THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY

St. John Society

Why Did God Become Human?

And Why It Matters!

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The Inseparable Connection Between the Incarnation and the Cross

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

G. K. Chesterton

3. Human Destiny: Deification

2 Peter 1:4

“Through these [God’s glory and power], 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.”

Paragraph 1 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

"God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life."

Paragraph 294 states:

"The ultimate purpose of creation is that God 'who is the creator of all things may at last become 'all in all,' thus simultaneously assuring his own glory and our beatitude."

Catechism of the Catholic Church

460 Why did the Word Become Flesh? The Word became flesh to make us *partakers of the divine nature*:

“For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.”

St. Irenaeus (180 A.D.)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

“For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”

St. Athanasius, Great Doctor of the Church

(*On the Incarnation*, c.315 A.D.)

‘The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods’”

St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1260)

What is Deification?

Divinization, Christification, *Theosis*

The greatest possible union with God.

A communion with God so intimate and so complete that we become sharers of God's divine nature for all eternity.

We become immortal and incorruptible.

Catechism 1999

“The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the sanctifying or deifying grace received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification:

> *Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself. (2 Cor 5:17-18)*

Deification is a Two-fold Process

1. Being children of God (God's divine grace)

   (participation in his nature/made in his image)

2. Acting like children of God (our cooperation)

   (imitation/likeness)

Eucharistic Liturgy

In every celebration of the Eucharist , the priest (or deacon) mixes a little water with the wine in the chalice and says:

“By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”

Roman Missal, 381

Pastoral Implications

While this phrase of our “becoming God” is ancient, this is just the message we need to place at the center of today’s call for a “New Evangelization.” As Pope Saint John Paull II exhorted all of us [today], the Church in the twenty-first century is to help others duc in altum, to “[p]ut out into the deep” (Lk 5:4), by seeing how the divine longings of their hearts will be satisfied only by the God for whom we are all made…. We must present to the world a Christ who rushes past our own sinfulness and shortfalls in order not only to heal and embrace us, but to transform us into himself. He sent us his own Holy Spirit and thereby adopts us into his own life, making us divinely adopted sons and daughters, children of the same heavenly Father.

Called to be Children of God, David Meconi and Carl Olson

The Moral Life

How poverty-stricken and mean Christian morality appears when it is regarded merely as the morality of man…rather than as the morality of the sons of God! How faintly the heavenly, spiritual, holy, even divine character of Christian virtue glows in this view! It is not sufficient to stress the exceedingly great and fatherly love of God for us, or to say in general that we are adopted by the Father through Christ and are made co-heirs with Him. To appreciate the magnitude of that love, we must appreciate the magnitude of its effect in us. To grasp the truth that we are really Christ's brothers, we must go into the question of our conformity with Him in His divine no less than in His human nature. …[Grace] must be apprehended and presented as the new foundation of that life…."

Matthias Scheeben, *Nature and Grace*

We become fit for the kingdom by learning to make a complete gift of self to another.

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