They are above the normal miracles attributed to Jesus and His disciples. These two with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit mark the beginning and the end of the central climax of Salvation history.<sup>124</sup> Cardinal Schönborn explains mainly the uniqueness of Jesus' resurrection from: the empty tomb, the arrangement of the linen clothes in which He was buried, the Easter appearances (*christophanies*), and the reaction of the disciples.

The empty tomb was a true historical fact.<sup>125</sup> It is exaggerated subjectivism and increasing relativism that has led to hesitation in "asserting that in the historical Person of Jesus Christ, God himself has become a human being and has spoken to us."<sup>126</sup> The empty tomb speaks a lot about the true human nature of Jesus Christ. It shows that Jesus Christ is truly Man with a true physical human body of flesh and blood. Jesus truly died and was buried just like every true human. Jewish anthropology prohibits any talk about resurrection unless the grave is empty. In this Jewish context, the empty grave was used as a necessary and important reality and ground for the proclamation of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. The post-Easter witnesses held this concrete corporality and did so in spite of all the difficulties they encountered with the Jews, who did not expect the resurrection of the body until the Parousia, and

124 Cf. G. O' Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*, Press New York: Oxford University 2009, p. 293.

125 Cf. C. E. Olson, *Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead: Questions and Answers about the life the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus*, Fort Collins: Ignatius Press-Augustine Institute, 2016.

126 J. Ratzinger, *Deus locutus est nobis in Filio: Some Reflections on Subjectivity, Christology and the Church*, Meeting with the Doctrinal Commissions of North America and Oceania, Menlo Park, California, 9 February, 1999, no. 2, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_19990209\\_california-ratzinger\\_en.html#](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc_con_cfaith_19990209_california-ratzinger_en.html#), accessed on 28 February 2022.

later with the pagans, for whom the resurrection of the body was a grotesque and vulgar notion.<sup>127</sup>

The Old Testament gives a clear expression of hope for the resurrection (Dan 12:2; 2Macc 7:9, 11, 13, 23, 29). The Pharisees and many of Jesus' contemporaries believed in the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6; Jn 11:24). Jesus Himself teaches the resurrection quite clearly (Mk 12:18-27). The resurrection is expected at the last day (Jn 6:40) and it will be associated with the universal judgement (Jn 5:25-29). Jesus even raised the dead (Mk 5:21-42; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11). Some prophets before Christ also raised the dead (1Kgs 17:17-24; 2Kgs 4:8-37). All these were signs of authority and signs of the coming resurrection of the dead, but they were not 'The Resurrection', since those Jesus raised only returned to earthly mortal life. Something quite new, happens with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus announced His imminent suffering but also his subsequent resurrection three times (cf. Mk 8:31-33; 10:32-34).<sup>128</sup> Jesus resurrection is unique in that it goes hand in hand with His identity as the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Son of God (Mk 8:29; Mt 16:16-17). It is bound with the Kingdom of God that is coming and indeed already dawning. In the Person of Jesus Christ is the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ Himself is the heart of this Kingdom and it comes only through His mission, which is through His dying for many (Mk 10:45) and through His resurrection.<sup>129</sup> His resurrection is not a return to the earthly mortal life but to a glorified life, to a state of glory. According to Saint Zeno of Verona (c. 300-371), "...the Lord at his resurrection held [gave] out to those who believe in him not merely health but immortality, and took back to himself dominion over all nature as he himself bears witness when he says, 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father'[Mt 11:27]."<sup>130</sup> Hence, His resurrection is unique as it comes with not just a restoration to life, but comes with immortality.

The uniqueness of His resurrection is further emphasized by the fact that He leaves behind everything to do with death. The report in the Gospel according to Saint John indicates clearly that inside the empty tomb, the linen cloths were found lying, and beside them the 'neatly folded' cloth that had

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127 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 316.

128 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 314.

129 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 315.

130 Zeno of Verona, "A reading from the sermons of St. Zeno of Verona, Sermon 15, 2," in *The Divine Office III*, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2014 edition, p. 132.

covered His head (Jn 20:6-7). He leaves behind the shroud. The leaving behind of the bindings shows that the Risen One was completely unfettered. He does not leave the tomb as Lazarus did, with hands and feet wrapped with bindings and with a napkin hiding his face (Jn 11:44).<sup>131</sup> Jesus comes out of the tomb fully victorious over death.

The appearances of Jesus are yet another indication of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ's Resurrection. He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve (1 Cor 15:5). The empty grave and the appearances complement each other in stressing the uniqueness of His Resurrection. That is why, "Even though he finds an empty tomb, Peter does not conclude that Jesus has risen; rather he remains perplexed. Peter sees an empty tomb, but seeing the empty tomb does not cause faith [at once]."<sup>132</sup> Jesus' appearances makes it clear why His dead body is no longer in the tomb. The angels proclaim, "He is not here, but has risen" (Lk 24:5).<sup>133</sup> The meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus consists in the fact that Jesus' mission continues. It is about the earthly life of Jesus and in an experienced reality and an experience of concrete reality today. The disciple becomes a witness to His Resurrection through Christ's act in making him a witness, that is, by showing Himself to him in visible, concrete, bodily form. The identification of the Person who appears takes place mainly through the identification of His concrete Body: "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself" (Lk 24:38-39).<sup>134</sup> In this way, it may be seen why the Church as the Body of Christ is very necessary as the universal sacrament of Salvation. The Church as a sacrament (visible sign) concretizes and makes visible the Body of Christ risen. This in turn helps to foster, support and to develop the faith in the Risen Christ and so lead the believer gradually to Salvation.

"The Resurrection was a real event, with historically verifiable manifestations. It took Apostles and disciples by surprise. Hiding and frightened in Jerusalem after the Crucifixion, the Apostles did not immediately believe the women when they reported an empty tomb. The empty tomb, however, was an essential sign of Jesus' Resurrection—a first step in acknowledging God's

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 317.

<sup>132</sup> K. B. Osborne, *The Resurrection of Jesus: New Considerations for Its Theological Interpretation*, p. 66.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 318.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 319.

work in bringing the Son back to life. The Apostles and disciples did believe, however, when the risen Lord himself appeared to them – in the upper room, to Peter, to Mary Magdalene (the first to see Christ after he had risen), to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, to the Apostles in Galilee, to Saul who had been persecuting Christians, and to more than five hundred disciples at one time (1 Cor 15:5-8). Along with the Spirit's gifts of faith and fortitude, these appearances transformed, frightened, confused, and disappointed the followers of Jesus of Nazareth into bold, courageous witnesses who willingly lived and died proclaiming Jesus Christ is Lord" ["We cannot stop preaching]. Jesus' Resurrection to a glorious Body, not limited by space or time and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, proves that he has conquered sin and death. Christ's Resurrection confirms Jesus' works and teachings. It fulfils the Old Testament promises and Jesus' preaching. It proves Jesus' Divinity. Additionally, while Jesus' Death frees us from sin, his Resurrection gives us new Life, justifies us in God's grace, and adopts us into the Divine family. Finally, the Gospel promises that if we join ourselves to the risen Lord and live according to his message of love, we will also share in our own final resurrection at the end time. Jesus's Resurrection is the promise of our eternal life with God" (cf. CCC, nn. 638-653; 656-657).<sup>135</sup>

#### 4.5.4 Resurrection "in" or "at" Death Rejected

There is a theological question of why the resurrection of the body is deferred until the Parousia. Stephen Yates in his work *Between Death and Resurrection* (2017) presents the debate between Catholic theologians and protestant theologians.<sup>136</sup> In order to keep within the scope of this study, we shall not delve into the details of this debate here. According to Cardinal Schönborn, attentive observation at the way the resurrection of Jesus Christ takes place, leads to the rejection of the idea that resurrection occurs "in" or "at" death. Resurrection at death is inadequate because it neglects the evidence that Jesus was really dead. The reality of Jesus' death is expressed and emphasized by three facts.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, p. 54-55.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Stephen Yates, *Between Death and Resurrection: A Critical Response to Recent Catholic Debate Concerning the Intermediate State*, New York: Bloomsbury 2017.

First, is the fact that He was laid in the tomb. Second is that His resurrection took place on the third day. And third, His tomb was found empty. It is always emphasised right from the oldest kerygma that Christ died, was buried and rose again (cf. 1 Cor 15:3-4). Moreover this sequence of death, burial and rising again corresponds to historical course of events.<sup>137</sup>

Regarding the doctrine of the *anima separate*,<sup>138</sup> of the soul detached itself, or which has been detached itself from the body, being dismissed often as a relic of Platonism and as unbiblical, it is answered that the idea that resurrection occurs *at death* is inadequate, as it neglects the evidence that Jesus was really dead, as it is expressed in Jesus' being laid in the tomb and the resurrection on the third day and his tomb being empty. Christ showed himself in visible, concrete, bodily form. The identification of the Person who appears takes place mainly through the identification of His body. Jesus says, "Why are you troubled, and why do questions rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself" (Lk 24:38-39). Only people who already knew Jesus before Easter can be witnesses to His resurrection. Only they can testify that 'it is the same Person.' It is the Lord (Jn 21:7). Peter counts the time from Jesus' Resurrection up to the Ascension as being part of the period of his earthly life, when "the Lord Jesus went in and out among us" (Acts 1:21-22).<sup>139</sup> Immediate resurrection is taught based on interpreting Saint Paul (2 Cor 5:1-10; Phil 1:20-24; 3:20-21). However, arguments for the delay of embodiment can find support from within the Pauline corpus itself as a whole, but not taking fragmented sections.<sup>140</sup> Philosophically, *atemporalism* renders very unlikely a meaningful account of the numerical identity between human persons in *statu viatoris* and those in eternity. Moreover, it does not support fulfilment which is central to Divine revelation and Salvation.<sup>141</sup>

137 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 317-318.

138 Saint Peter addresses the question of duality, that is, "the body is dead, but the spirit is alive and contemplating God" (C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 305). Saint Peter says about Christ, "being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit" (1 Pet 3:18). Interpreting Saint Peter, Schönborn hold that "He [Christ] is dead according to the body, but according to his spirit, he goes down into the underworld, although in doing so his soul is already enjoying the beatific vision of God. On the basis of this vision, he can confidently face the imprisoned spirits and also preach to them" (C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 305-306). The immediate beatific vision of God by the souls of the human beings who die without any stain of sin is also implied here.

139 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 329.

140 Cf. S. Yates, *Between Death and Resurrection*, pp. 241-242.

141 Cf. Stephen Yates, *Between Death and Resurrection*, p. 242.

The communion antiphon during Advent hints at the reason for the transformation of the human body at the end of time. That, “We await a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our mortal bodies, to confirm with his glorified body.”<sup>142</sup> The resurrection of the body is believed in because of the fact that Christ after the resurrection has a glorified body. And so, the human body of others humans has to be conformed to that of Christ when He comes again in glory. This ‘awaiting’ for Him to come in glory to judge the living and the dead here becomes important. The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (1979)<sup>143</sup> and the International Theological Commission (1992)<sup>144</sup> rejected all atemporalistic formulations. The Congregation holds that the Parousia is distinct and deferred with respect to the situation of people immediately after death. Moreover, atemporalism implies recourse to a philosophy of time quite foreign to biblical thought and threatens the truly corporeal nature of the resurrection. According to Joseph Ratzinger, atemporalism undermines any possibility of anthropological and historical realism. Proponents of immediate resurrection, “in” or “at” death, actually exclude the body from the hope for Salvation. In denying the immortal soul, and yet claiming resurrection for those who have died, they dematerialize the resurrection and are guilty of aggravated Platonism.<sup>145</sup>

#### 4.5.5 Time Between Christ’s Resurrection and His Ascension

Cardinal Schönborn sees the time mention as an eschatological dimension of Salvation. Christ was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1Cor 15:4). Time specification places the Resurrection promises within an eschatological dimension. This is very important for us human persons. According to Pope Saint Leo the Great († 461), in the days between Christ’s

142 Cf. Cf. Communion Antiphon of Friday of the Second Week of Advent in *The Daily Missal*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2013, p. 65.

143 Cf. CDF, *Letter on Certain Questions Concerning Eschatology*, 17 May 1979, no. 2, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19790517\\_escatologia\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19790517_escatologia_en.html).

144 Cf. ITC, *Some Current Questions In Eschatology*, no. 5.

145 J. Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988, pp. 108-112.

Resurrection and His Ascension, great truths are revealed. The immortality of the body as well as the soul are made known. He revealed the glory of our human nature more than it was to the eyes of the first members of the human race who were filled with shame at their sin. In this time Jesus Christ taught one lesson that, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was truly born, truly suffered, and truly died, should be recognized as the One truly risen.<sup>146</sup>

After the resurrection, but before the ascension, makes a witness to the reality that, unlike Lazarus, Christ rose again, and dies no more. Christ's flesh rose on the third day and will never die again. This is the reality which Christ reveals to His disciples after His resurrection but before the ascension. He reveals to his disciples the reality of His flesh, its weakness as was shown on the cross and now its immortality in rising from the tomb. His body is incorruptible, He rose in the very same body in which He had been buried, but now no longer constrained by the normal limits of human bodies. The doors were closed when Jesus appeared to the disciples (Jn 20:19).<sup>147</sup>

#### 4.6 GOD-MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER

Yes, Enoch and Elijah being taken up into heaven are anticipations of the ascension but Christ's ascension remains unique and the only one with no parallels.<sup>148</sup> John the evangelist emphasizes that Jesus' destiny is our destiny. Jesus in reaching His (our) destiny, He has reached it not only for Himself but for us human persons also (cf. Jn 20:22). The Risen Christ says to Mary, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; go rather and say to my brothers, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God"(Jn 20:17). The personalistic relation with Christ as adopted sons in the Son becomes very clear. The disciples become His brothers and sisters. Christ the One who ascended is

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146 Pope Saint Leo the Great, *Sermon I on the Ascension*, 2-4, in "The Divine Office-The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite as renewed by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and promulgated by the Authority of Pope Paul VI, Vol. II, London: Harper Collins Publishers 2006, p. 614.

147 G. O'Collins, *Saint Augustine on the Resurrection of Christ: Teaching, Rhetoric, and Reception*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 6-16.

148 Cf. D. Farrow, *Ascension Theology*, Landon: T&T Clark International, 2011, p. 2.

the same One who also descended onto earth, effecting the true Redemption. Having reached the goal, that is, having been raised from the dead and welcomed into the Father's house, He is able to prepare there a welcome for His brothers and sisters. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2).<sup>149</sup>

#### 4.6.1 Christ Remains True Man

The Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen Son of God remains true Man forever. This is so, because the Incarnation is irrevocable. The flesh the Person of Christ assumed from the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, is not like a cloth to Him. He truly became Man. Therefore, He does not put off His Humanity as if it were a cloth. Even as He sits at the Right Hand of the Father, He sits there true God and true Man. He, the God-Man, is and remains the living bridge between heaven and earth, time and eternity. The fulfilment of the world has already become reality in Him.<sup>150</sup> When it is said, Christ sits bodily at the Right Hand of God the Father, it does not mean the existence of any localized Right Hand of the Father. For how could He who cannot be circumscribed possess a localized right hand? It is only circumscribed beings that have a right and a left hand.

By the Right Hand of the Father, it is understood to mean the splendour and glory of the Godhead. It is in this splendour that the Son of God exists from eternity as God and consubstantial with the Father, and in which He now, after having become flesh in these last times, also sits bodily, since His flesh has been glorified along with Him. For He is adored as One with His flesh in an act of adoration on the part of the entire creation.<sup>151</sup> This means that Christ is God, consubstantial with the Father, and that He has *not* given up His Humanity after His glorification but truly sits "bodily" glorified, at the Right Hand of the Father.<sup>152</sup> Here care should be taken not to understand consubstantial with the Father as meaning that Humanity has now become substantially Divine. The Hypostatic Union is without confusion. One nature never dissolves the other

149 Cf. D. Farrow, *Ascension Theology*, pp. 10-11.

150 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 15.

151 Cf. John Damascene, who synthesizes the great tradition of the Greek Fathers in *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith: Expos fidei* IV, 2: PG 94, 1104 D., as quoted by C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 17-18.

152 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 18.



nature. There is no comingling, no mixture of natures, but at the same time there is no separation of the two natures of the Son. Saint Thomas Aquinas talks of the Son standing at the right side of the Father by quoting the martyr Stephen “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). He concludes that by the expression ‘Right Hand’ is then understood either as the glory of the Godhead, or His eternal beatitude, or His judicial and royal power. The preposition “at” signifies a kind of approach to the Right Hand, thus denoting a reality in common, and yet with a distinction. It also means a union that implies distinction of nature, and unity of Person – Christ as Man is the Son of God. Also it means, that the Human nature of Christ is glorified. It possesses royal and judiciary power. He sits at the Father’s Right Hand in equality with the Father, but at the same time as Man He sits beyond all creatures. He sits in equality of honour since He is an inseparable unity of natures. Therefore, with the same honour is venerated the Son of God with His assumed Human nature.<sup>153</sup>

From the way Schönborn presents the Person of Christ and His sitting at the Right Hand of the Father while remaining true Man forever, we come to the lordship and the judicial role of Christ, the believers’ sharing in Christ’s lordship, and the unity of Head and Body, of Christ and Church. Witness of the “Rule of Faith” as is the case already in the New Testament, the statements about Christ’s sitting at the Right Hand of God are connected in the early Church too with the Easter faith and with the confession of faith. We find a solemn profession of faith in Christ’s Paschal victory and, beyond this, of His eternal lordship.<sup>154</sup> “This is He who made heaven and earth and formed man at the beginning; who was announced through the law and the prophets; who became flesh through the virgin; who was hanged on the wood; who was buried in the earth; who rose from the dead and ascended to the heights of Heaven; who sits at the Right Hand of the Father; who has all authority to judge and to save; through whom the Father made everything from the beginning unto all ages.”<sup>155</sup> Christ is confessed as the beginning and end, an unutterable beginning and incomprehensible end, as King and Lord, as Alpha and Omega. Irenaeus

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153 Aquinas on the question “Whether it belongs to Christ as Man to sit at the right hand of the Father?” (cf. T. Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica: Complete Edition*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, New York: Catholic Way Publishing, 2014).

154 Cf. C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 19, taking from Bishop Melito of Sardis (c. 160-170).

155 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 19-20 quoting *Peri Pascha* 104.

of Lyons, too, emphasizes that the preexistent Son of God is at the same time the crucified and glorified One, against the tendency of the Gnostics to divide Christ into an earthly being and heavenly being. The One who St. Paul identifies with complete clarity as Christ, the Son of God, is none other than the One who was arrested and suffered and shed His blood for us human persons, He who also rose and was taken up into heaven, as he himself says: "Christ who died, or even more, who was raised up and is at the right hand of God (Rom 8:34). One and the same Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who reconciled us to God through his suffering and who rose from the dead, who is at the right hand of the Father and is perfect in all things."<sup>156</sup>

We can now appreciate the role of a personalistic notion that, "a person is one, unique, irreducible, irreplaceable, not a copy, not an example." If we consider the Gospel, the apostle Paul, and generally the whole of the New Testament, if we consider the Church fathers, and Cardinal Schönborn's Christology with this personalistic notion, we came to a great appreciation of what it means that the Person of Christ is seated at the Right Hand of the Father. This, is so because if one accepts that the One and same eternal Son of God – the Person of Christ became Man and the same and the One Person was crucified, died, buried and rose from the dead, remaining the same Person we cannot but appreciate as human persons the mystery of Christ sitting at the Right Hand of the Father and its implications for human Salvation. Of course, this does not mean that Christ just passed through a process like water passing through a pipe. The fact that from now onwards He is true God and true Man at once, gives witness to the reality that, the Incarnation was not Docetism. At the same time, it cannot be said that He lost His Divinity as to suggest a change – a mutation in God.

Fulgentius of Ruspe (sixth century) emphasizes about the correct rule of faith, that, One and the same God, the Son of God according to the flesh that lay in the grave, rose from the grave and the same Incarnate God ascended to Heaven on the fortieth day after the resurrection and sits at the Right Hand of God. Cyril of Jerusalem emphasizes that Christ sits from all eternity at the Right Hand of the Father, for it is not the case as some have held that He was in some sense crowned by God after His suffering nor did He gain the throne at the Right Hand because of His patient endurance, rather He has possessed

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156 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 20.

the royal dignity for as long as He is. But He is begotten eternally and sits at the Father's same throne, since He is God, Wisdom and Power. He reigns together with the Father and has created everything for the sake of the Father. Here the emphasis is wholly on the Divinity of Christ which is given prominence precisely through the same throne. One Son is to be proclaimed, who sits before time at the RIGHT hand of the Father, and has not received this position of sitting at His side only little by little, in time, after His suffering.<sup>157</sup> While Cyril scarcely mentions the "co-glorification" of Christ's Humanity, this is strongly emphasized in Pope Leo the Great.

According to Pope Leo the Great, with the Ascension, human nature has taken its place high above all the creatures of heaven. In order to find the ultimate goal of its elevation on the throne of the eternal Father and to share on this throne the glory of Him, The Father, with whose being it was linked through the Son.<sup>158</sup> All men are in a certain sense implicitly given a share in the Humanity of Christ in this glorification. Christ's Ascension means our own elevation, for God's Son has united human nature to Himself and given it a place at the right hand of the Father. He says, "in my Father's house there are many rooms, I have gone to prepare for you these rooms" (Jn 14:2). This is the final Destiny.

#### 4.6.2 Reincarnation Rejected

Unlike Origen, Tertullian teaches the simultaneous origin of the soul and the body, which gives him occasion to teach "traducianism." His aim is quite clearly to oppose faith in the Resurrection to the idea of reincarnation (*fiducia christianorum resurrectio mortuorum*) – the hope of Christians is the resurrection of the dead. The Resurrection of Christ is the hinge of this hope. The identity of the glorified body of the risen Christ with His earthly body is the strongest barrier set up against the *metempsychosis*. Cardinal Schönborn discussing and objecting the possibility of reincarnation holds that it is above all this Jesus Christ himself that forbids it to make any compromise with the reincarnation

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<sup>157</sup> C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>158</sup> C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 22.

teachings. He is the Incarnate God. He is the Word of God become flesh. He has arisen in this flesh and has ascended to Heaven, where He sits at the right hand of the Father in this flesh. He will come again in glory in this eternally living, glorified flesh.<sup>159</sup> Jesus Christ himself is the focal point of the Christian vision of life on earth and the life after death. He is the Alpha and the Omega, Origin and Goal. It is He who discloses to us what existence in transition means. Christ the Incarnate, crucified, and Risen Son of God remains man forever. He, the God-Man, therefore, is and remains the living mediator between Heaven and earth, time and eternity. The fulfilment of the world has already become reality in Him.

The goal of the Incarnation of God is the “deification” of man. Christ Himself is the form and content of the deification of man. As Christ unites in Himself Heaven and earth and gives time its secure place in eternity, so also does the Church, which is His Body. As a pilgrim Church, she belongs indeed to the earthly reality, but inseparably from this – she is also already the heavenly Church. Seen from the perspective of Christ, her Head, she is the place of God’s dominion: the Kingdom of God. As seed and beginning of the kingdom of God she comes into time, she grows visibly and tangibly in time, yet she is not of this world. This inevitably leads to tensions with the kingdoms of this world. Relationship between the Church and politics in view of the coming of God’s kingdom. Regarding the doctrine of reincarnation, why has this view of the relationship between earthly life and life beyond the grave remained alienated to the Christian Faith? Why did the early Church reject the doctrine of reincarnation? Fundamental experience that causes Christian Faith to see death and life after death in another light? The Christian tradition certainly does know of a migration of the soul naturally of a very specific kind. The traditions know about the path taken (once only) by the soul out of this world into the other world. By disclosing to us the meaning of dying, tradition also shows us the path of life, so that we may live soberly, righteously, and piously in this world, while we await the blessed fulfilment of our hope: namely, the appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus (Titus 2:12-13).<sup>160</sup>

Saint Paul exhorts the Colossians to seek the realities that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. They are to strive to attain what is

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159 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 159.

160 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 11-16.

above, not what is on earth (Col 3:1-2). Is not this “eschatological amnesia” of our preaching one reason why many people no longer turn to the Church when they want information about the last things? The growing interest in spiritualistic practices, esoteric doctrines, belief in reincarnation, and many other such things is alarming. Schönborn advances the thesis that in Jesus Christ Himself is the focal point of the Christian vision of life on earth and life after death. He is the Alpha and the Omega, origin and goal. It is He who discloses to us what existence in transition means.<sup>161</sup> The impossibility of reincarnation can also be argued from the reality of the uniqueness of every person. A person is one, and unique. A person does not accept a change which results in destroyed what the person ontologically is. At this point, it is important to return, and seek aid from the argument advanced by Saint Anselm of Canterbury, arguing, “How of necessity the Word only can unite in one person with man.”<sup>162</sup> According to Anselm, the Father or, the Holy Spirit cannot become incarnate. It is only proper and unique to the Son to become incarnate, since it is in His uniqueness to be a Son. He argues that if the Father were to become incarnate, then He would become the son of man. This would create a problem in the Godhead as there would now be two sons, one inferior and the other superior. If the Holy Spirit were to be incarnate, the same problem would arise in the Godhead of two sons. But since the Son is eternally a Son and this is His uniqueness, namely, being the only proper Son, it is only possible for Him alone to become incarnate since it lies in His uniqueness to be a Son.

Coming back to our question of reincarnation, the ontological personalistic difficulty that comes with reincarnation, is that, the human person reincarnated would have to undergo a change which is not proper to the uniqueness of the person. This would be an absurd situation, since it would be a replacement or result in annihilation of the original personness of the person who lived before he or she became reincarnate. Therefore, from the uniqueness, irreducibility and irreplaceability of each person, it can be clearly seen that there is no place for reincarnation as this would go against the reality of what it means to be a person. The ontological reality of what it means to be a person, cannot simply accept reincarnation. According to Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), in *Christian Personalism*, destiny is not an abstract

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161 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 11-16.

162 Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo*, translated by Sidney Norton Deane, *The Catholic Primer*, 2005, p. 62.

tyranny. It is not a heaven of ideas. It is not an Impersonal Thought indifferent to the individual destinies that reign over persons. But rather, is God who is Himself Personal. A God Who has given Himself to take on and transfigure the condition of mankind. One Who offers to each person a relation of unique intimacy and of a participation in His Divinity. He is a God who does not at all affirm Himself by what He takes away from man, but He grants man a freedom analogous to His own freedom. The ultimate end of the human person in Christian Personalism is supernatural and elevating. It is identification with God and His Will.<sup>163</sup>

#### 4.7 THERE IS PERFECT HARMONY BETWEEN THE INCARNATION, PASSION, DEATH AND GLORIFICATION

The Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and the Glorification of Christ, can be conceived – as the united Act(s) of love. There is no opposition or contradiction among these mysteries. It is true that Cyril stresses the Incarnation greatly, especially after the onset of the Nestorian crisis (428 AD). And yet, it would be entirely mistaken to interpret him as setting the Incarnation and the Passion, the becoming Man and the Paschal Mystery, over against each other. Rather, Cyril shows that the Incarnation is itself a salvific act, and that, on the other hand, the Cross and the Resurrection receive their significance in light of the Incarnation.<sup>164</sup> He interprets the Incarnation as the first step which would culminate in obedience unto the Cross. At this point, it is important to remember that every reality, every action, in the life of the Person of Christ is salvific. The Incarnation already contains what the Cross will later reveal in its fullness. Schönborn indicates that, “The blood poured out on the Cross is not the *only* cause of our Salvation. Even in His accepting our Human nature, the Son of God is restoring in man the image of God.”<sup>165</sup>

163 Cf. E. Mounier, *A Personalist Manifesto*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938, p. 37.

164 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 156.

165 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 229; see also C. Schönborn, *Man the Image of God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011.

The Child born of Mary is the beloved Son who has become Man out of obedience and love. The Cross, therefore, completes the Incarnation. With the shedding of the blood, the mystery of the Incarnation finds its completion. Christ is obedient to the Father unto Death, even Death on the Cross, and He has redeemed the world through His blood.<sup>166</sup> Whoever sees the Incarnate Word sees the obedience and the love of the Son, and in this sense, the words of Christ “Whoever sees Me, sees the Father” (Jn 14:9) also apply to the Humanity of the Logos. His Humanity, indeed His flesh, is the visible revelation of His union with the Father; it is the radiant image of the Father’s beauty. It is the Father’s love in visible form, the Human translation of the eternal Sonship into Human terms, the Incarnate Image of God. The Incarnation is not the ultimate goal. It points beyond itself. Its objective is that marvellous exchange in which the willingly accepted poverty of the Son is providing human persons with the richness of adoption as sons. The Incarnation is no mere transitory stage, superseded as soon as the objective is reached. For the Risen Son is now the Firstborn of many brothers (Rom 8:29).<sup>167</sup>

Since He has taken our Human nature, and since He has granted us human persons through the work of Salvation with His own properties, He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, for through Him we are destined to become sons and daughters. He remains our brother as He is the Firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18) for, risen from the dead, He ascended in the flesh to the Father. In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ is connected with all humanity and grants Redemption without violating the human being. Saint Irenaeus in his doctrine of recapitulation points out that the Word Incarnate does not use violent means to obtain what He wills so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork, creation, of God might go to destruction. Christ “has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own Incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God.”<sup>168</sup> Jesus’ life flowing from its origin in the Holy Spirit at conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, is also

166 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 121.

167 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, pp. 87-92.

168 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies-Adversus Haereses*, Book V, I-The Word Incarnate, no. 1

the deepest ground of that unbelievable openness in His encounters with other human beings. To encounter this Man makes the human person whole. Here is a Man who never abandoned the wounded along His path. He is Human without wounding others. He is a new Man completely open to the Father, completely open to His brothers out of personalistic love. Death, the consequence of Sin, has no power over Life.<sup>169</sup>

#### 4.8 CONCLUSION

According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Cross of Christ, the tree of life, it is by virtue of Christ's sacrifice on this tree that sin is overcome. The event of the Cross and Resurrection draws everything toward life (cf. CCC, no. 1085).<sup>170</sup> The redeeming Cross of Christ opens Paradise to which the love of the Father, the mission of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit are to draw and gather us. Now as we conclude this chapter, one may once again ask the question: why the Cross is the means of our Redemption? Was not there other better possible means of Salvation in the Divine plan of Salvation? It is important to acknowledge the fact that human persons, who are creatures, much as we are rational, we cannot redeem ourselves from sin. Nor can we do anything to make ourselves acceptable to God, without God's grace. Proposing a better means of Redemption is self-contradictory, because it presupposes that as human beings we know and consequently can save ourselves without God. It would imply that we know better than God does. It becomes important here to have a clear Notion of God. "Who is His counsellor?" Much as the human person is rational and free, this rationality and freedom, if it is to be correctly understood, should never be a freedom that separates human person from God. Because as human persons we are creatures. If created, then we have a beginning and if we have a beginning then we are finite and not infinite. Being finite means we are

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169 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 32.

170 Cf. C. Schönborn, "Introduction; By Whose Authority," in Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis; with an introductory essay by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. xxiii.



not omniscient and not omnipotent. Therefore, much as we are free to choose Salvation or not, because of our limitedness we are not omniscient, and so not capable of proposing or thinking out, let alone actualizing the means of our Redemption. What we are capable of, is participation in the Redemption which God has realized for us in place. By participation, what is Universal Redemption becomes personally objective and subjective when we receive Salvation. Personal Participation in the objective Redemption available to all human persons yields the subjective aspect of Redemption while remaining objective, which we call Salvation. With this in mind, we can now pass on to the next chapter which is on Redemption and Salvation by the Person of Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER FIVE: REDEMPTION AND SALVATION BY JESUS CHRIST

### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

While Redemption is Universal and is already accomplished for all, Salvation in the strict sense is not necessarily universal, and is not yet necessarily accomplished. Salvation is the concrete realization of Redemption in the unique human person. Everything necessary for Salvation is already prepared by Christ, only what remains is the human person, with the help of grace, to concretise what has already been prepared. To realize, to accept, to partake, of what is already prepared is possible with the help of the Holy Spirit. But the human person has to freely cooperate. This “partaking of” requires participation. The Church teaches that “Christ himself is the mystery of Salvation” (CCC, no. 774). Redemption and Salvation as conceived from the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn may be seen as running as follows: Look at the Mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ and you will see your Redemption. Look at the Person of Christ and yourself will be revealed to you. Look at the Mystery(ies) of His life Incarnate. Look at the mysteries of His hidden life, the miracles and teaching of the Kingdom. Look at the mystery of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit. Look at His ascension into Heaven. Look and you will see your Redemption accomplished. Rather, do not just look but participate in the Mystery. Participate by confessing the Mystery(ies). Participate through faith, hope and love, and you will attain the gift of Salvation. In doing this, you need Scripture, Tradition, and Experience of the living Christ. These will help to relate concretely with the Concrete Person(s).

It is not possible to separate the exposition of the doctrine of the Person of Christ from the treatment of the work of Christ – soteriology. The baptismal

faith contains within itself both a confidence in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as confession of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that it must therefore be always regarded as a whole.<sup>1</sup> According to the Fathers of the Church, the history of Salvation is to be traced back to that eternal life, in which the almighty God is One, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, without mentioning something about the mystery of Redemption and Salvation, our conception about the personalistic Christology would be incomplete. That is why this concluding chapter carries the heading “the Redemption and Salvation by Jesus Christ.” Conceived as the united Act(s) of love, that is, the Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and the glorious Accession of Christ, the Redemption and Salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ for all human persons according to the personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, may be construed from different points. The purpose of this chapter is to uncover such points.

### 5.1 REDEMPTION AS THE WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

God is the God who Acts. For God is a Personal God.<sup>3</sup> The One work of Redemption is One Act of the One Holy Trinity. The saving activity of the Son of God incarnate appears in the faith of the early Church as the revelation of the Holy Trinity. God the Father himself is involved in the mission of the Son. The Mystery of God revealed in Christ. Faith enables participating in the life of God, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads the Church into the truth (cf. Jn 16:13). The Church ponders the immensity of the love by which the Father gave His Son (cf. Jn 3:16), and the glory, grace and truth that were revealed in Him for Salvation (cf. Jn 1:14).<sup>4</sup> According to Pope

1 Cf. Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation; The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff, Andrew Louth (Ed.), Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1993, p. xi.

2 Cf. Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation; The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff, Andrew Louth (Ed.), Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1993, p. xii.

3 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Source of Life: Exploring the Mystery of the Eucharist*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013, p. 45.

4 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 8 March, 2012, no. 100.

Benedict XVI, Jesus Christ is the incarnate love of God.<sup>5</sup> God, the Father, himself is “involved” in the mission of the Son. Mission does not mean assigning an objective distinct task, but that God is giving himself with the Son, that with Him, God is giving us everything (cf. Rom 8:32). Jesus Christ is the presence of God, the self-abasement of God, not only as the shekinah, as a passive form of God’s presence, He is rather God among His people as one who freely chooses himself to bring about this dwelling.<sup>6</sup> God first loved us human persons and gave up His Son for us.<sup>7</sup> God the Father is the creator and merciful Father; God the Son is the only-begotten, eternal Wisdom incarnate, died and rose for the Salvation of human persons. God the Holy Spirit moves all reality – cosmos and history, toward their final, full recapitulation.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, from the Holy Trinity, Redemption has its beginning and finds its fulfilment in the same Holy Trinity.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, then, what effects the Redemption and eventually the Salvation of a human person is not Christ’s suffering alone in isolation. It is rather, God’s gracious decision to redeem us human persons. In relation to the Godhead, Christ’s Passion may be conceived as an effective cause of Redemption. If, however, the Passion is related to Christ’s free will, it is merit. Insofar as it happens concretely in Christ, it is satisfaction. In relation to our being freed from the servitude of guilt, it is a sacrifice. In relation to human persons being freed from the debt of punishment, and in relation to our reconciliation with God and other human persons, it is ransom. Therefore, in as much as the One work of Redemption *is* and *remains* the work of the One Holy Trinity, Christ is the Redeemer because, as Head of the Church and Head of mankind, He acquires merit.<sup>10</sup>

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5 Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est: On Christian Love*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 25 December, 2005, nn. 12-15.

6 Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 116.

7 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 115-116.

8 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Angelus: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity*, Saint Peter’s Square, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, June 7, 2009.

9 Cf. B. Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation; The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff, Andrew Louth (Ed.), Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1993, p. xiii.

10 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 296.

## 5.2 REDEMPTION IS THE WORK OF THE UNIQUE PERSON OF CHRIST

Only through Christ? How could one person represent the whole human race and prove the cause of eternal Salvation for all men and women everywhere? It is important to remember that through Him all things were created. If through Him all were created, can't through Him all be saved? There is Salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by whom human beings must be saved (Act 4:12).<sup>11</sup> To be able to conceive Redemption as the work of Christ, it is most important to keep in mind that the unique Person of Christ is truly Divine and truly Human. The Pauline key, which teaches us to conceive of Christ as the Last Man (1 Cor 15:45), the final Man, who takes man into his future, consists in Christ being not just Man, but God.<sup>12</sup> He is of a perfect Divine will and perfect Human will. He is of a perfect Human Body and perfect Human Soul. He is one Being with the Father and with the Holy Spirit as regards Divinity, and of one Being with human beings as regards Humanity. He is the Son of God and born of the ever-Virgin Mary.<sup>13</sup> He is the Son who is consubstantial with the Father, united with Him in the Divinity, for He tells us that "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:31).<sup>14</sup>

### 5.2.1 Christ's Passion and Death is the *Effective Cause* of Redemption

Both Redemption and Salvation are *effected* by the glorious Cross of Jesus Christ,<sup>15</sup> but not isolated from the Incarnation.<sup>16</sup> Keeping in mind the unity of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Cross is very important for understanding when it is prayed during the Nativity season that, "through Him the holy exchange that restores our life has shone forth today in splendour: when

11 Cf. Catechesis by Pope John Paul II on Jesus Christ General Audience, Wednesday 14 January 1987, no. 8.

12 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 234.

13 Cf. John Paul II, *Catechesis on Christ's Mission*, General Audience, Wednesday 20 April 1988, no. 2.

14 Cf. Pope Saint John Paul II, *Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, General Audience, Wednesday 24 August 1988, no. 2.

15 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 257-258.

16 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 121.

our frailty is assumed by your Word not only does human mortality receive unending honour but by this wondrous union we, too, are made eternal.”<sup>17</sup> This prayer highlights the Redemption of the humanity that accrues from the mystery of the Incarnation. Human life which was dead in sin, is restored, or better to say is raised to glory, making it possible to have communion with God. Humanity is redeemed. Human mortality receives unending honour and is made “eternal.”<sup>18</sup> Once again, Christ’s Passion and Death is the *effective cause* of Redemption. His Death is the redemptive Death because God’s saving plan is accomplished once and for all by this Death of His Son. In this sense, it is not like any other death of a human being. It is the one unique Death that causes Redemption for all. The One gave up His life for many, in other words, the *One* for *all*.<sup>19</sup>

There are four important elements to be considered while talking about Redemption by the Person of Christ. These are: merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and ransom. According to Saint Anselm, the effect of Christ’s Passion is Satisfaction. For Luther it is Substitution. For Aquinas it is Merit.<sup>20</sup> The efficiency of Christ’s Passion lies in the fact that He offers himself freely out of love. Keeping in mind the perfect harmony that there is between the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Glorification of the Son of God, for, these can be conceived as the united Act(s) of love, and following Saint Thomas Aquinas, Schönborn sees Christ’s Passion and Death being the *effective cause* of Redemption and Salvation.

### 5.2.2 The Most Important Constituent Redemptive Elements of Christ’s Death

Cardinal Schönborn examines the four most important constituent redemptive elements of Christ’s Death, namely: merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and ransom,

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17 Cf. Preface III of the Nativity of the Lord, in *The Daily Missal*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2013 p. 618.

18 Here “eternal” means that humanity, which is a creature, now overcomes death and is able to live on forever in the presence of God. It is not used in the sense of the eternity of God who always is, for God is not a creature.

19 Regarding the giving of His life for many, “for many” means that the *One* Christ is dying for *all* human beings. It is not restrictive but contrasts the whole humanity with the unique Person of the Redeemer (cf. CCC, no. 616).

20 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 293-294.

which are not opposed to each other, but are in fact different angles of looking at the same Act. Jesus the Christ in His Humanity gave himself up wholly to His Divine mission. Human persons have to always remain open to the mysteries and the attitudes of Jesus, which are ever-effective and ever-present.<sup>21</sup> Christ's merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and ransom do not remain locked in the past, but are all encompassing.

### 5.2.2.1 Merit

Merit, understood broadly, means the whole life of Jesus Christ merits and achieves Redemption, and subsequently, Salvation for human persons. Through His entire earthly life, Christ merited the grace of Redemption for human persons from the Father. Each one of His earthly action(s) is significant for our Salvation. Saint Thomas Aquinas treats Christ's merit within the framework of Christ's human will, because only if Christ become Man, and hence is true God and true Man, can His life and Death bring Salvation.<sup>22</sup> Suffering is not a free action. Since, however, only actions originating from freedom can be meritorious, then one cannot achieve any merit through suffering, unless one takes it upon oneself of one's own free will. Secondly, Jesus' whole life has the character of merit. Why then the Passion and Death are of a particular value? According to Cardinal Schönborn, Aquinas refers to love as the root of all merit.<sup>23</sup> Christ's Passion and Death is the only one that is meritorious because of three reasons. First, He is the only One that is true God and true Man at once. Second, He goes to this Passion and Death willingly out of love. He takes it upon himself of His own free will. Thirdly, it overcomes obstacles that hinder human persons.

God has exalted Christ on account of His Passion, and together with Him all who believe in Him. The glorification of Christ does not take place for Him as an isolated individual, but as Head of the Church and, thus as Head of the new humanity.<sup>24</sup> The notion of the unity of Christ and the Church, of the

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 223.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 296-297.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 293.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 293.



Head and the members, of the *totus Christus* is fundamental for any doctrine of Redemption. It is a biblical notion. No one lives for himself alone. Each action has implications for everyone, this is true in incomparable greater measure of good than it is of evil (Rom 5:12-19).<sup>25</sup> Suffering as such is not meritorious but taking it upon oneself of one's own free will, then it becomes meritorious. Christ's entire life is meritorious. However, there are obstacles on the side of human persons that need to be overcome by Jesus Christ's suffering in order for human persons to attain, to "merit" Salvation for themselves subjectively.<sup>26</sup> Christ is the source of this merit for the human person, because He goes to the Cross out of Love. Therefore, the Church calls those spiritual goods of the communion of saints the Church's treasury, "which is not the sum total of the material goods which have accumulated during the course of the centuries. On the contrary, the treasury of the Church is the infinite value, which can never be exhausted, which Christ merits has before God. Were offered so that the whole of mankind could be set free from sin and attain communion with the Father. In Christ, the Redeemer Himself, the satisfactions and merits of his Redemption exist and find their efficacy" (CCC, no. 1476).

### 5.2.2.2 Satisfaction

The doctrine of satisfaction has been treated one-sidedly and hence looks cruelly mechanical and less and less feasible.<sup>27</sup> In Jesus Christ it is not a question of some work separate from himself.<sup>28</sup> Here we are talking about the satisfaction which is necessary, and which replaces punishment. The soteriology of Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033/34-1109) is centred on reparation-*satisfactio*. Anselm is sometimes accused of legalism that, for him God was an angry, despotic private individual.<sup>29</sup> However, based on a more carefully nuanced view of Anselm's process of thought, this accusation can be found not to be accurate.<sup>30</sup> It is an injustice to take Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction separated from the rest of his

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25 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 294.

26 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 294.

27 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, pp. 230-231.

28 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 233- 234.

29 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 231.

30 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 261.

work. There is, “a certain injustice in the history of thought toward Anselm of Canterbury in the broader reception of Anselm’s works, on account of the dominance of his satisfaction theory of atonement and ontological argument over other aspects of his legacy...so many commentators skim lightly over the text, rather than performing a work of thorough exegesis.”<sup>31</sup> God became Man so that He could save men by His Death, even if, He obviously could have saved man through a different way.<sup>32</sup> But God nevertheless chose this path of humiliation, of satisfaction, because it reveals the ineffable beauty of God’s love and the Redemption of man. What is reasonable for God is likewise highly fitting and what is fitting is also highly rational and beautiful.

Cardinal Schönborn quotes Anselm that “Let it be settled between us that man is created for happiness, which cannot be attained in this life; and that no one can arrive at it without remission from sins; further, that no man passes through this life without sin.”<sup>33</sup> After the quotation and discussion, Cardinal Schönborn then concludes that according to Anselm, all the elements in the above quotation can only be fulfilled Only in Christ.<sup>34</sup> The fact that man is made for *happiness*, which in this life cannot be entirely achieved, may be demonstrated, for instance, by the transcendent nature of man. *Forgiveness* of sins is a prerequisite for eternal bliss is evident when a concept of immortality unconnected with any ethics whatever is adopted. All men sin *de facto* is reasonable, provided the existence of God and man’s dependence on God are admitted. Man has fallen from his or her original state through sin, and can come to Salvation only if God draws him or her to Himself again. And that could not occur except through forgiveness of all sins and that occurs only by means of *antecedent complete satisfaction*.<sup>35</sup>

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31 Gavin R. Ortlund, *Anselm’s Pursuit of Joy: A Commentary on the Proslogion*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020, p. 65.

32 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 262.

33 Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus homo-Why God Became Man*, I, 10:262-63, as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 264-265. Regarding the question of no man passes through this life without sin, about the Mother of God, it is taught and defined and believed that “the Most Blessed Virgin Mary at the first moment of her conception was, by singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the Human race, preserved from all stains of original sin...” (Pope Pius IX, Dogmatic bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854.; Pope Pius XII, *Fulgens Corona*, Encyclical, proclaiming a Marian Year to commemorate the Centenary of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, 8 September, 1953, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, no. 1).

34 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 265.

35 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 265-268.

Cardinal Schönborn discussing Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction, and comparing it with the doctrine of Redemption in Maximus the Confessor, comes to a synthesis that, God became Man and restored life to the world by His Death; because God was not obliged to redeem man in this way, but human nature needed to make satisfaction to God like this.<sup>36</sup> Anselm understands God's honour in a personal sense. That is why he can say that God sorrows and mourns. Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction starts with an analysis of interpersonal justice and reparation. Satisfaction or atonement is something done as compensation, through which both parties can agree amicably and through which the injured, aggrieved party indicates his readiness to forgive, and the readiness to ask and to accept forgiveness by an appropriate sign-the reparation. There can be only one or the other, either satisfaction or punishment. Once satisfaction has been made, the punishment thereby becomes superfluous. Being freed from the burden of punishment goes along with the satisfaction. There is no alternative to say that the other person should just forgive the offender unconditionally. The act of forgiving always has to have two sides to it. It is not enough for the person who has been injured simply to forgive. This readiness to forgive is an absolute precondition for the resolution of the conflict; but the forgiveness also has to be actively accepted by gestures and signs signifying a request for forgiveness. It involves the change of will that is made visible reparation even has to go beyond the damage caused.<sup>37</sup>

The personalistic reality here becomes clear in as far as the will is involved. A relation of persons can be seen, the person on one side forgives freely and the second person on the other side freely accepts the forgiveness by gestures. Here we see active subjects on both sides and not an object-subject relation. It is a Subject-subject relation, with the First Subject being God and the second subject being man. In this relationship of Subject-subject, man is subordinate since all he receives is from God as the ultimate source. It is grace, but which has to be actively accepted, and cooperated with. In this sense, of active acceptance and cooperation, man is a subject of Salvation. It is a relation worth the name – personalistic relation. In this regard, then Redemption and eventually Salvation can be said to be personalistic. We also see the pathway or pass from Redemption to Salvation. Without the second party, that is, the offender changing his

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36 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 261-270.

37 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 270-271.

or her will, and requesting, and accepting the forgiveness by gestures, it only remains Redemption and without concrete attainment of Salvation on the side of the concrete human person.

The objection to satisfaction is that, no one can make reparation for someone else. Everyone is responsible to make reparation for him or herself just as each has to do penance for him or herself. Schönborn quotes Aquinas' reply that, "He properly atones for an offense who offers the offended person something that person loves as much as or more than he hated the offense. Christ, however, by suffering out of love and obedience, gave more to God than was required as compensation for all the offenses of the human race."<sup>38</sup> Following Aquinas, Schönborn then concludes that most important is love – the love with which God loves the human being. Christ, because of the greatness of His love, the dignity of His life, and His pleading for humanity, and His Passion, He is the only One that makes reparation for all sins (cf. 1 Jn 2:2).<sup>39</sup>

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, following the Council of Trent (1547), teaches that "Jesus atoned for our faults and made satisfaction for our sins to the Father" (CCC, no. 615). The Catechism, further stresses *Love* as the most important in this act of satisfaction. "It is love 'to the end' that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as Redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction" (CCC, no. 616). The uniqueness of the Person of Jesus Christ, the Only Person in Heaven and on earth who is true God and true Man at once, is stressed when the Catechism teaches that, "No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the Divine Person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible His redemptive sacrifice for all" (CCC, no. 616).

Cardinal Ratzinger summarises Anselm's doctrine of satisfaction and adds to communitarian element among the members of Christ. That by man's sin, which was aimed against God, the order of justice was violated beyond measure and God infinitely offended.<sup>40</sup> The Bible expresses the truth in the little word 'for', in which it makes clear that the human person lives not only directly from the relation with God but also from one another and, in the last

38 Thomas Aquinas, *resp.*, DThA 28, 86 as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 294.

39 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 294-295.

40 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, pp. 232-233.

analysis, from the One who lived for all. In satisfaction doctrine, it remains clear that, election is not a privilege of the elected, but the call to live for others. It is through this living *for* alone that the human person can come to himself.<sup>41</sup> According to saint Padre Pio, as Jesus Christ is going “to begin His dolorous [sorrowful] Passion. Instead of thinking of Himself, He is all anxiety *for* you. Oh what an immensity of love does this Heart contain!”<sup>42</sup> According to Pope John Paul II, “we do not forget even for a moment that Jesus Christ,...He it was, and He alone, who satisfied the Father’s eternal love,...He and He alone also satisfied that love which man in a way rejected by breaking the first Covenant.”<sup>43</sup> It is Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the Only One who in a unique unrepeatable way made satisfaction and reconciled man to God.

### 5.2.2.3 Sacrifice

Concerning Sacrifice, the starting point is that, “Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice” (Eph 5:2).<sup>44</sup> Cardinal Schönborn makes the following quotation from Saint Augustine: “A true sacrifice is every work that is done in order that we may cling to God in holy fellowship, that is to say, that has a reference to that goal of the good, through which we may be truly blessed.”<sup>45</sup> Most important here is that sacrifice creates fellowship (cf. Ex 24:11). Sacrifice creates fellowship with God, and among human persons.<sup>46</sup> It creates a relation. The Sacrifice of Christ is unique. It completes and surpasses all other sacrifices because it is a gift from God the Father himself since the Father handed His Son over to sinners in order to reconcile human beings with himself. At the same time it is the offering of the Son of God who became Man, who *in freedom* and *love* offered His life to His Father through the Holy Spirit in reparation for human beings’ disobedience (cf. CCC, no. 614). Once again,

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41 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 233.

42 Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Saint, *The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane*, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1981, p. 8.

43 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 9.

44 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 295.

45 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10, 6 (CChr. SL 47:278) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 295.

46 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 295.

Christ does everything consciously, willingly, out of love. He fulfils everything as a Person who is unique but always in relation.

#### 5.2.2.4 Ransom

On the basis of freedom of a person, ransom means setting free, enabling one to be one's own master again. The human person needs this setting free because man has sold himself twice over. First, as a slave to sin, and secondly, man is in debt on account of sins committed. These make man unfree. Jesus Christ's suffering was the price paid for ransom. It is a ransom in relation to God and for the sake of fellowship with Him.<sup>47</sup> The four elements, namely, merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and ransom ought to be taken together, since each one present a way in which the unique Person of Christ was and is the effective cause of Salvation in His Divine and Human nature united in one Person. He acquired merit, made satisfaction, offered himself as a sacrifice, and ransomed human persons.

### 5.3 FIVE ASPECTS OF REDEMPTION TO BE TAKEN TOGETHER

We have just seen the four most important redemptive elements inherent in Christ's redemptive Death. The four elements (merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and ransom) are intrinsic in His concrete redemptive Death. However, when considered in a broader sense, it is possible to zero in on five aspects of Redemption in general, which also ought to be taken together and ought to be seen in their inner unity. Schönborn follows Hans Urs von Balthasar and points out these aspects as: Love of God, self-giving of the Son, substitution, setting men free, and adoption-participation into the Divine life of the Holy Trinity. They have to be taken together without over emphasized one as dominant at the expense of the others. The central assertion achieved through considering

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47 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 296.

these five aspects together ought not to be replaced by an equivalent easily more understood alternative. At the same time one ought not to relax the tensions that occur between these specific aspects, or concealing them, or even not seeing these tensions at all. One ought to avoid arriving at a synthesis that is merely apparent, or of letting oneself be blinded by a supposed agreement.<sup>48</sup> This approach helps to achieve a more comprehensive and integral conception about the Redemption and Salvation accomplished by the Jesus Christ.

### 5.3.1 Love of God

The notion of Divine Love time and again appears in the Christology of Cardinal Schönborn. This common appearance may be explained by the fact that God is a personal God. He is communion of Divine Persons and so since there is Community of Persons in the Holy Trinity, God is Love. Man's state of having fallen into sin necessarily attracts the wrath of God (cf. Mt 3:7; Rom 1:18; Eph 2:5). However, on the other hand, reconciliation is ascribed solely to the Love of God. It is from Love that the Son was given up for all by the Father (Rom 8:32-39; Jn 3:16). Above the righteousness of God, there is the gracious Love of God which restores and perfects the covenant once made with man. The source of this Divine action is the gracious Love of God.<sup>49</sup>

### 5.3.2 The Self-Giving of the Son for All

For God to effect Redemption presupposes the self-giving of the Son for us all, whereby He also gives us all things (Rom 8:32). Yet Jesus does not remain completely passive in this. Rather, He gives himself up *willingly*.<sup>50</sup> This self-giving

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48 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 259-261.

49 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 260.

50 The Second Eucharistic prayer emphasises this self-giving by the term "*willingly*" when it reads, "At the time he was betrayed and entered *willingly* into His Passion,..." Yes, He was betrayed, but nevertheless, He did not enter into His Passion as fate resulting from the betrayal but rather, He *willingly* gave himself to Death, even to a shameful Death on the Cross.

willingly is very personalistic as it shows that the Son is not violated or forced to make the Sacrifice. He Himself is the sacrifice and, at the same time, He is the High Priest (Heb 9:11-28). His blood is the expiation (Rom 5:9), the justification (Rom 5:9), the purification (1 Jn 1:7; Rev 7:14) that seals the final covenant of God with men (cf. Mt 26:28; 1 Cor 11:25).<sup>51</sup> The Catechism mentions the perfect fulfilment of the Law by the only Righteous One in place of all sinners (cf. CCC, no. 579). The Catechism adds that, having established Him in solidarity with sinners, God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, so that we might be reconciled to God by the Death of His Son (cf. CCC, no. 603). In this the *Communio personarum* of Divine love is also made clearly revealed. There is perfect harmony and agreement of the Will of the Father and that of the Son. In this sense, it can be understood that the Father and the Son Will the same. They possess one and the same Will but remaining distinct Persons. The Father gave Him up for us all, and He [the Son] freely gave himself up in perfect unity of Love with the Father.

In clearer and stronger terms, in order to emphasize the self-giving of the Son for all, the Catechism teaches that at the end of the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus recalled that God's love excluded no one. It is not the will of the Father who is in Heaven that one of the little ones should perish (Mt 18:14). Christ affirms that He came "to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). The term "for many" is not restrictive but contrasts the whole humanity with the unique Person of the Redeemer who hands himself over to save humanity (cf. Mt 20:28; Rom 5:18-19). Christ died for all without exception. There is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer. He gave himself up for all (2 Cor 5:15; 1 Jn 2:2). He knew and loved all humanity when He offered His life (Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2). One has died for all. No human person, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all and offer himself as a sacrifice for all (cf. CCC, nn. 605-616). The Divine Person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible His Redemptive sacrifice for all.

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 259.



### 5.3.3 Substitution

The self-giving for all goes so far as to become substitution. He Himself who *knew no sin* is *made to be sin* for us (2 Cor 5:21). He becomes a “curse” (Gal 3:13), that human persons may become righteous. He, the wealthy One, becomes poor for human persons’ sake that they may become rich (2 Cor 8:9). He is the Lamb of God, who takes the sin of the world upon Himself (1 Jn 1:29; 1 Jn 3:5). He is the sin-laden servant of God (Is 53:4). He is the sacrificial Lamb at the Passover, He is the scapegoat. He carries the sins of all humanity.<sup>52</sup> In the mouth of John the Baptist, the words, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” are uttered for the first time. John does not simply call Him a lamb, but he calls Him the “Lamb of God.” Every day lambs were offered as sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem, and to this day a lamb is eaten at the meal on the Jewish Easter night (the Seder on Passover), which recalls the night of the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. The “Lamb of God” means the sacrifice that is offered to God for reconciliation and liberation. John further says of Him that “He will take away the sins of the world.” These words about Jesus predict His entire future path. He will travel this path, not with great military conquests or with tremendous political success, but rather “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Is 53:7). But exactly in this way, in this seeming impotence, “like a lamb”, He will lift off its hinges the entire burden of evil on the world.<sup>53</sup> While discussing about substitution, it is important to keep in mind that Christ was *made sin* but *not a sinner*. The Catechism teaches that, “For our sake God made him to be sin (2 Cor 5:21). By sending his own Son in the form of a slave, in the form of a fallen humanity, on account of sin, God made him *to be sin* who *knew no sin*, so that in him we might become the righteous of God” (CCC, no. 602). Jesus did not experience reprobation as if He Himself had sinned. But in the redeeming love that always united Him to the Father, He assumed us in the state of our waywardness of sin, to the point that he could say in our name from the Cross: “my God, my God, why have You forsaken me? (cf. Mk 15:34; Ps 22:2; Jn 8:29; CCC, no. 603).

In substitution, the main focus is on the question: when the eternal Son of God became Man, was He made “sin” or a “sinner”? According to Cardinal

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 53.

Schönborn, for Luther, Christ's substitution means that Christ committed sins of all human persons. The Cross, therefore, becomes the drama of God against God for the benefit of human persons. That "through the person and work of Christ the change from wrath to pardon was brought about in God himself."<sup>54</sup> Reconciliation is like a change of mind in God Himself that only Christ can effect. Luther takes as scripture basis when it speaks of God's wrath and God's repentance. Also he quotes Saint Paul when he says, "For our sake [God] made him to sin" (2 Cor 5:21) and "Christ...having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13).<sup>55</sup> For Luther, Christ took upon himself not merely the sin itself and its consequences but that He himself committed sin itself. Therefore, Christ is completely ensnared in the sins of humanity, so that in exchange of this ensnaring of Christ, man acquired righteousness. For Luther, Christ's substitution means that He can say, "I committed the sins of all men."<sup>56</sup> Before going further, with Cardinal Schönborn's analysis of Luther, we can see that, in this form of exchange as conceived by Luther, Christ would eventually have to be damned. Because in Luther's view Christ has really become a sinner. He is indeed the greatest sinner, since He committed all the sins of all men. From Luther's understanding we can be forced to a conclusion that Christ himself too needs Redemption. Moreover, Christ himself cannot merit for himself this Redemption since he too is sinful – the greatest sinner. It would follow by necessity that this kind of "Christ" ensnared by sin needs another true Christ to redeem him.

Returning to Schönborn's analysis of Luther, this kind of perception of Christ's Substitution would mean that in justification, man remains a sinner turned away from God and lives at the same time (*simul*) turned to God. Man becomes *simul iustus et peccator*, that is, at the same time righteous and a sinner. At the same time within Christ, the most extreme and complete sin exists together with the supreme and complete righteousness.<sup>57</sup> Luther interprets Paul (2 Cor 5:21 and Gal 3:13) out of context. The Jewish converts to Christianity were asserting that the Law was a source of justification (cf. Gal 2:16; 3:2) and Paul responds to them that the Law was the source of a curse, a curse from which

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54 Pesch, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung*, pp. 132-33 n. 40, as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 275.

55 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 275.

56 C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 276.

57 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 276.

only Christ and not the Law can free the Jews. Paul does not mean to say that God cursed Christ but that God himself wished to reconcile the world to himself through Him (2 Cor 5:19).<sup>58</sup> When Paul quotes Deuteronomy (21:23) he omits “accursed by God” from the quotation in order not to give the impression of “accursed by God.” Christ is born of a woman, born under the Law (Gal 4:4) means that Christ accepted our humanity that is under the law of sin, in order to reconcile it with God in an act of perfect obedience and love. Paul *never* says that God made Christ to *be a sinner* so that in Him human persons may attain the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:21), he rather says, He made Him to *be sin* so that we might become the righteous of God.<sup>59</sup> Cardinal Schönborn makes a sharp distinction between making Christ sin, and making Christ a sinner. This distinction is not recognized by Luther. He does not see the contradiction between Him who knew no sin and He at the same time being a sinner.

The correct interpretation of Paul, and also as Tradition has always understood him is that, there is a distinction between sin and the sinner. Neither Christ nor we are simply identical with sin.<sup>60</sup> The statement “For our sake God made him to be sin” means that God made Him truly united with our sinful condition, so that we might be truly united with His condition of righteousness. God made Christ a sacrifice for sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). He made Him both sin and sacrifice for sin. Even in the Old Testament sacrifices were eaten by priests as something holy. The sacrifice or its flesh was not considered to have become a sinner also itself (cf. Lev 6:22). Following Augustine’s interpretation, Schönborn concludes that the sacrifice removes sin without becoming a sinner itself.<sup>61</sup>

Substitution may also be understood in terms of Love. So that God dies as Man. He gives himself entirely to men who are not wont to give themselves to Him, and He thereby substitutes the reality of His all-sufficient love for the futile cultic substitution.<sup>62</sup> Jesus Christ’s Death is a ransom, a Redemption that defeated the powers of evil. He substituted for each and every human being, by taking on the guilt, dying a Death which the human beings deserved because of sin. In order to buy freedom with His very Person and eternal love. Hence,

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58 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 277.

59 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 277.

60 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 277.

61 Cf. S. Lyonnet and L. Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption and Sacrifice: A Biblical and Patristic Study*, AnBib 48 (Rome, 1970), pp. 251-253 as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 277-278.

62 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Sabbath of History*, Washington, DC: William G. Congdon Foundation, 2000, p. 28.

Saint Paul states, “Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person... But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:7-8). Christ died for all human beings. He took sins, the sins of humanity, to the Cross and as the New Adam. He, truly Man, represented all humanity before the Father, through His suffering and Death, which is the perfect Divine love, a self-surrendering gift of love on behalf of sinful humanity. It opened eternal life for humanity, which is the supreme gift that sinners do not deserve. His love surpasses all description because He is so gracious that He gave all that He had that human beings might live (cf. CCC, nn. 599-623).<sup>63</sup>

#### 5.3.4 Setting the Human Persons Free

The aim of self-giving and substitution is to set human persons free. He becomes the ransom, giving freedom from sin (Rom 7; 8:2, Jn 8:34). He gives freedom from the evil one (Jn 8:44; 1 Jn 3:8; Col 1:13). He brings freedom from the violence of the coming judgment (1 Thes 1:10). He pays the highest price (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pet 1:18-19). He is the ransom (Mk 10:45). He expiates and this expiation is connected to blood (Heb 9:12) and a violent Death (Heb 9:15).<sup>64</sup>

#### 5.3.5 Adoption as Sons in the Son – in the Life of the Holy Trinity

Unlike the Son, who is consubstantial with the Father, human persons are called sons not by nature, but by adoption. Humanity is not restored to original grace, before the fall, but has been raised to a higher dignity (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22).<sup>65</sup> Those united with Christ are made citizens of Heaven. Pope Leo the Great († 461 AD) has given a wonderful synthesis of what has been accomplished for human beings by the Son of God who is Incarnate, Dead, Risen and Glorified. He states “seeing the truth, that when the Lord went up, to heaven, they [apostles and disciples] experienced a great joy...[because] *human nature*

63 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, p. 51-52.

64 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 260.

65 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 227.

was exalted above the dignity of all the creatures of heaven, passing beyond the ranks of angels, being raised above the high seat of the archangels, to receive an elevation that would have no limit, to share the glorious throne of him with whose nature it had been united in the Person of the Son.”<sup>66</sup> Very important truths stressed here include: first, human nature has now become exalted above the dignity of all creatures of Heaven. It is not elevated above Divine nature but above all creatures in Heaven. Human nature has passed beyond the ranks of angelic persons and has been raised *above* the high seat of the archangels. Secondly, humanity has received an elevation that has no limit. Here, is also a clear indication of the glorification of the human body, since, Christ has ascended with His glorified Human Body. Thirdly, there is a “sharing” in the glorious throne of Him with whom, humanity has been united, namely, the Person of the Son. Sharing not in the sense that each takes a percentage or portion but in the sense of full sharing, in full measure.

From the Incarnation comes the “divinization” of man. The soteriology of the early Church is that “God made himself Man, so that man might be able to become God.”<sup>67</sup> The term divinization is not preferred because of its Neo-Platonic closeness and Hellenistic tendency. The preferred term is “adoptive sonship”, υιοθεσία, as Saint Paul uses it “so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal 4:4-5).<sup>68</sup> More precise rendering is the “grace of adoption as sons.” Unlike the Son who is consubstantial with the Father, human persons are called sons not by nature, but by adoption. Any talk about “divinization of man” is only possible in reference to Christ. Turning His Death on the Cross into an act of prayer, a prayer accepted by God, Christ made it open, and possible for all peoples to participate in His most intimate and personal filial relationship with God.<sup>69</sup> It is the true Divinity and true Humanity of the Son that guarantee “divinization” - Salvation.

The precise definition of divinization has two points. First is grace that “if only God can divinize, then man cannot divinize himself, and thus he is

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66 Pope Saint Leo the Great, *Sermon I on the Ascension, 2-4*, in “The Divine Office-The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite as renewed by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and promulgated by the Authority of Pope Paul VI, Vol. II, London: Harper Collins Publishers 2006, p. 615.

67 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 104.

68 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 108.

69 S. W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical theology of Pope Benedict XVI*, Michigan: Brazos Press-Baker Publishing Group, 2009, p. 145.

also unable to satisfy his highest longing himself, insofar as this is divinization, then, is grace.”<sup>70</sup> Second is participation and not identity of nature. That is, divinization “leads, not to an identity of nature with God, but to a participation in God.”<sup>71</sup> Where the East speaks of divinization, the West speaks of grace. The element of grace is emphasised by the fact that no creature is of itself capable of divinization, since none can comprehend God.<sup>72</sup> It can only take place by the grace of God. However, this does not negate the truth of man striving to this goal. In other words, it does not mean that man should be passive.<sup>73</sup> One who, through grace, is divinized and becomes god is not God according to nature, not according to being. Everything that God is, apart from being God in nature, is what one becomes that is divinized by grace. This is the real content of Redemption and eventually of Salvation.<sup>74</sup> At the same time divinization does not mean annulment of man’s creatureliness but rather it means openness to sharing in the life of God himself in a way constitutive for being human. It is not an abolition of creatureliness but the realization of man’s being in the image of God, like God, in harmony with God. Immortality, imperishability, indestructibility are the gifts of grace by which man shares in the life of God. Man reaches this not by flying from being human but by sharing in the Holy life of God, by restoration and complete relationship with God, which is fundamental in creatureliness. It is a real *κοινωνία* with God, a cleaving to God, through grace. In this way, is understood Psalm 82:6, “I said, you are gods” as quoted by the Gospel according to Saint John (10:34-35).<sup>75</sup>

The Redemption and Salvation by Jesus Christ is more than just the removal of all evil. It is at the same time the bestowal of the Holy Spirit and hence a participation in the Divine life of the Holy Trinity, an adoption as children, granting of a sonship with Christ (cf. Gal 4:6-7; Rom 5:15-17; Eph 1:5). The freedom bestowed is understood not merely negatively, but positively as freedom in the Holy Spirit. Only this kind of freedom can really and truly be freedom. This is the only kind of freedom known in the New Testament (cf. Gal 5:1, 13-26; Jn 8:31-36). Freedom which spurs the human person on to the

70 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 105.

71 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 105.

72 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 106.

73 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 260.

74 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 106.

75 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 108.

good. This is the freedom which grants the human person a genuine opportunity for development. Humanity is not restored to original grace but has been raised to a higher level. The original grace, that is before the fall of Adam, established between God and man a union of friendship, we may say akin to the union between members of the same household. But after the Passion, Death, Resurrection, Glorification and Ascension of Christ, Christ has raised the old union to the highest type. When the Divine Son assumed flesh, human beings were made, in a supernatural way, one with Him, and through Him connected with the Father. Now, the sonship of human beings participates in a higher degree in the Sonship of the eternal Son. Human beings can now, receive inheritance and spiritual life drawn, “begotten”, from the Father. Human beings can now enter in communion with the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Son and dwells in us as in His Temple (1 Cor 3:16).<sup>76</sup>

Here, care should be taken, not to understand this inheritance and spiritual life in the Son, as if to mean automated Universal Salvation. It does not mean Universal Salvation but rather it alludes to the Universal Will of Salvation.<sup>77</sup> In other words, Salvation is made open and possible for all. But because God respects the free will of each human person, one can freely choose not to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. And when one chooses not to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, one rejects the Universal Will of Salvation and hence misses the concrete realisation of Salvation in his or her concrete person. The new higher order, in a sense, consists in that, every justified human person becomes a son. The justified is anointed with the Divine Spirit and made a “partaker” of the Divine Nature and transformed into a son of God. The dignity, which is eternal, usual, and natural to the Divine Son becomes his or hers – the justified human person, by adoption. With the former grace, before the fall, as a quality infused into the soul precedes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In Christ and His sanctified members, the anointing Spirit is the source of created grace. The fullness of perfection achieved by Christ belongs to the supernatural order.<sup>78</sup> That is why we may be led to see or to say that whereas Original sin is common

76 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, Vol. II, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1899, p. 193.

77 Cf. M. Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000, p. 262.

78 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, p. 194.

to all human beings, Salvation is not automatically inherited in the same way as it is with Original sin<sup>79</sup>, simply because, this is a supernatural order – an order of grace which requires free acceptance on the side of man as an active subject who is free. And this freedom is respected by God. Original sin took place in the realm of the natural order. Hence, it may be perceived that human persons relate to each other in original sin “automatically”, *naturally based on nature*, but do not relate to Salvation “automatically”, for Salvation is in the realm of Supernatural grace. Original sin is not self-committed but rather inherited because of this natural reality. And since, human nature at its natural level is corrupted and wounded, but not destroyed (cf. CCC, no. 405), even though transmitted in this corrupted state, it is still capable of cooperating with grace. Grace can work with this nature, and this nature can cooperate with grace. It becomes also possible to conceive that the Blessed Virgin Mary by singular grace or privilege is conceived without original sin, for this, is the work of grace and not nature.<sup>80</sup>

To show that the Redeemer’s sacrifice acquires perfect and definitive value, the Letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus ‘passed through the heavens’ (Heb 4:14), and ‘entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into Heaven itself’ (Heb 9:24). Human beings are loved in a special way by the Father. Therefore, they are raised with Christ and made citizens of Heaven. God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love, even when human persons are dead through sin, He makes them alive together with Christ (cf. Eph 2:4-7). The Fatherhood of God, who is rich in mercy, is experienced by creatures through the love of God’s crucified and risen Son, who sits in Heaven on the right hand of the Father as Lord.<sup>81</sup> After earthly life, participation in complete

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79 The *Catechism of The Catholic Church* states that “...the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature... Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called ‘sin’ only in an analogical sense: it is a sin ‘contracted’ and not ‘committed’-a state and not an act.” (CCC. no. 404).

80 Cf. Pope Pius IX, Dogmatic bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854.; Pope Pius XII, *Fulgens Corona*, Encyclical, proclaiming a Marian Year to commemorate the Centenary of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, 8 September, 1953, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, no. 1.

81 Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Wednesday 21 July 1999, no. 3.



intimacy with the Father thus comes through insertion into Christ's Paschal Mystery (1 Thes 4:17-18).<sup>82</sup>

## 5.4 DIVINE REDEMPTION AND HUMAN FREEDOM – SALVATION

According to Saint Anselm, every wish of a rational creature must be subject to the will of God.<sup>83</sup> Man is therefore required to take his or her creatureliness seriously, this is what the Scripture describes as the fear of God. This concerns freedom because man is the creature who can and should, of his or her own free will, accept and respond to his or her Origin – the Creator. It is the uprightness of will (*rectitudo voluntatis*) by which man directs himself or herself toward God.<sup>84</sup> Liberation from the forces of destruction into the sphere of Salvation depends on the human person's free response, which although it is made possible and called forth by grace, is nevertheless free. Redemption and eventually Salvation are free gift(s) of God to the human person, but not automatic.

### 5.4.1 The Necessity of Redemption

Following the fatalism and predestination of Calvin one can easily be led to think that Redemption as such is not necessary. Redemption is said to be unnecessary, especially any Redemption from outside ourselves. This is the point of view of Gnosis. We only have to realize for ourselves who we really are. Our true identity, our divine self, must dawn upon us; then we are redeemed, and a "redeemer" is merely the messenger who brings this knowledge. Redemption is said to be impossible because everything is basically predetermined, is already established and fixed. Redemption is said not to make sense

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82 Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Wednesday 21 July 1999, no. 4.

83 Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus homo-Why God Became Man*, I, 11:262, as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 267.

84 Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus homo-Why God Became Man*, I, 10:262-63, as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 264-265.

because with respect to our own finitude, humility is required, and we ought not to want more than is possible.<sup>85</sup> However, in the true Christian faith, it is possible to talk of Redemption as grace. This is so because of the constant sensation that no men can ever fulfil the whole law of themselves, even if they truly wanted to. Among the Jewish people, this was an absolute certainty. For this reason, Israel celebrated every year the Feast of Atonement, Yom Kippur, to ask for God's forgiveness.<sup>86</sup> This consciousness opens the human person to the need of Redemption as a grace, as a gift from God, a gift from outside the human person but which is given to the human person for his or her good.

According to Romano Guardini (1885-1968) Christ is the stream of living water from the eternal source of the Father's love to the thirsting world. He from 'above' establishes the new existence which was impossible to establish solely from below.<sup>87</sup> The human being is mortal. To move from historical existence, physical death is a necessity and a must for every human being. Physical death opens the door for the next life. Yet, without destroying death, it is still impossible to reach the glorious state. The human person has to freely accept and cooperate with this gift because the actions of the human person are paramount since a person discloses himself or herself in his actions (cf. CCC, no. 236).

#### 5.4.2 The Human Condition in the Context of Redemption and Salvation

Human persons are finite and frail but, with the help of, and cooperating with grace, they are capable of relationship with God. It is said that the conception about human personhood is still very much emerging.<sup>88</sup> However, much as this may be true in some respects, there are already revealed truths to be held without question. After original sin, human nature is wounded and corrupted but not destroyed. Hence, in spite of the original sin, humanity can still be redeemed and by cooperating with grace, the human person is able to attain Salvation. Man has a special dignity in the universe mainly because of three

85 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 258.

86 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 246.

87 Cf. Romano Guardini, *The Lord*, with a new introduction by Joseph Ratzinger, Washington, DC: Gateway Editions-Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2002, p. 82.

88 Cf. Daniel P. Horan, *Catholicity and Emerging Personhood: A Contemporary Theological Anthropology*, New York: Orbis Books, 2019, p. viii.

reasons. First, human nature is willed and created by God (Gen 1:26-27). Secondly, the eternal Son of God assumed a true Human nature forever. Thirdly, Christ ascended with this true Human nature to the Father. The human being is a mystery because in man, there is a hidden Divine life, “but that hiddenness does not make it any less real.”<sup>89</sup> The original fall from grace has subjected human beings to corruptibility and death. Human beings carry in them the image of the earthly Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15:49). This corruptibility, affects above all the flesh and makes it earthly, dust returning to dust. Having become corruptible, the image of God in man is also *distorted but not destroyed*. Since the advent of sin, the Spirit could no longer find a dwelling place in man. It was only after the Son of God had become Man that the Spirit once again dwelt in human nature. Thus it is possible to be remoulded after the Incarnate Word, who is the heavenly Adam. Only through His Humanity does mankind obtain the remedy of immortality.<sup>90</sup>

In trying to understand the condition of the human person, it is possible to think of the natural state, the state of grace, and the glorious state. The human person is capable of relation at three levels or states: at the natural level – *status naturae*, at the level of grace – *status gratiae* which is a cooperating with the free gift of Divine grace, and at the level of glory – *status gloriae*.<sup>91</sup> Hence, following Saint Thomas Aquinas, it is possible to conceive of the human person being in the natural state, being in the state of grace, and sharing in the state of glory – Beatific Vision. In order for the human being to attain true Salvation, God has prepared, and continues to initiate and propose, to the human person the life of grace, through which the human person is able to arrive at life of glory – Salvation. The time of *grace* is very important. For now, since God’s time is near, since it is among human persons and is calling each person every time, it is an immediate opportunity for love. Every moment is important on the path to Salvation.<sup>92</sup>

Pelagius seemed to deny any real place to Divine grace in the beginning or continuation of the relationship with God. Pelagianism came to be a religion of human autonomy, which held that human beings are able to take the

89 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 150.

90 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face*, p. 86-87.

91 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, no. 16, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20040723\\_communion-stewardship\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040723_communion-stewardship_en.html).

92 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 357.

initiative in their own Salvation.<sup>93</sup> Human persons who deny the limitations which are the inner standard of being creature, deny the truth. Ratzinger explains that “They are living in untruth and in unreality. Their lives are mere appearance; they stand under the sway of death.”<sup>94</sup> Augustine reacted against Pelagianism, insisting upon the priority of God’s grace at every stage in the Christian life, from its beginning to its end. Human beings do not possess the necessary freedom to take the initial steps toward Salvation. Humans are in possession of a will corrupted and tainted by sin, but not destroyed, which biases them toward evil and away from God. Only grace can counteract this bias toward sin.<sup>95</sup> For Pelagius, the resources of Salvation are located within humanity. The unique human persons have the capacity to save themselves without the help of grace. They have the ability to do all that is necessary to be saved. Salvation is earned through good works without the help of grace. These works place God under an obligation to humanity. For Augustine, human nature is weak, fallen, and powerless, while for Pelagius, human nature is autonomous and self-sufficient. For Augustine, humanity must depend upon God for Salvation while for Pelagius, God merely indicates what has to be done if Salvation is to be attained, and then leaves the human person alone to meet those conditions unaided.<sup>96</sup>

According to Cardinal Schönborn, Salvation is by the grace of God through Christ and is received by faith, but it is not that Salvation is by grace alone, or by faith alone. It is important to keep the fact that human persons, even if they are naturally rational, without God, they cannot redeem themselves from sin because they are creatures. They can do nothing to make themselves acceptable to God, without God’s grace. Through the grace of Baptism a human person can imitate the thoughts, feelings, and aims of Jesus Christ.<sup>97</sup> The Person of Jesus Christ is alive related to humans through Baptism and through the grace of adoption as sons. He is also encountered in the liturgy.<sup>98</sup> Salvation is attained through the Son of God by the human person with the help of Holy Spirit. Following Saint Paul’s teaching (cf. 2 Cor 5:19; Rom 11:32) Cardinal

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93 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 33.

94 J. Ratzinger, *In the Beginning...: A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, p. 71.

95 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 33.

96 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 34.

97 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 223.

98 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 223.

Schönborn loudly states that, “it is impossible for man to save himself, to justify himself, but that God has justified us... Yet on the other hand, justification does not abolish human freedom.”<sup>99</sup> According to Saint Paul, the baptized, filled with the Spirit, live “in Christ”, they have died with Him and have been raised with Him, and now live hidden with Him in God (cf. Col 3:3). For John, the baptized are also born anew, born of the Spirit (cf. Jn 3:5, 8); this birth is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (cf. Jn 1:13). One does not become a child of God by natural birth, not by any natural process of growth, but as a result of a supernatural event worked by God alone. It is only by the new birth that one can become a new man, a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).<sup>100</sup> No one, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>101</sup>

The personalistic reality in this is the reality of relation between the Divine Person of the Son of God and the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit in relation to the human person who accepts Baptism. One does not become the child of God through natural birth, certainly not through a process of natural development, but through a supernatural event brought about by God alone. Much as the human person is free, this freedom, if it is to be correctly understood, should never be a freedom that separates human person from God. Because, as human persons, we are creatures. If created then we have a beginning. And if we have a beginning then we are finite and not infinite. Being finite means we are not omniscient and not omnipotent. Therefore, much as we are free to choose Salvation or not, because of our limitedness we are not omniscient, and so not capable of proposing or thinking out, let alone actualizing the means of our Redemption, and eventually Salvation, independent from God. What we are capable of, is participation in the Redemption which God has realized in place for us.<sup>102</sup>

99 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 367.

100 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, New York: Paulist Press, 2013, p. 26.

101 Cf. Dominus Iesus 12; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris missio*, no. 5.

102 A more detailed analysis of participation is done by Karol Wojtyła. Much as his analysis is more concentrated on the uniqueness of the human person but who is at the same time lives in a community, it is nevertheless very useful for our basis and trying to understand the reality of personal participation in the mystery of personal Salvation. A detailed Wojtyła's analysis on participation, is presented in, Antonio López, et al. (Eds.), *Karol Wojtyła: Person and Act and Related Essays*, The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/ John Paul II, Volume 1, translated by Carl A. Anderson, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021, pp. 514-531.

According to Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), fallenness (*Verfallenheit*) is an option which human persons choose while for Augustine the original sin is inherent to human nature. For Augustine, since all are sinners, all require Redemption. All have fallen short of the glory of God, hence, all require to be redeemed. Humanity left to its own, could never enter into relationship with God. The situation cannot be transformed from within and so, the help must come from outside the human situation. God intervenes in the human dilemma. God need not to have done so, but out of His love for fallen humanity, He entered into the human situation in the Person of Jesus Christ so as to redeem humanity.<sup>103</sup> Grace is an unmerited or undeserved gift of God, by which God freely breaks the hold of sin upon humanity. Redemption is possible only as a Divine gift. It is God who initiates the process of Salvation. The personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn, follows the line of Augustine, Aquinas, Trent, Vatican II, and Pope John Paul II and is sharply critical of Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, and all those who follow their line of thought.

### 5.4.3 Justification of the Human Person

Schönborn speaks of the dialectic process resembling the process of *simul iustus et peccator*. Having been pronounced righteous, man remains even in a state of being distant from God. Yet in that he accepts in faith (*sola fide*) that God is gracious toward him, he lives in a “constant *transitus* from sin to grace. Justification is not a state of being but one of continuous becoming; one that does not at some time or other cross over into being, but forever remains this becoming.<sup>104</sup> Salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ, does not mean the unmerited, free grace of Christ whereby a believing sinner is eternally and completely and once for all saved from sin. Grace means God’s help to live a righteous life. All children of the Church should nevertheless, even those who have heard the gospel and deliberately rejected it, remember that their exalted condition results, not from their own merits, but from the grace of Christ. If they fail to respond in thought, word and deed to that grace, not only shall they

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<sup>103</sup> Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 34.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 282-287.

not be saved, but they shall be the more severely judged (cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 2, 14). It is a grace that does not result in eternal certainty, but only the possibility of living up to God's requirements (Gal 1:6-8).<sup>105</sup>

In the Middle Ages, the term “justification” and the verb “to justify” came to signify the entering of the human person into a right relationship with God – what the unique person had to do in order to be saved. Humanism raised a new emphasis of individual consciousness and individuality.<sup>106</sup> For Luther, “the God of the Christian gospel is not a harsh judge who rewards individuals according to their merits, but a merciful and gracious God who bestows righteousness upon sinners as a gift.”<sup>107</sup> For Luther, Faith has a “personal [individualistic-not personalistic], rather than a purely historical, reference; faith concerns trust in the promises of God; faith unites the believer to Christ.”<sup>108</sup> Hence, saving faith concerns believing and trusting that Christ was born for us personally (personally understood here as individualism) and has accomplished for us the work of Salvation. Faith is trust.<sup>109</sup> The person who does not have faith is like someone who has to cross the sea, but is so frightened that he does not trust the ship. And so he stays where he is, and is never saved, because he will not get on board and cross over.<sup>110</sup>

According to Luther, faith unites the believer with Christ. Luther insist that God provides everything necessary for justification, so that all that the sinner needs to do is to receive it. For Luther, justification of the sinner is based upon the grace of God, and is received through faith. Justification by faith alone is an affirmation that God does everything necessary for Salvation.<sup>111</sup> Even faith itself is a gift of God, rather than a human action. Here it is possible to see that Luther's scheme or understanding of faith somehow blurs the personalistic reality of personal act in the fullest sense. Both Augustine and

105 Way of Life Literature, *What the Roman Catholic Church teaches About Salvation*, 2013, available online, [https://www.wayoflife.org/database/what\\_the\\_catholic\\_church\\_teaches\\_about\\_salvation.html](https://www.wayoflife.org/database/what_the_catholic_church_teaches_about_salvation.html), (Accessed on 29 October 2021).

106 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 154.

107 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 156.

108 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 156.

109 According to Professor Bogumił Gacka, Faith is a personal act, an act of believing. This means that it is a free response of the human being to God who is a Person that reveals Himself (cf. A. Perzyński, *The Christian Faith: Approaches to Theological Anthropology*, Warszawa: Warszawskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne 2011, p. 113). Luther's understanding of faith does not properly stress personal act.

110 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 156.

111 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 282-287.

Luther agree that God graciously gives sinful human persons a righteousness which justifies them, but whereas Augustine argued that this righteousness was to be found within believers, Luther insisted that it remained outside believers. For Augustine, righteousness is internal while for Luther, it is external.<sup>112</sup> In personalistic terms, the human person is a creature, therefore, it is absolutely true that faith is a gift, but the faith which receives Salvation is not a sterile or dead faith.<sup>113</sup>

We can see an important difference here. For Augustine then, internal conversion of the human person is necessary for Salvation of the human person. The sin has to be blotted out of the human person in order to attain Salvation while for Luther, there is no need to blot out this sin from the human person. Personalistic concreteness helps us to discover the error in Luther's scheme, namely that, the concrete human person remains untouched by concrete Salvation, since, everything remains alien to the human person. For Augustine, God bestows justifying righteousness upon the sinner, in such a way that it becomes of his or her person. As a result, this righteousness, although originating from outside the sinner, becomes of his or her person. For Luther, the justifying righteousness remains outside the sinner. It is an alien righteousness (*iustitia aliena*). God reckons this righteousness as if it is of the sinner's person, but in reality, or in concrete terms it is not of the sinner's person.<sup>114</sup> We can call it "docetic" Salvation. In personalistic terms, we can say that Luther's view of justification is impersonal while that of Augustine is personalistic. The justification as understood and explained by Luther may be termed as pseudo-justification while that as conceived by Augustine is true justification originating and initiated by God, real, truly given by God, and truly can be received by the human person. For Luther, the human person receives an alien righteousness of Christ imputed but not given or imparted to the human person by faith, but which nevertheless remain foreign.

Luther's comment on Romans (4:7), is that "the saints are always sinners in their own sight, and therefore always justified outwardly. But the hypocrites are always righteous in their own sight, and thus always sinners outwardly... we are righteous outwardly when we are righteous solely by the imputation

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112 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 157.

113 Cf. A. N. S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment*, London: T&T Clark Ltd, 2006, p. 118.

114 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 157.



of God and not of ourselves or of our own works.”<sup>115</sup> “Believers are righteous on account of the alien righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them – that is, treated as if it were theirs through faith.”<sup>116</sup> Through faith, the believer is clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It is not an ontological reality but remains just external, like a cloth on the human body. Luther suggests, as Ezekiel speaks of God covering our nakedness with his garment (cf. Ezek 16:8). Sin and righteousness thus coexist. The human person remains a sinner inwardly but is righteous extrinsically in the sight of God. The believer is “at one and the same time righteous and a sinner” (*simul iustus et peccator*). According to Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), God pronounces the Divine judgement that the sinner is righteous – in the heavenly court. Justification is the event of God declaring someone to be righteous. In this case then there is no real sanctification, which is the process by which God makes someone righteous. In the beginning, Luther tended to understand justification as a process of becoming, in which the sinner was gradually conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ through a process of internal renewal. Justification is about becoming. However, in his later writings, he tended to understand justification as a matter of being declared to be righteous, rather than a process of becoming righteous. He came eventually to see justification as an alteration of the outer status of the sinner in the sight of God.<sup>117</sup>

According to Trent, justification is the process of regeneration and renewal within human nature, which brings about a change in both the outer status and inner nature of the sinner. “The justification of the sinner may be briefly defined as a translation from that state in which a human being is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace and of the adoption of the sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour. According to the gospel, this translation cannot come about except through the cleansing of regeneration, or a desire for this, as it is written, “Unless someone is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he or she cannot enter into the Kingdom of God” (Jn 3:5).<sup>118</sup> Justification is not only a remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner person through the voluntary reception of the grace and the gifts by which an unrighteous person becomes a righteous person.

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115 Martin Luther, as quoted by, A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 157.

116 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 157.

117 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 158-160.

118 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 161.

Trent anathematizes anyone who teaches that justification takes place either by the sole imputation of the righteousness of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity or that the grace by which we are justified is only the goodwill of God. The sinner is initially justified through baptism; however, on account of sin, that justification may be forfeited. It can, however, be renewed by penance. For, Trent justification is comprising both an event and process. The event of being declared to be righteous through the work of Christ, and the process of being made righteous through internal concrete work of the Holy Spirit. Melancthon and Calvin and their followers distinguished these two matters, taking justification referring only to the process of being declared to be righteous. The accompanying process of internal renewal, which they termed sanctification or regeneration, they regarded as theologically distinct.<sup>119</sup>

For Luther, righteousness which justified sinners, alien righteousness of Christ—*iustitia Christi aliena*, was outside them. No works.<sup>120</sup> It was imputed, not imparted; external as opposed to being internal. Critics of the reformation argued that sinners were justified on the basis of an internal righteousness, graciously infused or implanted within their persons by God. This righteousness was itself given as an act of grace. It was not merited. But, there has to be something within individuals which could allow God to justify them. According to Trent, “we are renewed in the spirit of our mind (Eph 4:23), and are not only counted as righteous, but called and are in reality, righteous. Nobody can be righteous except God communicates the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ to him or her, and this takes place in the justification of the sinner. Human persons are said to be justified by faith because faith is the beginning of human Salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which is it impossible to please God.<sup>121</sup> Luther does not recognise the fact that for the human person to *remain faithful* grace is necessary. One united with Christ through faith and Baptism needs the help of grace to remain faithful.<sup>122</sup> For Luther and his followers, one could rest assured of one’s Salvation. Salvation was grounded upon the faithfulness of God to His promises of mercy. Failure

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119 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 161.

120 Cf. T. Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification*, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015, p. 47.

121 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, pp. 162-163.

122 Cf. S. Nowosad, “John Paul’s II Ecclesiology of Communio as Gift to the World”, *Roczniki teologii dogmatycznej*, 2012, 4(59), p. 185.

to have confidence in Salvation was, in effect, to doubt the reliability and trustworthiness of God. Yet this must not be seen as a supreme confidence in God, untroubled by doubt.

For Calvin (1509-1564), the person who is justified by faith is one who, without righteousness of works, has taken hold of the righteousness of Christ through faith. Having been clothed with it, appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as a righteous person. Believers are not righteous in themselves, but on account of the communication of the righteousness of Christ through imputation. Our righteousness is not in us, but in Christ.<sup>123</sup> The righteousness that God requires is not achieved internally by human persons through good works, but externally, through the imputation or reckoning of the righteousness of Christ to the believer.<sup>124</sup> In true personalistic understanding of love, Calvin misses the fact that true personalistic love means faith working through love (Gal 5:6). Faith is a gift that creates the “obligation” to live in new ways. Conversion is intrinsic to true faith.<sup>125</sup>

Calvin’s definition of faith is that “it is a steady and certain knowledge of the divine benevolence towards us, which is founded upon the truth of the gracious promise of God in Christ, and is both revealed to our minds and sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”<sup>126</sup> Calvin explains that believers have a perpetual struggle with their own lack of faith, and are far from possessing a peaceful conscience, never interrupted by any disturbance. Much as they lack this peace they can never fall out of confidence in the Divine mercy, no matter how much they may be troubled. There is no need to be transformed, but just to strengthen their confidence. In this way, prayer and indeed any act of worship or charity is reduced to psychological satisfaction and confidence as opposed to a truly ontological conversion. Much as no one should doubt God’s goodness, the reformers strongly erred when they taught that no one is absolved from sins and justified, unless he or she believe with certainty that he or she is absolved and justified, and this absolution and justification are affected by this faith alone. Trent insists that no one can know with certainty of faith whether they have been saved. For the reformers, justification rested upon the promises of God. A failure to believe in such promises was tantamount

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123 John Calvin, as quoted by, A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 159.

124 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 159.

125 Cf. G. O’ Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, p. 189.

126 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 163.

to calling the reliability of God into question.<sup>127</sup> If one is to attain Salvation, Schönborn holds that Conversion and openness to God is indispensable, not just trusting without converting.<sup>128</sup>

#### 5.4.4 Salvation is a Free Gift of God to a Concrete Human Person but not Automatic

Redemption takes place entirely through grace since man on his side can never make the infinite reparation which is required.<sup>129</sup> Salvation means liberation from evil, from sin. Only God can free from sin and from all the present evil of human existence (Gen 3:15). God reveals himself as the saviour as the one who frees from evil, in particular from sin caused by the free will of the creature. The world has been created and sustained by the Love of its maker. It has been freed from the slavery of sin by Christ, who was crucified and rose again (cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 2).<sup>130</sup> This faith of the Church shows that for true Redemption and eventually Salvation to be affected, man alone without grace cannot merit this effect. God's intervention out of Divine Love is always the starting point. However, God still respects the freedom of the human persons. He does not drag them to this Salvation. The human persons are free subjects capable of act. They can freely accept or reject this Salvation. It is true that "conversion is also a gift of mercy, a grace of God, a fruit of the Redemption wrought by Christ, but it includes and requires an act of our will which freely, under the action of the Holy Spirit, accepts the gift, responds to love."<sup>131</sup> Conversion falls within the order of eternal law and justice, and so yields to the attraction of Divine Mercy.<sup>132</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI, begins his encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, with the statement, "Redemption-Salvation – is not simply a given. Redemption is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, ...leads

127 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 163.

128 Cf. C. Schönborn, *We have found Mercy: The Mystery of Divine Mercy*, edited by Hubert Philipp Weber, translated by Michael J. Miller, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012, pp. 133-148.

129 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, p. 232.

130 Cf. John Paul II, *Catechesis on Jesus Christ*, General Audience, 14 January 1987.

131 John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Redemption*, General Audience, 1 March 1983, no. 4.

132 Cf. John Paul II, *Jubilee of the Redemption*, General Audience, 1 March 1983, no. 4.

towards a goal.”<sup>133</sup> Divine Redemption and human freedom work together. When the human person in his or her free will cooperates with the Divine Redemption already made possible and available for all, then there is Salvation. Since the human person’s own strength is not sufficient for him or her to turn to God again, the power flows to us from Christ’s merit, that we may once more acquire merit ourselves. God sent His Son for the Redemption of man. Christ’s Death on the Cross is Redemption from sins and from those of the whole world. However, to partake of this Salvation requires free acceptance on the part of man. Conversion and faith are absolutely necessary. Yet at the same time this human contribution *aliquid aliud*, is itself again Christ’s grace and gift and also flows from Christ’s Merit. Man himself has revoked his fellowship with God by his sin, but God does not distance himself from man. Because man’s own strength is not sufficient for him to turn to God again, it was absolutely necessary that Christ intervenes on our behalf. When no human merit is possible, the power flows to us from Christ’s merit, that we may once more acquire merit ourselves. This is how Divine Redemption and human freedom work together. God wants man to shine once more as the image of God and also as the image of God to make use of his freedom. That is what the Incarnation and Christ’s Passion bring about. In this regard the mystery of Redemption fits wonderfully into God’s plan for Salvation. Redemption is not only necessary in order that God’s plan might be fulfilled, but rather God also looks for the most appropriate way to redeem man, so that what is good in creation might be realized in the best possible way and the radiance of Divine truth might shine forth.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, much as, Salvation is a free gift of God to a concrete human person, it is not automatic because God respects the freedom of the human person and so a human can freely reject this gift.

#### 5.4.5 Personal Participation

Saint John the Evangelist is largely interested in light and life as they relate to Salvation (Jn 1:3-4). The light is revelation which people may receive *in active*

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133 Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi: On Christian Hope*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, November 30, 2007, no. 1.

134 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 300.

*faith and be saved.*<sup>135</sup> This active faith is understood to mean personal participation. By personal participation what is universal Redemption becomes personally objective and subjective when it is realised in a concrete human person – Salvation. Personal participation in the objective Redemption available to all human persons yields the subjective aspect of Redemption while remaining objective, which in the strict sense, is referred to as Salvation. It is true that Christ has merited Redemption for all human persons. However, this Redemption which is universal does not imply universal Salvation. The Will of God is that all be saved. But this remains an invitation to the human person. It is a proposition and not a dragging of everyone to Salvation by force. Otherwise, it would go against the will and freedom, which is proper to every person. It would go against love. By talking about personal participation, we are trying to search, into, the question, what can and should the human person do in order to realize, to partake of the Redemption universal, making it personal and hence concrete Salvation? For Luther, everything is set on God’s side, nothing on man’s side. For Luther, the human person can remain passive and attain Salvation. He makes justification a reality solely on God’s side, that is, as God’s turning toward man in forgiveness, for the sake of Christ. God alone is at work and there is no need of man’s substantial cooperation with God. Man, only needs to walk at the side of Christ – this is called believing, together with Christ, man can face God with confidence. On man’s part, there is not any possible merit. The whole of Redemption, and hence Salvation, remains an event that happens on God’s side. Redemption and Salvation becomes like a drama within God Himself. God against God for men, the gracious God against the wrathful God for our benefit.<sup>136</sup>

What Luther misses is that the glorious Cross of Christ is an invitation to the human person, to respond to love with love. The personalistic reality of the Cross lies in the fact that, the Cross is a meeting of love and love. To God who first loved us, we can in turn give the sign of our intimate participation in His plan of Salvation. Participation makes one own what belongs to the general and this is the role to be played by every unique human person in the Divine plan of Salvation.<sup>137</sup> Without personal participation, it becomes difficult

135 Cf. D.A Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991, p. 119.

136 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 282-287.

137 In the scheme of Arius, the Divine and human (creature) cannot not cooperate. Arianism advances "...a doctrine of creation which does not allow the possibility of the divine human person; that is, of a real revelation of God in man. For Arius, participation is only a moral

or impossible to realize Salvation. Salvation may be equated to the personal unique participation in Redemption. We do not always manage to discover, in this design, the reason for the pains that mark the path of our life. Supported by faith, however, we can come to the certainty that it is a design of love, in which the whole immense range of crosses, large and small, merge into the one Cross. Here we see faith as a supernatural gift, a grace given by God to the human persons to pave their way to Salvation but still which does not erase the necessity of participation. Without participation one does not own the result – Salvation.<sup>138</sup> Participation means an openness to His Redemption with the repentance of sins and the aspiration to holiness.<sup>139</sup> The Cross is for human persons a guarantee of life, of Resurrection and of Salvation because it contains in itself the renewing power of Christ's Redemption. In it, according to Saint Paul, the future resurrection and heavenly glorification is also an already acquired reality, which will be in eternity the glorious manifestation of the victory won by Christ with His Passion and Death. And human persons, with the experience of daily pain, are invited to participate in this mystery which is, yes, of passion, but also of glory.<sup>140</sup> Since man always remains as one who exists and acts together with others. This action as well as existence together with others gives further meaning of participation. However, since, it is a person that participates, participation cannot be something merely outside of the human person, merely outside the human person's subjectivity, outside the human person's concreteness.<sup>141</sup> Personalistic understanding of participation alludes to participation in a sense as being a property of the person acting and existing together with others. Participation is a property of the person which comes to light when the person acts and exists together with others. Personalistic understanding is against individualism and totalitarianism, since these two concepts destroy the person by depriving the human person of possibility and capacity for participation.<sup>142</sup>

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concept which leaves the being of God untouched by the being of the creatures...that is, God as transcendent and thereby as free to be God" (cf. P. F. Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World*, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2000, p. 246).

138 Cf. John Paul II, *The Holy Cross*, General Audience, 30 March 1983, no. 3.

139 Cf. John Paul II, *The Holy Cross*, General Audience, 30 March 1983, no. 4.

140 Cf. John Paul II, *The Holy Cross*, General Audience, 30 March 1983, no. 3.

141 Cf. A. López, et al (eds.) *Karol Wojtyła: Person and Act and Related Essays, The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/ John Paul II*, Vol. 1, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021, p. 528.

142 Cf. A. López, et al (eds.), *Karol Wojtyła: Person and Act and Related Essays*, p. 528.

According to Cardinal Schönborn, in Luther, individual actions and good works have nothing to do with Salvation. They have nothing to do with attaining eternal life. They are excluded because good works are merely the wall that man erects around his own self-satisfaction and against God.<sup>143</sup> God prescribes certain works, especially in the Old Testament Law with the intention *not* that man should carry them out but that man should tremble before the Law's dungeon. These signify prison, spiritual terror, by which the conscience is so confined that it can find no place in the world where it feels safe.<sup>144</sup> It can be seen that the errors of Luther, accrue from the lack a personalistic conception of man and of God. For Luther the relationship between God and man is not personal but mechanical. Man is like a machine programmed by God. God programs man by using terror. Human persons are really not persons according to Luther's line of thought. Even God is not a personal God. He is a selfish God who does not acknowledge and who does not respect the freedom of the person. He programs the human person to behave according to God's will through tricks, like those of terrifying. God is a trickster.

The Catholic Church teaches that, "the Cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the 'one Mediator between God and men.' But because in His incarnate Divine Person He has in some way united himself to every man, 'the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the Paschal Mystery' is offered to all men. He calls His disciples to take up their cross and follow Him" (CCC, no. 618). Saint Ignatius implores the Christians of Rome not to prevent his martyrdom, "Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God!" (Letter of Ignatius to Romans 5-6).<sup>145</sup> According to Clement of Alexandria, as presented by Pope Benedict XVI, two virtues above all embellish the soul of the "true gnostic." The first is freedom from the passions (*apatheia*); and the other is love, the true passion that assures intimate union with God. Love gives perfect peace and enables the "true gnostic" to face the greatest sacrifices, even the supreme sacrifice in following Christ, and makes him or her climb from step to step to the peak of virtue.<sup>146</sup>

In a sermon on the Sunday in the Octave of the Assumption, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) described with passionate words Mary's intimate

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143 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 280.

144 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 314.

145 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers: from the Early Church through the Middle Ages*, London: Fortress Press 2011, p. 7.

146 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers*, p. 17.



participation in the redeeming sacrifice of her Son. “O Blessed Mother, a sword has truly pierced your soul!...deeply has the violence of pain pierced your soul, that we may rightly call you more than a martyr, for your participation in the passion of the Son by far surpasses in intensity the physical sufferings of martyrdom.”<sup>147</sup> He presents Mary’s subordination to Jesus, in accordance with the foundation of traditional Mariology. Yet he also documents the Virgin’s privileged place in the economy of Salvation, subsequent to the mother’s most particular participation (*compassio*) in the sacrifice of the Son.<sup>148</sup> It should be noted that Vatican II’s mention of the title “Mediatrix” and speaking about Mary’s mediation, does not in any way undermine the singular Mediation of Christ (cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 62). Jesus Christ is the sole Mediator. Only that this mediation is not exclusive, rather inclusive, in the sense that it allows forms of participation. Christ the Only Mediator does not take away our personal task to stand before God as persons linked to each other and responsible for each other. We all, in different ways and in union with Jesus Christ, can be mediators for each other in our approach to God. For, nobody stands in the faith all alone. Everyone depends for a living faith also on human “mediation”. No such human mediation, though, would suffice to build the bridge to God. It is only in union with the One who Himself is God that human beings are able to act and do as mediators for each other. Likewise for Mary, without Christ, her mediation is obsolete. In talking about Mary as Mediatrix the understanding of participation ought to be kept in mind. Mary’s mediation in relation to Christ is defined in these boundaries of participation. Her mediation is based on participation in Christ’s Mediation. Compared to Christ’s Role, hers is one of subordination.<sup>149</sup> From Cardinal Schönborn’s writings, the following conclusions may be made.

First of all, just as there is no physical fitness training without one’s own participation, so Christ can give the human person his refreshment only if one takes on Jesus’ “program”. A mere neutral curiosity about God remaining only at the level of reason without transcending to faith can never enable one to see, even in dealing with a human person, and much less when we relate

147 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers*, p. 216.

148 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers*, p. 216.

149 Cf. J. Ratzinger, “The Sign of the Woman: An Introduction to the Encyclical ‘Redemptoris Mater’” in Catholic Church Authors & John Paul II, *Mary: God’s Yes to Man: John Paul’s Encyclical Redemptoris Mater*, Introduction by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Commentary by Hans Urs von Balthasar, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988.

with God. The relation with God cannot take place without the participation of faith.<sup>150</sup> Here we see the reality of personal touch or better uniqueness, participation (relatedness). His “yoke” which is actually not heavy, is simply: *Love God and your neighbour*. In this understanding, Schönborn emphasizes the reality of vertical and horizontal relatedness of the human person, since love is possible only among persons. This personal participation hinges on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. These make human persons “partakers of divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). They bring human persons into living communion with Jesus Christ. These virtues truly enable the human person to *attain* God in them, and through them human persons have a living union with the living Triune God (cf. CCC, no. 426).<sup>151</sup>

Quoting the Second Vatican Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Schönborn treasures the understanding of the Church as “the community of faith, hope, and charity”<sup>152</sup>(cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 8; CCC, no. 771). By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God.<sup>153</sup> He explains that, Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, *the obedience of faith* (cf. CCC, no. 143). And that the assent of the intellect and will is not something that happens as a merely human effort of the intellect and will. The assent of faith involves much more, that is being moved by God, having real contact with Him, a true participation in God. Following Saint John of the Cross, Schönborn asserts that, faith gives human persons God himself and enables them to know Him. The more the soul has faith, the more it is united with God. Therefore, faith is the first important element or place of personal participation. Through the act of faith, the human person starts to connect oneself with God.<sup>154</sup> It all begins as a free gift of God, “Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the yes of the mind and makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.”<sup>155</sup>

150 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 177.

151 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church: Spiritual Exercises Preached in the Presence of Pope John Paul II*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998, p. 148.

152 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 146.

153 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 148.

154 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, pp. 148-149.

155 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 150; quoting CCC, no. 153, which quotes Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, 18 November, 1965, no. 5.

Schönborn rephrases Vatican I (cf. HD, no. 3012) and the Catechism (CCC, no. 161) and concludes that, if theological faith is this living contact with God, we can understand why faith is necessary to attain eternal life. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). Without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life, but he who endures to the end (Mt 10:22; 24:13).<sup>156</sup>

The personalistic dimension of this faith, that is to say, the subjectivity and objectivity of this faith, or in other words, the uniqueness and relatedness is emphasized by Schönborn by quoting the official teaching of the Church about faith, that, no one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. No one has given oneself faith just as no one has given oneself life. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith. My faith, our faith, is not, my faith, our faith, but *the* faith, the faith of the Church. I believe, we believe (cf. CCC, nn. 166-168).<sup>157</sup> The totality of the human condition is found from the very start in human reactions and interrelationships that constitute the concrete human person. The Conscience of an “I” that is and must be fashioned within us in such a way that when we say “I,” even from a highly individualistic viewpoint, this “I” is already inhabited by others.”<sup>158</sup>

Faith is not a foreign reality or a defect to the human person, which as such would demand to be got rid of. It is not like lower irrational passion in the human person to be controlled or suppressed by the “upper” rational reality of the human person. Faith is rather necessary for Salvation. It is man’s response to God’s supernatural revelation (*Revelatio Dei*) distinct and higher than acceptance of natural revelation (*manifestatio Dei*). It is distinct from natural assent because faith is a free assent involving the whole person under the invitation or help of grace. Faith is grace, certain, and free (cf. CCC, no. 160). Faith includes a submission of the intellect. It is man’s duty to participate in Salvation by responding in faith to God’s word.<sup>159</sup> According to Pope Francis, “Faith is linked to hearing. Abraham does not see God, but hears his voice. Faith thus takes a personal aspect. God is not the god of a particular place, or a deity linked

156 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 150.

157 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 153.

158 Juan Luis Segundo, *Grace and the Human Condition*, John Drury (trans.), New York: Orbis Books, 1973, p. 38.

159 Cf. J. Neuner & J. Dupuis, (eds.), *The Christian Faith: in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1982, p. 33.

to specific sacred time, but the God of a person, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, capable of interacting with man and establishing a covenant with him. Faith is our response to a word which engages us personally, to a “Thou” who calls us by name.”<sup>160</sup> In this sentence of Pope Francis, the personalistic participatory dimension of faith is expressed as a personal engagement with a personal God.

#### 5.4.6 Redemption of Those who Lived Before the First Coming of Christ

It is possible to perceive the Redemption of those who lived before the Incarnation from the statement, “I am your God, who for your sake have become your Son. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell [Sheol]. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead” (CCC, no. 635).<sup>161</sup> The silence of Holy Saturday is the Whole earth’s attitude of expectation. Christ has come into the world, His earthly work, His life among human persons, and His Death for sin have been achieved. Yet His mission on earth is not yet quite completed. Not all the righteous have yet been redeemed. Those from the Old Testament are not yet there – above all Adam, the common ancestor. They are entangled in the underworld. For them, too, Christ came into the world to lead them home. That is why He descended into Sheol.<sup>162</sup> From this, it is possible to see how Cardinal Schönborn leads us to the conception of the universality of Redemption through Christ. All human persons from Adam to the last human person get their Redemption from Christ. The Person of Jesus Christ who is the only true God and true Man is in relation with all human beings including those who lived before the Incarnation. There is no other through whom Redemption can be attained.<sup>163</sup>

Jesus has joined the line of ancestors of the sinful race of human beings so as to redeem them all, as far back as Adam, the common ancestor of all

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160 Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei: On Faith*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 29 June, 2013, no. 8.

161 Cf. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 307.

162 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 307.

163 Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Declaration “Dominus Iesus”*: On The Unicity And Salvific Universality Of Jesus Christ And The Church, 6 August 6, 2000, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

human beings. In Death, He has become united and is in concrete solidarity with them. What we could call a kind of “Incarnation among the dead.” He goes into the underworld to call out all those whom death still holds in its snares. Christ now calls the dead, with whom He has declared himself united in death, to share also in the Resurrection. The meaning of *descent into Sheol* as explained by Schönborn greatly helps us to appreciate better the statements of Christ like, “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things [Death]?” (Lk 24:26).<sup>164</sup> In other words, was it not necessary that Christ should die in order to go and take Redemption also to those who had died before His Incarnation? In this regard then Christ’s redemptive Death is truly holistic and universal for all: those who lived before the Incarnation, those who lived during His earthly time, and those who will live in the centuries to come after Jesus’ Christ’s historical dwelling on earth. In this respect, the good tidings effected by His Death are extended to all human persons regardless of the historical epoch in which they find themselves. With this understanding, we are able to see the universality of Jesus’ Redemption for all humanity. Whoever is to go to the Father is to do so through Him, with Him and in Him. Here he breaks the bonds of history, and in this sense, Christ is above history. Those who lived on earth before the Incarnation are also to go to the Father through the same Son of God – true God and true Man.

Death is unable to keep its hold upon the dead Son of God. His entry into the underworld becomes a triumphal procession.<sup>165</sup> Jesus has truly died and is far from those still living on earth. Yet, Easter means at the same time Resurrection from the realm of the dead. We still have the Incarnation. It is proposed in this study that we understand the Incarnation as starting from the Annunciation until Ascension because these are all historical moments of Jesus’ concrete historical solidarity with human persons. Only through redemptive Death has Christ overcome death; only Good Friday can lead up to Easter Night. In this sense the Resurrection is depicted against the background of Sheol. Christ has had to descend to hades, there in the midst of the domain of death, Christ has now overcome death by His Resurrection. The descent among the dead is a very important fact if we are to have a true, not pseudo, and not docetic, Resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we talk about Jesus

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<sup>164</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 244.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 307.

Christ rising from the dead, it is not the Divine nature alone rising from the dead but the Person of Jesus Christ as one Subject. In Chapter Two we discussed the use of the language of *communicatio idiomatum*, therefore in this language of communication of idioms we are able to say that the truly human being and at once truly God – Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The Redemption brought about by Jesus Christ is universal, extending to all ages. It is not limited to an historical epoch of Christ's historical and physical life on earth. It extends even to those who lived before the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and of course also to those that live after this Act of Jesus.

### 5.5 THE CRISES OF MODERN TIMES – NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH

Human persons are always confronted with different crisis that threaten their *true* Salvation. For example, in Ebionism and Docetism, the Divine could not truly come into history. The true Incarnation is impossible, hence, emptying the life of Jesus Christ of its salvific truth.<sup>166</sup> In the Gnostics' categories, where Salvation is thought of as a mystical enlightenment, and the concrete is absorbed into the abstract, Redemption, for them, is deliverance from the material world, where the material world is regarded as intrinsically evil, and the cosmic dimension of Salvation is exchanged for individual concern for present communion with the Divine and safe destiny. The mysteries, too, in this erroneous view become useful as imparting Salvation through knowledge and emancipation from the fetters of human existence.<sup>167</sup> According to Cardinal Schönborn, the major crises of modern times are: the crisis of natural science, the historical crisis, and the existential crisis.<sup>168</sup> The greatest tragedy of the twentieth century are ideologies that promise great happiness on earth. In order to bring it about, they maintain that one has to do away with whatever or whoever is hindering the arrival of this happiness on earth.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. A. L. Moore, *The Parousia In The New Testament*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, p. 81.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. A. L. Moore, *The Parousia In The New Testament*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, p. 81.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 37-43.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *Happiness, God and Man*, p. 10.

The crisis raised by natural science is that of the choice of either opting for faith against reason or for reason against faith.<sup>170</sup> The historical crisis, or historical relativism, is the intensive historical research into the figure, the acts, and the words of Jesus. Today, a diffuse kind of neo-Arianism seems to be widespread, which sees Jesus as certainly a man accredited by God, but not as the true Son of God and not Incarnate. However, the more honestly, the more precisely the Person of Jesus is viewed historically, the more clearly His distinctiveness, His uniqueness emerges; the clearer it becomes that the “historical Jesus” was not “undogmatic”, not “predogmatic” but that all subsequent Christological dogmas are merely an attempt to express in words and formulas, the Person Jesus Himself. The existential crisis denies Jesus of Nazareth from being the Messiah because there should be universal peace when the Messiah comes (Is 2:4). If Jesus is the Messiah, about whom the ancient prophets speak, why have moaning and weeping not disappeared from the world? Why have not all the peoples broken their swords and made them into ploughshares? Everything is as it was before or even worse (2 Pet 3:4).<sup>171</sup>

Each of these crises, in its own approach, presents before a human person a kind of imaginary and not accurate image of who the human person is. Sometimes they promote only a rationalistic view of the human person. At another time, they operate at the level of humanism alone,<sup>172</sup> and at other times, they remain at the level of anthropology alone. Most often, they do not reach to the level of personalism. Regarding the distortion of the identity of the human person accruing from these crises, Hitchcock writes that “Besides abortion, euthanasia, and suicide, the issues included [at the time of Vatican Council II] surgically induced sex changes, artificial insemination, cloning, and the “creation” of life in laboratories, often to be destroyed for embryonic stem-cell research. The crisis was metaphysical even more than moral, in that the very identity of humanity was being called into question by a seemingly irresistible, all-devouring technology and by men determined to deny both

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170 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 39.

171 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 42-43.

172 Talking about humanism, one comes across qualifications to this notion, such as: Christian humanism, Secular humanism, civic humanism, true and false humanism. But here, in this study by humanism reference is made to the conception about the human person centred on nature and man without any transcendence, a naturalistic view of the human person. It seeks to anchor the human person here on earth for eternity.

higher moral truth and any concept of inherent human significance.<sup>173</sup> Analysis of these crises are very important because they each influence the conception of the very identity of humanity, as Hitchcock observes. They have direct existential consequences on the dignity of the human person. Hence, Christian personalism cannot turn a deaf ear to them. To be able to swim through the currents set by the crises of the modern times, a personalistic understanding of the human person is a necessity.<sup>174</sup> The Church is a necessity because she presents to us a holistic perception of the human person-which is a personalistic understanding. Christ instituted the Church as the universal sacrament of Salvation (cf. CCC, nn. 776; 780). The Church, as a sacrament, helps the human person on the pilgriming to find true and complete happiness – beatitude. But before turning in details to how the Church helps in presenting a holistic understanding of the human person, it is important to first discuss in details each of these crises.

### 5.5.1 The Crisis of Natural Science

The crisis raised by natural science is that of choice of: either faith against reason, or reason against faith. This may involve the overcoming of paying attention to the Church’s understanding of who a person is. In comparison to natural science, which relies only on the light of natural reason, Christian Personalism, presents to man a fuller view of what can be conceived about a person. This is so, because on top of the natural light of reason, Christian Personalism, in defining a human person, is aided by supernatural revelation, which [supernatural revelation] is not irrational but true, credible, reliable and

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173 J. Hitchcock, *History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012, p. 513.

174 In relation to the necessity of the Church, Hitchcock observes that, “Since the Enlightenment, secularists had accused the Church of being anti-humanist, because she subordinated man to God. But by the beginning of the twenty-first century, it had become apparent that without God the dignity of man could no longer be affirmed, that many secularists had come to reject humanism precisely because it placed man at the summit of nature [universe]. Thus, ironically, the Catholic Church, as she had since the time of her birth, claimed to be both the representative of God [universal sacrament of Salvation] and the chief witness to true Humanism.” [J. Hitchcock, *History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium*, p. 513].



can be accepted, and indeed can find place in the life of man who is rational.<sup>175</sup> There is a relationship between reason, faith, and obedience. The human intellect is ordered to and finds its fulfilment in coming to know the truth, either through reason or through Divine revelation. The human will finds its fulfilment in freely submitting itself, in obedience, to the truth known by the intellect either through reason or through faith.<sup>176</sup> In this sense, it can be seen that submission to the invitation of grace, or obedience to God's will is not something impersonal. It is not something irrational but rather it is truly personal and rational in as far as it is in harmony with reason and free will.

Therefore, setting reason and faith at odds with each other is a great injustice to the human person, as it is against the person's ontological reality that accepts reason and faith without ontological contradiction. While the philosophical profession relies solely on the 'wing' of reason, religious faith involves accepting claims that are inaccessible to reason. In this way it becomes both surprising and gratifying to find that philosophy – indeed reason itself – can lead the true philosopher to embrace the truth of faith.<sup>177</sup> Reason and faith are realities of the one and same human person, even if though, they are at different levels, with one being a natural gift (reason) and the other being a supernatural gift (faith). In this way, faith is indeed a personal act. It is proper to persons. In other words, faith can be accepted by a rational being. Faith is personalistic and not animism. That is why the Church teaches that “Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth” (CCC, no. 159). The things of the world and the realities of faith derive from the same God (cf. CCC, nn. 159; 50; 156-58; 274; 1706).

There is a distinction between faith and reason but nevertheless, they are not opposed to each other. Vatican I teaches about the line of demarcation between two orders of knowledge, that which is attainable by our natural powers

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- 175 Cf. B. Besong & J. Fuqua (eds.), *Faith and Reason: Philosophers Explain their Turn to Catholicism*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2019; G. Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays (Faith & Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology & Philosophy)*, Naples: Sapientia Press, 2007.
- 176 T. G. Weinandy, “Reason, Faith, and Obedience” in *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 13:4 (2010), pp. 133-134.
- 177 B. Besong & J. Fuqua (eds.), *Faith and Reason: Philosophers Explain their Turn to Catholicism*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2019, end note.

on the one hand, and that which is attainable only through revelation on the other. The Council teaches that the “Church with one consent has also ever held, and does hold, that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in origin and in object: in origin because our knowledge in the one is by natural reason, and in the other by Divine faith; in object because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries hidden in God, which unless revealed, cannot be known.”<sup>178</sup> Faith is the other order of knowledge, which man cannot arrive at by his own powers without Divine Revelation (CCC, no. 50). We do not think up faith on our own. It does not come from us as an idea of ours but to us as a word from outside.<sup>179</sup> The inability to believe does not come from reason; on the contrary, reason leads the human person to belief. The reason for refusal to believe lies elsewhere. Could it be lying in human freedom and free choice? Therefore, there is no point in any further trying to pile up the proofs of the existence of God. The human person must above all fight against his or her own passions of the free will.<sup>180</sup> Anyone who enters into a relationship of faith receives an answer that reflects not only God but also one’s own questioning and through the refraction of one’s own personality permits the human person to know something about God.<sup>181</sup>

More still on this question of natural science Pope Francis teaches, about theology, that “theology is more than simply an effort of human reason to analyse and understand, along the lines of the experimental sciences. God cannot be reduced to an object. He is a subject who makes himself known and perceived in an interpersonal relationship. Right faith orients reason to open itself to the light which comes from God, so that reason, guided by love of truth, can come to a deeper knowledge of God.”<sup>182</sup>

According to Pope Benedict XVI, “It is not science that redeems man: man is redeemed by love. This applies even in terms of this present world.

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178 Vatican Council I, session III, chapter 4, as quoted by B. Blanshard, *Reason and Belief*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974, p.

179 Cf. C. Schönborn, “Introduction; By Whose Authority,” in Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis; with an introductory essay by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. xxvii, quoting J. Ratzinger, *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997, p. 30.

180 Cf. B. Pascal as quoted by J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 176.

181 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 177.

182 Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei: On Faith*, Encyclical Letter, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, June 29, 2013, no. 36.

When someone has the experience of a great love in his life, this is a moment of ‘Redemption’ which gives a new meaning to his life... the human being needs unconditional love. He needs certainty, and if this absolute love exists, with absolute certainty, then, only then, is man redeemed. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer because through Him the human person has become certain of God. A God who is not a remote first cause of the world, because his only-begotten Son has become man and of him every human person can say “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2:20).<sup>183</sup> A personal encounter with Jesus creates conviction and joy and builds anew relations. In this personal encounter with Jesus Christ, “... you will discover new strength, conviction, and joy in seeing this vital and fresh expression of the reality of your Jesus and mine.”<sup>184</sup> The uniqueness and relatedness is depicted when one says, *your* Jesus and *mine*. “You” and “Me” are different persons. Yet related to the same One Person of Jesus Christ. The personal experience of Jesus Christ builds anew the relation of “you”, “Him”, and “me”. It is impossible in this setting to think of a relation between “me” and “Him” without the “you” but this does not mean to reduce my “uniqueness”. Otherwise, there would be no need of saying “your Jesus and mine.” In this sense, then, the joy of being truly related as human persons flows from the Person of Christ. The love flowing while in this relation to other believers in the same Person of Jesus Christ is implied.

The Church, be it pilgrim, suffering or triumphant, becomes also evident as a communion of love. Too much and extreme confidence in science, that is to say, psychology, and all other human methods alone without grace (without recourse to the Church as the universal sacrament of Salvation), and too much confidence in technocracy (technology) may leave no room for genuine human person values like friendship, love, and joy. And when there is no room for these such as love, the human person heads to self-destruction and out of reality. According to John Paul II, the person is one to whom the only suitable attitude is love. So when love is indirectly destroyed or weakened in its ontology by extreme trust in the human science without grace, the grace of God which makes genuine love among human persons possible, then there is no ontological or objective truth. Human person is a mystery which is revealed

183 Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi: On Christian Hope*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, November 30, 2007, no. 26.

184 Benedict J. Groeschel, “Forward” in

in love and friendship. This mystery cannot be exhausted by processes accessible to the natural sciences alone. To assume that neutrality alone without the help of the supernatural, and grace would be to make the human person exclusively dynamic and active and to destroy what is specifically “human person” in that person. Where utility prevails authentic ontology is annihilated. The human person-truth in the human person is corroded and even destroyed.

Rationalism fails because it places its emphasis on unaided human reason in trying to unlock the secrets of the universe. Empiricism also fails since it restricts the pursuit of knowledge solely in terms of what could be [touched]. Rationalism and Empiricism are not able tell us about right or wrong, love and hate, meaning or meaninglessness.<sup>185</sup> The rational scientific worldview of modernity tries to empty the world of mysteries. There are no spiritual and ethical meanings offered from the supernatural. The only outcome of such a situation is that people seek the satisfaction of their metaphysical needs in others ways including spiritism, magic, or theosophy. They seek compensation for what science cannot give them.<sup>186</sup>

The new science, which is mechanistic, seems to reveal a serenely ordered universe under God’s presiding intelligence. However, “the god of the geometers is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”, meaning that mechanistic science merely proves “the logical necessity of a Supreme Being, [but] not the existence of the living God.”<sup>187</sup> The living God is a Personal God, who can be related to by human persons. Concrete human persons, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Peter, and so on can be in concrete relationship with this God. They can pray to Him, worship Him, offer Him sacrifices which is contrary with the mechanistic God or the God known by human logic alone void of supernatural revelation. In other words, human reason alone can arrive at the Existence of God, but arriving at the existence of Personal God (the One Triune God) is a subject of supernatural revelation.<sup>188</sup>

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185 Cf. G. Murphy, “On Nepsis and the Spirit of the Age,” *American Theological Inquiry*, 3:1 (2010), p. 4.

186 Cf. G. Murphy, “On Nepsis and the Spirit of the Age,” *American Theological Inquiry*, 3:1 (2010), p. 4.

187 J. Hitchcock, *History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012, p. 314.

188 Cf. B. Clayton & D. Kries, *Two Wings: Integrating Faith and Reason*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018.

### 5.5.2 The Historical Crisis

The historical crisis tends towards presenting Jesus as a man accredited by God, but not as the true Son of God and not Incarnate. By taking this direction, it misses the reality that, the Incarnation-God with us, is the incredibly unique presence of God on earth. In Jesus Christ, God accepted to concretely sojourn on earth. He walked in Galilee, became hungry, talked to people and interacted with them physically. He was historically present on earth born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He died on the Cross and was buried but He rose again from the dead (cf. CCC, no. 512). In a word it can be said that God was historically present on earth. Jesus Christ is neither a myth nor a legend.<sup>189</sup> The principal cause of the loss of proper conception about the Person of Christ is the separation of “historical Jesus” from the “Christ of faith.” This separation leads to loss of touch with the truth of the Person of Christ as He is in Scripture, liturgy, and proper theology. From the Gospels, Schönborn envisions a great personalistic experience of Christ, by those who encountered with Him. The temple guards witness that no man ever spoke like this Man (Jn 7:46). Power, charisma, and fascination went forth from Him to them (Lk 6:19; 8:46) – what is this?! A new teaching full of authority (Mk 1:27). Jesus did not speak or teach like the scribes, the specialists of the Bible, but as one who with authority (Mk 1:22). According to Cardinal Schönborn, the devout believer who has studied and prayed with the Gospels has experienced this power. Schönborn agrees with Romano Guardini that, *The Lord*, dismisses the distinction between the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of Faith.” Only one attitude towards Him is justifiable: readiness to hear and to obey.<sup>190</sup>

Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI observes that, when the gap between the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of faith” grew wider and wider, the “historical Jesus” and the “Christ of faith” fell apart.<sup>191</sup> Because of the inadequacy of all portrayals of the “historical Jesus” offered by recent exegesis, towards the end of his life, Schnackenburg strove to produce one last great work, entitled *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology*. Schnackenburg intended to help believing Christians “who today have been made insecure by scientific research and critical discussion, so that they may hold fast to faith

189 Cf. C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, pp. 1-11.

190 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 11.

191 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One*, p. xi.

in the Person of Jesus Christ as the bringer of Salvation and the Saviour of the world.”<sup>192</sup> Most important for Ratzinger, the decisive point sees Jesus in light of His communion with the Father, which is the true centre of His Person; without it, we cannot understand Him at all, and it is from this centre that He makes himself present to us still today. Ratzinger insists that the Gospels, and the New Testament at large did not need to clothe Christ with flesh because He had already truly taken flesh. As historical-critical scholarship advanced, it led to finer and finer distinctions between layers of tradition in the Gospels, beneath which the real truth of faith – the Person of Jesus – became increasingly obscured and blurred. It led to an impression that we have very little certain knowledge of Jesus and that only at a later stage did faith in His Divinity shape the image we have of Him. This impression has by now penetrated deeply into the minds of the Christian people at large. This is a dramatic situation for faith, because its point of reference is being placed in doubt. Intimate and personalistic friendship with Jesus, on which everything depends, is in danger of clutching at thin air.<sup>193</sup> Enlightenment emphasises the ability of human reason to penetrate the mysteries of the world. Humanity can think for itself, without the need for any assistance from God. Unaided human reason can make sense of the world—including those aspects of that world traditionally reserved for theologians. Enlightenment championed the historical critique of traditional Christian doctrines, a trend associated with the “quest of the historical Jesus.”<sup>194</sup>

The historical-critical method is and remains an indispensable dimension of exegetical work because it is of the very essence of biblical faith to be about real historical events. The Bible does not tell stories symbolizing suprahistorical truths, but it is based on history, history that took place here on this earth. The *factum historicum* – historical fact, is not an interchangeable symbolic cipher for biblical faith, but the foundation on which it stands: *Et incarnatus est* – God’s actual entry into real history.<sup>195</sup> If we push this history aside, Christian faith as such disappears and is recast as some other religion. Yes, the historical-critical method is an indispensable tool, given the structure of Christian faith. However, this method does not exhaust the interpretive task for someone who sees the Bible as a united corpus of Holy Scripture inspired by God. Just as it

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192 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One*, pp. xii-xiii.

193 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One*, pp. xii-xiv.

194 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Historical Theology*, p. 184.

195 Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One*, p. xv.

is in personalism, objectivistic view of the person is not exhaustive without the subjectivistic view. The two, that is objective and subjective, uniqueness and relatedness should be taken together at once. It is important to recognize the limits of the historical-critical method itself. Because, for someone who is directly addressed by the Word of God today, the method's first limit is that by its very nature it has to leave the Word in the past. Historical criticism investigates not only someone as someone of the past, but also has to let itself remain in the past. Yes, historical criticism can make glimpse points of contact with the present and it can try to apply the past to the present, but one thing it cannot do is to make something, leave alone making someone, in the past really, truly, vividly present today. If it did, make the past present, then that would be overstepping its bounds. A person is a living and concrete reality. The person has existential reality today. Historical criticism does not adequately address this personalistic concreteness. Historical criticism can in some sense catch the sounds of higher dimension through the human word, and so open up the method to self-transcendence, but its specific object is the human word as human and not as God. Moreover, in spite of all the efforts to know the past, we can never go beyond the domain of hypothesis, because we simply cannot bring the past into the present.<sup>196</sup> The mystery of the Person of Christ is not a mystery of just the past, but is an Active Subject even now.

It is true that Jesus left nothing written behind. Only once is it reported that He wrote, but then He wrote in the sand, and it is not known what He wrote (Jn 8:6). His disciples, however, recorded many of His words in writing. They reported on His public work, His miracles and healings, and above all on the events in Jerusalem, His crucifixion, His death, and their meetings with Him, and the moment they found His tomb empty while He was living – resurrected. In the process of Gospel criticism, the Person of Jesus has proved to be stronger. His truth is too intense and too powerful to let itself be covered or falsified. The Person of Jesus shines through all representations in the Gospels with such intensity that people from all centuries cannot ignore the attraction of this Person if they do not close their minds completely.<sup>197</sup> The gospels are historically reliable and credible because one must not forget how accurately and reliably oral transmission functioned at a time when television and internet

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<sup>196</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part One*, pp. xv-xvii.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 13.

were non-existent to weaken the memory. Also, it is very probable that collections of Jesus' words, talks, and parables were already being recorded in writing during his lifetime. Moreover, the gospels report faults of Jesus' disciples in an unbelievably honest and ruthless manner. A touched-up biography of Jesus would certainly show the disciples in the most favourable light possible. The disciples of Jesus had to learn with difficulty and pain that He is indeed the Messiah, but in a quite different way from what they had imagined the Messiah to be. They first comprehended it fully when He appeared to them alive after Easter and they truly believed Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). They understood that everything that Jesus had said and done while living among them had this deep dimension of being the human words and deeds of the Son of God.<sup>198</sup>

The historical method presumes that the picture of Jesus presented and drawn from the Gospels is distorted by piety. The proponents suggest that this piety has to be stripped away in order to uncover the genuine Jesus, unadulterated. What is disappointing about the historical method, when taken alone, the Jesus who emerges is mostly quite astoundingly close to, whatever is, the current fashion.<sup>199</sup> Previously, it was the revolutionary Jesus, nowadays, He is usually a gentle esoteric teacher. That kind of picture of a fashionable Jesus already existed in early Christianity. It can be found in the so-called apocrypha – those writings about Jesus that were rejected by the Church as not being genuine, but late forgeries. The Church maintained only four texts as genuine Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is not by chance that these are older than the apocryphal "gospels", which come only from the second and third centuries.<sup>200</sup> All in all, it can be said that searching into the historical Jesus should be done objectively so as to help the human person to appreciate the true mystery of the Person of Christ but not creating an adulterated image of Christ. Historical method is useful, but should remain in the right limits, and it alone is not sufficient, the truth of the Gospels takes precedence over any historical hypotheses.

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198 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, pp. 15-18.

199 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 59.

200 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 59.



### 5.5.3 The Existential Crisis

The existential crisis posits that Jesus cannot be the Messiah because universal peace is promised to human persons when the Messiah comes (Is 2:4). Yet, from the days of Jesus until now the whole world is still full of violence and devastation, and Christians spill far more blood than all the other peoples.<sup>201</sup> Everything seems to remain as it was before or even worse (2 Pet 3:4). Cardinal Schönborn finds the response to this difficult state of affairs from the question which Jesus puts to His disciples “But who do you say that I am?” (Mk 8:29).<sup>202</sup> In order to be able to enter into a true personal relationship with Him, the question of who this Person of Christ is, becomes very important.<sup>203</sup> Therefore, the answer can be found by contemplating wholly the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Jesus Christ. It is this contemplation that leads to recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, in spite of the seemingly opposite existential status quo. The experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus becomes very import here, “was it not necessary that the Christ [and the Christians] should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” (Lk 24:26).<sup>204</sup>

### 5.5.4 The Failure of the Impersonalism of the Modern Crises

The crises of modern times fail because the Person of Christ perfectly resists against distortion by the crises that tries to depict Him as impersonal. Borden Parker Bowne (1847-1910) by observing the signs of the times, wrote about the failure of impersonalism.<sup>205</sup> Any method or system that tries to impersonalise fails, because selfhood is concrete and permanent.<sup>206</sup> An impersonal idea applied in the discourse or in an attempt to define the person as impersonal “is a pure fiction.”<sup>207</sup> Bowne identifies two forms of impersonalism: naturalistic and idealistic impersonalism. Naturalistic impersonalism is when the sense-bound

201 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 42-43.

202 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 43.

203 Cf. M. Pennock, *This is Our Faith*, p. 41.

204 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 61.

205 Cf. B. Gacka, *American Personalism*, Lublin: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Czas”, 1995, pp. 28-69.

206 Cf. B. Gacka, *American Personalism*, p. 45.

207 B. P. Bowne, *Personalism*, Boston: The Riverside Press, 1908, p. 253.

mind sees a great variety of extra-mental, impersonal things in the world which enter in thought and they become the basal fact of existence, and “in this way naturalism arises, with its mechanical way of thinking and its materialistic and atheistic tendencies.”<sup>208</sup> Idealistic impersonalism arises through the fallacy of the abstract, an attempt to explain the explanation, thus committing to the infinite regress. Even when the concrete reality is arrived at, there is a fancy in going behind even this. General principles become the most import. These principles lie behind all personal or other existence, as its presupposition and source, and constitute a set of first principles, from which all definite and concrete reality is derived.<sup>209</sup> Yet, reality is concrete and not abstraction. In this way, the real reality is altogether missed. Another form impersonalism identified by Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) is positivism. Positivism spells out total tyranny because it refuses the person any freedom, any rights, and in that way refuses the person any reality.<sup>210</sup> One violates at once faith and the laws of reason if he or she accepts any conclusion which he or she understands to be opposed to revealed truth, because those realities which become known by revelation have a force of truth.<sup>211</sup>

The Person of Christ himself, the claim He makes, and the question He himself poses is resistant to all crises. Against all analyses and fragmentation, the Person of Christ stands out again and again as the great question. He comes through all distortions. He is so notably comprised solely of Truth that even in overloaded distortions He cannot be entirely hidden. Jesus remains as impressive and effective as ever. Christ’s presence is not a psychological presence, or idea, or a matter of reawakening consciousness about a Person who lived far back in history now over 2000 years ago. Rather, the presence of the Divine Person – Jesus Christ is a real presence.<sup>212</sup> In the Incarnation, in the life, suffering, and Death of Jesus Christ, Redemption and Salvation became concrete, tangible, audible, and visible. His salvific actions live on in the Church in a sacramental form. Cardinal Schönborn quotes the Church teaching and Pope Leo the Great as follows: “The mysteries of Christ’s life are the foundations

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208 Cf. B. P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 218.

209 Cf. B. P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 218.

210 Cf. H. de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995, pp. 263-267.

211 Cf. Leo XIII, Pope, *Aeterni Patris: On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 4 August, 1879, no. 8.

212 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 45.

of...the sacraments, through the ministers of his Church, for what was visible in our Saviour has passed over into his mysteries” (CCC, no. 1115).<sup>213</sup> Therefore, it can be seen that the Person of Christ cannot be relegated to past history. He is sacramentally present and active, and always effective, resisting all that tries to distort His Person. He is mysteriously present and yet concrete. Pope Francis in his teaching is conscious of the concreteness of the people of God. In the context of the global pandemic, Covid-19, he reflects that, “Be careful not to virtualize the Church, to virtualize the Sacraments, to virtualize the People of God. The Church, the Sacraments, the People of God are concrete.”<sup>214</sup> Every unique person is always a concrete. A person is not an idea or abstraction. That is why the impersonal propositions presented as an alternative by the modern crises are out of reality.

### 5.5.5 Necessity of the Church

To be able to abide in the Father’s love, the Church is necessary. The Church uncovers sin, sin which Christ came to destroy.<sup>215</sup> The crises of modern times directly affect the human person and his Salvation. Moreover, “Amidst all the restlessness of the modern world the Church of Christ continues to proclaim and give witness to the truth of God who is communion and therefore calls men and women to come and share in that same Trinitarian communion.”<sup>216</sup> Also the three christological pillars of Scripture, Tradition and Experience stand in jeopardy without the visible structure of the Church. In this way, the Church becomes necessary to safeguard the pillars but also to continuously propose to the human person the way to Salvation. The physical presence of the Church is necessary as the visible sacrament of Salvation. Personalistic love is the foundation of the Church’s work. The authority of the Church is rooted in the Father’s love. Christ says “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore

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213 Leo the Great, *Tractatus* 74, 2 (CChr.SL 138A: 457) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 228.

214 Cf. Francis, Pope, *Homily*, Vatican: Vatican Media, 17 April 2020.

215 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Who Needs God?: Barbara Stöckl in Conversation with Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009.

216 S. Nowosad, “John Paul’s II Ecclesiology of Communio as Gift to the World”, *Roczniki teologii dogmatycznej*, 2012, 4(59), p. 168.

I have continued my faithfulness to you” (CCC, no. 220; Jer 31:3). God himself is an eternal exchange of Love, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He has destined us to share in that exchange (cf. CCC, no. 221). The plan of God’s loving kindness is continued in the Church (cf. CCC, no. 257), that is why the whole concern of doctrine must be directed to this same love.<sup>217</sup> The Church is herself under an authority to abide by what the Lord has commanded. The Magisterium can only exercise the authority that it has itself received, that of God the Father, in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. CCC, nn. 85-87).<sup>218</sup>

According to Cardinal Schönborn, the Personalistic love is the foundation of the Church’s mission to continue God’s loving kindness. The Authority of the Church is a participation in the Son’s mission from the Father. The authority which Jesus Christ gave to His apostles, upon whom He founded His Church, is the authority which He himself had received from His Father.<sup>219</sup> Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Jesus does not leave the apostles, instead He chooses that He and they should continue the mission of the Father together, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, who empties His life into the Church so that she may be filled with the Spirit’s grace and power.<sup>220</sup> Schönborn’s comments and thoughts on the Gospel texts are meant to lead his readers to a personal encounter with the word and Person of Jesus the Christ. He writes with a purpose to make the reader to get to know Jesus better, to understand him more deeply, and above all to love Him more. “I am venturing this very personal title *‘My Jesus’* in the hope that readers, for their part, will be encouraged to declare Jesus to be their own. Nothing and no one could join us together more strongly!”<sup>221</sup> There is no compromise between the Church and National Socialism for Jesus conquered not with the sword, not with weapons and not with force but with love – the love which does not

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217 Cf. C. Schönborn, “Introduction; By Whose Authority,” in Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis; with an introductory essay by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. xxiv.

218 Cf. C. Schönborn, “Introduction; By Whose Authority,” in Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis; with an introductory essay by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. xxiv.

219 Cf. C. Schönborn, “Introduction; By Whose Authority,” p. xxiv.

220 Cf. C. Schönborn, “Introduction; By Whose Authority,” p. xxv.

221 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 16.

exclude even the enemy. That is the heart of His Gospel.<sup>222</sup> Love by human persons is both vertical and horizontal, vertical for God and horizontal for the other persons. The Church is the Sacrament of Salvation. There is no Church without the head. The Church is the Bride of the lamb (cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 8). In the Church one encounters the holy liturgy which “as a whole comprises these three dimensions: the memorial of what happened once (in the Incarnation, life, Passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ), which is made present in the liturgical celebration and in which the glory that is to come already comes to meet us.”<sup>223</sup> Therefore, according to the personalistic Christology of Schönborn, the Church is necessary, as she helps the human person to abide and sojourn in the Father’s love. The Church is the journey of the human person moving to Salvation.

#### 5.5.5.1 The Church Immediately After the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

What did the meeting of the risen Lord mean for His disciples and for that matter to the Church? The perfection of the disciples’ pre-Easter in the communion of the witnesses with the Risen One is an event that establishes the Church. This affiliation is not however a privilege but a mission, because Jesus is the One who was sent, belonging to Him means mission.<sup>224</sup> The meeting of the risen Lord has great meaning for His disciples. Many accounts of Jesus’ appearances end with the commissioning of the disciples to bear witness to the risen Christ. After the Resurrection the Lord says to His disciples, “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Even in the pre-Easter moments, the disciples received a real share in the Kingdom of God through their communion with Jesus, a share in His mission and in His authority. Through His Easter appearances, the pre-Easter was incorporated and they become witnesses to His glory. The unique feature of the appearances of the Risen One is that they signify a unique personal relation of the witnesses with the One to whom they are testifying, what, according to Paul makes one an apostle. In this perspective, the apostle is one whom Christ, by appearing to him, shares into Jesus’ eschatological

222 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 20.

223 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Man, the Image of God*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011.

224 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 322-323.

perfection. The apostle comes into history out of the glory that is to come, in which he has received a share and hence he is a witness to the Lord who will come again. The apostles are sent out by Jesus to be His witnesses. Here, we see the personalistic reality of Acting. To be in relation with Jesus means simultaneously to Act by witnessing to His Resurrection. The Risen One lives in the witnesses. That means He lives in Action. The Apostles' kerygma would be in vain if Christ had not risen from the dead (1 Cor 15:14). Their preaching is not plausible words of wisdom, but demonstration of the Spirit and of the power that the people might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor 2:4-5; Acts 20:32).<sup>225</sup>

Back to our question "What did the meeting of the risen Lord mean for His disciples and for that matter to the Church?" In answer we can say, the meaning lies in the fact of relation to the Person of Jesus Christ before and after the Resurrection, and getting the power to Act from Him. Action is a truth of persons. We see that the Church is prepared by Jesus Christ before His Death and Resurrection and is empowered, commissioned, given power to Act, fully constituted a person capable of Act, after the Divine Act of the Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. In her consciousness, the Church can use this Divine power given in the Holy Spirit to Act as witness to the Resurrection and to make disciples of all nations and all ages. The Resurrection together with the Giving of the Holy Spirit, inaugurates the Church already prepared in the pre-Easter time and is now constituted with the ability to Act in the power of God. This is what is affected by the meeting of the disciples with the risen Lord immediately after His Resurrection.

### 5.5.5.2 The Relation of the Person of Jesus Christ to His Church

Jesus is personally present, and in relation, with His apostles as they make disciples of all nations. Between the last of the mysteries of the life of Christ that have already occurred, that is the Ascension and that for which we are still waiting the Parousia, there is one mystery that is contemporary with us: that Christ is seated at the Father's Right Hand. In this we are able to see the

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225 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 323.

most ecclesiological meaning.<sup>226</sup> This clearly shows the reality of the Church. With the Resurrection and Ascension, Christ has taken possession of his Kingdom. Jesus' final commission to His disciples is "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:18-20). The future, heavenly Kingdom of God is at the same time a present reality.<sup>227</sup> The reality of being in concrete relation is paramount if one is to become a true disciple of Christ. The Human Person does not make oneself a disciple of Christ but needs another given authority and commissioned by Christ to him or her to lead him to discipleship. The Christological-Ecclesiological relationship emphasized by Schönborn is that, Christ has taught His apostles, the Church, and has commissioned them to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. The content of the teaching is what the apostles themselves have learnt from Jesus and all that He has commanded them.

At the same time we see that much as the early Church longingly called the Lord to come soon, "Maranatha" (1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:20), she went ahead just as decidedly to work to win men for Christ from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues (Rev 7:9). Shortly before he returns to the Father, Jesus says to the disciples, who are asking when He is going to institute the Kingdom, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Church receives the mission to proclaim and to spread among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God and to be on earth, the initial budding forth of that Kingdom.<sup>228</sup> While it slowly grows, the Church strains toward the completed Kingdom and, with all its strength, hopes and desires to be united in glory with her King (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 5). According to Schönborn the Church has a personal relation to the Person of Christ.

Since the famous saying of Alfred Loisy († 1940) that Jesus had promised the coming of the Kingdom of God, but instead it was the Church that

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226 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 343-344.

227 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 344.

228 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 344.

came, we are constantly being told that we must not identify the Church with the Kingdom, since the latter is a strictly eschatological reality, whereas the Church is merely a sign of the Kingdom, pointing to it. The fundamental defect in such reductive concepts of the Church lies in their Christology: the Church is being seen too little in terms of her basis in Christ and too much in terms of her contingent historical and institutional aspect.<sup>229</sup> Schönborn's conclusion, namely, "the Church is being seen too little in terms of her basis in Christ and too much in terms of her contingent historical and institutional aspect" should be correctly understood not to dismiss the necessity of the historical and institutional aspect of the Church. By no means does this conclusion imply need to find a Church separated from the historical and institutional aspects, but rather Schönborn emphasizes the Christological-Ecclesiological relationship, that is, the relation of the Person of Jesus Christ to His Church.

### 5.5.5.3 Sitting at the Right Hand of the Father But Present on Earth

Because Christ is her Head, and she is His Body, the Church is by nature heavenly.<sup>230</sup> Faithful members of the Church pass their time upon the earth, but they have their citizenship in heaven. According to Schönborn, following Augustine, Jesus Christ who has already suffered and risen again for the human persons, He is the Head of the Church, and that the Church is His Body. Since, then, He is the Head of the Church, and that the Church is His own Body, Christ is the Head and Body together (*Totus Christus*), and the former has already risen to, in the end, resurrected and transformed into heavenly glory, the Body follows the Head. For, where the Head is, the other members must also be. Because of His Love, the Head is already in Heaven and yet He suffers here below as long as the Church is suffering here below. Here below, Christ Hungers, thirsts, is naked, is a foreigner, is ill, and is in prison. For whatever His Body suffers here, that, he tells us, is what He suffers too (cf. Mt 25:42-45). He who is in Heaven is nonetheless at the same time present here, present in the poor, in his Word, and above all in His Eucharist in which His coming reign becomes present for hu-

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229 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 345.

230 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 345; C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 17-40.



man persons (cf. Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 7).<sup>231</sup> The Personalistic reality in this lies in the fact that there is no such reality as a Church without concrete persons. The Church is not idea, but a concrete reality with concrete persons. Christ being in relation to His Church as Head is to be concretely in relation to the concrete members of the Church.

When we talk of the Church as the people of God, the accent is put on relation to God the Father. When we talk of the Church as the Body of Christ, here the emphasis is on relation to Christ. And when we make mention of the Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the focus is more on relation to the Holy Spirit. But from the personalistic dimension we know that the Divine Persons are always in the perfect relation. Therefore, the Church is always in relation with the Trinity in spite of our limited language which speaks in such a way accenting some aspects to help our limited human faculties of perception. The Apostolic Church is the Bride of the Lamb because she involves a convocation, that is, to be called and readiness to accept the call. She is a congregation of persons who are called and have heeded this call. She is a bride because there is free assent, a freedom which makes love. Those called, respond in freedom to God's call. Out of Love God calls and the human persons respond freely, reciprocating love for Love. She is a congregation of the Lord. The difference between the Apostolic Church as institution and other institutions lies in being the Bride of the lamb.

The eternal Son of God, Incarnate, Dead, Risen and now sitting at the Right Hand of the Father is also but present on Earth. The human person's proper place is where Christ is. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the Right Hand of God (Col 3:1). My desire is to depart and be with Christ (Phil 1:23). This yearning springs not from egotism that seeks its own immortality but is centred on the relation with the Person of Jesus Christ Himself and His promise that "In my Father's house are many rooms...when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (Jn 14:2-3). The expectation is based on this promise. Because of the relationship with the Person of Christ, the faithful already have, while here below, their home in heaven (Phil 3:20; Lk 10:20).

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<sup>231</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 345-346.

## 5.6 CONCRETE PERSONAL ARRIVAL AT SALVATION

The human person is a mystery<sup>232</sup> and is transcendent.<sup>233</sup> Following Rahner, Cardinal Schönborn distinguishes between objective knowledge of self and non-objective knowledge of oneself. The non-objective knowledge of oneself is rendered by the German term, *Grundbefindlichkeit* which is the basic mode of being. It is not objective knowledge and normally is not dealt with. Reflection never catches up with this basic mode of being, even when it is explicitly directed toward it. In personalistic terms, this might be described as the personal, subjective, concrete self-experience that can never be communicated to, or be shared with, another person. The uniqueness of each person. It is never common among persons. It is possessed by only one person in the universe. Schönborn deduces roots of this understanding from Saint Augustine († 430), that there is not only an objective perception of oneself but much more fundamentally, a knowing oneself as a whole, even if this is never completely objective consciousness. This knowledge is absolutely sure, without being objective.<sup>234</sup>

In this line of thinking, it may be possible to figure out the place of Salvation in the life of a concrete human person. There is no being saved on behalf of another. One is to concretely possess this Salvation uniquely as a person. The attainment of Salvation is a concrete and personal reality. In this sense, it may be said that Salvation is subjective while remaining objective. This Salvation is absolutely true, without being “objective.” And yet it is objective because it is true. In other words, it is a subjective-objective Salvation that the human person attains when one is saved and becomes a saint, in other words, attains the Beatific Vision concretely. A person has personal dignity. Each human person is unique, unrepeatable and irreplaceable. There is no possibility of being substituted in place of another as regard to the concrete attainment of Salvation. The concrete unique human person has to concretely personally attain or receive the gift of Salvation, which Salvation is a free gift but not automatic. According to Pope John Paul II, today, personalistic language is the more suitable language to use when trying to describe mysteries. That “it is

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232 Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 9.

233 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 265; C. Schönborn, *Happiness, God and Man*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010.

234 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 185.

always necessary to maintain a certain restraint in describing these ‘ultimate realities’ since their depiction is always unsatisfactory. Today, the personalist language is better suited to describing the state of happiness and peace we will enjoy in our definitive communion with God.”<sup>235</sup> Following John Paul II, who is now a saint, we try in our limitedness to present the understanding of personal Salvation based on the Christology of Cardinal Schönborn in personalistic language. But it is important to first take a look at the fantasy of reincarnation.

### 5.6.1 The Impossibility of Reincarnation for the Human Person

Cardinal Schönborn’s has made a critique of the idea of reincarnation. Saint Paul writes, “do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Col 2:16-17). Saint Paul shows that the reality is to be sought from the Person of Christ. The reality is decided in and from the Person of Christ. According to Cardinal Schönborn, quoting a survey of the Gallup’s American Institute of Publics Opinion,<sup>236</sup> roughly one European in four believes in reincarnation.<sup>237</sup> It is in the period of the Enlightenment that views around reincarnation arose in modern Europe. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) sees the history of humanity as an irresistible ascent to the light of the spirit.<sup>238</sup> This ascent could take place in a succession of ever more spiritualised lives on earth. Goethe and the Romantics take it up anew. Darwin’s theory of evolution strengthens in many people the conviction of universal progress.<sup>239</sup> The

235 John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 4.

236 Cf. J. Stoetzel, *Les aleurs du temps prZsent: une enquZte*, Paris: PUF, 1983.

237 The use of the term “reincarnation” may be seen not to be a precise terminology because the Incarnate Person is Only One—the Person of the eternal Son of God. If Incarnation means the union of two natures in One Person of Christ without mixture, without separation and without confusion, then it may be seen, that the reincarnation of the human person, being spoken of here, is not precise since, it does not mean that man will come back on earth in two natures.

238 Gotthold published in 1780 his famous work *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* which advocates for the spiritualized lives here on earth.

239 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Chance or purpose?: Creation, Evolution, and a Rational Faith*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007; G. Etienne, (with a Forward by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn),

words inscribed on the tombstone in Paris of Allan Kardac (1804-1869), a great propagandist of spiritualism and of reincarnation, summarises this belief. That to be born, to die, to be reborn, and to make continual progress: that is the law.<sup>240</sup>

In the East there is a cyclical view of time, which could be equated to the idea of universal progress. Reincarnation as the path of mankind's onward progress is confused with the Christian notion of Salvation history that makes its way toward the Kingdom of God.<sup>241</sup> For the religions of the East, reincarnation was and is a situation of wretchedness, which one must try to escape if possible. But in the West, under the influence of the idea of progress, reincarnation, which is the re-establishment of man on earth, becomes or camouflages as a kind of Salvation. While the East sees the wheel of rebirth as a situation of painful bondage, reincarnation becomes in the West the path of progressive self-realization. Reincarnation, that is, the return of man to this historical life on earth, is not compatible with the Christian Personalistic understanding of the human person because the Person of Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the End. The return of the human person into the historical life contradicts this reality. According to Christian Personalism, man is a creature.<sup>242</sup> If the human person with body and soul is a creature, then this means that the human person is willed by God as this unique person, as a person and not as a thing, with a unique Origin and a unique life that is destined to be fulfilled in the eternal life. In the very act of creating the human person, God has written in the human hearts a yearning for fullness and completeness that can only be found in Him (cf. 2 Cor 5:1). The human person will never be happy, whole, or complete until he or she attains this full union with God.<sup>243</sup>

Reincarnation has no place in Christianity because life in Christ is already its ultimate Goal. Christ is the End; He is the Goal. In Him there is no place for the endless search, from life to life, for a distant, unattainable goal, for a perfection that is not to be reached in aeons. The End has come to us. He is already present (1 Cor 10:11). Man's long search is at the End. Adam where are you? (Gen 3:9). God has found man. It was not the sheep that sought the

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*From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009.

240 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 125-167.

241 Cf. G. O' Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, pp. 70-74.

242 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life: The Christian Journey*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995, p. 144.

243 Cf. D. W. Wuerl, *The Catholic Way*, p. 13.

shepherd, or the drachma searching the housewife (Lk 15:4-9). He Himself bent down to earth and found His image. He himself went into the place where the sheep had wandered astray. He lifted it up and put an end to the wandering. After this return home, there is no more wandering.<sup>244</sup> Will the father send the prodigal son away, now that he has returned home? If “Today you will be with me in paradise”, how can there be a tomorrow. When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself (Jn 12:32) and “I shall certainly not turn away the one who comes to me” (Jn 6:37). After this great reunion there is nothing more to be sought, for what we find here infinitely surpasses all that we had sought and waited for (1 Cor 2:9).<sup>245</sup>

For this study, on Cardinal Schönborn’s analysis of the question of reincarnation, we may add that, reincarnation is supported or fuelled by the fear of death. And hence, human beings are interested in anchoring, and docking human life on this earth rejecting the next eternal life of communion with God. For Christianity, Christ is the answer as to why the Christian Faith cannot admit the theory or fantasy of reincarnation. The Person of Christ is the Incarnate God, the Word of God become flesh. He has arisen in this flesh and has ascended to heaven, where He sits at the Right Hand of the Father in this flesh and He will come again in glory in this eternally living, glorified flesh. The ultimate destiny of the human person cannot, in Christianity, be conceived as a return into other bodies and other lives on earth. When this life ends, there is no other destiny for the one who has lived in fellowship with the body of Christ than the full unfolding of this fellowship in the resurrection of the flesh. Schönborn calls this the *fundamental experience* of Christianity. The fact that the Christian Faith has no place for the doctrine of reincarnation is a direct consequence of this fundamental experience, which Paul recapitulates in the famous sentence, “For me, life is Christ and death a gain” (Phil 1:21).<sup>246</sup> Life is Christ. To die means to live in the truest sense, to live with Christ, to live as He lives, in the glorified flesh, the flesh in which He sits at the Right Hand of the Father. It is the flesh in which He will come again in glory.<sup>247</sup> It should be remembered that when, mention of Him coming again in glory is made, in no way, does it mean that He will come again to live on this earth.

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244 Cf. C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 169.

245 Cf. C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 125-167.

246 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 168.

247 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, p. 169.

Instead, He comes in glory to judge the living and the dead. This is the opposite of what is proposed by reincarnation that presupposes a new kind of existence and living on this historical earth. In this regard the Catholic Church teaches that, “Christ’s Death was a real death in that it put an end to His earthly human existence” (CCC, no. 627). It is important to remember the fact that, the Person of Christ is the one revealing to us the reality. He is not a phantom but the Truth. He is not an idea but a concrete Divine Person who is now Divine and Man at once. He is revealing the truth to human persons.

### 5.6.2 God’s Mercy after Death – Purgatory

The question here is about reward, punishment, and the experience of God’s holiness. These are impossible to reconcile without concentrating on the mystery of Christ. The Catholic Church teaches the final purification or purgatory. That “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal Salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (CCC, no. 1030). Christ himself is the eschaton because the judgement has already been issued (Rom 8:31-35).<sup>248</sup> Death is the separation of the soul and the body, “but just as the body bears traces of its life, like the scars of earlier injuries, so the same is true of the soul.”<sup>249</sup> After death the person steps into the open. All is at once made manifest. The threat comes not from the outside, from the hostile powers, but from within. This is so, because after death, what is innermost is exposed. There is no more outward appearance or any human favour that can help any more at this stage. The person now stands in all nakedness.

The idea of reward and punishment is inseparable from eternal justice. For, “God will reward those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6).<sup>250</sup> In God’s eternal justice no unrighteousness can stand before Him. At the same time everything good and true and beautiful, all striving and suffering of the human person cannot have been simply useless and meaningless. There is also recompense as is taught

248 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 367.

249 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 365; Plato, *Gorgias*, translated by Walter Hamilton and Chris Emlyn-Jones, Penguin Classics, revised edition, 2004, p. 132.

250 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 366.

by Christ in the parable of the talents (cf. Mt 25: 14-30). Everything that happens in history has consequences, which consequences become all visible in the final judgement. Cardinal Schönborn emphasises the personalistic reality in this when he stresses the role of human freedom. All human activity is relevant and all human activity has to be accounted for before God's justice. For, "who can stand at all with his works before God (Rom 2:1-3:20)? None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one (Rom 3:10-12)."<sup>251</sup> In purgatory, the souls of those who have died without mortal sin are purified for a time and then after pass on to Heaven.<sup>252</sup>

### 5.6.3 Heaven

When understood in the context of revelation, Heaven or happiness is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is the personal meeting with the Father which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit.<sup>253</sup> Pope John Paul II praises the personalistic language as the suitable language in speaking about the mysteries. He states, "It is always necessary to maintain restraint in describing these "ultimate realities" since their depiction is always unsatisfactory. Today, personalist language is better suited to describing the state of happiness and peace we will enjoy in our definitive communion with God."<sup>254</sup> By His Death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has 'opened' Heaven for human persons. Christ makes partners in His heavenly glorification those who have believed in Him and remained faithful to His will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ (cf. CCC, no. 1026).<sup>255</sup> In the true Christian understanding, "divinization" rather "adoption by grace" is not in the Neo-Platonic sense of emanation, a degraded share

251 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 366-367.

252 Cf. F. Spirago, *The Catechism Explained: An Exhaustive Exposition of the Christian Religion, with Special Reference to the present state of society and the Spirit of the Age*, Post Falls: Mediatrix Press, 2020, pp. 239-242.

253 Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 4.

254 Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 4.

255 Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 4.

in the incommunicable One, but rather, it is a grace filled share in the life of God granted through sonship effected by the Spirit through, with, and in Christ.<sup>256</sup> The Psalm affirms that we are made little less than God, crowned with glory and honour (Ps 8:5). Man's greatness is his relationship with God, his enthronement. By nature, human beings are almost nothing, small, but by vocation (cf. CCC, no. 877), by calling we are children of the great King.<sup>257</sup>

The life of the blessed consists in the full and perfect possession of the fruits of the Redemption accomplished by Christ (cf. CCC, no. 1026). It is taught that those who have welcomed into their lives and have sincerely opened themselves to His love, at least at the moment of death, will enjoy that fullness of communion with God which is the goal of human life. The Catholic Church teaches this perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed is called Heaven. Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness (cf. CCC, no. 1024).<sup>258</sup> The depiction of Heaven as the transcendent dwelling place of the living God is joined with that of the place to which believers, through grace, can also ascend, as we see in the Old Testament accounts of Enoch (Gn 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11). Thus, Heaven becomes an image of the life in God. In this sense Jesus speaks of reward in Heaven (Mt 5:12) and urges people to lay up for themselves treasures in Heaven (Mt 6:20; Mt 19:21).<sup>259</sup>

#### 5.6.4 The Beatific Vision of God by the Human Person

Can a finite, created capacity for perception really know God “as He is”? There is only one way of knowing God as He is. This is by looking at Him. Looking on God means seeing Him Himself, not just “His feet”, not just His works, but God Himself. Looking upon God is too powerful for this life on earth. Moses sees Him only from behind, and Elijah veils his face. Therefore, John the evangelist rightly say that “No one has ever seen God; the Only begotten Son, who is

<sup>256</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 109.

<sup>257</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, *Pope's General Audience: On Prayer & Mystery of Creation*, 20 May, 2020.

<sup>258</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 1.

<sup>259</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 21 July, 1999, no. 2.



in the bosom of the Father, has made Him known” (Jn 1:18).<sup>260</sup> In spite of this, “friendship with God is possible, and it is the greatest happiness imaginable, although often it is still so distant.”<sup>261</sup> Human persons cannot look upon God until they do so in the perfection of the Kingdom of God (1Jn 3:2; 1Cor 13:12; Mt 5:8). Looking upon God can only mean endless happiness, *beatitudo*, *visio beatifica*. For Christ “looking upon God” means Christ is in direct relation to God.<sup>262</sup> Because of this direct relation, it is Christ who brings human persons directly into touch, into contact with God. In this sense, Christ is the Way that can lead human persons to the Goal, to the *visio beatifica*. Yet in order to lead human persons, Jesus must be not only *viator* on the way to the Goal, but also must already be there Himself, *comprehensor* (cf. CCC, no. 1720).<sup>263</sup>

Saint John the evangelist writes that “No-one has ever seen God” (Jn 1:18), as if to remind his readers not only of a commonplace of Judaism, but also of the fact that even where Moses saw the Lord’s glory (Ex 33-34; Jn 1:14), Moses himself was not allowed to see God (Ex 33:20). Moses saw, so to speak, the afterglow of the Divine glory (Nu 12:8). The vision of the Lord seated on His throne that Isiah saw was so vivid and terrifying, so close to the real face to face of God, even though, it was but the hem of the Lord’s garment that filled the temple, that he could cry, “Woe to me!...I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips...and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty” (Is 6:5). The fact emphasized remains that God cannot be seen, or more precisely, that for a sinful human person to see God would bring death (Ex 33:20; Dt 4:12; Ps 97:2). Apparent exceptions are always qualified in some way. It is important to recognize and to remember that Christ does not have a Beatific Vision of God like that which the saints have. No! He is God. To differentiate, John adds, the unique and beloved One (Greek, *monogenes*-Himself God), has made Him known (Jn 1:4). This means that the beloved Son, the Incarnate Word (Jn 1:14), Himself God, while being with the Father (Jn 1:1), the Word was simultaneously God and with God at once, has broken the barrier that made it impossible for human beings to see God, and has made Him known. So, Jesus can rightly say, anyone that has seen Him has seen the Father (cf. Jn 6:46, 14:9).<sup>264</sup>

260 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 180.

261 C. Schönborn, *Happiness, God and Man*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010, p. 9.

262 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 180.

263 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sth III*, q. 15, a. 10 (DthA 25:365-68) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 181.

264 Cf. D.A Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991, p. 134.

Because of His transcendence, God cannot be seen as He is, unless He Himself opens His mystery to the human person's immediate contemplation and gives the human person the capacity for it. This contemplation of God in His heavenly glory is called the Beatific Vision (CCC, no. 1028). This is the meaning of seeing God face to face (1 Jn 3:2; 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4). This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scriptures speaks of it in images such as life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the Kingdom, the Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (CCC, no. 1027; 1 Cor 2:9). The Beatific Vision will unite human persons perfectly with God. In the darkness of earthly journey, it is faith that unites human persons with God while the Beatific Vision unites human persons with God in the radiance of a sunlight without setting.<sup>265</sup> The Beatific Vision unites human persons with God in the radiance of God's glory.<sup>266</sup> The personalistic element stressed in as far as the Beatific Vision is concerned is namely, being in a personalistic relation with the Person of Jesus Christ. Without being in a real relation with the Person of Jesus Christ, it is impossible for the human person to attain the Beatific Vision of God. This is so, because only One – the Person of Jesus Christ is at once both the *viator* and *comprehensor*.<sup>267</sup> In Aquinas there is a distinction between essential reward of the saints in Heaven and accidental reward. The essential reward is the Beatific Vision but necessarily comes with it proper accidents of delight, joy and charity, a glorified human body, participation in the communion of the saints, the joy experienced by the saints in sensing God's new heavens and new earth.<sup>268</sup> A personalistic understanding of the Beatific Vision is that it is the most perfect union with God possible. It comes with the perfect society of creatures. It is a transcendental reality (a state of glory) that satisfies the human desire for perfect goodness itself. It is an immutable participation in God's eternal life. It eventually includes perfect "sensation" and "bodily movement" in the new heavens and the new earth.<sup>269</sup>

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265 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 149.

266 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Loving the Church*, p. 149.

267 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sth III*, q. 15, a. 10 (DthA 25:365-68) as quoted by C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 181.

268 Cf. C. M. Brown, *Eternal Life and Human Happiness in Heaven: Philosophical Problems, Thomistic Solutions*, Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2021.

269 Cf. C. M. Brown, *Eternal Life and Human Happiness in Heaven*, pp. 2-3.

### 5.7.5 Hope for Personal Salvation

All human persons need Redemption and Salvation. The nature of this study, which is personalistic, demands a discourse about the hope for personal Salvation of each and every human person. This question is very important for this study because, it is directly implied by any discussion about personalistic Christology. There is a Universal Will of Salvation, but there is not a Universal Salvation in the sense that, all will be saved even when one does not repent or accept God. Salvation is not reserved to a predetermined few but rather it is open to all. It is open to all but nevertheless one has to freely accept this gift of Salvation.<sup>270</sup> Cardinal Schönborn understands universality of Redemption basing on Matthew that, “You are the salt of the earth” (Mt 5:14). Light, not only for their small environment but also for the whole world. Jesus is not making a moral appeal to his disciples: Just be the salt of the earth, the light of the world! It would certainly be far too much to expect every person to satisfy such a demand. Jesus says of Himself, “I am the light of the world” He who believes that Jesus is the Messiah, Christ, the Son of God will also be able to believe that Jesus truly is “the way, and the truth, and the Life” as he says of himself (Jn 14:6), and that he is this, not for his own people, the Jews, but for all people. Hence, Redemption ought to be universal that, not discriminative or selective but rather for all peoples. That is why Jesus also instructs His disciples to go to all nations and peoples and to bring his light to them which is what they have done from the beginning to this day.<sup>271</sup>

Salvation is open to all but not all will necessarily accept it. The Catholic Church teaches that, the first commandment is also concerned with sins against hope, namely, despair and presumption. By despair, man ceases to hope for his personal Salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his or her sins. Despair is contrary to God’s goodness, to His justice – for the Lord is faithful to His promises – and to His mercy (CCC, no. 2091). There are two kinds of presumption. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, hoping to be able to save himself without help on high, or he presumes upon God’s almighty power or his mercy, hoping to obtain forgiveness without conversion, and glory without merit (CCC, no. 2092). Faith in God’s love encompasses the

<sup>270</sup> A. Perzyński, *The Christian Faith: Approaches to Theological Anthropology*, Warszawa: Warszawskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, 2011, pp. 47-72.

<sup>271</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 61.

call and the obligation to respond with sincere love to Divine charity (CCC, no. 2093).

A human person can sin against God's love in various ways: indifference neglects or refuses to reflect on Divine charity; it fails to consider its prevenient goodness and denies its power. Ingratitude fails or refuses to acknowledge divine charity and to return him love for love. Luke warmth is hesitation or negligence in responding to Divine love; it can imply refusal to give oneself over to the promoting of charity. Acedia or spiritual sloth goes so far as to refuse the joy that comes from God and to be repelled by Divine goodness. Hatred of God comes from pride. It is contrary to love of God, whose goodness it denies, and whom it presumes to curse as the one who forbids sins and inflicts punishments (CCC, no. 2094). From teaching of the Church, it is clearly seen that Hell or damnation is a reality. Cardinal Schönborn's Christology stresses the necessity of baptism, and hence belonging to the Church is necessary for Salvation. However, he interprets the woes and blessings and basing on this he presents the hope for Salvation made possible for those without baptism or those "outside" the Church.<sup>272</sup>

### 5.7.6 Personal Salvation of those Without Baptism or "Outside" the Church

This title "Personal Salvation of those outside the Church" does *not* in any way mean to say, or to imply that those in the Church automatically receive Salvation. No it does not mean so. The members of the Church do not automatically emerge as victors from this struggle. Paul announces a great rebellion (2 Thes 2:3), and there is dreadful battle at the end of time (Rev 20:7-10). Christ Himself warned His disciples against premature certainty and self-satisfaction. The victory of faith has to be won by a struggle: "When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:8).<sup>273</sup> According to Schönborn, when Christ says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16), does not seem to mean that those who know nothing about faith are damned. The woes and blessings point farther.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 368.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 357.

One can accept or reject Christ through his or her actions. That is why, we find, those who are saved asking, “When did we see you naked and clothe you?” (Mt 25:38). This, now still, ‘anonymous’ belonging to Christ will not be revealed until the end last day.<sup>274</sup> However, this should not be interpreted as to diminish the necessity of the Church and the necessity of belonging to this visible Church because “by her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind, and the source of this is He, He himself, He the Redeemer.”<sup>275</sup> Vatican Council II teaches that “the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for Salvation. Christ, present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique way of Salvation. In explicit terms He himself affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church... Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 14).

Therefore, while remaining clear on the necessity of entering, belonging and remaining in the Church, with the risk of not being saved when one wilfully rejects to enter in this Church, there is nevertheless the possibility of Salvation of those, who not out of their own fault, are outside the sojourning visible Church on earth. The Church helps the human person to abide in Christ (Jn 15:4; CCC, no. 1324).<sup>276</sup> In this way, it may be possible to conceive of the meaning *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*.<sup>277</sup> The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith emphasizes that the Church pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for Salvation. But adds that this doctrine must not be set against the universal salvific will of God (cf. 1 Tim 2:4). It is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of Salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this Salvation.<sup>278</sup> For those who are not formally and visibly

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274 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 368.

275 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 7.

276 Cf. Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis; with an introductory essay by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008, p. xxii.

277 Cf. M. Zubrzycka, *Summary: History of the formula ‘extra Ecclesiam nulla salus’ (Part II)*, Szkoła Teologii, available online at <https://www.szkolateologii.dominikanie.pl/disputatae/podsumowanie-historia-formuly-extra-ecclesiam-nulla-salus-cz-ii/> accessed on January 17, 2022.

278 Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Declaration “Dominus Iesus” On The Unicity And Salvific Universality Of Jesus Christ And The Church*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, August 6, 2000.

members of the Church, Salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church, but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ. It is the result of His sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. This is so because there is no Salvation without the Son of God.<sup>279</sup>

### 5.7.7 Hope for Salvation of Infants Who Die Without Baptism

In this personalistic study, the reality of freedom, will, and acceptance of Salvation on the side of the human person out of love has been emphasized. In this regard then, what can be said about the personal Salvation of the infants that die without baptism, and before attaining the age of reason and hence unable to exercise their freedom? More so, given, the personalistic understanding that the life of a human person begins from the moment of conception (cf. CCC, nn. 2270-2323),<sup>280</sup> what can be said about the personal Salvation of these truly human beings that die before baptism or before birth?<sup>281</sup> The International Theological Commission has studied the question of the fate of un-baptised infants, bearing in mind the principle of the hierarchy of truths and the other theological principles of the universal salvific will of God, the unicity and in-superability of the mediation of Christ, the sacramentality of the Church in the

<sup>279</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 7.

<sup>280</sup> The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception gives us the assurance that human life begins at the moment of conception (cf. Pope Pius IX, Dogmatic bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 8 December, 1854; Pope Pius XII, *Fulgens Corona*, Encyclical, proclaiming a Marian Year to commemorate the Centenary of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, 8 September, 1953, Libreria Editrice Vaticana). Cardinal Schönborn has a personalistic understanding of this moment of conception. He states, "The conception of a human being is something very intimate. A mother will not speak of it in the same way as she tells of other events in the lives of her children. If and when she eventually does tell her son or daughter about it, she will do so with great care and modesty. ...In attempting to speak of it, we must adapt our speech to the intimacy and hiddenness of this event" (C. Schönborn, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, pp. 18-19). The fact that, conception is a very personal moment, in a way, points to the dignity of the human person beginning right from the moment of conception.

<sup>281</sup> Right from the moment of Conception the human person has full dignity of the human person (cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation Replies to Certain Questions of the Day*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 22 February, 1987, nn. 1-5).

order of Salvation, and the reality of Original Sin. It is important to consider the fate of all men, created in the image of God, and in a more particular way on the fate of the weakest members of the human family and those who are not yet able to use their reason and freedom.<sup>282</sup>

On the one hand, the adult's act of desire for Baptism can hardly be attributed to children. The little child is scarcely capable of supplying the fully free and responsible personal act which would constitute a substitution for sacramental Baptism.<sup>283</sup> The state of grace is absolutely necessary for Salvation: without it, supernatural happiness – the Beatific Vision of God cannot be attained. In an adult an act of love may suffice to obtain sanctifying grace and so supply for the lack of Baptism. To the child still unborn, or newly born, this way is not open.<sup>284</sup> The conclusion arrived at is that there are serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptised infants who die will be saved and enjoy the Beatific Vision. The Commission emphasises that these grounds are reasons for prayerful *hope*, rather than grounds for sure knowledge. There is much that simply has not been revealed to us (cf. Jn 16:12). We live by faith and hope in the God of mercy and love who has been revealed to us in Christ.<sup>285</sup>

There are different proposed theological positions on the question of infants dying before baptism. For example one can find propositions such as the possibility of conversion after death. That some people do not have the opportunity to turn to God in their lifetime because they die in infancy or appear to lack the capacity to respond to God, or fail to take up that opportunity (because they appear to die faithless or unrepentant of great sin. Another position which can be found is that because of the Divine wish for the world to be fulfilled in its entirety, God allows at least some people to respond after, or in, death. However, this freedom to decide about God is a freedom of a somewhat curtailed sort; consequently, a change of heart about God, together with the unresolved effect of sin, will be experienced after death as judgement and punishment.<sup>286</sup> In spite of the

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282 Cf. International Theological Commission, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die without Being Baptised*, Vatican City, 2007.

283 Cf. International Theological Commission, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die without Being Baptised*, no. 29.

284 Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical Letter "Humani generis", *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 42 (1950), 570; Pius XII, Allocution to Italian Midwives", *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 43 (1951), 841.

285 Cf. International Theological Commission, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die without Being Baptised*, no. 102.

286 Cf. M. Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000, p. 262.

existing varying positions, some suggesting possibility of conversion after death, or at once condemnation and damnation, the personalistic Christology according to Cardinal Schönborn follows the position that what has been revealed is that the ordinary way of Salvation is by the sacrament of Baptism. This sacrament remains absolutely necessary. And there is no justification for delay in administering the sacrament. What is suggested is that there are strong grounds for hope that God will save infants when we have not been able to do for them what we would have wished to do. That is, to baptize them into the faith and life of the Church.<sup>287</sup>

### 5.6.8 Hell – Self Condemnation of the Human Person

The exclusion of oneself from Salvation does *not imply a limit in* Divine mercy because merciful love is open to everyone.<sup>288</sup> It is true that in Christ God has reconciled the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19). No human person can save or justify himself or herself without Christ. However, it is also true that the action of God does not abrogate human freedom. Therefore each human person will have to give an account of his or her life.<sup>289</sup> The human person is still free to shut oneself up, and to refuse God.<sup>290</sup> Man has the freedom to choose oneself and thus become enslaved to self, and to own unrighteousness. The grace period is that this decision “does not effectively occur until death, when human life reaches its ultimate limit...all masks drop away, and man enters into his truth.”<sup>291</sup> Salvation which is a free gift of God’s mercy and love through Christ can still be accepted or rejected by the human person freely. The free human person has to choose to say Yes or No to this gift. From this understanding of human freedom as explained by Cardinal Schönborn, it can be concluded that there is no place for ‘Apocatastasis’ in Schönborn’s personalistic Christology.<sup>292</sup>

287 Cf. International Theological Commission, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die without Being Baptised*, no. 103.

288 Cf. H. U. V. Balthasar, *Dare We Hope “That All Men be Saved”?*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988, p. 219.

289 Cf. C. Schönborn, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, p. 23.

290 Cf. C. Schönborn, *We have found Mercy*, 2012, pp. 133-148.

291 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 367.

292 For an overview of the doctrine of Apocatastasis, Cf. P. Batiffol, “Apocatastasis” in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 1, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907, retrieved on February 17, 2022 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01599a.htm>



Moreover, it can be asked, if Apocatastasis was true, why does Christ teach about perishing resulting from unrepentance? (cf. Lk 13:3).<sup>293</sup> Why talk about no forgiveness in this and the next life for those that sin against the Holy Spirit? (cf. Mt 12:32-32).

The human person cannot be united with God unless he or she freely chooses to love Him. Hence, dying “in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated from Him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called hell” (CCC, no. 1033). One goes to Hell by a free choice and actions since “God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a wilful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end” (CCC, no. 1037). Following the example of Christ, the Church warns the human persons of the sad and lamentable reality of eternal death, also called Hell (cf. CCC, no. 1056). Everyone who acknowledges Christ before men, Christ also will acknowledge before His Father who is in Heaven (Mt 10: 32). Anyone who rejects Him, rejects the One who sent Him (Lk 10:16). And in doing so, one rejects one’s own life. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned (Mk 16:16).<sup>294</sup> Acknowledging Christ is a personalistic action. Likewise rejecting Christ is a personal act. Therefore, the personalistic reality of personal act becomes very important in determining one’s own fate.

Schönborn distinguishes between Hell and Sheol. Hell means eternal damnation while Sheol means the realm of the dead.<sup>295</sup> When Christ died He did not descend into Hell – the realm of the damned, but rather, He descended into Sheol which is the realm of the dead waiting to receive their Salvation from the Single redemptive Sacrifice of Christ. Jesus says, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt 10:28). This verse does not only make allusion to the immortality of the soul, but it also points to the existence of Hell.<sup>296</sup> Hell then, exists as a complete exclusion from the presence of God, both soul and body. He who does not accept Divine Love and to re-echo this Divine Love to other

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293 “Perishing” as used here in this study, is understood to mean definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the saints, and not annihilation.

294 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 368.

295 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 304.

296 Cf. International Theological Commission, *Some Current Questions In Eschatology*, no. 5.4.

human persons judges himself or herself as not worthy of God. In a word, in personalistic terms, it may be said that judgement consists in a free rejection of this Divine Love that blocks oneself from a personalistic relationship with God. It is a blocking of oneself as an active subject choosing to reject the Divine Love that Christ and His Church brings for human persons. It is not a judgement by God's being but a self-effected judgement.

### 5.7 THE FINAL ARRIVAL – PAROUSIA AND JUDGEMENT

Parousia is understood as the glorious return and appearance of the Person of Jesus Christ as Judge of the living and the dead, at the end of time. The Judgement is not anticipated; rather it takes place in His self-offering on the Cross.<sup>297</sup> It is understood as the second coming of Christ, when history and all creation will achieve their fulfilment (cf. CCC, nn. 1001; 68; 673). Vatican Council II teaches that, "We do not know when the earth and humanity are to be consummated, nor do we know how the universe is to be transformed (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 39). The International Theological Commission describes the Parousia as a specific event, the moment of the resurrection of the dead. The Greek word *Parousia* signifies the future second coming of the Lord in glory. It is different from His first coming in humility. The manifestation of His glory (cf. Tit 2:13) and the manifestation of the Parousia (2 Thes 2:8) refer to the same coming. In John (6:54) it is called the last day. Also Thessalonians (4:16-17) and at this coming all men will rise,<sup>298</sup> and nations will be judged.

Cardinal Schönborn centres judgment first of all on the Person of Christ, Who can be accepted or freely rejected. Secondly, he hinges this judgment on human freedom. The human person freely accepts or freely rejects, or can deny after accepting, the Person of Christ. God did not send the Son to judge the world, but to save it (Jn 3:17; 12:47). Yet, it is very clear that in the scriptures the Day of Judgement is promised as the Last Judgement, as the universal judgement of the world.<sup>299</sup> It is not a matter of imagining future events, but

<sup>297</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 171.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. International Theological Commission, *Some Current Questions In Eschatology*, no. 2.1.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 361.

a relation to the present is always implied each time the issue of Last Judgement is presented in the apocalyptic symbols.<sup>300</sup> The judgement is concerned with the human, historical aspect of the end, coming from below. The deeds and works of each human person and human history are a very important aspect of judgement. Sometimes there is a danger of too much emphasis on human achievements and too little on grace. The grace and works belong together. God will reward those who seek Him (cf. Heb 11:6). Reward and punishment are inseparable from judgement. At the judgment, God will establish justice; no unrighteousness can stand before Him, and anyone who has suffered injustice will be given justice. Recompense is observed (cf. Mt 25:14-30). Everything that happens in history has consequences. The seriousness of human freedom is at issue. All human activity is relevant. All human activity has to be accounted for before God's justice.<sup>301</sup>

### 5.7.1 The Parousia Will Come

According to Cardinal Schönborn, “It is certain that the last hour is coming; it is uncertain when it is coming.”<sup>302</sup> The Parousia, Christ's return, is a matter of the Divine and irreducible aspect of the end coming from above. The coming of Christ is central and not the works of man. It is the manifestation of Christ's rule. The gracious character of Christ's coming and its joy are accented.<sup>303</sup> Judgement is concerned with the historical aspect of the end, coming from below. The two aspects of Christ's coming and judgement should be taken together at once when we think about the final arrival.<sup>304</sup> To be able to participate in the final Kingdom one must have participated in the first Kingdom. Christ will come again at the end of time (cf. Mt 24:29-44). In Jerusalem, a few days before His death, Jesus speaks of the end of time. He calls himself the “Son of man”, and he promises that he will come “with great power and glory” that will then be the Day of Judgement, the last judgement, the end of the world. When will

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300 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 364.

301 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 364-366.

302 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, p. 23.

303 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 364.

304 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, pp. 364-365.

that be? Jesus does not announce a time plan, but it is certain that one day that the human person's last hour will strike. How is the human person to prepare for this coming? By learning from nature and from personal life. And since the hour is not known, the human person can only keep himself or herself, not in fear and panic, but in anticipation of that day. This attitude makes every day become a precious coming of God, an advent of God.<sup>305</sup>

### 5.7.2 The Resurrection of the Body

From Cardinal Schönborn's personalistic Christology, three arguments for the resurrection of the body may be seen. First, is the fact that the body is willed and created by God from the moment of the creation of man. Secondly, because of the mystery of the Incarnation – that the Word of God became flesh. And thirdly, because of fellowship with the one Body of Christ.<sup>306</sup> Man is a creature of God. This means that man is willed by God in his entire reality, in his soul and body. The body is not the prison of the soul but is likewise created. Indeed, it is destined for an eternal life through the resurrection of the flesh – an idea that is totally alien to the Hellenistic world. Saint Paul provoked shouts of laughter when he began to speak of this at Areopagus (Acts 17:32). If man – with body and soul – is a creature, then this means that he is willed by God as this particular man, as a person, with a unique origin and a unique life that is destined to be fulfilled in eternal life.<sup>307</sup>

The second argument for the resurrection of the body is Jesus Christ himself. The Christian faith looks on Christ as the incarnate God, the Word of God becomes Man. But He has arisen in this body and has ascended to Heaven, where He sits at the Right Hand of the Father in this body, and He will come again in glory in this eternally living, glorified body.<sup>308</sup> Thirdly, is the union with Christ. This life here is already fellowship with Christ. It is the fellowship that unites in one single body the adherents of this path and makes them

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305 Cf. C. Schönborn, *My Jesus*, pp. 22-23.

306 Cf. C. Schönborn, "Resurrection of the Flesh in the Faith of the Church", *Communio*, 17:1(1990), pp. 8-26.

307 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 125-165.

308 C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, 1995.

members of Christ, and when this life ends, there is no other destiny for the one who has lived in fellowship with the body of Christ than the full unfolding of this fellowship in the resurrection of the body.<sup>309</sup> Since Christ's body did not know sin, it was well able to discard the tyranny of Sin. This Body, united to the Word in an ineffable manner, was ennobled by the Word's own Person. It became holy, life-giving, filled with divine power. Human bodies are being transformed in Christ, the first fruits, so that they can overcome all frailty and sin.<sup>310</sup> The greatness of Salvation history and the salvific effectiveness of the Incarnation consists in the mystery that Jesus was not a mere man but God's Son. A question is asked, how could the blood of Jesus cleanse from all sin if it were the blood of an ordinary man who is subject to sin? In Him and in Him alone, was human nature as a natural consequence, transformed into the Humanity of God's Son. Human beings, on the other hand, can, through grace, become sons of God, thanks to His human nature now taken up into Sonship.<sup>311</sup>

The personalistic reality of Christ being One Person having One Body is very important for faith to conceive about the resurrection of the human body. Christian personalism is a very important key to conceive about the resurrection of the Body, happiness of the saints in Heaven yet still waiting for resurrection of the body.<sup>312</sup> It is very important once again to recall the notion of Person, that is, a person is concrete uniqueness and relatedness at once. A person subsists as unique and yet in relation always. The truth of relations helps us to appreciate the reality of the resurrection of the body.<sup>313</sup> When a human being dies, the soul separates from the body. This is what we call death. However, a relation remains between the particular body and its respective particular soul. The two are *not* separate beings but rather are one of the one person, for example "Peter". Death is like an interruption that has occurred in the unity of the particular human being "Peter". Because of the real unity that there is between the particular body and the corresponding particular soul this unity guarantees the necessity of the resurrection of the body at the

309 Cf. C. Schönborn, *From Death to Life*, pp. 125-170.

310 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 86-87.

311 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God's Human Face*, p. 86-87.

312 The "Body"-written in upper case refers to the unique mystical Body of Christ (the whole Church), and the body written in lower case means the unique body of a concrete human person like, Paul, Peter, or Lucia (cf. Timothy R. Gabrielli, *One in Christ: Virgil Michel, Louis-Marie Chauvet, and Mystical Body Theology*, Collegetown, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2017, p. 9).

313 T. R. Gabrielli, *One in Christ*, Collegetown, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2017, p. 184.

end of time for the completeness of the human being. The interruption must be overcome for eternity. In this regard then the oneness of a person as a whole helps us to appreciate the reality of the resurrection of the body. When Jesus died on the cross, His soul was separated from the body, this separation was overcome by the resurrection from the dead.

It is important to remember that relation does not destroy uniqueness. Like in the Trinity, the Father is uniquely the Father, and The Son is uniquely the Son, and the Holy Spirit is uniquely Spirited but of the same Substance, the same nature, the Divine nature. Due to limited terminology, we can loosely allow ourselves to say, that the soul of human being “A” and the corresponding body of the same human being “A” are of the same human nature of the human being “A” therefore they cannot be ontologically separated forever. The concrete human being “A” necessitates unity. The abnormality of death cannot be eternal, for, Christ has overcome this separation by rising from the Dead. Therefore, there must be a resurrection of the body.

Saint Paul identified the body of the Risen One with the Eucharist and with the Church.<sup>314</sup> Hence, the reality of the mystery of the Body of Christ becomes very important, if we are to understand more about the resurrection of the body. A question is posed that if, after all, the departed souls are already in the beatific vision of God, what will the resurrection of the flesh add to this beatitude of the vision of God? To this question, Cardinal Schönborn responds that the resurrection at the last day is accessible in quite a new way if we do not consider it in an individualistic, isolated sense, but see it in connection with the mystery of the One Body of Christ – the Church.<sup>315</sup> That “we belong to the One Church, and we have all not yet risen in the body. All those who believe in Christ and have his Spirit constitute the One Church, whether they are pilgrims on earth or have departed this life and are either being purified or are already glorified and have a clear vision of the triune God. The One Church in heaven and on earth has this in common, that all her members, with exception of Mary, do not yet have the glory of bodily resurrection.”<sup>316</sup>

In purgatory the soul learns, now that it is no longer in the body, its powerlessness to purify itself by any act of its own. It is also longing for the resurrection of the body. The souls of the saints in Heaven, already behold God

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<sup>314</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 348.

<sup>315</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 331.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 331.

but they too yearn for the resurrection of the body because, being intimately united with Christ, they yearn for the final coming of his Kingdom, which will be fully realized only with the victory over the last enemy, death (1 Cor 15:27), that is, with the resurrection of all the dead. These work, ceaselessly united with Christ, to build up His Body for the Salvation of men. Their longing for the resurrection of the body is not a hope for greater personal happiness but for the resurrection of the flesh. Because Christ is the model for our own resurrection, it is irreconcilable with faith to assert that the resurrection happens in death, since Christ rises on the third day.<sup>317</sup> Taking Christ as model for our resurrection, it is concluded that the risen body is numerically the same as the pilgrim body, but at the same time is qualitatively quite changed and different.<sup>318</sup> Saint Paul understands the glorification of the human person basing on the Glorification of the Son of God, “If the Spirit of God who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too, for the sake of His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom 8:11). The resurrection of the human person to glory has connection to the relationship one has attained and kept. This is the meaning of the Spirit dwelling in the human person.

### 5.7.3 Cosmic Dimension of the Final Arrival – Not Individual But Personal

God does not want that which He created good to fall prey to destruction.<sup>319</sup> The Redemption of the world is a tremendous mystery of love in which creation is renewed because of the Incarnate Son.<sup>320</sup> Because of the Person of Jesus Christ, the structure of the universe is not individual but personal, that is, in relation. From Cardinal Schönborn’s Christology, it is possible to see that the revelation of the Son of God is not for human persons alone but for all creation. The fullness of perfection achieved by Christ in the supernatural order belongs primarily to human beings, because the eternal Son became Man. But, as Christ is Head also of the Angels, and consequently their mediator, they

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<sup>317</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 331.

<sup>318</sup> Cf. S. Yates, *Between Death and Resurrection*, p. 24.

<sup>319</sup> Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 314.

<sup>320</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 9.

too participate in the fruits of His work. The glory of their Head reflects upon themselves. Their worship is enhanced by being united with Him.<sup>321</sup> Scripture testifies that not only human persons, but all creation is waiting for the Son of God to be revealed so that, it too, may attain its perfection in Christ (Rom 8:19-22).<sup>322</sup> Christ's return (*Parousia*) will also bring a new heaven and new earth (2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21:1). The entire creation, heaven and earth, things visible and invisible were created through Him and for Him (Col 1:16). God calls everything into being in His Son and grants continued existence. He is the beginning and the end (Rev 22:13). The Alpha and Omega. Therefore, the mission of Christ and indeed His saving work is not only in relation to man, but also in relation to the physical nature of the cosmos.<sup>323</sup>

The material world is raised in perfection through the greater perfection of man, for whose service it exists. Christ unites the whole of creation into one since He is the foundation of all. He gathers all rational being into one family, into one body, of which He is the Head.<sup>324</sup> Christ, through the Cross, embraces the whole of created reality. The Cross was not only for the present world but also for that of the future and even for past ages. Indeed, Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection means Salvation not only for human persons but even for heavenly powers. The cosmos finds its meaning and its fulfilment in Christ, for, in Him all things hold together, and all things are united in Him (Col 1:17; Eph 1:9, 10). The universe is converging upon Christ. Since the cosmos is converging, it must have *Someone* as its goal. Christ is the Goal and thereby the inner pole of attraction for the whole history of creation. There is an assurance that there is no ending in disintegration. In Christ all the promises of God find their fulfilment (2 Cor 1:20).<sup>325</sup> Through the Act of Christ, God re-establishes all things in Christ that are in Heaven and on earth. The restoration, rejuvenation, summing up means that, the whole of creation is bound up together and perfected in Christ as Head.<sup>326</sup> All this is taking place at the supernatural order. At the level of grace and not at the natural order. The natural order was

321 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, Vol. II, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1899, p. 194.

322 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 359.

323 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 361.

324 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, Vol. II, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1899, p. 194.

325 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 361.

326 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, Vol. II, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1899, p. 195.



at the time of creation, and now here, is the new creation, which is a moment of grace. Christ leads back the whole of creation in the most perfect manner to God, Who is the first principle.<sup>327</sup> Sin led creation astray, away from God and now thanks to the Person of Christ, creation can now be restored and reconciled with God at a higher level, supernatural, than the former which was natural. Christ is the Crown, the Centre and the Foundation of a new and higher order (1 Cor 3:22.23).<sup>328</sup>

In contrast with philosophies that make consciousness cosmic and strive to depersonalize man and God, according to Schönborn, the Christian view of the world is based on a God Who is fundamentally personal that He personalizes the whole of creation. In Christ there is no contradiction between universal and personal. Thus, the structure of the universe is indeed not individual, but personal. Schönborn goes ahead and connects this view to the personalistic notion of love he states, “This view of the world [universe] is liberating. In a world, which is open at its summit in Christ Jesus, we run no risk of suffocating! And, on the other hand, not only air comes down from these heights, but the rays of love.”<sup>329</sup> The notion which holds that, the All will someday dissolve into the impersonal is rejected by Scripture (cf. Col 1:17; Eph 1:10). Instead, the universe, the All, is converging upon the Person of Christ. The All is being “christified”.<sup>330</sup>

From Schönborn we can deduce that the universe cannot be viewed in individualistic or atomistic terms, instead it has to be seen as a whole, as a created reality, in the Son of God, in love. This personalistic view becomes very important for a meaningful ecology and cosmology, and for understanding how the human person can relate with the rest of the created reality. In Schönborn’s discussion about the tension and movement, between disintegration and convergence in Christ – in which it has been decided in favour of convergence, points to the non-annihilation of created reality. In Christ, God’s creation does not end up as a wastage, instead, it becomes transformed at the end of time. Christ not only restored the original order but raised the whole

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327 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben’s Dogmatik*, p. 195.

328 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben’s Dogmatik*, p. 195.

329 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 359.

330 Cf. C. Schönborn, *God Sent His Son*, p. 360.

of creation to a higher perfection.<sup>331</sup> Ascension was the act in which the link between our fallen world and the new creation was fully realised. It was the act in which the problem of the presence and the absence came into being – the problem that defines the eschatological situation and necessitates the peculiar sacramental form of the people of God.<sup>332</sup> Irenaeus is regarded as theologian of the ascension when he indicates that the ascension into Heaven in the flesh (*et in carne in caelos ascensionem*) of Jesus Christ and His manifestation from Heaven in the glory of the Father to gather all things in one (*ad recapitulanda universa*), and to raise up anew all flesh of humanity.<sup>333</sup>

Pope John Paul II explains the cosmic dimension from love and goodness. He teaches that in Christ, the Redeemer of the world, there has been revealed a new and more wonderful way; the fundamental truth concerning creation. The visible world which God created for man – the world that, when sin entered, ‘was subjected to futility’, recovers again its original link with the Divine source of Wisdom and Love.<sup>334</sup> Pope Benedict XVI also alludes to the cosmic dimension in personalistic terms of love, when he teaches that, “that God is Love ‘not in the oneness of a single Person, but in the Trinity of one Substance... who moves all things, cosmos and history, toward their final, full recapitulation. Three Persons who are one God because... God is wholly and only love, the purest, infinite, and eternal love. To a certain extent we can perceive this by observing both the macro-universe: our earth, the planets, the stars, the galaxies; and the micro-universe: cells, atoms, elementary particles... all that exists..., is in relation; in this way we catch a glimpse of God as relationship and ultimately, Creator Love. All things [reality] derive from love, aspire to love and move impelled by love, though naturally with varying degrees of awareness and freedom.”<sup>335</sup>

There is also an explanation of the cosmic dimension in terms of the Eucharist, and in relation to human persons who are united with Christ. Hence,

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331 Cf. J. Wilhem & T. B. Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's Dogmatik*, p. 192.

332 Cf. D. Farrow, *Ascension And Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology*, Edinburg Scotland: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999, p. 39.

333 Cf. D. Farrow, *Ascension And Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology*, Edinburg Scotland: T&T Clark Ltd, 1999, p. 45.

334 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8.

335 Cf. Benedict XVI, *Address after Angelus: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity*, Saint Peter's Square, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 7 June 2009.

we find subtitles like, “The universe attains its destiny through us.”<sup>336</sup> What makes us the image of God, may be recognized by looking at the unique image, Christ, and learn from how He related not just to humanity, but to creation as a whole. The world is perishable but the Eucharist may give us clues about its survival. The Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise, but this sacrifice of praise is only possible through Christ. Christ unites the faithful to His own Person, to His own praise and to His own intercession, so that the sacrifice of praise to the Father is offered through Christ and with Him, so as to be accepted the Father (cf. CCC, no. 1361). At the Eucharist the new Heaven is anticipated. There is a gathering of the angels and saints, there is not just of the Salvation of humanity in isolation but more widely, there is the Salvation of creation as a whole. As bread and wine made by human hands are lifted up to God, it can be learnt that humanity has a responsibility for the wider creation and that it too has a place in the Heaven.<sup>337</sup>

## 5.8 CONCLUSION

Redemption and Salvation is one work of the Holy Trinity, this is so, because the saving activity of the Son of God reveals the Holy Trinity. And yet, it is the work of the unique Person of Jesus Christ, since, by His Passion, Death, and Resurrection He merits Redemption and eventually Salvation for the human person. It is accomplished in love and freedom. Redemption is personalistic, since, it is the fruit of the voluntary sacrifice on the Cross. He accepted all the humiliations, all the pains of the Cross and Death personally freely out of His love for the Father and for human persons. Here is seen the real vertical and horizontal relation that there is in the Person of Christ. There are two closely interconnected personalistic aspects: on one hand, through His suffering Christ has made satisfaction for us as our substitute, and on the other hand His merit is not conceivable apart from His infinite Love *for* the Father and *for* us -which is the reality, “Love.” The most heroic and unselfish act is worthless if it does

<sup>336</sup> Cf. P. McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000, pp. 113-124.

<sup>337</sup> Cf. P. McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation*, pp. 113-124.

not spring from Love (1 Cor 13:1-3). Cardinal Schönborn, by insisting on the connection between Jesus' love *for* the Father and *for* the human beings as the intrinsic reason for Jesus to suffer all these things, presents to us a personalistic dimension of Redemption because "Love" is a reality possible only among real persons. Only persons can freely love. Without freedom it is not possible to love. Natural science, historical investigation, and existentialism are good provided they remain personalistic. However, each time they become impersonal, they impend true love and jeopardise the realisation of Salvation in the concrete human person. But, however, with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Universal Sacrament of Salvation – the Church, with the human person's free cooperation, one is able to stand against these crises.

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## GENERAL CONCLUSION

“The truth is that only in the Mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of Man take on light (*in misterio Verbi incarnati misterium hominis vere clarescit*). For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the Mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals Man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. (...) He Who is ‘the image of the invisible God’ (Col 1:15), is Himself the perfect Man” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22). In this quotation we see that the truth of the Mystery of the Person is taught by the Church’s Magisterium. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn has written following the Church tradition and teaching and his personalistic Christology can be summed up by the phrase *presenting the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Christ*. It is a Christology that places emphasis on Mystery(ies) of the Act(s) of the eternal Son of God, Incarnate. God reveals himself in this personal Mystery. The life of Christ is the mystery of Redemption and Salvation (CCC, no. 774). There is only one Person who is true God and true Man at once. This is an ontological exposition of the uniqueness and irreplaceability of every person. That is why it is strongly held that in the mystery of the Person of Christ all the other mysteries are revealed. He reveals the mystery of the Holy Trinity; He reveals the mystery which was hidden for all ages; He reveals the mystery of the human person; and effects Redemption and with free cooperation and participation of the free human person, the human person attains Salvation. Because of this uniqueness, He is the only One able to restore the Divine likeness which had been disfigured by sin. By the Incarnation, human nature was not annulled but rather has been raised up.

The Christology of Cardinal Schönborn can also be described as a descending Christology. Though, some elements of ascending Christology may be detected especially when it comes to Christ judging with Divine love, which is a transforming love. God sent His Son and the Son ascended back to the Father,

and is now God-Man forever. The Son is always the perfect Image of the invisible God. He is the perfect Image before the Incarnation, after the Incarnation, and even when He is on the Cross. He is always the perfect Image of the Father, and reveals God and His love. The Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, and generally the first seven ecumenical councils are indispensable, if one is to appreciate or to understand the Christology of Schönborn. Derived from these councils, but put in dialogue with contemporary problems, his Christology follows the structure of the Creed, and the Magisterium of the Church. The thread that runs through can be summarised as: the Son of God and the inner life of the Holy Trinity; the mission of the Son of God; the Incarnation; the Son's historical earthly life; and the Paschal Mystery of the Son of God. None of these stands alone if we are to have a true conception about the Person of Christ. They are all interconnected and united, for, the Life of the eternal Son of God is a unity. Seen whole together is what constitutes Redemption and eventual Salvation for the human person.

Chapter one with the title, "God the Son-Preexistent" has focused on the Mystery of the Son in the inner life of the Holy Trinity as a Divine Person. In other words, it is about the Son of God before His physical historical life on earth, that is, the Son of God before the Hypostatic Union, before the Incarnation. This chapter first clarified how the notion of Person is understood by presenting the historical development of this notion, then exposing the difference and inseparable unity between Person and nature, and finally delved into the notion of Person and subjectivity. The chapter arrived at a conclusion that a Person is the ultimate uniqueness, irreducible to any generality. Whereas nature is the principle of being and acting, Person is a subject of being and acting. Person has reason and will, and so is capable of loving. In the notion of Person, uniqueness and relatedness should always be taken together without confusion, without dissolving one into another, and without separation. In a Person, objectivity and subjectivity are both held together at once. Persons in the Holy Trinity are the true real concrete Relational Subsistences. The missions in the Holy Trinity help us to see the distinction of Persons. The truth of Persons do not affect in any way the oneness of God, they instead reveal to us God who is Love. The second Person of the Holy Trinity is the only eternally begotten Son of God and He is the perfect Image of the invisible God. By being the perfect Image of God, He is the perfect revelation of the Father and indeed the perfect revelation of the Divine Persons in the Holy Trinity, and in turn He reveals man to man.

Chapter Two entitled, “The Incarnate -True God and True Man,” concerned itself with the Person of Christ who is One Subject subsisting in two natures. In Schönborn’s theological writings, it is strongly held that the perfect One Person of Christ is perfectly Divine and perfectly Human at once. He is The Hypostatic Union. In order to reveal God, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, to reveal the mystery of the human person, and to effect true Redemption and Salvation, it was necessary that He be truly Divine in complete integrity and truly Human in complete integrity. In our speech, a special language of *communicatio idiomatum* makes it possible to maintain the One Subject subsisting in the two natures of fully Divine and fully Human. The truth of the unity of the two natures in One Subject-One Person is truly biblically founded. This unity is the true concrete historical reality, but which extends beyond time and is not a myth. The Hypostatic Union has its goal being the Redemption and eventual Salvation of the human person and with this will come the cosmic dimension at the end time as chapter five has explained.

Chapter three focused on the mysteries of “The Son of God on Earth.” Cardinal Schönborn pays a keen attention to the mysteries in the life and experience of this Person, since they are revealing of Who this Person is, and what He accomplishes for Humanity. The concrete moments between Christ’s Birth and Passion, moments such as, the Epiphany, the flight to Egypt, the Child Jesus, the Baptism of Jesus, the Wedding feast at Cana, the Transfiguration and some other mysteries of Jesus’ life on earth were discovered in Schönborn’s writings and presented. It was discovered that at each of these moments there is a revelatory moment of the mystery of the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity, and more specifically revelation of the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ, and these in turn are revealing to the human person of his or her inner reality and is a moment of Redemption eventually leading to the Salvation of the human person. These mysteries of the Son of God on earth reveal in a concrete way that the mystery of the Person of Christ is true God and true Man. The integrity of the Divine nature of Christ, that is, lacking nothing that is truly Divine, is revealed. The integrity of the Humanity of Christ, lacking nothing that is truly Human, is also revealed in these mysteries. Moreover, each of these mysteries provide a moment for the human person towards the attainment, or acceptance of Redemption and eventual Salvation as free, true persons. That is why Christ fulfils the prophecies, judges with Divine Love, forgives sins, serves, and overcomes the kingdom of Satan. He had full knowledge and full

self-awareness in all that He did. He had a true Divine knowledge and a true Human knowledge. That is why He is the only true Bridge and the only true Mediator between God and man.

Chapter Four on, “The Passion, Death and Glorification of the Incarnate Son of God,” discussed the personalistic understanding of the Paschal Mystery. It was discovered from Schönborn’s Christology that the Person of Christ accomplishes the Redemption always as an Active Subject and not as passive Object. He is not used as a *living instrument* of the Father. He is never used but freely gives Himself. Yes, He is sent by the Father for this mission, but He also freely accepts and takes upon himself this mission. He freely takes upon himself the sins of all Humanity. He is an active Subject. He chooses His Death on the Cross as a Person acting with freedom. In this Act, Jesus Christ is always a Subject and not an object for use. This quietly fits the Divine plan of Salvation because it is accomplished in freedom and out of Love. His Resurrection and Ascension opens the door, for all who freely accept Him, to sitting with Him at the Right Hand of the Father.

Chapter Five titled, “The Redemption and Salvation by Jesus Christ” has presented the Redemption and Salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ for human persons, and indeed for the entire cosmos. It is concluded that Redemption and eventual Salvation is the Work of the Holy Trinity but at the same time, it is also the work of the unique Person of Christ. It is the work of the Holy Trinity because *Actiones Divinarum Personarum sunt communia* (cf. CCC, nn. 648-650). The meaning and saving actions always find their basis in the Communion of the Love of the Divine Persons. Redemption and eventual Salvation is the work of the unique Person of Christ because it is He, in His Person that merits Redemption for all. It is Him in His uniqueness as a Person that is concretely Incarnate and, the One who concretely dies on the Cross. It was found out that there is a perfect harmony and no opposition between the Incarnation and the Passion, Death and Resurrection in as far as causing Redemption is concerned. Nevertheless, Christ’s Passion and redemptive Death is the effective cause of Redemption and Salvation. Even if the whole life of Christ is redemptive, it is His concrete Passion and Death that Merits, that Satisfies, which is the concrete Sacrifice, and the concrete Ransom. To actualise Redemption in the concrete human person so that there is Salvation, the human person as a person, cooperating and with the help of grace, has to freely accept this gift. This acceptance is realised through free participation. And for those



unable to use their freedom to accept for example, infants dying before birth or baptism, this has not been fully revealed. But there is hope that in ways known to God alone, they may attain Salvation.

The primary sources that were used in this research are Cardinal Schönborn's major theological works, but especially his works, *God's Human Face: The Christ Icon* (1994); *From Death to Life: The Christian Journey* (1995) and *God Sent His Son: A Contemporary Christology* (2010). These, together with the secondary sources, studies, and other additional literature helped in analysing, interpreting, exposing, and describing the Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn. Of great help was also the direct face to face personal theological consultation to the Cardinal in which he explained the key points.

The method which was used in this study is analytic, expository, and descriptive, and personalistic. The theological works of Schönborn were examined, analysed, and the personalistic truth found in them exposed and described. In addition, as an approach, according to Cardinal Schönborn, a true Christology is that which contemplates and tries to present the mystery of the Person of Christ in as far as it is possible for human persons to do so. It is not just a presentation of the history of Christology, but a presentation of the mystery of Someone and not of something. It is not the presentation of doctrines of different theologians but the presentation of the Mystery of the Person, the Person of Christ who is concrete and not an idea. Schönborn presents his Christology in such a way as to give a comprehensive description of the Mystery of Christ. His theology enables the human person to freely take part in his or her personal meeting and acceptance in love of the Person of Christ. His style keeps to the fore, the uniqueness of each and every person, one is able to personally take part each uniquely to encounter with Jesus without coercion. He points out three pillars of a true Christology, namely, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and Experience. He integrates all these pillars, attentive to the truth of mystery, while pursuing each of the Christological aspects. He follows the structure of the Creed and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This study also in many respects adopted and used this approach.

This study has found and concludes that according to Cardinal Schönborn, a true Christology is that which presents the Mystery of Christ in a coherent and not fragmented way. This coherence is well expressed by the first seven ecumenical councils, that is, from Nicaea I (325 AD) to Nicaea II (787 AD). These councils when taken together, provide a coherent Christology. In them

there is a great unity. This study has brought to exposition, the personalistic Christology of Schönborn at the level of being (ontology – the two natures of Christ), the level of action – the two wills of Jesus Christ, and at the level of Redemption and eventual Salvation for the human person – soteriology.

Another conclusion is that Schönborn insists that to follow the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Christ is the way of doing any credible Christology. Moreover, in the liturgy, we celebrate His life. While not dismissing, and not underestimating the value of the traditional approach of presenting the history of Christology, Cardinal Schönborn finds the traditional approach lacking in something very important. It lacks being a systematic theology, mainly because it does not follow concretely as such the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Divine Son Incarnate. Here, by Incarnation, he understands the mystery of the life of the Son of God as a whole, and not just the moment of Virginal Conception and Birth. He understands Incarnation to mean the becoming Man and all that followed from this Act. A true Christian faith deals with reality, and not with things as ideologies. Most important for him is: “what is the matter?”, “what can we conceive about the Mystery(ies)?” What can we say about the mystery in as far as it is possible for human persons to say, without reducing the mystery to ideology or phantom? Christology should not be a presentation of opinions of so and so, but a presentation of the Subject. Most important for Schönborn is to “confess the mystery.”

This research further concludes that in the Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Schönborn the Person is very central and indeed intrinsic. The personalistic dimension of any Christological work remains ultimate because the Holy Trinity is the eternal Communion of Persons. In the Holy Trinity the One and only essence and nature in the Divinity is Three Persons distinct from one another by their properties, more specifically by being unbegotten – The Father, by being begotten – the Son, and by proceeding – the Holy Spirit. These properties do not divide the One nature and power of the ineffable Divinity into three essences, or dissimilar, or even similar natures, but they denote the Persons in whom the One Divinity subsists and who are themselves this One Divinity. The Incarnation is a true expression of faith. Christ is really God Incarnate. The Incarnation shows the finality of God’s Love. That God can humble Himself for the purpose of man’s Redemption and ensuing Salvation. The Divine mission, namely, God sent His Son is very important, because it is not a result of human speculation but is from God who gives.

The novelty, newness, and uniqueness of this research is that, while firmly maintaining the truth of mystery, it presents the Mystery(ies) of the Person of Christ in the personalistic language of Cardinal Schönborn, and how the human person cooperating with grace can realise the gift of Salvation concretely. Conspicuously exposed are three points: (1) the truth of Mystery(ies) revealed in and by the Person of Christ; (2) the mystery of the Incarnation (here the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Glorification understood to be the united Act(s) of Love); and (3) the personalistic reality – Personalism. As a summary, the personalistic truth(s) or characteristic(s) in Schönborn's Christology include: the reality of Persons in the Holy Trinity, the uniqueness of each Divine Person, love is the reason of the Hypostatic Union, the Son of God is always in relation, Redemption and Salvation is the work of the Holy Trinity but it is the work of the unique person of Christ, Salvation is a free gift to a concrete human person but not automatic – since personal participation in love with the help of the Holy Spirit is necessary, the failure of the impersonalism of the modern crises, the Unity of the Person of Christ with His Church, hope for personal Salvation, and the Beatific Vision of God by the human person.

The Person of the eternal Son of God remaining true God became true Man for ever. He is true God and true Man but One Person-One Subject. He is the Divine Person subsisting in two natures of Divine and Human. This personalistic reality is very important, if one is to conceive anything about revelation of God, Redemption and Salvation. He became Man while remaining true God, suffered, died, rose, ascended into Heaven, and is now seated at the Right Hand of the Father in His true Divinity and Humanity. He gave His life for the Salvation of the human person out of free will and Love. The human person as a true person partakes of this Redemption and Salvation, with the help of grace, by freely accepting communion with the Person of Christ. Personalism, and indeed any conception about a person, should never lose focus of the Incarnate Son of God. The loss of this focus will lead to loss of contact with reality and end up in ideology. Christ's Redemption is Universal but its concrete realisation, hence, Salvation requires free acceptance of Him on the side of the human person cooperating with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Mystery of the Person of Christ reveals and opens the mystery of the human person to human person. In this true God-Man, Life defeated death. The rising One bequeathed to humanity the benefits of His victory over death. Redemption and Salvation comes through Divine Love. The Person of Christ

has fulfilled the mission of Divine Love on the Cross. The Temple is no longer the concrete sign of Divine Love but the glorious Cross of Christ. The cause and effect of the glorious Cross of Christ is not limited by time. Much as the, Passion, Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ happen at a definite time in history, its cause and effect is not limited to this concrete historical time alone. It rather surpasses it. Therefore, and in this way, it is understood to be universal, extending to all ages and generations and nations, to all persons who are invited to freely accept the gift of Redemption and by so doing attain or merit the gift of Salvation. There is only one Christ for all. There cannot be another Christ to merit Redemption. Christ's Redemption is so universal that it extends to Adam, to those who lived in the historical epoch of Jesus' life on earth, to those who live today, and to those who will live in the future till the end of time. Due to the great vastness and wealth of Cardinal Schönborn's theological work, this study discovered some possible further studies that can be conducted based on his theological works. Therefore, this research concludes by proposing further research on, "the Significance of Person in the theology of Cardinal Schönborn"; "the Mystery of the Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery according to Cardinal Schönborn"; and since for Schönborn, the Person of Christ, the Head, is always together with His Body – the Church, "the Personalistic Ecclesiology of Cardinal Schönborn" is also a great dimension that can be explored.

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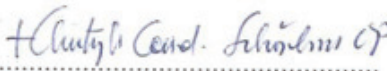
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**RE: CONSULTATION TO CARDINAL CHRISTOPH SCHÖNBORN, O.P.,  
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF VIENNA  
BY STUDENT LEONARD SANYU, UGANDA  
ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2021**

This is to testify that while conducting the Scientific Research entitled: *The Personalistic Christology of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn*, under the supervision of Fr. Prof. Dr. hab. Bogumił Gacka, MIC, I was blessed to personally meet and consult the Person on whose theology my dissertation is based- His Excellency Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, O.P., Metropolitan Archbishop of Vienna on September 9, 2021 in Vienna, Austria. I presented and consulted him regarding the proposition of the corpus and content of my dissertation and gladly received his correction and advice regarding the most key points.

  
.....  
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.....  
**Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, O.P.,**  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Vienna  
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