THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY

St. John Society

Why Did God Become Human?

And Why It Matters!

Mon. October 6, 7-8pm

Mon. October 20, 7-8pm

Mon. October 27, 7-8pm

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Problems with Sin as Cause of Incarnation

- Does the Incarnate Word owe his existence to sin?
- Is the Incarnation, which Christians agree is God's greatest work in all of creation, contingent on an evil act?
- Is Christ an afterthought of God?
- The primacy and centrality of Christ in creation is threatened if the Incarnation of the Word is a response to sin.
- Sin takes center stage instead of Christ.
- Human destiny changes to something originally unplanned.

2. Building a Case for Communion as the Cause of the Incarnation

God’s Will for Humanity

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved” (Eph 1:3-6).

2 Peter 1:4

“Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of sin.”

Dei Verbum (On Divine Revelation, Vatican II)

- “In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will (see Eph. 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (see Eph. 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4). Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (see Col. 1;15, 1 Tim. 1:17) out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends (see Ex. 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them (see Bar. 3:38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself” (2).

Communion

Communion is the overall purpose of God's actions

- Within himself
- Outside of himself

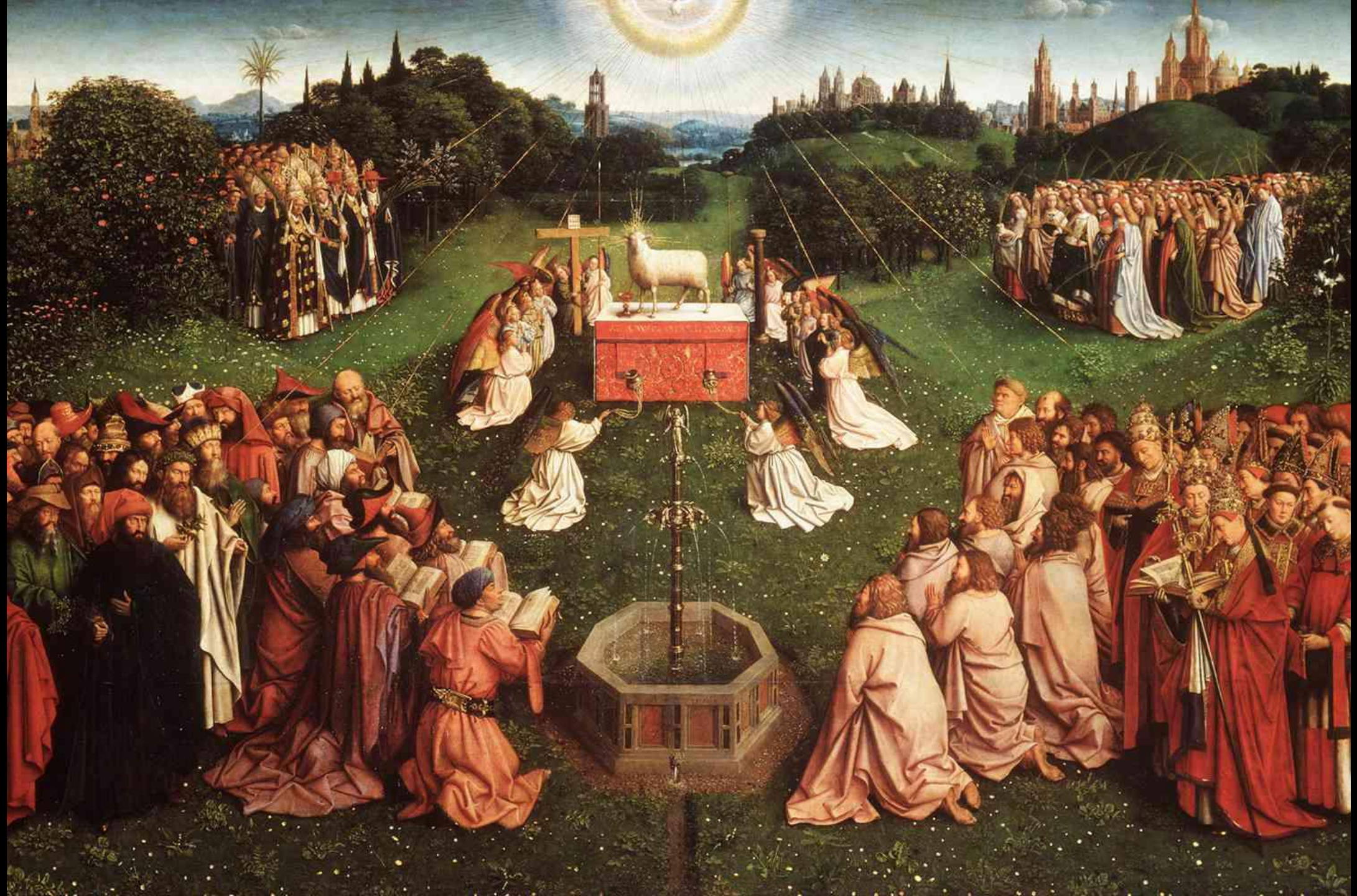
Love is a communion of persons

God is a communion of persons (Trinity: three persons in one God)

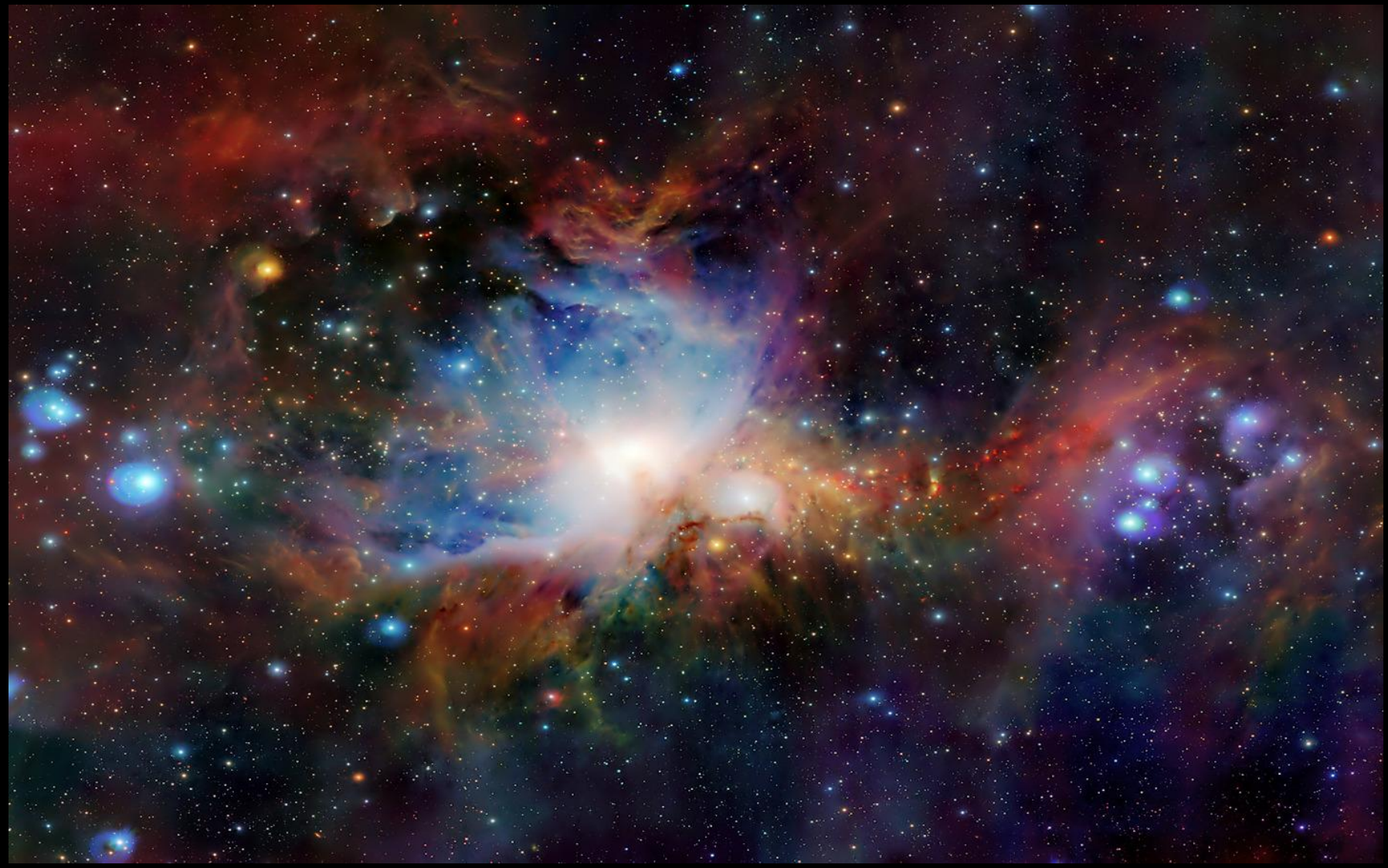
God desires to share his divine life with us

- What does that mean?

God desires to bring us into communion with himself. God wants to adopt us into the communion of persons that he is, to share his divine life with us. God loves us. To enter his communion of love, we must love.



All Creation is Ordered to Christ



Fr. Gabriel Amorth

All too often we have the wrong concept of creation, and we take for granted the following wrong sequence of events. We believe that one day God created the angels; that he put them to the test, although we are not sure which test; and that as a result we have the division among the angels and demons. The angels were rewarded with heaven, and the demons were punished with hell. Then we believe that on another day God created the universe, the minerals, the plants, the animals, and in the end, man. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve obeyed Satan and disobeyed God; thus they sinned. At this point, to save mankind, God decided to send his Son.

This is not what the Bible teaches us, and it is not the teaching of the Fathers. If this were so, the angels and creation would remain strangers to the mystery of Christ. If we read the prologue to the Gospel of John and the two Christological hymns that open the Letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, we see that Christ is “the firstborn of all creatures” (Col 1:15). Everything was created for him and in the expectation of him. There is no theological discussion that makes any sense if it asks whether Christ would have been born without the sin of Adam. Christ is the center of creation; all creatures, both heavenly (the angels) and earthly (men) find in him their summation. On the other hand, we can affirm that, given the sin of our forebears, Christ’s coming assumed a particular role; he came as Savior. The core of his action is contained within the Paschal mystery; through the blood of his Cross, he reconciles all things in the heavens (angels) and on earth (men) to God. The role of every creature is dependent on this Christocentric understanding.

Salvation is Needed Apart from Sin

The Second Council of Orange taught in 529:

Canon 19. That no man is saved except by the mercy of God.

“Human nature, even though it remained in that integrity in which it was made, could in no way preserve itself without the help of its Creator. Therefore, since without the grace of God it cannot preserve the salvation which it received, how without the grace of God will it have the power of restoring what it has lost?”

A Broader Understanding of Salvation is Needed

"Christianity is about salvation. Jesus made that clear, and the New Testament is about nothing else. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19:10). "I did not come to judge the world but to save the world" (Jn 12:47). Believers have always looked to Jesus as "Savior". All who profess the Christian religion – or even simply study it from afar – can agree upon that one simple fact. The most ancient sources agree with the most recent tracts left behind on the subway, the claims of viral emails, and the scrawl of roadside graffiti ("Jesus Saves!"). "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). But what do we mean when we speak of salvation? Ask a hundred Christians today, and you will hear many answers, but most come down to this: Jesus saves us from sin and death. Rescue from sin and death is indeed a wonderful thing – but the salvation won for us by Jesus Christ is incomparably greater…. Salvation is much more than most people believe and hope it could be. For we are not merely saved from sin; we are saved for sonship, to be divinely adopted sons and daughters of God. Forgiveness is the precondition for God's greater gift, the gift that will last beyond our death: the gift of divine life. God adopts us as his children, so that we can share the life of the eternal Son, Jesus Christ. …[G]od gives us by grace what the eternal Son possesses from all eternity. God gives us a created share of his uncreated nature. When we are saved, we participate in Jesus' divinity. We become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). The early Church Fathers were so bold as to call this process "divinization" and "deification," because it is the means by which we enter the life of the Trinity, the eternal family of God. Salvation could not get any better than this. We are God's children now. This is our primary identity (see 1 Jn 3:1-2), and this is the primary reason why the Word became flesh. God stooped down to become man in order to raise us up as his children. Thus we are made divine. Saint Basil the Great put it boldly, in A.D. 375 in his De Spiritu Sancto, when he enumerated the gifts of the Spirit: "abiding in God, being made like God – and, highest of all, being made God" (9.23). *Scott Hahn*

The Nicene Creed

“For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”

The Inseparable Connection Between the Incarnation and the Cross

G. K. Chesterton once wrote:

“[T]he inevitable result of love…is incarnation, and the inevitable result of incarnation…is crucifixion....”