

Jesus, Sacrament of God: A Contemporary Franciscan View

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The topic of salvation in Christ has been a major and highly sensitive issue in the Roman Catholic Church today. There are ecclesiastical and theological leaders who insist not only on the uniqueness of Jesus for salvation but also that this unique Jesus is truly found only in the Roman Catholic Church. By this, these Roman Catholic leaders mean, first of all, that no one in the entire world has ever received or will ever receive the gift of salvation unless the grace of salvation is connected in an essential way to Jesus Christ. This essential connection is, in their view, retroactively effective for all the descendents of Adam and Eve down to the time of Jesus. The essential connection of salvation to Jesus Christ is also effective for all people from Jesus to the present day, provided people in some way accept Him as Lord and Savior. Outside of Jesus Christ there is no salvation for anyone at all.

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Second, the same Roman Catholic ecclesiastical and theological leaders focus on the death of Jesus Christ as the one and only sacrifice of Atonement through which all men and women can receive salvation. In this sense, the Christian church—taken in its most comprehensive meaning, namely, all Christian church groups, Protestant, Latter-day Saint, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, etc.—represents the only religion in which true salvation can be found. All other religions—Islam, Buddhism, Judaism—in themselves have no salvific value. Only the Christian church can offer true salvation to all men and women. This position is very stark and is, in this formulation, very conservative and exclusive. That some current Roman Catholic ecclesiastical and theological leaders maintain this position is a matter of record.

Within the Roman Catholic Church today are, thankfully, other voices. In the documents of Vatican II and in subsequent documents from the papacy and the Roman Curia, Catholic leaders have cautiously and probingly opened the official teaching of the Catholic Church to a more ecumenical stance. Today, the Roman Catholic Church is open to serious dialogue with the many Orthodox, Protestant, and Anglican churches. The intensity of ecumenical discussion on serious theological issues is well known. Ecumenical discussions have produced a number of important documents on baptism, Eucharist, ministry, justification, and marriage. Moreover, the Catholic Church on special occasions allows Orthodox Christians, Anglican Christians, and Protestant Christians to share Eucharist at a Catholic liturgy. The majority of Roman Catholic ecclesiastical and theological leaders are much more open to salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church than ever before. This is a big step for those of us who are Roman Catholics today. There may still be some arrogance about the way this openness is described, but I hope you rise above the arrogance and see the change as a healthy one.

Today, some ecclesiastical and theological leaders in the Roman Catholic Church have taken a more astounding step. Discussions continue taking place on a theme that was almost unheard of until the end of last century. Today, there are Christian-Jewish dialogues, Christian-Muslim dialogues, Christian-Hindu dialogues, Christian-Confucian dialogues, and Christian-Buddhist dialogues. These discussions involve not only Roman Catholic theologians and leaders but also other

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Christian leaders and theologians. Christians and non-Christians have entered into a serious colloquy with leaders and theologians of other religions, and they are doing this in an official way. Officially appointed delegates of Christian churches and officially appointed delegates of other religions are seriously theologizing and praying together.

In my view this is one of the most unbelievable moments in Christian Church history. Within Islamic, Buddhist, Confucian, and Hindu religious teachings exist anthropologies, epistemologies, philosophies, and theologies that are radically different from Western Christian anthropologies, epistemologies, philosophies, and theologies. What we are witnessing today is a process that has not occurred in the Christian church since the Hellenistic period of the second, third, fourth, and fifth centuries. Scholars during the last two centuries assessed the hellinization of the Christian message in several ways. The historical debates on this matter have continued down to the present. However one adjudicates this hellenization process in the early church, the movement of the Christian message and the form of Christian life from its more semitic foundation to a hellenistic foundation clearly involved a profound inculturation and reculturation. This inculturational process was no mere superficial acceptance of Hellenistic culture. Rather, hellenistic ways of thinking, that is, anthropological, epistemological, philosophical, and theological ways of thinking, enhanced and even supplanted in some form or another semitic ways of thinking. This hellinization was indeed a major paradigm shift. John Cavadini, the dean of theology at the University of Notre Dame, describes this process as follows: "It must be remembered that the Gospel cannot exist apart from a cultural matrix and that, as already noted, there was no feature of Greco-Roman culture that was not to some degree 'hellenized.' It would be odd, therefore, if Greco-Roman Christianity were not hellenized to some extent."¹

In the long history of the Christian church, such an intense confrontation with another culture and an assimilation of this other culture's philosophy have never occurred in Christian history until now. Minor inculturations have taken place in the course of history,² but a second serious inculturation equal to the hellenization of the Christian message has only begun to take place. Only now are there major dialogues between Christians and Buddhists, Christians and

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Hindi, Christians and Muslims, and Christians and Jews. These interreligious dialogues have called into question the unicity of salvation, which the Christian churches have exclusively claimed for themselves. The results of these dialogues are not yet clear, but discussions are certainly continuing. However, not many of these interreligious dialogues have faced a major philosophical issue: the diverse philosophical, epistemological, linguistic, and ontological dimensions of the participants. A Confucian, for instance, may not hear a Western Christian through a Western way of thinking, and the Western Christian may be hearing a Confucian colleague through Western ears. It is this major confrontation of philosophies that I want to emphasize.

Hellenistic ways of thinking confronted Semitic ways of thinking in the early church, and the theology of the early church slowly began to be expressed through Greek philosophy rather than through Semitic structures. Similarly, today's dialogue with other religions involves radically different ways of thinking. This is precisely why I believe that today's interreligious dialogues mirror to some degree the hellenization process of the early church. This is precisely why I say that today's interreligious dialogue involving the Christian world is only the second time that such a dialogue has taken place in Christian history within profoundly different philosophical worldviews. The very term that we use in a so very facile way namely, *salvation*, does not automatically mean the same thing in words from the Korean, Chinese, Indonesian, Arabic, Tanzanian, and other language systems through which they try to translate the Western term. It would be odd if at a conference such as this there would be no mention of these interreligious dialogues. At the heart of these interreligious dialogues two questions are central: (1) Is salvation only possible through Jesus Christ? and (2) Is salvation possible only through some connection to the Christian church?

In the following section of this paper I want to consider the Christological issue—is salvation possible only through Jesus Christ?—with a special focus on Jesus as the sacrament of salvation. In the section after that I want to consider the second issue—is salvation possible only through some connection to the Christian church?—with a special focus on the church as a sacrament of Jesus.

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Christological Considerations

When one begins to speak of salvation and its theology as it is understood in official Roman Catholic teaching, one should begin with the New Testament itself and also with the *Decree on Justification*, promulgated at the Council of Trent on January 13, 1547. This decree represents a Roman Catholic interpretation of the New Testament texts on justification. Justification and salvation are intrinsically related. In the *Decree on Justification* the bishops at Trent finally faced head on the main theological issue that caused the Protestant Reformation; namely, the issue of grace and good works. Is one saved by grace? Or is one saved by good works?

In chapter seven of the *Decree on Justification*, the bishops made use of the then current Aristotelian philosophical categories on causality to present the process of justification (salvation). In doing so they were not canonizing Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotelian terms were simply used to express as best as possible the faith reality of justification (salvation).

The very first thing that the tridentine bishops formulated about justification is that “*the glory of God and of Christ and eternal life is the final cause of justification.*”³ The meaning of this sentence is clear: God’s own glory, God’s own life, God’s own love for God’s own self are the final and foundational reasons for justification. The issue of sin and salvation from sin is secondary. The inclusion of the phrase “of Christ” is a focus primarily on the divine nature of Christ and not on His human nature. The inclusion of the phrase “eternal life” is primarily the eternal life of God. Only secondarily can one speak of our participation in God’s eternal life. In all of this, it should be clear that the final cause of justification (salvation) is not sin-driven. Human sin in no way causes God to justify or to reconcile us. The final cause is God-driven, love-driven. In this decree the final cause is placed first, and it is clear that the bishops wanted to say that justification (salvation) is primarily *grace*; that is, *the free gift of an absolutely free God*. Because of the total gratuity of this grace of salvation, no finite act, no human agency, no good work can make any claim whatsoever to be the foundational reason for salvation. We are not saved by baptism, if baptism is considered from the aspect of what we do or what the Church does

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or what water and word do or what the minister does. As in every sacrament, it is primarily God who acts, and this is what is fundamental and primordial. Everything else involved in a sacramental celebration is secondary, if not tertiary.

Evangelization, then, primarily means an announcement of the absolutely free gift of God's forgiving and saving love to all men and women. Evangelization is not, then, primarily concerned with making people Christian. It is not primarily concerned with establishing the Church. It is not primarily concerned with baptism. It is not primarily concerned with the remission of sin. We must not put the cart before the horse; we cannot put something secondary before what is primary. We cannot put any good work before the gratuity of God's grace.⁴ The glory of God is the final cause of justification—salvation.

The second issue that the bishops formulated reads as follows: "The efficient cause of justification is the merciful God who gratuitously washes away and sanctifies, signs, and anoints with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance."⁵ Once again, the starting point is God, more precisely God who is merciful (*misericors Deus*) and who is acting gratuitously (*qui gratuito abluit et sanctificat*). The absolutely free and compassionate God is the only one who efficaciously and efficiently accomplishes justification (salvation). We, as human beings, are not the "efficient cause" of our salvation. Neither baptism nor acceptance into the Church is the "efficient cause" of our salvation. We, as evangelists, are not "efficient agents" of salvation. God alone is the efficient cause of our salvation. The decree on justification is crystal clear on this issue. God's gratuitous and merciful love is the primordial cause, as final cause and as efficient cause, when we speak of justification and salvation.

In order to feel the full weight of this doctrinal position presented by the tridentine bishops, it might be helpful to consider some other statements that these same bishops included in other parts of this same decree.

The impotency of both nature and law to justify a human person. [c. 1 - title]⁶

Not only Gentiles . . . but also Jews . . . were unable to be freed or rise [from sinfulness] even though there was in them a free will. [c. 1]⁷

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The beginning of justification in adults must be based on the prevenient grace of God through Jesus Christ, by which they are called through no existing merits of their own. [c. 5]⁸

We are therefore freely called justified because none of those things which precede justification, be it faith or good works, merits the grace of justification. [c. 8]⁹

So many powerful words are found in these few phrases: words like *impotency*, *unable*, *prevenient grace*, *no existing merits*, and so on. All of these words emphasize in one way or another that salvation is a reality that primarily stresses two issues: (1) The mystery of God's grace, and (2) A totally gratuitous gift of God's compassionate love.

Justification (salvation) is absolutely undeserved. It is given only because of the absolutely free love and gift of a compassionate God. When evangelizers are asked to go and proclaim salvation to all men and women, this should be the very core of their message on salvation. In the past this core message or good news was often not presented as the core in the evangelization efforts of many Christians. Too often the major stress of many prior efforts of evangelization was ecclesiastical. Rather, the primary theme of their preaching was ecclesiastical in emphasis: outside the Christian church there is no salvation. In its focus on the role of the church, the church was seen as the "owner" of God's gratuitous gift of salvation. God's gift was indeed an absolutely gratuitous gift, but it became a "gratuitous gift" with strings attached. The church gave this "gratuitous gift" only to those who in some way or another accepted the church. If one wanted the gift, one had to accept the church, and this acceptance depended on the judgment of church leadership. In this kind of theologizing is the institutional church being placed above the grace of God? Does the church have so much control over God's gratuitous gift of salvation that God ceases to be absolutely free? Should a Christian evangelist begin with a message about the Christian church and its ability to give salvation? Or should not he or she begin with a more fundamental message; namely that of a compassionate who God freely gives grace and salvation to all men and women? In my personal view and in the statements of the decree on justification, salvation is God's gift. What we do in the church and in our evangelization can in no way manipulate the absolute freedom of God.

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Naturally, this emphasis on our own human and finite impotency, and on our inability to do anything at all to gain the marvelous gift of salvation, even in a prevenient way, raises the question, is there no room for the church's initiative? Is there no room for ministers of the gospel to be active ministers of evangelization?

The bishops at Trent did leave room for all of this, but in a way that is governed by what has just been said; namely, that *the* final cause and *the* efficient cause of justification (salvation) are the glory of God and the absolute freedom of God. Let us consider the "room" for finite, human activity.

In the next statement the bishops focus on Jesus, and particularly on the human nature of Jesus. "*The meritorious cause is God's most beloved and only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who while we were enemies, because of the great love with which he loved us, through his most holy passion on the wood of the cross merited for us justification and made satisfaction for us to God the Father.*"¹⁰

Merit—what a difficult and dicey theological word this is! Since the time of Tertullian, the term *merit* has been used in various ways to indicate the human contribution to salvation. In the theological schools of the sixteenth century, the time of the Reformation, the ways in which Catholic theologians presented an understanding of merit were severely contested by almost all Reformation theologians. In general there were at that time several different approaches to the meaning of merit and how merit applied to the passion and death of Christ.¹¹ The *vicarious atonement theory* of St. Anselm was dominant. Jesus atoned for our sins by "meriting" God's gift of salvation through His sacrifice on the cross. Thomas Aquinas, along with others, had favored this approach.¹² The *victory over death, sin, and the devil theory* was also prominent. Gustaf Aulén claims that in the sixteenth century Martin Luther was the major representative of the victory theory.¹³ Peter Abelard's *revelatory theory of atonement* had fewer followers at the time of the Reformation, but there were enough followers to claim a forceful voice in the many discussions on merit.¹⁴ At the Council of Trent, the bishops never attempted to settle the disputes among the schools. Consequently, the issue of the meaning of Jesus's death as a meritorious cause of salvation has been left open for subsequent theological interpretation.

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Depending on what theological theory on the meaning of the death of Jesus a theologian prefers, he or she will have different views on the precise meaning of the terms *mediator* and *merit*. In union with a tradition going back to the early church, the decree on justification insisted on an essential relationship between the gratuitous gift of salvation by an absolutely free God and every theological hermeneutic for the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.¹⁵ Every theology on the humanity of Jesus's role in the process of salvation must be seen primarily in the light of God alone, who is the final and the efficient cause of the salvation of every human being. With this in mind one can understand that the terms *mediator* and *merit* have several different meanings, depending on the theory of redemption one takes.

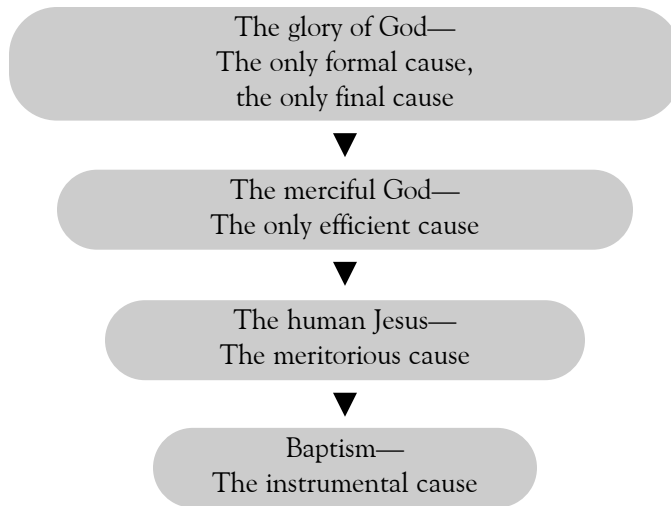
The next focus of the decree on justification was on the instrumental. "*The instrumental cause then is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which justification ever comes to anyone.*"¹⁶ It helps to remember that the date for this decree is 1547, only fifty-five years after Columbus had made his world-changing voyages to the Western Hemisphere. By and large, Roman Catholic scholars in that age were still under the impression that the European world and the Christian world were coextensive. The reality of a large number of other human beings outside of this Christian-European world was only beginning to impact the theologies of that period. Even the journeys of Marco Polo had not brought home a realization that beyond the Christian pale were many others. In the theological worldview of that time, it was generally understood that a few others did exist outside the Christian-European world. There were a few Jewish groups and a few Islamic or Saracen groups. The question of the necessity of baptism for salvation was seen as normal. In the Christian-European world, baptism was taken for granted. Current discussions on baptism and salvation are quite different.

The phrase *instrumental cause* cannot be taken in a strictly Thomistic sense, since the bishops did not wish to favor one scholastic school over another. Hence, this tridentine phrase must be interpreted within a very wide latitude to include the Augustinian, Franciscan, and Dominican interpretations. For anyone who knows the history of theology, the theological discussions on instrumental causality are

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intricate, prolix, and unresolved. No single theological interpretation can claim to be *the* interpretation.

With these caveats in mind, let us turn to the issue of baptism as part of the justification process or the process of salvation. I believe that a theology of baptism and its connection to salvation must in some way be consonant with all that has been said above. The following graph indicates this integration.



The issue of causality in this process has descending degrees of importance, beginning with the most foundational issue: what reason at all is there for salvation, and ending with the least of the causes: baptism. If baptism is not understood within this hierarchy and if it is not presented to people within this ascending and wider background, baptism becomes unrecognizable as a part of the process of salvation. This incorporation does not belittle baptism in any way; rather, it gives it its true value, but a value that is relative to other greater and more important values. Were one to take away these other, greater, and more fundamental values, then baptism would really have no value at all.

Last of all, and as a sort of recapitulation, the bishops of the Council of Trent state: “*Finally, the only formal cause is the justice of God,*

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not that by which he himself is just, but that by which we are made just, namely by which through his gift we are renewed in the spirit of our soul, and not only are we imputed to be just but we truly are called and are just.”¹⁷ The formal cause of justification or salvation is the very justice of God. Again, we see that it is God who is at work, and this is the only formal cause. Two issues are emphasized. The first is that this justice of God is a gift: God alone makes us just if God alone saves us (*qua nos iustos facit*), and this justice has been given by him (*ab eo donati renovamur*). The second issue is that this is not simply some sort of external imputation, but rather it is an internal sanctification: We are truly just (*vere iusti nominamur et sumus*), and we are not only reputed just (*non modo reputamur*).

The *Decree on Justification*, in its description of the process of salvation, begins with God and ends with God. This is clearly the official teaching of the Catholic Church: God is the author and the perfection of salvation, and salvation is fundamentally a free gift from an unbelievably merciful and compassionate God. Grace, not good works, is at the core of salvation.

Shortly after the Council of Trent, Robert Bellarmine and Peter Canisius put together catechisms for popular consumption. Did these two catechisms, which at that time became far better known than the official *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, reflect clearly the teachings of the decree on justification? In all honesty, I do not think so, nor do I think that a majority of theologians and ecclesiastical leaders within the Roman Catholic Church have taken this decree as seriously as they should. There is still a form of schizophrenia in Roman Catholic theology and liturgy. If grace and salvation are totally gifts of an absolutely free God, then how does one correlate this absolute freedom both of gift and giver to a theology of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, much less to a sacrifice of the mass?¹⁸ Why are there still statements in official liturgical text and in large numbers of hymns that reflect these words of the Easter Proclamation [the *Exsultet*]: “O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!” Does one really believe that it was Adam’s sin that “merited” so great a savior? Does God give us justification because Adam sinned?

*Salvation in Christ**Jesus as the Sacrament of God*

The dogmatic constitution on the Catholic Church, *Lumen gentium*, which is perhaps the most important document promulgated at the Second Vatican Council, uses a title that indicates the deep relationship between Jesus and Church. The Church, this document states, is *not* the light of the world; only Jesus is the Light of the World. Cardinal Suenens, it seems, was the one who first officially suggested the title *Lumen gentium* for the document. Gérard Philips, a key theologian in the writing of the final draft of *Lumen gentium*, indicates in his commentary on the document the deep significance of this selection. He states that the Bishops reserved the title *Light of the World* for Jesus alone, “the import of which is that the Church refuses to give itself this title. Christ alone is really the light of the gentiles, though this light is reflected in the visage of the Church. The Christo-centric attitude, which was emphasized so strongly by Cardinal Montini, was solemnly affirmed in the first lines of the declaration.”¹⁹

Bonaventure Kloppenburg states the theological issue even more clearly. He writes: “Vatican II seeks to give a completely Christo-centric and thus relativized idea of the Church.”²⁰ He goes on to say: “If the Church is absolutized, separated from Christ, considered only in its structures, viewed only in its history, studied only under its visible, human and phenomenological aspects, it ceases to be a ‘mystery’ and becomes simply one of countless other religious societies or organizations. It does not then deserve our special attention and total dedication. Only because it is a ‘mystery’ can it arouse our love.”²¹

For some people, this nonabsoluteness of the church sounds strange. Even Ernst Troeltsch’s volume entitled *Die Absolutheit des Christentums (The Absoluteness of Christianity)*, in which he tactfully questioned this absoluteness, was considered suspect. According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, however, Christianity in its entirety—namely, the Christian church in its total ambit and the Roman Catholic Church in particular—are relative to Jesus and above all to God, who alone is absolute. Today’s evangelization does well to begin not with ecumenism as such but with this understanding that the Light of the World is Jesus, and Jesus is Light of the World or sacrament of God only in His humanity.

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It cannot be stressed enough that Jesus can only be considered as a sacrament in and through his human nature. In all sacramental discussion, there is the sacrament, and there is the reality to which the sacrament refers. The reality is always superior to the sacrament. It is for this reason above all, that the humanity alone can be the focus of Jesus as sacrament. If the divine nature of Jesus is the sacrament, then there is a reality superior to the divine nature, which is an unacceptable position in Christian theology. If the Second Person of the trinity is the sacrament, then the First Person, the Father, is superior to the Logos which again is unacceptable to Christian theology. Therefore, it is the human nature of Jesus which is the sacrament of God's presence.²²

In this approach, Jesus in His humanness is the primordial and fundamental sacrament. However, it must be said that the Vatican II documents do not present any detailed Christological discussion. Nonetheless, if Jesus is the only true Light of the World, then Jesus is clearly something primordial, something basic, something fundamental. Anything else that bears the name *Christ*, that is, anything called *Christ-ian*, does so in relation to and therefore relative to Jesus. This is true for the *Christian* church, which is completely relative to Jesus. Any absolutizing of the church is theologically unacceptable.

Another question immediately arises, and this question is key to Christology: can we theologically say that Jesus is absolute? In the course of Christian history, aspects of this question have been deeply and bitterly discussed. The Council of Chalcedon, without using terms such as *absolute* and *relative*, has given Christians a most official and solemn response. We, however, can use the terms *absolute* and *relative* and remain clearly within the framework of Chalcedon: Jesus is divine and therefore absolute; and Jesus is human and therefore relative: and yet Jesus is one.

The Council of Chalcedon very clearly affirmed the full divinity of Jesus and almost in the same breath affirmed the full humanity of Jesus. The following chart, with the exact words of this council, presents all Christians with an essential part of one's faith as regards Jesus, and this Christian tradition from Chalcedon has been held with the greatest honor by the Catholic Church. The parallelism of

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the council's approach should be noted not only in the juxtaposition of the phrases but in the reduplication of key words. The following chart brings this out.

Jesus is truly God
(*theos alethos*)
and
truly human
(*anthropos alethos*)

Jesus is consubstantial with the Father
(*homoousios to patri kata ten theoteta*)
and
consubstantial with us
(*homoousios hemin kata ten anthropoteta*)

Jesus is perfect in His divinity
(*teleios to autos en theoteti*)
and
perfect in His humanity
(*teleios to autos en anthropoteti*)

Jesus is begotten from the Father from all eternity
according to His divinity
(*pro aionon ek tou patros gemethenta kata te theoteti*)
and
[Born] in these last days of Mary according
to His humanity
(*kai ep' eschaton ek Marias kata te anthropoteti*)

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One notes that in all these parallel statements the full divinity of Jesus is proclaimed, and at the very same time the full humanity of Jesus is proclaimed. That Jesus is fully divine is a *de fide definita* teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and that Jesus is fully human is likewise a *de fide definita* teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

As God, that is, in His divinity, Jesus must be seen as absolute. As human, Jesus must be seen as contingent and relative in the same way that every other human being is contingent and relative. Everything created, everything nondivine, is contingent and relative.²³ To say otherwise about Jesus's humanity is to predicate divine prerogatives to the human nature to Jesus. If Jesus's human nature has by right any divine prerogative, then this "human nature" of Jesus is *not* consubstantial with us, is *not* as fully human as ours, is *not* perfect in the kind of humanity in which we live and move and have our being.

In other words, any statement that might absolutize in any way the humanness of Jesus would remove Jesus from our way of being fully human (*homoousios unum—anthropos teleios*). Such an absolutizing would be heretical. Such an absolutizing of Jesus's humanness would imply on the basis of Chalcedon that our own individual humanness is equally absolute, since Jesus, in His humanness, is *homoousios*, of one being with us, and *teleios*, perfect in His humanity, as we too are essentially perfect in our humanity. Whenever one maximizes the divinity of Jesus and at the same time minimizes the humanness of Jesus, both the divinity and the humanness of Jesus are falsified. Likewise, whenever one minimizes the divinity of Jesus and maximizes the humanness of Jesus, both the divinity and the humanness of Jesus are also falsified. One must maximize at one and the same time the fulness of Jesus's divine nature and the fulness of Jesus's human nature.

The full human nature of Jesus can be called the Light of the World, the sacrament of God, insofar as it comprises the total human nature of Jesus; namely in its contingency, createdness, finiteness, relativity, temporalness, and limitedness.²⁴

The theological understanding of Jesus as image (icon) of God has had a lengthy historical rootage in Christian history, but only in our present century has the term *sacrament* been applied to Jesus in any detailed way. Considering Jesus as an image in Christian tradition,

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perhaps Ludwig Hödl describes in the clearest way the exemplarity teaching as expressed in the middle ages but bearing in it the echo of past Christian centuries. He writes: “According to the scholastic teaching on ‘*imago*,’ Christ is not so much the image of God, in order to show the children of God what they are; rather, to show the human world who God is.”²⁵

Jesus, in His full, complete and perfect human nature, is just such an image, primarily showing us who God is; only secondarily telling us something about who we are. We see in and through the humanness of Jesus who God is. Only secondarily will we begin to understand who we ourselves are.

Jesus as *image of God* is a treasured phrase in Christian tradition. In other words, Jesus, in His humanness is the *icon of God*,²⁶ and because of this the humanness of Jesus provides us *through its imaging* with a small window into who and what the ultimate mystery of God truly is. Some might say, A small window? What are you talking about? Jesus is a big window, a panoramic window, a window through which we can see God in ourselves. However, on the basis of the New Testament itself and the explication of the New Testament found in the Council of Chalcedon, one should tread carefully on this issue, and for the following reasons:

- ◆ Is the humanness of Jesus created? Then we have a created image of God.
- ◆ Is the humanness of Jesus finite? Then we have a finite image of God.
- ◆ Is the humanness of Jesus contingent? Then we have a contingent image of God.
- ◆ Is the humanness of Jesus limited? Then we have a limited image of God.
- ◆ Is the humanness of Jesus relative? Then we have a relative image of God.

In the humanness of Jesus we do indeed have a window through which we begin to see something of the transcendent mystery. But this window—the very humanness of Jesus—has all the qualities just mentioned: created, finite, contingent, limited, and relative. Nonetheless,

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the humanness of Jesus says to all people: "Do not look only at me in my humanness. Look through my entire humanness, through my words, through my healings, through my life, my suffering, and my death, and you will perhaps begin to see a credible God—a God in whom you might begin to believe, at least sometimes."

When we study the theological depths of Jesus's humanness as a sacrament of the transcendent mystery, we see even more clearly that His humanness, totally similar to our own, has to be created, finite, contingent, limited, and relative. This is so, not simply because the humanness of Jesus in itself has all of these dimensions, but for an even more important reason. This more important reason is the total transcendence, the absolute freedom, the fulness of being that God truly is. Should we ever say that in Jesus we see God in God's own fulness, God would cease to be transcendent, cease to be absolute freedom, and cease to be the fulness of being. Even after years of meditation on Jesus and the New Testament, we should in our final analysis say, paraphrasing Augustine: if we claim to fully understand God, what we claim would not be God.

Some consequences in all of this are most helpful for the understanding of salvation. That Jesus was Jewish is a relative issue and should not be absolutized. That Jesus was male is a relative issue and should not be absolutized. That Jesus lived at one period of time and not another is a relative issue and should not be absolutized. Salvation is not based on ethnicity, gender, or historical situation. It is not the humanness of Jesus, who is Jewish, who is male, who lived from roughly 2 BC to AD 31, that saves us. Rather, the humanness is a window through which we see a saving God.

One can indeed present a Jewish Jesus to Koreans and to Thai, to the various tribes in Uganda and in Tanzania, or to any other different groups of men and women and say that His Jewishness is totally relative, created, finite, contingent, and limited. In itself being Jewish has no absolute value, nor is being Jewish the fundamental reason why Jesus is the image and sacrament of God. This ethnic dimension of His human life does not reflect in any way on the honor and holiness of one's own ethnicity as Korean, Thai, Ugandan, and so on. By itself His Jewishness is but a small contingent and limited part of His

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total humanness. Only when taken with many other human, finite, created, limited, contingent, and relative factors in Jesus can we say of Jesus that He is a sacrament of God.

Another sensitive issue in today's evangelization is the masculinity of Jesus. This issue becomes particularly acute in the discussion on the ordination of women. When it comes to Jesus as the sacrament of God, His masculinity is totally relative, created, finite, contingent, and limited. In itself being male has no absolute value, nor is Jesus's masculinity the fundamental reason why Jesus is the sacrament and image of God. His masculinity does not in any way reflect negatively on femininity. By itself His masculinity is but a small, contingent, and limited factor of His total humanness. Only when combined with many other human, limited, finite, contingent, and relative factors is Jesus considered the "image" or "icon" or "sacrament" of God.

The same argument can be made of His position in time and space. His historicity in second temple Jerusalem is but a part of His total humanness, and it is His total humanness that allows Jesus to be seen as the sacrament of God.

In all of this the full humanness of Jesus, which is created, finite, contingent, limited, and relative, presents us with a created, finite, contingent, limited, and relative image or icon or sacrament of the transcendent God. If I am reading the material from the history of Christian teaching correctly, I would conclude that it is theologically incorrect to absolutize the humanness of Jesus or to absolutize any aspect of the humanness of Jesus. The human Jesus as an image of God primarily leads us to God. God's own presence in this particular human, Jesus, makes the human Jesus important. All His human characteristics are, against this background, of secondary importance. In other words, in the statements *Jesus is the sacrament of God* and *Jesus is the sacrament of salvation* we are primarily asking, what imaging of a God do we begin to see in Jesus? Only secondarily do we see something about our human nature.

A second major theological issue that demands our attention is the finiteness of Jesus's humanness. Because the human nature of Jesus is finite in every aspect of its being—mind, will, heart, love, intelligence, and so on—the humanness of Jesus as sacrament must itself be seen

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as a finite, limited, partial imaging of who God truly is. To speak of the humanness of Jesus as the full revelation of God—as was noted—would render the ineffable God effable, the mystery of God no longer mystery, the transcendent God no longer transcendent, and the absolutely free God no longer absolutely free. To say that Jesus in His full humanity and in His full human life reveals something of God is a far more careful use of theological language than to say that Jesus in His full humanity and in His full human life reveals God in God's own fulness. No finite being can totally image the infinite. No relative being can totally image the absolute. No contingent being can totally image absolute freedom.

To preach Jesus as sacrament, then, is by no means a preaching of the totality of God. God is bigger than the humanness of Jesus. John Paul II, in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, makes the following statement: "The Kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine or a programme subject to free interpretation, but it is before all else a *person* with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the invisible God" [n. 18]. His statement correlating the kingdom of God and the person of Jesus is baffling, to say the least. Does he mean that the kingdom of God is not the first person or the third person of the Trinity but only the second person? This makes no sense. In trinitarian theology the term *person* has a very specific meaning. Does he mean *person* in today's psychological framework? This makes no sense either since the human person is finite, contingent, relative, and created. Salvation is a salvation to the kingdom of God, not to a human person, Jesus.²⁷

However, some might argue, to preach Jesus is to preach God, since Jesus is God. Jesus is indeed truly God, but He is also truly human. The genius of Chalcedon lies in its parallel structure. In the incarnation, God entered into human life in a way that intensified God's presence to all created life. The created world has always been in some way a reflection, an image of God, the Creator. God united through the incarnation to the human Jesus is a more intense presence of God within the created sphere. In the incarnation, the humanness of Jesus is this intense presence, image, icon, and sacrament of the divine. When the incarnation is divorced from creation, from the covenants

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of the Old Testament, from the world at large, then the incarnation becomes epiphenomenal to the human world and to its history, and this has never been part of the Christian tradition which has used such phrases as *the fulness of time*, *the new covenant*, *the fulfillment of the law* and *the prophets*. These phrases, so prevalent in the Christian tradition, indicate an interconnection between incarnation and creation, incarnation and history, and incarnation and the eschatology of the world.

A key issue that is germane to the theme of salvation in Christ remains in this reflection: Jesus is both God and human but He is also one. Harry Wolfson, in *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, states that Aristotle explained three kinds of physical union: (1) a union of composition, in which two or more elements are combined so that they are merely aggregates or a mere juxtaposition; (2) a union of mixture, in which two or more elements are combined in a more or less balanced way but can be subsequently separated back into their respective original natures; and (3) a union of predominance, in which the mixture resembles number two, but the dominant element is increased in some way, such as in the mixture of some tin and a lot of bronze or the mixture of wine with a drop or two of water.²⁸ The Stoics also developed a similar but different classification, as one finds in Alexander of Aphrodisias, Stobaeus, and Philo.

The Council of Chalcedon and the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople did not espouse any philosophical system, whether Aristotelian or Stoic. Nonetheless, these philosophical terms were the *lingua franca* of the time in which academic issues on union, mixture, and so on, were discussed. The Aristotelian definitions of union provided the bishops at these councils with some sort of intellectual clarity.

In Chalcedon the union of human and divine was first expressed negatively; that is, the members of the council informed us that there were ways of union one should not use if one wished to preserve the tradition of the faith. These negative ways were expressed in four negative adverbs:

<i>Asynchutos</i>	=	inconfuse	=	without any commingling
<i>Atreptos</i>	=	immutabiliter	=	without any change
<i>Adiairetos</i>	=	indivise	=	without any division
<i>Achoristos</i>	=	inseparabiliter	=	without any separation

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One sees again that the bishops at Chalcedon were truly concerned that the divine and the human remained intact in their respective natures. One does not commingle or change the two natures; nor does one so divide and separate the two in a way that precludes saying that Jesus is one. These negative adverbs maintain the unique distinction between *creator* and *created* while maintaining a union (though not identification) between the divine Logos (creator) and the humanness of Jesus (created).

Today, we might use our own *lingua franca* on such unions and mixtures, not taken from either physics or chemistry but from human life and human interaction and interrelationship. In this area, signs, symbols, and sacraments play a major role. For instance, one's encompassing love for another, one's deepest pain and sorrow, and one's supreme joy and happiness—all these can only be shared and presented to others in a symbolic way.

In the deepest realities of the human phenomenon, such as human love, sorrow, pain, and joy, there are two coexisting aspects: a manifest aspect, a showing itself in itself, as Heidegger would say, and a hidden aspect, a not showing itself in itself, which needs to come out of its hiddenness in some degree so that the meaning of the human phenomenon in question (love, sorrow, pain, joy) can be to some degree shared and understood. We humans make this kind transition through signs, symbols, and sacraments, which in their symbolic power and sacramental event announce the very presence and depth of one's love, sorrow, pain, or joy, without at the same time totally manifesting the reality that they announce.

All of this may sound very philosophical, and it is. All of this may sound very much like the language of Heidegger, and it is. But one could also use a manner of speaking similar to that found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, Jürgen Habermas, Theodor Adorno, Jacques Lacan, and many other contemporary authors. Deep areas of human nature, including the unconscious areas, are accessible to some small degree only in and through sign, symbol, and sacrament. It is indeed a person who loves, but love is basically expressed through a set of symbols, since the love that lies deep within a person cannot of itself and in itself be expressed and shared except through some sensible

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symbol, such as word, action, and so on. One's love can only be communicated to the one loved through a host of symbolic actions and words, in symbolic speech-acts and symbolic human-acts.

When we apply this basic symbolism of human life to the humanness of Jesus, which is the phenomenon in which incarnationally the Word has shown itself in itself, at least to some degree, then we are talking about a humanness that includes certain aspects that not only proximally show themselves, but also proximally remain hidden. We are saying, furthermore, that these hidden aspects of the humanness of Jesus are essentially constitutive for the meaning of that humanness, just as the profound dimensions of love, pain, sorrow, and joy are constitutive of every human nature. The dividing line here is not human and divine; the dividing line crosses through the human phenomenon as such.²⁹ We are all creatures who by our very human constitution manifest and conceal, hide and reveal who we truly are.

No human being is metaphysically capable of expressing the totality of his or her love for another. No human being is metaphysically capable of totally expressing his or her sorrow or joy. For the most part, something is always proximally hidden and at the same time something, to some degree at least, is proximally manifest.

The human phenomenon is proximally hidden, while at the same time the human phenomenon is proximally manifest. The same could be said of human sorrow and human joy. These too remain for the most part hidden; but they are, to some extent shared, communicated, and presented. All that we are as humans is for the most part hidden even to ourselves, but to some degree there is at least a part of each human person that is manifest.

The total human phenomenon of Jesus is this union of a reality that for the most part is hidden, but to some degree made manifest to others.³⁰ This total humanness of Jesus—part of which is manifest and much of which is humanly hidden—is the sacrament of God, the image of God, the icon of God, and the Light of the World. As the hidden part of Jesus's humanness becomes manifest, part of the sacrament of Jesus's humanness begins to reveal to us something of the transcendent mystery. Jesus's total humanness is indeed sacramental, but its actual sacramentality for us becomes operative only as this humanness

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manifests to us. The hidden and the manifest human dimensions are part of what human finiteness is all about.

Jesus as the sacrament of God or sacrament of salvation manifests only a small part of who God is and what salvation is. Because the human Jesus is only partly manifest, what Jesus manifests is also partial. Because in His humanness Jesus is partly hidden, what Jesus manifests is also partial. In Roman Catholic theology on Jesus as sacrament of salvation, scholars usually attach an adjective to the noun *sacrament*. Jesus is the primordial sacrament, the foundational sacrament, the root sacrament, the original sacrament. The attachment of these adjectives to the noun *sacrament* indicates that no other reality can be a primordial, a root, or an original sacrament. There is no doubt that Catholic theologians mean that Jesus as sacrament can have no rival. Jesus, sacrament of salvation, is unsurpassable. This unsurpassability of Jesus as original, root, primordial sacrament is its most problematic theological issue. I have stated this more clearly in my volume *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World*:

Can one say, then, that any human being at all could be primordial? The answer is no, because primordality is not a constitutive part of human nature. Can one say that any creature at all can be primordial? The answer again is no, because as we have seen above primordality goes far beyond human epistemological capabilities and beyond our onto-epistemological world. With both answers negative, there is once more a serious concern about the validity of, the meaning of, the reality behind the phrase "Jesus, the primordial sacrament."³¹

Because of the historicity and temporality of all finite realities, because of a subjectivity that questions any unbending objectivity, and because of the relativity of language that has neither synchronic nor diachronic absoluteness, the phrase *primordial sacramentality* is, in my view, hermeneutically meaningless.³² Sacramentality has meaning, but primordality (or any of the other words used in this same context, such as foundational, root, and so on) is hermeneutically meaningless when applied to something finite. Nothing can be presented as an absolute, and this applies theologically to the humanness of Jesus.

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Conclusion

From all the above what can one conclude on the issue of salvation? I have made and perhaps even overstressed a number of theological points in my presentation.

- A. Salvation is a faith reality that is understood only in its relationship to God, who is infinitely compassionate and absolutely free. Salvation is a faith reality that is understood only in its relation to the entire finite universe which is a gift of an absolutely free God. Salvation is a faith reality that is only understood in its relationship to God's gift of the incarnation in the humanness of Jesus. Salvation is a faith reality that can only be understood in its relationship to the church as a sacrament of God's love for us in Jesus Christ.
- B. God's salvation is an absolutely free gift. Nothing created can manipulate God into giving us this gift. Nothing created can restrict God's absolute freedom.
- C. In His humanity Jesus is finite, contingent, relative, temporal, and subjective. Whatever Jesus does in a human way is also finite, contingent, relative, temporal, and subjective. This challenges us today to rethink the statement, *By dying on the cross Jesus merited salvation for all men and women*. His dying on the cross is a finite, contingent, relative part of His human life. How can something finite be a cause of salvific grace? In the Roman Catholic Church today some highly respected theologians are in a serious way attempting to face this challenge, and they do this by making Jesus's dying on the cross consistent with the church's decree on justification. God alone is the final and efficient cause of salvation (justification).
- D. The decree on justification, which stresses the absolute freedom of God's gift of salvation, has often not been related to Christology. Ecclesiastical leaders and theologians in the Roman Catholic Church have indeed spoken of grace as an absolutely free gift of God, but they have also maintained that Jesus's death was the sacrificial offering made to God as atonement for our sins.

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- E. The Christian church is relative, not absolute. The Christian church cannot claim any absolute control over God's gift of salvation. The Christian church can neither monopolize God's freedom nor manipulate God's love. The Christian church does not restrict God in His freedom or His love. This issue has been raised by Roman Catholic theologians in dialogues with leaders and theologians of non-Christian religions. Actually, the central issue is not whether God *can* use other religions as a means of salvation. God can do whatever God wants. For Christians the question is whether *de facto* God has used and does use non-Christian religions as a means of salvation.
- F. Several respected Roman Catholic theologians have questioned the dominance of Logos Christology. Logos Christology has dominated Christian theology from the first centuries of the church down to the present. Roman Catholic theologians today are calling for a renewal of Spirit Christology, which is a more telling form of Christology than the Logos Christology. Spirit Christology offers a Christology that is more open to non-Christian religions, but this is not its deepest contribution. Spirit Christology focuses on the absolute freedom of God. In Logos Christology, the Logos is united hypostatically only to the human nature of Jesus. In Spirit Christology, the Spirit in Jesus is the same Spirit who was active in creation and who is active in all men and women. A Spirit Christology relates creation, incarnation, and parousia. Creation itself is incarnational and parousia is incarnational. The documents published by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) contain many texts that stress a Spirit Christology. Such statements by high-ranking bishops, needless to say, have not gone unnoticed by the Vatican Curia.
- G. Were you to ask me today what the Roman Catholic theology of salvation is, my answer would be the following: In general, the Roman Catholic understanding of salvation is the same as the understanding of salvation in the Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant, and Latter-day Saint sects. Christians worldwide

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have a rather consistent understanding of salvation as long as this understanding of salvation remains in general terms. If you were to probe the Roman Catholic theological explanations of salvation in a more specific and detailed way, my answer would be that in the Roman Catholic Church today a growing number of theologians are striving to understand the meaning of salvation outside the Christian church and are questioning the univocal relationship between Jesus and salvation. These current theological attempts are not all of one dimension. Some are more hesitant, while some are more daring. Roman Catholic leaders and theologians, however, cannot resolve these new issues by themselves. On this matter Roman Catholics need to be in dialogue with Anglicans, Protestants, Latter-day Saints, Orthodox people, Jewish people, and representatives of all world religions, and this is precisely what this conference is attempting to do.

My presentation may seem somewhat disjointed. In an honest way I have tried to present the current efforts by Roman Catholic leaders and theologians to express the meaning of salvation in today's multicultural and religiously plural world. The majority of Roman Catholics retain a theology of salvation that one can surely call traditional. They are not to be faulted. However, the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church remains in a state of disunity. The theology of God as absolutely free and loving, the theology of salvation and justification as beyond any human good work, and the theology of Jesus as Savior of all men and women have not yet been interrelated in a satisfactory way. Once again, this conference is a help to us who are Roman Catholic to bring some resolution to our lack of unity on these three issues.

Notes

1. R. McBrien, ed., *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (Harper Collins, NY: 1995), s.v. "Hellenism."

2. Minor historical processes of inculturation include, for instance, the assimilation into the Western Christian church of the many so-called Germanic

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tribes and their diverse cultures and traditions during the seventh to tenth centuries. The Germanic influence can be seen particularly in the area of medieval church law and medieval church liturgy. Some of these influences in law and liturgy remain a part of current church law and current church liturgy. As we begin the third millennium, a new inculturation is slowly taking place. Some minor processes of inculturation have already begun to appear in the current use of ethnic traditions in Christian liturgies. Ethnic songs, colors, processions, and so on, are part of current western Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant liturgies. On the one hand, Vatican directives on this same current inculturation activity remain highly conservative. On the other hand, the current theological discussions on inculturation go far beyond the Vatican's approach to the same issue. Today, one can say that there is a beginning of a major inculturation process, namely, the rethinking of Western Christian theology in philosophically different forms that are not Euro-Anglo-American. Such a rethinking has major implications, since the very patois of theology would change.

3. Latin: *Concilio Oecumenicorum Decreta* (Freiburg im B.: Herder, 1962), 649: "Huius iustificationis causae sunt: finalis quidem gloria Dei et Christi ac vita aeterna."

4. To Roman Catholics this presentation of the decree on justification may sound "Lutheran." The Lutheran scholar A. von Harnack once remarked that if the decree on justification had been promulgated at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, there would have been no Protestant Reformation. Further material on this issue includes the following: Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, trans. Ernest Graf (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1961) vol 2; Kenan B. Osborne, *Reconciliation and Justification: The Sacrament and Its Theology* (New York City: Paulist Press, 1990); Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

5. Latin: *Concilio*, 649: "Efficiens vero misericors Deus, qui gratuito abluit et sanctificat, signans et ungens Spiritu promissionis sancto, qui est pignus haereditatis nostrae."

6. Latin: *Concilio*, 647: "De naturae et legis ad iustificandos homines imbecillitate."

7. Latin: *Concilio*, 647: "Ut non modo gentes per vim naturae, sed ne Iudaei quidem per ipsam etiam litteram legis Moysi inde liberari aut surgere possent, tametsi in eis liberum arbitrium minime extinctum esset, viribus licet attenuatum et inclinatum."

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8. Latin: *Concilio*, 648: “Ipsius iustificationis exordium in adultis a Dei per Christum Iesum praeviente gratia sumendum esse, hoc est, ab eius vocatione, qua nullis eorum existentibus meritis vocantur.”

9. Latin: *Concilio*, 648: “Gratis autem iustificari dicamur, quia nihil eorum, quae iustificationem praecedunt, sive fides, sive opera, ipsam iustificationis gratiam promeretur.”

10. Latin: *Concilio*, 648: “Meritoria autem dilectissimus unigenitus suus dominus noster Iesus Christus, qui cum essemus inimici, propter nimiam charitatem, qua dilexit nos, sua sanctissima passione in ligno crucis nobis iustificationem meruit et pro nobis Deo Patri satisfecit.”

11. At the Council of Trent, a large number of bishops and theologians (*periti*) were Scotistic; a large number of bishops and theologians were Thomistic; a third but quite small group of bishops and theologians were Augustinian. The bishops at Trent did not in any way intend to resolve the differences among these three scholastic schools of thought, and the decree on justification left the diverse theologies on justification of all three schools legitimately and validly open. From a historical standpoint it is clear that the decree on justification deliberately included a latitude of interpretations. See McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 80–97. As regards the complicated issue of “merit,” the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians had differing theological views on the theological meaning of merit. Likewise, at the time of the Reformation, Lutheran and Calvinistic theologians had differing views on the meaning of merit.

12. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 3:159. See also *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), n. 2006–29. In this section of the Catechism the authors present a very general approach to merit that leaves one with more questions than answers. In Catholic thought the theology of merit is far more complicated than these paragraphs indicate. See also H. A. Oberman, “The Tridentine Decree on Justification in the Light of Late Medieval Theology,” *Journal for Theology and the Church 3: Distinctive Protestant and Catholic Themes Revisited*, ed. R. W. Funk (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 28–54. See also Osborne, *Reconciliation and Justification*, 102–97. In this section of the book I assess the issues of justification, salvation, and reconciliation from the twelfth century to the Reformation and to the Council of Trent.

13. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. Arthur Gabriel Herbert (NY: Macmillan, 1969), 101–22. Jaroslav Pelikan’s Foreword, xi–xix, presents a concise statement on Aulén’s position regarding Luther.

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14. On this issue, see Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 95–97, 143–59. See also J. Rivière, *Le dogme de la Rédemption au debut du moyen-âge* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1933), 96–129.

15. I have attempted to clarify the issue of a disunified Christology in *The Resurrection of Jesus: New Considerations for Its Theological Interpretation* (New York City: Paulist Press, 1997), 141–73.

16. Latin: *Conciliorum*, 649: “Instrumentalis item sacramentum baptismi, quod est sacramentum fidei, sine qua nulli umquam contingit iustificatio.”

17. Latin: *Conciliorum*, 649: “Demum unica formalis causa est iustitia Dei, non qua ipse iustus est, sed qua nos iustos facit, qua videlicet ab eo donati renovamur spiritu mentis nostrae, et non modo reputamur, sed vere iusti nominamur et sumus.”

18. See Osborne, *Resurrection of Jesus*, 168–69. Chapter 5, “The Resurrection and a Unified Christology,” deals with a theology of grace integrated into the Christological issues of the death of Jesus and the Resurrection as parts of the salvation process.

19. Gérard Philips, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: History of the Constitution,” *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 1:107. Philips also states this same interpretation at greater length in *La Chiesa e il suo Mistero* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book, 1986), 69: “La Costituzione sulla Chiesa adotta sin dall’inizio la prospettiva cristocentrica, prospettiva che si affermerà istantaneamente nel corso di tutta l’esposizione. La Chiesa ne è profondamente convinta: la luce delle genti si irradia non da essa, ma dal suo divino Fondatore; pure, la Chiesa sa bene che, riflettendosi sul suo volto, questo irradamento raggiunge l’umanità intera, e la investe dell’luce che emana da Dio solo.” Bonaventure Kloppenburg, *Ecclesiology of Vatican II* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), reiterates the same idea: “The Council begins its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church with the words, *lumen gentium*. But this ‘light of the nations’ is not the Church: ‘Christ is the light of all nations’! From its very opening words, therefore, Vatican II seeks to give a completely Christocentric and thus relativized idea of the Church” (19).

20. Kloppenburg, *Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, 19.

21. Kloppenburg, *Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, 19–20.

22. Kenan B. Osborne, *Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction* (New York City: Paulist Press, 1988), 69–70.

23. The statement of Chalcedon mentions clearly that Jesus is “similar to us in everything except sin.” Jesus’s humanity, therefore, mirrors our

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humanity in every way except sin, and our humanity mirrors His in every way except His sinlessness.

24. If one were to say that Jesus *in His divinity* is the sacrament of God, then the Word, the Logos, as sacrament would be pointing to a greater reality, namely, the Father. The Word as sacrament would be subordinate to the reality (Father) to whom it points. A sacrament is always of less importance than the reality of which it is a sacrament. This position is clearly untenable for Christians, since it brings subordinationism into the trinity itself. This position has been condemned time and time again in the history of the Christian Church. As a result, only Jesus's humanness can be qualified by the name "sacrament." Only the humanness of Jesus, therefore, can be called the Light of the World.

25. Ludwig Hödl, "Zur Entwicklung der fröhscholastischen Lehre von der Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen," *L'homme et son destin d'après les penseurs du moyen âge. Acts du Congrès international de philosophie médiévale* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1960), 356.

26. See T. Piffli-Percevia and A. Stirnemann, eds. *Im Dialog der Wahrheit, Dokumentation des römisch-katholisch/orthodoxen Theologischen Dialogs XLI* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1990). In this volume the article by Wactaw Hryniewicz, "Theologischer Dialog und ökumenische Hoffnung," 139–49, presents an excellent overview of the dialogue at that period of time. In his report, the term *icon* plays a central role.

27. Were one to say that the kingdom of God is a person, Jesus, and by this were one to mean the Second Person of the Trinity, namely, the Logos, then additional clarifications are seriously in order. The Second Person of the Trinity cannot be called the "sacrament of God," since this would imply that the reality of the kingdom (*res*) is really the First Person of the Trinity, the Father, and that the Logos was simply the *sacramentum tantum*. This would lead one into subordinationism, a position continually rejected by the Church. If the term *person* in this context means the Logos as Second Person, then the kingdom of God needs to be explained more fully. If the term *person* means the humanity of Jesus, then the entire New Testament meaning of *kingdom* is compromised.

28. Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 372–86.

29. For a fuller presentation of this Heideggerian and phenomenological approach, see Kenan Osborne, "Jesus as Human Expression of the Divine Presence," in *The Sacraments: God's Love and Mercy Actualized*, ed. Francis Eigo (Villanova: University of Villanova Press, 1979), 29–57.

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30. Heidegger's analysis of truth as *aletheia* is of great help in this matter. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 256–73.

31. Kenan Osborne, *Christian Sacraments in a Postmodern World* (New York City: Paulist Press, 1999), 104.

32. Osborne, *Christian Sacraments*, 110.