Becoming Children in the Reign of God: Encountering Triune God Shows Self-emptying and Self-giving as Keys to Wellbeing through Practicing Christ's Model of a Charitable Life Order

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"…to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God…" (Jn 1:12)
"… and see – we are alive" (2Cor 6: 9)

Becoming Children in the Reign of God

Encountering Triune God Shows Self-emptying and Self-giving as Keys to Wellbeing through Practicing Christ's Model of a Charitable Life Order

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CONTENT

ABSTRACT

This essay describes, interprets, and proposes theological conversation and performance that can actualize the experience of our encounter with the Triune God and what we were able to learn thus far from this event in which the Trinity teaches us.

The phenomenology of performing spiritual exercises in clinical pastoral care leads to a systematic theology for pastoral ministry. It integrates psychological and theological conscientization, transforming the participants through the self-emptying self-giving dynamism of radical love, even for the 'enemy'. The love for God and neighbor provides a communal ecclesial space of encounter and conversation for all to share with the Spirit. Eucharist and Reconciliation offer the liturgical ritual confirmation of commitment to self-emptying self-giving, in imitation of Christ. As receivers of wellbeing from the Father who gives, we flourish, children in the reign of God.

The ideas were developed in conversation with the letter to the Phillipians, the gospel of Luke, and first letter of John, the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola, and of Augustine of Hippo, with the theology of Jacques Haers, Bernard Lonergan, Karl Rahner and Paul Tillich, the psychology of Carl Jung, and the postmodern philosophy of Jaques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Emmanuael Levinas, Jean Luc Marion, and Paul Ricoeur.

TERMS

Conscientization
As promoted by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin, 1972): the process of "developing consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality".

Consolation
St. Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises* [316] calls consolation "every increase of faith, hope and love, and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of one's soul, by filling it with peace and quiet in its Creator and Lord."

Contemplation
Becoming personally present through the imagination to an event in the life of Christ, in order to come to know Christ intimately and personally. It allows the development of real and ongoing relationship with Jesus, to act out of the vision Jesus has to life. Contemplation allows for the imaginative and voluntary encounter with triune God.

Desolation
All the opposite of consolation. (St. Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises* [317])

Dialectic
Any systematic reasoning, exposition, or argument that juxtaposes opposed or contradictory ideas and usually seeks to resolve their conflict.

Fulfillment
As explained by Karl Rahner (Theological Investigations X Ch. 15), fulfillment or consummation is a temporal event that has an end and has a result that it seeks as self-justification.

Subject
–noun: the one performing the action or being in the state expressed by a predicate.
–adjective: being under domination, control, or influence.
–verb (used with object): to bring under domination, control, or influence.

Subjectivation
A concept coined by Michel Foucault, referring to the construction of the individual subject. Subjectivation precedes the subject in the same way as the process of individuation precedes the creation of the individual. It has an ontological preeminence on the subject as a term.

Symbol
A term that participates in the actualizing of the thing it refers to.

Introduction: A Conversion Event

We became children in the reign of God by encountering the Trinity in traumatic events that transformed us stepwise. These changes came to us – clients, staff, myself as chaplain – as partakers in ministry to mental patients and prisoners. It led us to self-giving love, after confronting us with self-emptying. We found meaning in service to our communities, inside and outside institutions or families[1]. This brought a persistent tension between self-giving and self-centeredness, self-emptying and being full of one-self: the pride of appropriating as personal achievement what are the gifts of God. Self emptying can have a high as after-effect, one we may be inclined to seek after with bodily techniques – like most of the new-age religious reaching. In contrast, it can generate a scary after-effect, one of discomfort, of loss of meaning. Then we must wait as a gosling for its parent to feed it. We can be demanding, but the timing is not ours, the action is not ours, the initiative is not ours. Leaving the initiative to God is the main difference between Enlightenment and Charity as life orders. Our experience shows that God's time is not ours; we actually temporize for contrition and change, but eventually God's turn comes. Conversion involves a battle over autarchy and creativity, where we compete with God for supremacy. This conflict finds its expression in aggression, and any form of violence. It is all reducible to surrender to God or the lack thereof. Conversion through self-giving is thus intrinsically connected to self-emptying in filial obedience. The Father himself gave us the example in his Son, and to all who accept him, "he gave the power to become children of God (Jn 1:12)", the Glorified Christ in us through the Spirit, making us alive theologically.

The mentally ill for whom I was a chaplain flourished, where psychiatry failed. Why? Triune God through traumatic events invited us to conversion and led us to live as children in the reign of God. My status as chaplain seems to play an important sacramental role, somewhat as a low level version of apostolicity. This essay attempts a theological explication from inside the event of how our wellbeing

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[1] Sr. Donald Corcoran, OSB-Cam, oral communication.

actually came about and can persist. The thesis it proposes is that *encountering Triune God shows self-emptying and self-giving as keys to wellbeing when practicing Christ's model of a charitable life order.*

As stated, the context is my ministry to mental patients mainly in Massachusetts and Flanders, in various circumstances: private, halfway houses, voluntarily or involuntarily institutionalized, forensic. Without formal psychological or theological training, conditioned by traumatic events, I was asked to clinically take care of traumatized people. The Spirit went to work…

This essay then describes, interprets, and proposes theological conversation and performance that can actualize the experience of our encounter with the Triune God and what we were able to learn thus far from what the Trinity taught us.   There are four chapters. Each chapter starts with a section describing our experience and a hypothesis about what we were made to discover. The next section finds support for our hypothesis, and the third section finds objections to it. Every chapter then closes with a theological reflection. The first chapter introduces dynamics of love that can constitute stages of wellbeing. We also find that this dynamic human consciousness can be brought into harmony with divine consciousness; which leads us to surmise that human reality operates within a theological framework. We find how doing Spiritual Exercises in the style of Ignatius of Loyola leads people to conversion and wellbeing, in ways that parallel but exceed clinical psychology[2]. The second chapter shows how self-giving preconditioned by self-emptying is the engine for dynamic conscientization in likeness of the Triune God and brings flourishing. The third chapter leads to the conclusion that in order to maintain this wellbeing we need the sacraments of the Church, so that we can become children of God. In the final chapter we find that a charitable life order is necessary to achieve persistent wellbeing in communion. We find that a monastic model, like oblature is constitutive of that. We find projects in prison ministry that have implemented and brought to fruition various aspects of our proposal. The partakers in such projects have reached wellbeing, and persist as children in the reign of God, being alive theologically.

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[2] The paper presupposes some familiarity with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and with clinical psychology or pastoral care.

1. Encountering God brings the Experience of Wellbeing

1.1. Ministry, Psychology, Theology

<u>Spiritual Exercises, Growth, Wellbeing and Crises</u>

In their liminality mentally traumatized people form a fertile group with whom to work at conversion. For them religious development is not an increase in pietism but a search for a replacement of an objective super ego God and a finding of a more authentic relation wherein they can be subject of their selves. This need to be subjects of their selves dominates our conversations. God is preferable as authority over 'the system'. Hence, the patients want to orient our meetings in a theologically direction, and make them quite distinct from family visits, or expert visits with lawyers or medical staff; this is true for one-on-ones as well as for group meetings. We engage in exercise projects, in which we adopt Ignatian style contemplation[3] about gospel texts, trying to place ourselves "in the scene" and express our intellectual and affective reactions. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola are about God's self-communication to the exercitant[4]. They are the culmination of a dynamic paradigm grounded in scripture that leads the exercitant to joining the Glorified Christ as an instrument for the Reign of God, surrendering one's self to resonating union in joy, to find God in God. Ignatius recognizes that aligning one's will with God's aims, resonating in harmony, develops in stages. In the annotations for the directors of the exercises, he insists on the need to adapt the exercises to the individual's progress. These decisions must be guided by the development stage that the exercitant achieves.

We developed a structured framework for the individual meetings and a project plan. The authority behind the outcome of the exercises, and their aim is God, not the chaplain, not the institution, nor the 'Personal Treatment Plans'. The actual implementation of the projects is entirely contextualized by the

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[3] St. Ignatius of Loyola, "Spiritual Exercises" in Michael Ivens, S.J. *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises,* Inigo Text Series: 4 (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 45-48;*Spiritual Exercises* [45-49].

[4] Howard J Gray, S.J., "Joy and Friendship in the Fourth Week", *Resurrection and Beyond: the Fourth Week* (London: The Way Publications, 1999); Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises,* 15th Annotation [15].

situation of the exercitants. A complementary effect of the exercises is an increased participation in the sacraments of Eucharist, and reconciliation. Spiritual exercises are very personal experiences that cause unthematized reactions. They are the clients' projects; my role as chaplain is to help them structure the outcomes, i.e. thematize. I was amazed at apprehending God's Trinitarian cooperation with the patients' conversion. There is the presence of the Father, the discipleship of the Son, the power of the Spirit. God is present to the participants, laboring for them, in them, with them; I am allowed to 'see' that, with certainty. [5] For the chaplain the presence of God in the patients' life remains a certainty, which these exercises put in more evidence. For each patient, I make an overall project plan that includes preparatory sessions for explications and logistics; then follow 4-8 contemplation weeks, to finish with the "Contemplation to Attain Love". Each session is divided in an Expression part that relates the past contemplation, and a Word part: talk about the topic of the new reflection. For each session I produce in writing a preparation-implementation- recapitulation report that documents progress through the project and compares it with stated goals. While these goals are qualitative they try to stipulate measurable outcomes and criteria for success. Finally I write a recapitulating reflection. With these documents I can objectively follow the evolution of our cooperative conversion towards wellbeing; they are also available for supervisory evaluation.

Four different types of exercise projects seemed to be needed: Initial transformation, confirmation, crisis-correction, and 'maintenance'. The exercises are built on the frame and the style of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises: Discrete steps, with discrete intermediary goals of discernment on "here and now" issues. The purpose of the first project is initiating transformation. The discourse is the recognition of the participants' situation, guilt, desire for change, and religious background, in front of and among God and their neighbors. To that end I introduce the participants to Ignatius' principles of discernment and

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[5] The clinical staff record the changes in the patients in their medical charts, so the effects of God's presence in the patients' existence are independently measured.

detachment. The project ends with Ignatius' "Contemplation to Attain Love,"[6] the purpose of which is to ground persistent efficacy of the conversion and consequent discernments. After the Transformation project the clients try to live according to St. James' admonition on faith expressed in deeds of love, supported by Ignatius' discernment, and by Augustine's principle of using the world to save one's soul "…if we wish to return to our Father's home, this world must be used, not enjoyed…"[7] They set out to be the subject of their being, not the object of the system's control. They tend to enter into dialectic with "the system". They are willing to pay the price for the challenges this brings, in the knowledge that their suffering will bring the gain of knowing how to lead a more successful existence as a transformed being on the way to redemption. Theirs is not a resistance for the sake of power games, but for the purpose of gaining control of their life, on the one hand by taking it away from others, and on the other hand by figuring out how to be a better human. The tools they have are Eucharist, prayer, daily examen, discernment, and trust in God's presence. It is out of their relationship with God that they construct a strategy for gaining control of their existence. They pray, typically that is expressed in reciting the Lord's Prayer: "It helps to focus, but the medications they give make focusing a struggle."

The second project aims at confirmation of the clients being on the right track. "They let us exist, they say of the institutional powers, but they do not let us be." This statement sets the tone for the second project: ongoing conversion actualizes being and freedom.   As a follow-up we use the same technologies and understandings as before. The discourse now, however, is the progress made by the patients on the way of becoming subject of their selves,[8] while being on the way to the Father.[9] Since the second type of project is directed towards providing the clients with means for assessment of their situation and confirmation of their identity. It tends to be more intellectual than the Transformation projects which involve raw feelings, more meditating about the 'fruits' than contemplating the 'mysteries'.

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[6] St Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*[230-237].
[7] St Ignatius *Spiritual Exercises* [313- 336]; St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book I.4; Jas 2:12-24.
[8] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject (*New York: Picador , 2004).
[9] St Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book I.

In between projects patients live a life of hope in dialog or in tension with 'the system', supported by their love for God. To be allowed to see this cooperation between God and Human is to experience in Spirit how the Father makes himself present to those who strive towards discipleship of the Son. It is a great consolation. Their goal is conversion towards becoming a better human being, and control over their existence. God laboring through them at the reign of God is the real source and goal of flourishing. This makes us instruments in God's salvation economy.   As Karl Rahner says, humans as instruments transform history into transcendence[10].

The road to conversion is not usually without bumps. Hence a project was developed that helped resolve crisis. Again with contemplation of gospel texts, mainly on the persecution of Jesus, it is possible to realize that the disciple is not better than the master, and that therefore 'non-cooperation' must be expected and dealt with. The choice is to love your enemies, but to do it informed by the gospel and by negotiation theory. It requires developed discernment, and management of one's emotions. These exercises tend to be one-on-one. They involve practical third party expert support, and teaching the patients to manage their lives without conflict, in the presence of God, working in them, with them, for them. They require self-emptying. Hence contemplation of Jesus on the cross is part of them.

To minimize the re-occurrence of crises we developed maintenance exercises, which are weekly conversations, partly one-on-one, partly in group (when applicable), combined with sacramental life and meditation: participation in Eucharist. The pattern for our conversations is always the same: the clients' relationship with God and neighbor, their relationship with themselves, the management of their feelings and acts in light of these relationships, their desires for self-governance in the presence of God. These four phases of our conversation each correspond with one of four dynamical constituents to human consciousness: acceptability, acceptance, management, control. We came to call these the Dynamics of Love, and will discuss them later on. During the meetings we discuss current concerns in the light of the

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[10] Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. X, Ch.15.

contemplations of the past week. We try to formulate strategy for 'action'. Combining an understanding of the symbols used by patients to express their concerns with the authority of the text of the bible, and with Ignatius' rules for assessment, discernment, and election provides a sufficient process to increase the adequacy of psychiatrically disabled people through pastoral care. Increased adequacy is necessary for recovery. Prayer and Spiritual Exercises proved to be effective tools for conversion resulting in persistent wellbeing, in adults with psychiatric disabilities. Afterwards, I reflect on the communication and preview appropriate gospel texts for relevant reflection for the coming week. Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist appear to be effective as symbols in the practice of the patients, for this very reason: they are symbols that bring their spiritual reality present. The patients may not intellectually understand this, but they have a felt knowledge of their efficaciousness. To be allowed to observe the effect of their participation in the Eucharist on the patients' attitude of self-giving remains a source of wonder for me. It shows how sacramentality as act of giving engenders the presence of that what is beyond its symbolic representation and as act of receiving synchronizes the action of the recipient with that of the giver. In the case of the Eucharist it's object is the actualization of synchronous self-giving of Christ and of us. Since self-giving is what brought wellbeing to the patients, as we will see, it stands to reason that participation in the Eucharist is the symbol for that wellbeing, simultaneously presenting and maintaining it. The effect of these exercises is conversion of intentionality towards identifying with Christ through appropriation of his attitude of self-giving.

1.2. Christ's Attitude, Love, Beatitude

How was Christ self-giving? What did it entail? We look for a theological interpretation of New Testament texts about Christ's *kerygma*, one that we can identify with.

<u>Paul: Individual Attitude</u>

Paul in Phil 2:6-11 summarizes Christ's way of life, an attitude that the Father approves by identifying Christ as God. Christ against sin presents self-renunciation rather than self-promotion, and humility rather than pride. Besides, the obedience of Christ contrasts with the disobedience of Adam. We see Paul's as a message of recapitulative salvation and ethics, or of ontological and existential change. The Christ event serves as guideline for how to live according to the message of Christ (Phil 1:27) by remaining steadfast while suffering.[11] God in his sovereignty approves (Phil 2.9-11) the action and thoughts of Christ, whose submission (Phil 2:6-8) underscores God's sovereignty by appealing to all to follow in surrender (Phil 2:12-18). The primacy of God's judgment is confirmed in (Phil 1:28). It justifies Paul's appeal to ethics (Phil 2:2-5): "conform to the mindset of Christ on the virtue of God's approval".

Children of God work out their salvation in obedience to God, who works in them to kindle their desire and to help them work (Phil 2:12-13), thinking one thing: the attitude of Christ, who emptied himself from his Godness prerogatives, and even as human humbled himself to death on the cross, thus taking on the status of slave, someone without civil rights and thus not human. Christ-ethics effect salvation: hence behave as Christ in freedom and joy for your salvation; hold on to the word of life; rejoice and share your joy! That is the message of Paul since the Father gave Jesus the Name (Lord, the name of God) because of his self-giving identifying him as God-self. To confess that Jesus is Lord is to glorify the Father, who gave him the Name.

Christ's self-giving is the paradigm for the self-giving of the faithful. Christ being divine gives himself, and thus reveals self-giving as characteristic of God. Christ's self-giving is therefore not only towards our salvation but towards the revelation of God as identifiable by self-giving. Hence what Christ is and what Christ is for us is one self-communication of God.[12] Christ's submission is rendered to God out of

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[11] Suffering is the linking image between Christ and the patients or inmates, the 'gate'.
[12] Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for Us* (San Francisco: Harper, 1973), 5.

his equality, and makes God identify him as God: self-giving confirms his Godness.   Humans by imitation

of Christ's submission in self-emptying self-giving to God open themselves up to the activation of divine

nature[13] in harmonious resonance or synchronicity with the divine. Paul demonstrates that same

submission that is applicable to all believers (Phil 1:1). Paul like Christ reflects an attitude of self-giving (Phil

1:22-26; 2:17-18) and willingness of dropping in humility his human privileges under the law (Phil 3:5-6),

which while not divine, still are superior as Jew to those of the Hellenists in the Christian community. Paul

shares suffering (Phil 3:10). He submits himself by striving for Christ's message doing what God makes

him do (Phil 3:14) and all this Paul does willingly (Phil 3: 8).

For Christ, demonstration of divine equality came as glorification; for humans affirmation of

likeness with God comes as wellbeing. Surrendering our life to God activates what we are meant to be:

dynamic images of God. God "acknowledges Christian self-abnegation (Phil 2:1-4, 12-18) in the same way

(Phil 3:2, 11, 21)."[14]   Submission to God is a dynamic synchronicity, a harmony, a resonance between the

faithful and God. Handing over control of one's life to God, is to come in union of being with God, making

God present, to oneself, and by one's actions in synchronicity with God allow God to reveal Godself in the

world. In this submission to God all humans are equal: there is only one Father, there is no hierarchy,[15] no

transference, there is no attachment. Any and all synchronicity and resonance and harmony between

humans are through God. The Fatherhood of God is not of one who Lords it over you but one who walks

with you (Mic 6:8) and works in you (Phil 2:13) so that you may desire to work and actually manage to work

with God, and be children of God shining like "lights in the world" because God will fully supply whatever

you need (Phil 4:19). It is by working at our submission that we work at our salvation (Phil 2:12). Christ

already has brought us spiritual resurrection but not yet bodily resurrection if we submit ourselves to his

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[13] Wolhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Eerdmans, 1991),377

[14] N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991),97

[15] Elisabeth Schuessler-Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroads, 1983),26-36

name: Christ's self-emptying and self-giving is normative of this radical new spiritual life. Self-emptying is towards God, self-giving is towards God and others.

Paul's exhortation is: "Have among you the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). Philippians language is ambiguous on individual-communal interpretation of the imitation of Christ e.g. (Phil 2:5 ; 2:13) '*en umin*' may mean 'in you' or '*among you*'; (Phil 2:2) '*ta eauton*' can be 'the things of each yourselves' i.e. individual attributes. So the impression given is that unity of group-behavior is a consequence of individual imitation of Christ, without mutuality. Similarly Phil 2:12 is ambiguous on the individual – communal plan: "work out your own salvation." So, if Phil 2:5 and 2:13 are translated as "in you" the meaning is individual: God is working in you as individual, and you work out your individual salvation, even if in the context of a group everybody doing simultaneously the same thing the group ends up saved. On the other hand, if the translation is 'among you' then God working at the common good of the group is the origin of the salvation of the group and of the individual through the individuals in the group.

So Paul gives examples of individuals: first of all, of himself imitating Christ; so that all in imitating Paul imitate Christ. This is a 'vertical' imitation (Phil 3:17). As an example he sends Timothy who "as son with his father" served with Paul. He also sends Epaphrodistos who puts the good of others before his own good, to the point that he gets sick working on the behalf of the Philippians who sent him to Paul. The two women Euodia and Syntyche must "think the same in the Lord" and in that way come together. So it would seem that Philippians prioritizes individual but 'synchronous' behavior to generate unity in the group. [16] I raise this issue because it was my observation that 'individual salvation' through one-on-ones alone is more difficult to achieve and maintain than in combination with groups. It is however only when one becomes self-giving to others that persistent salvation and wellbeing are established. It is a mutually influencing horizontal dynamic that obtains lasting effects of flourishing, a flowering plant more than a bouquet of flowers.

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[16] Jerry L. Sumney, *Philippians* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007),39-68

<u>Luke: Radical Attitude</u>

It is not sufficient to claim love of God, it must be expressed in works towards the neighbor (Jas 2), even to the extent of loving one's enemy, as Luke radically proposes; only then one can perceive one's own wellbeing (1Jn 3:21-22). According to Luke to love your enemies is a command of Jesus to his disciples, the first after the blessings in the plain (Lk 6:27:38). To 'love', i.e. to pay attention to 'enemies' for Luke's Jesus is expressed in concrete deeds, as for instance by the Roman centurion who built a synagogue (Lk 7:5). Radical life giving love resembles self-giving to an enemy: it is a gift that cannot be returned – no other is you – to someone who cannot be expected to return it: those who have disregard for you, abuse you, reject your thinking.[17] It is not limited to material goods: the humiliation of the blow on the cheek, the injustice of having taken away what is yours must be reacted upon by offering the other cheek, a non violent reaction of surrender by offering more. Such an action may be interpreted as subversive of the system of competition and violence. The main effect here of the teaching of Luke's Jesus is the interruption of reciprocity.   To give gratuitously is to empty yourself of the desire of reciprocity. Not even within the Trinity there is reciprocity, says Lonergan.[18] The 'Thou' addressed to the Father presupposes a human connection: Jesus. On the human level this makes that a true encounter is always with someone we cannot control. What we do together must be freely engaged, not imposed, whether in violence or competition. It perplexes the others who cannot understand; in that it reinforces self-giving as a driver of staged development. We evoke through self-emptying of attachments and self-giving, but cannot force personal change in one another. We must make room for one another, so that each can freely give, and freely receive, in a creative flow of transformation. We communicate ourselves, in trust, to our friends and partners. We accept the risk of being judged standing before them. This love operating in a religious space brings about a fulfillment that is grounded in the experience of the presence of God, to which both

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[17] Christopher Owczareck, sdb, *Sons of the Most High* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002),130ff
[18] Bernard Lonergan, *De Deo Trino, Pars Dogmatica* II (Rome: Gregorian University, 1964),196.

patient and chaplain can entrust themselves through faith.[19] How to justify the demand for faith? That is the question posed by Hans Urs von Balthasar. The answer must be theological or rather "theo-pragmatic:…a deed that interprets itself before man [sic] and for his sake (and only therefore to him and in him)…and is credible only as love."[20] Paradoxically, God's self manifestation in love maintains the absoluteness of the distance of the Wholly-Other through the glory of the resurrected Christ. Religious consciousness is a function of this paradox, which requires faith, and cannot be derived from the self.

John: Communal Attitude

John in the Fourth Gospel teaches the participation of Christians in the life of God. This occurs currently in our consciousnesses where death, judgment, resurrection, access to eternal life are kairotic[21] actualities[22] uniting biblical mysticism and apocalyptic eschatology. Jesus constantly looks at the Father to determine his actions and behavior: because the Son cannot act without the Father on the Trinitarian plan. This dependence in equality of the Son on the Father is shown in Jesus lived in human mode, so that the disciples in mimesis and having received divine life may behave as children of God (Jn 1:12). Jesus on earth existentially defines the 'children of God' concept of life: to live with the gaze fixed on God's glory (Jn 5:41; 7:18; 8:50) completely absorbed in filial dependence. To refuse this actual filial dependence is sin in act (1Jn 1:8; Jn 3:32) and in state (Jn 8:47; 1Jn 3:6; 3:8; 3:10). It is a presumptuous self-centeredness, which takes away the possibility of opening towards God (Jn 9:39-41).   Sin is not only an intellectual decision of the will, but an affective rejection as well which turns into hatred (Jn 15:18f; 17:14)[23] for which there is no solution. A refusal of conversion results in serious punishment, but individual sins find their resolution in redemption, through faith and confession which are brought by the Spirit who assists those

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[19] Bernard Lonergan, "Religion", *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 101ff.
[20] Hans Urs von Balthasar: *Love Alone is Credible* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, *2004),* 10, 56.
[21] Paul Tillich, "The Kingdom of God within History", *Systematic Theology*, Vol III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 370f.
[22] A. Feuillet, *Études Johanniques* (Paris: Desclée - De Brouwer, 1962), 179, 188.
[23] Giuseppe Ghiberti, *Spirito e vita Cristiana in Giovanni* (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1989), 156f.

who distribute the forgiveness, and also those whose sins must be forgiven. The gift of the Spirit thus is twofold; the gift and the invitation to voluntarily accept the gift whose content is the Spirit and the mission. Both are a sign of the new life of Glory. In 1Jn 3,4 we learn that it is by loving each other that God remains among us, and in us, and that we have life, rather than death. We can do this because God loved us first. We do not have fear in our heart, and we can therefore discern what is pleasant to God. It is the only thing we can give God: to do what pleases God. We must give up idols, to possess the Son, and life.

> "We should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Then he remains in us, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us." (1Jn 3:23-24)

In his self-emptying self-giving Jesus of Nazareth was so filled with the powers of God that through his deeds he performed his equality with God, for all to see while submitting himself to the Father. (Jn 5:17-23; 10:33). This equality was so evident that it endangered the establishment (Jn 11:47-48) and that therefore Jesus had to die (Jn11:49-50); that the establishment were to adapt was not a possible consideration. This decision being proposed by the archpriest, the agent of God under the Old Law, who prophesizes at the occasion, makes John suggest that Godself wants this to happen in order to replace the Old Covenant with a new one, an apocalyptic change from an exteriorized existential practice to an interiorized transformational ontology, from static rules to dynamic creativity, living Word: the norms for human behavior can only be found there where God has inscribed them. The dynamics of human being then are given to them after self-emptying and are expressed in self-giving, the character of God, explicated by Jesus Christ, Son and God. In order to make this new covenant effective Jesus must die and rise again. John shows the irony of the high-priest's prophecy: Jerusalem was destroyed and Christ lives.[24] There is a double irony in that it is in the self-centeredness of the formulation of the decision (the leadership wanted to stay in power for its own benefit) that the establishment emptied itself of all meaning.

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[24] Raymond Ahoua, *The Transference of the Three Mediating Institutions of Salvation from Caiaphas to Jesus* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008),97.

1.3. Consciousness and Imagination

Imagining themselves in the narration of the Bible stories, and participatively repeating them, allows the patients to 'read' the reality of the gospel as an accepting space within which they have an important role to play, and which challenges them to accept an identity[25]. This identity they get in dialog with the identity behind the text of the authors of the text, as the latter propose their view of Christian life. Paul in Philippians states explicitly: imitating me, you will imitate Christ, and Divine life will be infused in you. Reading the Gospel stories allows the patients to re-enter the realm of the Imaginary, without having to feel childish by returning to the religion and the stories of their childhood. However this link is not automatically defined: there is freedom, and also insecurity, but in a manageable way. The patient-in-the-parable makes decisions. These decisions they relate to the group and to the chaplain, and they apply in their own life. They can compare the judgments, their own and that of their peers, in a trusted environment. That is the space of the Real: where they can make judgments, and be judged, by themselves, their peers, and God. The Gospels are the sacrament of God's Word, and bring God present, allowing a dialog that challenges us into choices about identity. The absent becomes present within my internal horizon on my demand; it is the game babies play with the face of the parent. It means Love: self-giving of God to me, in my space of imagination which I agree was delimited by God in the first place. It substitutes for the stories that I do not have, for the attention I did not get. It proves my acceptability. It is empowering. The satisfaction is in the felt knowledge of Christ-God in me. Christ in me is the bridge between the immanent and the transcendent for which I am the voluntary channel; not quite the hypostatic union, but union with God nevertheless.

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[25] Peter Brooks, Norman Holland, Jacques Lacan, Pierre Ricoeur as quoted in J. Harold Ellens and Wayne G. Rollins, *Psychology and the Bible* (Westport: Praeger, 2004)156ff, 242.

Similarly, Paul Pruyser proposes that religious experiences open a space in consciousness for symbolic processing of an illusionistic world that deals with transcendence and mystery. [26] 'Illusion' unlike hallucination or delusion that are fallacies because unrealizable, is a true third between dream and common sense. It bridges the gap between the autistic, subjective, inner world of affect, and the exterior , objective, sensory world. Because this third world is threatened by attempts to reduction to selfism and sensory reality it requires careful tutoring. Pruyser like Rahner underlines the importance of limit situations in the religious experience. Unlike Rahner he puts the initiative with the individual human.

John J. Shea specifies that this shared space precisely is why religion is about the self and God together and is relational and developmental.[27] To come to this integral spirituality requires a threefold transformation: of the self from adolescent to adult, of the fettered imaging to unfettered religious experience, of the characteristics of the superego God to the characteristics of the Living God. What hinders the transformation? Shea says that foremost is a lack of love in the formative years, also addictions and dependencies on substances, practices or other persons. Trauma is another factor, as well as cultural and societal constraints, and finally inadequate choices and sin. What triggers transformation in the first place is love, sometimes trauma, which give us the space to accept our condition. This may lead to challenging the standards of society, and to renegotiating our own choices, in other words managing our lives differently. To that end we hope and forgive, we engage in an integral spirituality, but above all we surrender control over what may happen in life to the Living God.

What, however, if our surroundings interfere, for instance through over-medication and oppression? Most psychological models presume the benevolence of service providers. It would seem from our evidence on the interaction between patients and system that dialectic models like those of Leone,

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[26] Paul Pruyser, "The Tutored Imagination in Religion", Paul Pruyser, Ed. , *Changing Views of Human Condition* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987) , 101-117.
[27] John J. Shea, *Finding God Again* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005),95.

Linn and Siegel, and Basseches are applicable only in cooperative dynamic situations.[28] What about conflict? For a patient we will name 'Ryan' it was possible to overcome conflict by relinquishing control, because he learned to love his enemies[29]. This had come only after a major crisis that shocked Ryan: he suddenly reacted violently on persistent abusive behavior by the staff; consequently the institute wanted to send him to jail. This was the occurrence that inspired the development of the 'crisis project' described above. It seemed necessary to reemphasize Augustine's paradigm,[30] and to perform small steps of gratuitous kindness towards peers and staff. Such a forgiving behavior went beyond what the system expected; it brought a loving response from Ryan's mother –who was going through a major crisis of her own; it built up his self-esteem and subjective wellbeing.[31] It was in line with a Christian theological value pattern of accepting transcendence and expressing it in self-giving love. In letting go of his attachments, Ryan followed Christ's exemplary and humbling self-emptying as proposed by Paul in Philippians 2. This freed his consciousness to being a new creation, because of God loving him in spite of his falling away. It requires a lot of humility to accept that you are acceptable as you are, and loved by God and by people. The key was Ryan's conversion advancing to loving his enemies, doing good to them, turning his cheek, forgiving his mother for the lack of love (Lk 6:27-38). Love for their enemies is the highest degree of self-giving Jesus asks from his disciples. In short notice it brought Ryan back to flourishing, with restored privileges as objective measurement by the hospital[32]. This repeat conversion was possible because Ryan finally accepted self-emptying, and giving control to God, hence opening up to God making Ryan apt for transcendence.   This was shown in his behavior towards God in prayer and participation in the sacraments, which stands symbol for his wellbeing, and in his behavior towards others.

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[28] Michal Basseches, "Dialectical Thinking as a Metasystematic Form of Cognitive Organization", *Beyond Formal Operations: Late Adolescent and Adult Cognitive Development*, Michael L. Commons, Francis A. Richards, And Cheryl Armon, eds. (New York: Praeger, 1984), 231.

[29] For reasons of privacy not only are the patients identified with aliases, but are their concrete situations not detailed.

[30] Use and enjoy: use that what can bring you closer to enjoying union with God.

[31] Kevin R. Byrd, Andrew Hageman, and Dawn Belle Isle "Intrinsic Motivation and Objective Well-Being: The Unique Contribution of Intrinsic Religious Motivation" in *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 17(2), 141-156.

[32] Chaplains no longer are given access to patient charts, treatment plans nor team meetings, per changed policy of the DMH.

The religious experience with the patients when thematized with the help of theological reflection corresponds with and confirms several concepts in psychology of religion. Paul Pruyser, as we mentioned above, proposes that in an 'illusory space' people in their imagination can deal with the experience of mystery and transcendence; this somewhat corresponds with the recourse to imagination made in Ignatian contemplation, and opens toward the 'space of encounter' that we experienced. Pruyser, however, does not elaborate on the communal aspects of the religious experience. James W. Fowler does; in his view conversion is a communal happening.[33] For Fowler, it matters how one is sponsored throughout the conversion, how affirmation, encouragement, guidance, and models are provided for ongoing growth and development. Our evidence in contrast seems to indicate that the theological way of spiritual exercises and dealing with God in all things, reduces the importance of the sponsor in favor of the perception of God's active presence. The chaplain is not an intermediary to an objectified God, far above or infinitely deep within, but merely a catalyst of the Triune God, once the patients adhere to the Father, by 'cleaving to' the Spirit, by thinking and acting as the Son. While on this point we differ with Fowler, his assertion that "we constitute our own subjective experience of others, self, and world, related to transcendence" seems to parallel our dynamics of love model. Fowler claims, and we want to agree with him, that these ordered and staged transitions are trans-cultural, and underscore humans' universal calling to be related to the Ground of Being in a covenantal relationship that includes the neighbor. Viability of one or other stage or sequence of stages however, seems dependent on the values within a culture, particularly when it comes to the motivation for transition.[34] Fowler adapted to religious awareness a schema similar to Kohlberg's model for phased moral development. Every stage represents a discrete, self-sustaining whole characterized by particular values. For Kohlberg each stage is a whole structured by logical arguments about justice. In the first "egocentric" stage one judges in the light of one's self interest. In the subsequent 'authoritarian' stage,

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[33] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1981), 286-303.
[34] Michael L Commons and Francis A Richards, "Applying General Stage Theory ", *Beyond Formal Operations*, 156.

people judge in conformity with the dictates of their peer group.   In the last 'autonomous' stage have they have developed an adult understanding of justice that embraces what benefits the whole world.   For Kohlberg, who sees only objective norms rather than subjective decision making, cognitive development of justice rather than care's response to others fosters stage transitions, which are dominated by rational reflection[35]. We too observe such levels of being, but in contrast to Kohlberg, found both thematized and unthematized aspects to these transitions, which were possible only through acts of self-giving and discernment after conversion. Typically, however, the patients were unhappy with their performance at the first two levels and did not find ways to transit to the next stage.

That brings up the question of whether religious experience is one of the dimensions that constitute humanness, or that being human, including knowledge and culture, develops within the relationship with God. Enlightenment's project is to answer this question by promoting autonomy of the human from a distant God-object in an objectified environment. Kathryn Tanner is convinced that theology is part of culture, but not that it underlies human consciousness.[36] She supports the assertion that it is one way of formulating worldviews, and that therefore it is necessary to correlate theology with human situations in order to show its relevance. For Tanner, and Pruyser for that matter, culture is the framework for an individual's fulfillment of social needs, including the affective.   What moves people in their decisions, is determined by their local culture.

Which localizes Kant's[37] universal 'kingdom of ends', the common good for rational beings, who are otherwise each an end on themselves. A dynamic bond between morality, action, beneficence towards others, and perfection of the self is constituent for the rational being. There is no self-giving love: the objective necessity of any action, including occasionally changing one's maxims, is a consequence of the

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[35] Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (New York: Harper & Row),493.
[36] Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997),63-69.
[37] Immanuel Kant, *Groundings for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992),[426, 400-401, 410-414, 441,443, 398, 431, 439].

duty toward pure thinking. Kant's insistence on the need of the will to be free and autonomous grounded

his hesitation vis-à-vis affect. No *Einfühlung,* empathy, for him!

Robert Vischer's concept of empathy or esthetic sympathy was transferred to psychology by

Sigmund Freud who viewed it as essential for establishing the rapport between patient and analyst that

makes interpretation possible.[38] It opens the therapist's worldview to the patient's, while keeping it at a

distance to avoid transference. Empathy, thus defined, therefore must exclude self-emptying or self-

giving.[39] It leaves the patient alone and sole authority in the determination of a course for the future.   Carl

Rogers redefines empathy as a cognitive and affective behavioral process that is perceptive of the interior

frame of reference of another, as if one were the other, without losing the insight of the 'as if' condition.[40]

For Edith Stein, empathy does not only let us understand others, but also ourselves by making us construct

values and evaluations based on these values. In parallel with empathy compassion is aroused in the

observer, together with a desire to help. The problem is that over-arousal of empathy impedes caring,

probably as an evolutionary reaction against endangering one-self in hopeless situations. According to

Charles Shelton empathy can serve as a channel for Christian praxis.[41]   Radical Christian love, states

Jules Toner, is "a response in which the lover affirms the beloved explicitly in his act of being, allowing for

identification through communion." [42] Shelton's proposal for Christian empathy is not radical love according

to this definition, it does not include identification with radical self-giving, it does not require self-emptying,

and it does not allow Christ to live in us for further sharing in communion.[43] While empathy is a necessary

part of affective behaviour, it is not enough to explicate our experience; it falls short because it is purely

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[38] Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,* 1905.

[39] Beverly Ann Mussgrave, "Empathy: The Caregiver Looks Both Ways", Beverly Ann Mussgrave and John R. Buckle. Eds., Partners in Healing (New York: Paulist Press, 2003),35.

[40] Carl Rogers "A Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-centered framework" in Charles M. Shelton, *Morality of the Heart,* (New York, Crossroads, 1990),40.

[41] Shelton, *Morality,*103.

[42] Jules Toner, *Love and Friendship* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003),163.

[43] Shelton, *Morality,*107.

dyadic as Edith Stein pointed out, [44] and does not involve God in the relation. Hence, while empathy provides a general direction towards care it cannot substitute for 'love',[45] and thus is insufficient to encounter God. [46]

Carl Jung underlines the importance of the feeling-tone of the complex of ideas that construct a level of consciousness with their meaning and energy. Individuation depends on an attitude that uses these feeling-toned complexes for development, by detaching consciousness from external objects and internal images[47]. There is a superabundance of meaning beyond consciousness, which engages consciousness through synchronicity, in a a-causal concurrence of spirit and matter in just-so orderedness. Hence, Jung postulates two 'transcendental principles' in tension with each other: spirit and instinct, which both relate to the psyche. In the creating engagement between the two the mystery draws the self developing consciousness of the individual to surrender to its very near presence[48].

That brings us back to Shea's thesis and our experience: in the presence of God we receive our identity in mutuality, which makes us flourish. Psychological science has developmental models that explicate wellbeing. We came to similar findings through a theological approach to clinical pastoral practice. God is present with self-giving love giving itself to us in a personal union that fills us with this self-giving as a community of children who imitate the self-giving.

1.4. Felt Experience of Encountering the Triune God

Likeness of God…

Trauma leads to transformation and conversion through self-giving hat are possible because as image of God's self-giving creatures have a consciousness apt at resonating with God's. This is so

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[44] Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington: ICS Publications, 1986), 117-118.
[45] Beatrice Beebe, Frank M. Lachmann, *Infant research and adult treatment: Co-constructing interactions* (Hillsdale: The Analytic Press, 2002).
[46] Note how spiritual exercises and discernment based on the charitable model have a triadic nature, e.g. Ignatius and Augustine.
[47] Carl Jung, " The relation between the Ego and the unconscious" , *Collected Works*, Vol. VII (Princeton: Bollingen), 174.
[48] Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage 1963), 325.

individually but also in conversation with the community within which they perform. The dynamics of human consciousness often are expressed by a model that starts with consciousness of the self, consciousness of relations with others, handling of the emotions that these two generate, and control of the self in the context of the world. Such is in a nutshell a materialist view of human consciousness. Beatrice Beebe's research suggests inverting the order of the first two terms: Humans need to start recognizing relationships as precondition for forming identity.[49] Since God loves us while we are still sinners (Rom 5:8), we can order this self-development paradigm according to the eschatological order of Jesus' Sermon in the Valley: sense of acceptability by others, *in casu* God and neighbors, justifying through Christ in us acceptance by the self, submission of situational management, and of existential control of oneself to God.[50] The patients indeed needed and desired to resolve four fundamental issues by stepwise developing capabilities for relations with the other (sense of acceptability), relations with the self (sense of acceptance), management of emotions caused by the previous two (sense of becoming subjects of their self), directed towards control over their world (sense of control).[51] This is how we actually found the four dynamics. We extended this inverted consciousness model by adding 'God' to the term 'other' and to the term 'world'. We find that it is similar to what Lonergan proposed,[52] but also that it includes at its limits the 'immanence' of God and the 'transcendence' of God.[53] This is the model of human consciousness that we use in our conversation with the patients, as stated above. Facing acceptability by God is recognizing God's immanence. Submitting the self to God implies recognizing God's transcendence. Now our self-development paradigm parallels Karl Rahner's concept of fulfillment.[54] The Gospels narrate how Jesus, helped by the Spirit, lived according to such an eschatological paradigm, by self-giving. Our 'Dynamics of

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[49] Beatrice Beebe, "Faces in Relation: A case Study", *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2004) 1-52.
[50] Cf. James F. Keenan, S.J., *Moral Wisdom* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004),24.
[51] Timothy Radcliffe, "Making Promise till Death", in *I Call You friends* (New York: Continuum, 2001),96.
[52] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990), 9.
[53] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, (New York: Crossroads,2004), 70.
[54] Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. X, Ch.15; cf. below, page 35.

Love' paradigm therefore enables discipleship of Jesus, as a start towards recovery of our new selves becoming children of God, which we see reflected in the progression of our conversion, which includes an ontological change as well as an existential one.[55] Hence, from early on we were amazed at the 'resonance' between psychology and theology. Theology, as we shall see further, finds God's consciousness to be dynamic. Dynamics enable consciousness to come into resonance.[56] Accepting such resonance leads to wellbeing. We find this experientially. It has been theologically labeled and elaborated as image and likeness of God. This likeness as the core of identity and joy remains a mystery because of the meaningfulness that it brings.[57] Particularly self-emptying self-giving allows us to identify with Christ in receiving glorified life. The evidence here seems in line with Paul in the Philippians and shows first, that self-giving is the driver behind the dynamics and stage transitions in wellbeing, and second, that self-emptying is a precondition for self-giving in the perception of God's Presence. It goes beyond post-formal development theory. The conversion experience and development exceeds cognitive development, in that it involves affect, it exceeds behavioral development in that it surpasses existential change in a transformation that is exterior as well as interior. Conversion seems to involve the integral person in opening one's horizon of being through courageous cognitive and affective subjectivity in submission. As stated above, a parallel seems to exist between the stages of wellbeing and the spiritual felt-knowledge of patients in progress of conversion. Or rather, the stage model of ethical and subjective development fits well with the Dynamics of Love model. We surmise that this is so because all human development, individual and social, occurs within the framework of religious development, which is to say

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[55] See for instance the paradigmatic change in person that Thomas Merton describes in *The Seven Storey Mountain,* or Ignatius when he describes his change at Manresa, or the seven stages of transformation described by Beatrijs of Nazareth in *Seuen Maniere van Minne.*
[56] I choose the term 'resonance ' because it is analogous to harmony and synchronicity of the (Jungian),psychologists, and because in physics it allows energies to act together as one while remaining separate, thus wholly maintaining otherness: "union of being, not union in being" as Thomas Aquinas writes. The term resonance opens potential connections to *perichoresis* theology as well.
[57]Robert Doran, "Christ and the Psyche", Thomas A. Dunne and Jean-Marc Laporte, Eds.,*Trinification of the World* (Toronto: Regis College Press, 1978)119-120.

within the integrating relationship with God in a space of encounter where the Triune God self-communicates to us, as relational persons.

…and Resonating Consciousness

Ignatius writes" … in the exercises it is fitting…that the creator and Lord Himself should communicate Himself… "[58] To open our consciousness in the concrete circumstances of everyday life puts us literally in front of God among our peers at a concrete location at a specific moment. It makes our judgments concrete occurrences of participation of the finite in the life of the Infinite. That is what God gave us space for by creating us[59]. In that space-time frame our psychological self and our theo-conscious self can meet God in love, because God is lovable in giving, and we are lovable in receiving this love. We would not open up and seek God, if God had not already found us.[60] This dynamic, this movement of the Spirit that grasps all in the space of our loving answer to God's call, is God's love. God gives us this transformation of our space into God's space, when we transcend ourselves expressing in our creativity, goodness, and love God's Presence, for all to see by what God did to us. That is to be transcended into self-communication of God. Consolation without cause is a way for us to experience God's presence. Most often they are experienced as personal, surprising instances of presence of God in self-communication, whether in the mind or through the senses, in daily circumstances. It is an amazing invitation to intimacy. For existential experiences to be constructive of redemption they must be understood cognitively and affectively against the backdrop of Dynamics of Love. This understanding comes as a mystical moment of conscientization that transforms the four dynamics of love ─acceptability, acceptance, management, submission ─ into dynamics of salvation, if one makes the concrete decision of faith.[61] The theological virtues of faith, hope, and love must be experienced as revealing Truth and Love, justifying self-

[58] Ignatius Loyola, "Fifteenth Annotation", *Spiritual Exercises*, [15].
[59] Simone Weil, *L'Attente de Dieu* (Paris: Fayard, 1966),146 ff.
[60] Edward Collin Vacek, S.J., *Love, Human and Divine* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 51.
[61] Karl Rahner, "Mystical Experience and Mystical Theology", *Theological Investigations* XVII (New-York: Crossroads, 1981), 96-99.

emptying and self-giving. That is why theology must be not only studied but exercised as foundational support for growth in personal or communal conversion, inner and outer. The outer word of saving history and the inner word of transcendental history, whether for the individual or for the community or for both in conversation, are mutually explicating revelation.

It requires however the very opening to judgment and to be in front of God, self, and peers; it requires the very opening to participation and to be among God, self, and peers. It requires courage to bring judgment and participation together in consciousness, and to go beyond subjectivity by projecting the contemplation into the awareness of an objective expression that communicates the experience of the contemplation for all to share[62]. Reporting about one's affective and intellectual experiences seemed to be more efficient when done in group combined with private sessions with the chaplain, than when limited to one-on-one sessions alone. Exteriorizing one's experiences for the benefit of the others was a major breakthrough for some of the patients. The first step always seems to be to find ourselves acceptable to others, as we are. If we believe that we are acceptable to God, we can muster the courage to be ourselves in front of the others, in spite of paranoia and low self-esteem.[63] Once we therefore relate to God and to our peers in acceptability, we weaken the excuse to not accept ourselves, which is the second step; we now have reached a level whereby both acceptability and acceptance of self and others construe a stable platform. This allows us to conceptualize the emotions that affect us during these interactions, and allow us to manage our life within the boundaries of our situation. We may not like these boundaries, because they are exteriorly imposed, yet we must be willing to give up the illusion that we can control every single happening in our life. Best is to give up control to the Father, with whom we now have established a working relationship in prayer. Helped by faith, the dynamics of our love enable us to reach a new stage of freedom in conversation with God as children.

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[62] Evidence shows that flourishing came more easily for individuals living in communion with peers. Milieu-therapy as practiced in the Welmet Project, about which in the last chapter, where patients and counselors cohabitate in community applies this insight.
[63] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2000), 40f.

Encountering Triune God's self-giving in all things substantiates a charitable life order, for which our context, which for inmates is the state institution or prison, presents itself as the locus of praxis.   The Contemplation to Attain Love, with which all projects end, gives an experiential understanding of love and shows God working for the patients and with them. They have in fact been elevated and made to transcend their previous state of being, thereby gaining some of the freedom of the children of God with their increased love for others. Their improved mental well-being shows, in relatedness to God-the-Father, in comfort with their boundaries, and enjoyment of the tension with the 'system'.[64]

The patients' spiritual exercise projects hence involve the construal of a new 'identity' within their awareness of the presence of God. "A person is an identity that emerges through relationship."[65] When illness interrupts their relationships, the patients want to change their being, and gain a better existence in the process. In fact, the evidence seems to indicate that unless this is what they strive for there will be no persistent improvement in their wellbeing.   Most patients' intentions involve transitioning from conventional behavior[66] in the hopes on a future that includes intimacy.[67]   To that end they need trust as a minimal version of a loving relationship. The only person they possibly can trust is the chaplain; not 'the system'; not their relatives nor friends. Their thought processes typically are stressed *ad limina*, facilitating the experience of God,[68] and the desire to build a new relational structure. The exercises that the chaplain encourages them to engage in provide them with an opportunity to do so. They include contemplation, creativity, and cooperation with peers, with the goal of producing a concrete deliverable that enriches all. If they give themselves to these exercises without reserves they flourish; otherwise they do not. The major difficulty is letting go of control over even the minutest of happenings. Within the limited number of patients

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[64] Freedom of judgment is precisely what the psychiatric-medical-legal system does not accept; it demands conformity to its behavioral directives. The result is detrimental for the patients – in a period of twelve months three committed suicide shortly after release.
[65] John D. Zizioulas, *Communion & Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 9f.
[66] Erik Erikson on typical "stage four" conventional behavior in James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 80, 322.
[67] Typical for "stage five" behavior; cf. James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 83, 113, 290.
[68] Karl Rahner, "The Experience of God Today", *Theological Investigations*, V11, (New-York: Crossroad-Seabury, 1974), 157; William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 157.

that I work with (40 in all) this appears markedly more difficult for whom was not been brought up religiously.   The exercises bring 'freedom-in-God' from an apprehension of the presence of God as Father, to whom they pray — quite often by reciting "Our Fathers". The exercises enable patients to become loving towards their peers, because freedom-in-God is *for* the other, not *from* the other; it is self-giving. This theological transition corresponds with transition to Fowler's stage of consideration of individuative-reflective faith, and with Erikson's stage of intimacy. During and after the exercises patrons demonstrate responsibility for others, and experience living with the ability of making more mature moral choices.[69] They thus accommodate and generate a new structure[70] in line with the findings that "patterns of cognitive growth are related to, and seen in patterns of affective and social development."[71]

Christ established what it entails to become Children of God: self-emptying self-giving. To be able to adopt this attitude we must grow toward a mature consciousness in submission to God; our wills then resonate in synchronicity. Our theological approach easily absorbs the concepts of developmental psychology. The difference is that in a psychological enlightenment model the initiative is with humans, whereas in a theological charity model the initiative is with God, making all human action and knowledge *ad limina* turn into theology.[72]

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[69] These exercises are in line with Ignatius' 18th annotation.
[70] Fowler 4th stage, Erikson 5th stage , cf. Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* 49.
[71] Suzanne Benack, "Postformal Epistemologies and the Growth of Empathy", in *Beyond Formal Operations*, 340-356.
[72] Karl Rahner, "The theological Dimension of the Question about Man", *Theological Investigations,* V17 (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 53-70.

2. Experiencing Self-Emptying Self-giving

2.1 Conversion, Self-emptying, Self-giving

<u>Experience of the Desire toward Conversion</u>

Self-centeredness appeared as the most striking characteristic of mental patients, extreme, pathological, self-destructive, yet understandable when one reads their medical charts. Where psychiatric care providers can empathize, they cannot let their compassion grow into the love that gives hope to mentally ill patients. Where this is done recovery can only be achieved at the price of transgression of professional boundaries and ethical norms; Beatrice Beebe documents this quite clearly.[73] Chaplains, however can, because they can show patients that the possibility exists that they are loved, gratuitously. Love is essential for people to muster the courage and transcend the framework in which they feel trapped. Pastoral support uniquely can assist them in overcoming these limits by discerning the will of God in all things and experience for themselves God's love for them. The onset of this love signals a change in the subject. The love events occur when patients want to be changed by God, the Lover catalyzed by the chaplain. Christ is present and through the chaplain can draw patients into the action of the Spirit and enable a situation whereby the patients feel loved by God, and by the chaplain out of the chaplain's love for God[74]. Any transference of affection can be redirected towards God. Intuitive, non-rational thought is acceptable in this triadic situation; the patients know it is not required to immediately disconnect from cognitive distortions to be acceptable. This facilitates the patients accepting rather than denying painful emotional states, and problematic environmental events. It gives time to reflect and discern before changing or acting upon them. For this to work the patients must freely accept the Triune God's presence, in general when meeting the chaplain, and here and now when the issues are discussed; this requires self-

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[73] Beebe, *Faces in relation.*
[74] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine,* 44ff.

emptying by the patient and experiential interaction with the Trinity beyond the perplexity of personal void. The chaplain is nothing more, nor less than a catalyst for this interaction between patient and God beyond the chaplain. This goes beyond, but requires, the focusing on felt experiences promoted by Gendlin[75]. It is an experience of anxiety to find one's personal space empty. In response, one can curve back onto the self in avoidance of what seems impossible to deal with. Alternatively, the courageous thing to do is to let God and neighbor fill this space, according to Christ's command.

By adapting spiritual exercises to the specific needs of the patients the chaplain can direct the attention and affects of the patient to the Word of God as authority. The conversation is between God and the patient; the chaplain together with the patient transfer the patient into the imagery of a parable in which the patient can associate with the 'good person' or the 'suffering person' who is saved through faith. The negativity of the patients' inadequacy becomes acceptable, because rejects-by-the-world are favorites of Jesus. Pride can be dropped, humble submission to God makes possible the courage of facing one's emptiness and let it be filled from the exterior with God's gift of presence. The negativity of the emptiness provides a tension and a force towards change through love for and being loved by Christ, in the current situation. This attenuates the emotions, and makes the condition more acceptable, and hence more controllable; thus surrendering to God generates a net gain a-posteriori of control over one's situation. The beneficial effect of self-giving became apparent immediately after a group of patients in the forensic unit of a state mental hospital, participating in a spiritual exercise started opening up to each other during group conversation about their experiences during contemplation of the mysteries of Christ as presented by Ignatius in the 'third week' of the Spiritual exercises. The fact that they were enabled to will and show themselves vulnerable to the others was a major breakthrough never observed in the hospital. It resulted in them behaving more caring towards each other and to other residents and staff, resulting in markedly

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[75] Eugene T. Gendlin, "Client-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy," David A. Wexler and Laura North Rice, *Innovations in Client-centered Therapy* (New York: John Wiley, 1974),234; see also M. M. Linehan, *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1993).

reduced violence. The importance of self-giving for the drastic transformation in wellbeing of the patients

was confirmed at a later time and place, when 'Lenny' asked me to bring him to visit 'Ken' who recently had

been transferred from their supervised residence to a hospice, because "it does him good; he enjoys it

when we visit him." On the other hand, reducing or stopping to be self-giving can cause regression on

religious, psychological and social level. This happened to Ryan. After an initial successful transformation,

Ryan had tried to live according to St. James' admonition on faith and deeds of love, supported by Ignatius'

discernment, and by Augustine's principle of using the world to save one's soul. [76] He set out to be the

subject of his being, not the object of the systems control. During that period Ryan experienced many

consolations, and was made aware of the Father working for him. Because consolations are different

experiences from ordinary ones such as pain, they easily can be overlooked, just as the experience of the

presence of the Spirit can be overlooked, just as unthematized psychological experiences can be lost

according to depth psychology.   Besides, objectified experiences are not the same thing as the experience

itself: e.g. the recollection of a consolation.   Mystical experiences are not outside the realm of an ordinary

Christian, although we may overlook, suppress, or not admit them. "He whom we call God dwells in this

nameless and pathless expanse of our consciousness, known in the experience of transcendence." [77]

Sachs concurs: mystical experience is an "intensification of the ordinary life of faith, rather than a

qualitatively different life." [78]   Listening to God's Word in contemplation is revealing in action, through

attunement with Jesus: Service Mysticism.   Thus it is possible even for mental patients in contemplation to

imagine themselves as participating in the parables or events in Christ's life. It is in action that we can

become aware of our being an image of God. This was an important finding for us. The spiritual exercises

that we do are based on the 'third week' of Saint Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual exercises, because of their

concentration on transformation. They test the imagination to serve with Jesus in self-giving. The whole

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[76] St Ignatius *Spiritual Exercises* [313- 336]; St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book I.4; Jas 2:12-24.
[77] Karl Rahner, "Experience of the Holy Spirit", *Theological Investigations*, XVIII, 190-191, 197
[78]John R. Sachs, "Ignatian Mysticism" in *Ignatian Prayer*, The Way Supplement 1995/82 (London: The Way Publications, 1995),73-83

person is challenged; not only intellectual knowledge through indwelling in the mysteries of Jesus' life, but affectively as well. Knowledge and affection play a mutually validating role in discernment. These exercises turned out to be very effective by bringing about an understanding in the exercitants of the meaningfulness of self-giving, the goal of all patients.

Conversation and Identity

Through trauma the Triune God irrupted into our existence teaching us to convert and to live charitably. The conversion projects that the mental patients and I, their chaplain, have been immersed in for the last five years allowed us to apprehend the presence of God and to be guided towards wellbeing by various threads of theology. [79] God appeals to changing behavior. Joint prayerful reflection by patient and chaplain on a parable or the authoritative text motivate the patient to change. Ignatius of Loyola offers guidelines for discerning how to behave and become a better person by searching God's will in all things. [80] The positive outcomes of increased wellbeing of the patients who participate in these spiritual exercises showed them as better humans, and thus a greater glory of God. Chaplains have an advantage over therapists and other service providers, in that they can introduce love in the process of recovery. For other service providers this would be a boundary transgression because of the risk of transference. Chaplains can introduce the discovery of the "covenantal friendship with God"[81] as a common project. The challenge for the chaplain, as I see it, is to improve discernment and attunement capabilities in their patients. Parables and the stories of Jesus as described in the Gospels provide a background against which to evaluate moral judgment. By paying personal attention to the emotions of the patients and letting them discover the values that these emotions indicate, a chaplain can help these patients with discernment.

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[79] I like to use the term Presence , rather than Grace, because of its body and wits connotation that flows into presentation-present-gift linguistics and because it contrasts with the Distance of the philosophers.
[80] Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises* [313-336].
[81] Edward Collins Vacek, S.J., *Covenantal Friendship with God and Discernment*, 2006, Draft-unpublished.

Contemplation by creatively imagining oneself in the place and the situation with Jesus and the other protagonists of the parable or a gospel story applicable to a here and now situation is one way of conversation with God that showed to be very effective towards flourishing. It's reliance on creative imagination draws the participant to the splendor of God's action without the aid of concepts, "independently of analysis into the good and the true."[82] Judgment about good and evil is the condition of humankind after the fall[83].   Searching for God in everything is the means for human salvation. Ignatius wants the exercitants to conclude their contemplations with an imaginary conversation with God about their feelings and insights that came up during the contemplation session, in colloquy. Hoping for the help of God suffices for creative 'space of encounter' experiences that open participants for the Spirit to work, as Raab describes.[84] To explicate to the chaplain and to the other participants in the exercises becomes a creative means of expressing contemplative intimacy and love in relativity to the others associated with the conversion project. This creativity, in action and contemplation breaks down the barrier between self and other caused by the conscious mind. Thanks to a fusion of subject and object, a new altered division of them in the aesthetic moment, the letting go of the 'I', benefits wellbeing through acts of self-giving love.

Conversation with God for Ignatius also happens through daily examen. "… Let him go over hour by hour or period by period. Then let him resolve anew to amend himself". Being aware of the presence of God always, transubstantiates a banal three-dimensional environment into a transcendental meeting space for sharing the truth and love revealed. God retreats a little to let us contemplate within this space so we can retreat into our highest levels of consciousness. There we are free to judge, and be judged by our judgment. There we choose to accept or reject the invitation to join our fellow invitees, in becoming aware of the presence of God. Conversation with God must not be limited to imagination. It must also include actual dialog with our environment in multi-cultural, multi-faith, open conversation. In that way conversation

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[82] John Navone, S.J., *Toward a Theology of Beauty* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press),ix.
[83] Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* I.2, M. Friedlaender, trans. (London:Truebner & Co., 1885) Vol I, 37.
[84] Kelley A. Raab: "Learning from Marion Milner", *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 13 (2),79-96 (2003).

becomes a dynamic moment that transforms our everyday environment into a space that helps put ourselves and our neighbors in front of God. There all can retreat into the deepest levels of consciousness; dare and relinquish control, contemplate the here and now situation, and freely accept the risk of being called upon by the Transcendence of Triune God. Responding to the call is the existential choice of everyday life. The Creator brings us the opportunity to transcend ourselves in the space of encounter by self-emptying, invites us to meet Godself, and make decisions.   The space of encounter is more than "a moral space"[85] that judges about ongoing affairs, the possible. It is the space for accepting to be filled with the new life of Christ, the power to be children of God, where we become totally self-giving. It is the space where we gain God's meaning out of our nothingness. The impossible happens: God's presence fills my abyss. It is the absurdity of the cross, lived in the liminality of mental illness and trauma. By identifying with Christ we build an identity for ourselves. God is the One ontological and existential father providing the feedback of love and truth in a new stage of freedom and felt knowledge of flourishing as children of God.

Conversion Event

Spiritual exercises based on Ignatius' contemplations of the mysteries of Christ lead to decide on conversion. This conversion allows us to regain a sense of adequacy. In order to reach the patient a chaplain must learn the semiotics of the verbal and behavioral symbols that are idioms of the patient.[86]   By using the authority of the text in a targeted theological approach, the bible stories and parables seem to empower patients and encourage them in exterior changes, by opening the possibilities of discipleship in a feedback loop.[87] That is to say, their felt knowledge generated by their imagining themselves in the parable situation justifies them in their own eyes, because they see the character they play in the parable as

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[85] Leon Bronstein, *Fragments of Life, Metaphysics, and Art* (New York: Bond Weelwright Company, 1953).
[86] Ana-Maria Rizzuto, "Discussion of Granqvist's article "On the relation between secular and divine relationships: An emerging attachment perspective and a critique of the 'depth' approaches." *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 16 (2006),19-28; and David M. Wulff, "How attached should we be to attachment theory?" *Ibid*, 29-36.
[87] J.A. Appleyard S.J. , *Becoming a Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991),9; also :conversio morum' cf Wolfers, and Sr. Kirsten.

justified by God. As a result they appropriate the attitude promoted by the biblical authors behind the text as the attitude of Christ. This changes the patients, and thus they come to a different behavior. These changes seem to come in stages: recognition of acceptability, self-acceptance, empathy, self-giving, self-emptying. All these stages require *intellectual* transitions opening up increased cognitive functionality, negotiated in tension with the context and with the inner cognitive growth of a person. Similarly and concurrently there are a*ffective* transitions*.* Affective and cognitive development, integrate into feeling knowledge that is united with *social* experience into conscientization, a unified constructed rendition of reality that exceeds this construction. [88] Thus our religious development towards well-being expresses itself in a psychological and ethical development that is acceptable to others, making us more acceptable to ourselves, and more able to manage our life in a meaningful way, irrespective of the circumstances. From this it appears that when religious development is left to be itself, mental health and flourishing follow.[89]

We observed the conversion event to have the following flow: desire for conversion, spiritual exercises and discernment, self-giving and blossoming (as early stage of wellbeing), freedom of spirit, conflict, regression to pre-conversion values and conditions, self-emptying, second attempt at decision and commitment, persistence and sacramentality, in an ecclesial context. We saw the synchronicity between increased adequacy of functioning in personal – relational, psychological, medical, legal- and theological – sacramental, spiritual – contexts.   As St Ignatius indicates, it is the rhythm of the individual's conversion that determines the tempo of proceeding. 'Third Week' exercises mediate transformation. The 'Contemplation to attain Love' contributes to persistence of the conversion. Augustine's "use the world to enjoy the presence of God" algorithm enables the setting of practical priorities on a daily basis. The patients' treatment history, eventual past projects, the rules of the Departments of Mental Health (DMH) or

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[88] Herb Koplowitz, "A Projection Beyond Piaget's Formal Operations Stage: A General System Stage and a Unitary Stage,", *Beyond Formal Operations,* 294.

[89] Peter Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion: by Way of Freud and Tillich", *Essays in Divinity,* Jerald C. Brauer, Gen. Ed., Vol III *The Dialogue between Theology and Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968),53-81.

of Corrections (DOC), and the habits of the psychological care givers are preconditions for the conversion projects that we are involved in. [90]

In conversion, we try and bridge the gap between experience of salvation and talk about it. The mystery of God as dynamic self-giving love surpasses all expression of reality, reflecting the engagement of the Triune God in the world. By turning to God we receive a new identity in conscious resonance with God.

2.2. *"Love Alone is Credible"*

Transcendental Theology

Karl Rahner's theology elaborates Ignatius' insight of God's self-communication. It means for him persistent presence to human consciousness of ineffable God, in un-caused freedom, not predictable from any perspective because Mystery[91]. It presupposes the return of faith to consciousness, the recognition of the relation of God to us as positive presence: God will accept us. Self-communication is communication: God arrives into humanness by appropriating humanness which is not a a-priori problem: humanness and godness are 'similes'. Consciousness is how we spiritually relate. Creation is a dynamic moment of self communication: the addressee 'is' for the purpose of the self-communication and 'is such' that the self-communication can be received. On God's initiative humans change history into transcendence, and in doing so are free beings, thereby constituting the difference between offer and acceptance of God's self-communication. God's self-communication comes with an added gift that makes acceptance possible: it shows that freedom in accepting is acceptable. For Rahner, the tension between "knowledge and love in their duality" describes human reality. A self-communication of God to humans must present itself as a dual occurrence of absolute love and absolute truth, in order to be receivable by humans. Hence, "the

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[90] For instance the psychotherapy imposed by the DMH is behavioral, and excludes depth psychology, whereas the chaplain uses theological development models and practices which show affinity with depth psychology. See: Marylou Sudders and Wendy Warring, Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Bipolar Disorder in Adults (Boston: Commonwealth Of Massachusetts, 2002); and also: Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Schizophrenia in Adults (Boston: Commonwealth Of Massachusetts, 1999).
[91] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, 88 note 10.

divine self-communication occurs in unity and distinction in history (of truth) and in spirit (of love)".It

occurred historically in the Christ event, which reveals the Father and hence brings knowledge of the truth:

self-communication as self-emptying self-giving love. It reoccurs economically all the time because it is a

timeless implication in history of the unoriginate, who mediates himself to himself: Father; the one who is in

truth uttered for himself: Son; the one who is accepted in love for himself: Holy Spirit. That what is freely

communicated is what makes God, God: 'divinity'.   "There is in God an awareness of these three persons;

a knowledge of Trinity as one consciousness and 'subject' of self-emptying self-giving.[92] There is no

mutuality in these 'relative' bonds between the self-communicator and the receivers.[93] The more so for

humans: to love God is to empty one-self of even rightful claims and be self-giving to other humans (Phil 2).

In doing that humans and their history in the world are elevated into transcendence, towards a horizon of

ultimate consummation into union with God.[94] It is the synchronization of consciousness and will in

obedience that makes human history apt for transcendence. In Christ God reveals himself as self-giving

love preconditioned by self-emptying. Such and only such self-emptying self-giving love provides the power

of and motivation to transform by raising in the addressee a response of submission to God in faith.

Existential Theology

In his existential theology, Paul Tillich pays attention to acceptability and acceptance as necessary

to courage of being. Courage is threatened by 'non-being', the abyss of losing oneself and becoming a

thing among things or of losing one's world in an empty self-relatedness. Courage needs the power of

being, a power transcending the non-being which is experienced in the anxiety of emptiness and

meaninglessness, which is effective in the anxiety of guilt, and in the anxiety of condemnation. The

courage that takes this threefold anxiety into itself must be rooted in a power of one's world. Neither self-

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[92] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, 94-96, 99, 106.
[93] Bernard Lonergan , *De Deo Trino*, 196.
[94] Karl Rahner, "Unity of Spirit and Matter", *Theological Investigations* VI; "Consummation of the World ", *Theological Investigations* X , 275.

affirmation as a part of a group nor self-affirmation of one-self is beyond the threat of non-being. Mystical identification transcends the aristocratic virtue of courageous self-sacrifice. It is self-surrender in a higher, more complete, and more radical form. Mysticism is an element in any person-to-person encounter with God. Self-affirmation comes from the personal encounter with God, which justifies the courage to accept acceptance in spite of consciousness of guilt; the courage to be is the courage to accept oneself as accepted in spite of being unacceptable. There is faith in the personal encounter with the personal God, because faith is the state of accepting of **being grasped by the power of being itself. Meaninglessness —as a consequence of being emptied— includes an exper**ience of the 'power of acceptance'. To accept this power of acceptance consciously, is the religious answer of absolute faith; it goes beyond mysticism because it accepts an aspect of doubt, which mysticism does not.[95] The courage to be, says Tillich, transcends mysticism and person-to-person encounter, cataphatic forms which are prevented by radical doubt and must be transformed leaving only absolute faith to achieve the Love and knowledge of God, and constitute the dynamics of God's self-affirmation that makes the self-affirmation of the finite being possible. Whoever receives the power of being and self-affirmation in courage participates in the reign of God.[96]

The path of self-emptying self-giving focuses on truth and love as the way of development; it demands concrete and constructive witnessing with our lives. Both Rahner and Tillich underscore the action of God in the lives of humans. Tillich accentuates faith, Rahner both faith and love. Our experience shows that only subjection to the un-limitable presence of God intimately transferring love and faith to us brings us wellbeing. In that, faith and love together act on us in hope: love is credible, and motivates us toward conversion. Rahner puts the initiative for the intimacy with God; Tillich puts the initiative with the humans.

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[95] The mystical experience of Beatrijs van Nazareth among others denies this statement by Tillich.
[96] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be,* 155, 164, 180.

2.3. Autarchy, Loss of Meaning, Loss of Control

We learned that we do not achieve wellbeing by clinging to temporal objectivity as autarchic subjects of our limited self. Yet care of the self is what continental philosophers consider to be necessary for humans to flourish. They too find self-emptying as a necessary condition. They assign however a totally different significance to the term kenosis – no surrender in self-giving love to God, no self-giving in love to neighbor, no self-giving to self. They see it to signify loss of meaning caused by loss of individual control over oneself. The unchanging search for increased control in ways that are solely initiatives by humans make the latter forever drawn to but separated from God in confrontation, refusing surrender, leading to existential absurdity. This contrasts with the Christian tradition which teaches that wellbeing comes through the giving up of identity of the human who converts and in submitting control to the Father identifies with God in the development of new life; identity is a gift of God together with wellbeing.

We consider a few philosophical proposals about kenosis, which position the term each in a different contextual application, and thereby clarify through contrast our own understanding of conversion, self-giving, and self-emptying. They object to self-emptying if not also to self-giving and conversion. For Foucault the absurdity hides either in unending unfulfillable progress of society, or alternatively in the ultimate dissipation of society that is corollary to ultimate individualism as consequence of the conversion to the self[97]. For Ricoeur it is the absurdity of self-emptying in radical love and forgiveness. For Derrida it is the impossibility of ultimate self-giving that makes even the name God meaningless. For Levinas it is the inactivity of the infinitely removed ineffable God that renders self-emptying absurd.

The 'fall', that is to say the insistence on autarchy makes humans choose the possible, which is the certitude known or knowable from the past, not the risky future that may be impossible.[98] Hence, autarchy misses courage to be transcending. It controls a knowable objective world, which in itself is radically

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[97] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 358.
[98] Jacques Derrida, *On the Name (*Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995*)*.

incapable of consummation, whether, as enlightenment assumes, a teleological movement is brought about purely from within the event from resources proper to it (immanent consummation) , or whether brought about by a non teleological infinite progress to infinitesimal individualism (immanent dissipation) .[99]

First, we consider Michel Foucault's concept of self. According to him only philosophy allows access to truth about oneself and provides the means to do so.[100] Spirituality requires transformation into other-than-oneself in order to access truth; it is not given by simple knowledge (*connaissance*), but requires *eros* (love) and *askesis* (work), which lead to change of the subject in being subject, through truth imposed by a higher authority outside the subject.   Enlightenment reverses this: the subject in one's self makes the truth: salvation is self-finalization.   Conversion therefore is nothing but return to the self.[101] Christian *metanoia*, says Foucault, is a break in the self: a change in being (from reign of the devil to reign of God), and a change in mode of being (personal *ethos*). Enlightened conversion, to the contrary liberates us within immanence, away from transcendence we cannot control, to what we can control: from the impossible to the possible. It is an advance towards the self as an end, to the ultimate goal of enjoyment of the self in the self.   Enlightened conversion is a continuous process of vigilance, a struggle. In contrast to monastic practice, which tries to decipher the self in function of an exterior guide, we must rather listen to the interior guide, "the presence of the self to the self in the distance" and produce our own ethos.[102]

Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida recognize the need for kenosis, self-emptying, while remaining on the same exclusive path of existential conversion which leads to nothing; they each give kenosis a different meaning, however. Says Derrida about Augustine's archetypical Christian conversion: "…it turns itself toward the other in order to turn the other toward God, without there being an order to these two movements, which are in truth the same… it is a conversion of existence…confession does not consist in

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[99] Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, Joseph Pearson, ed. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e, 2001),160-166.
[100] Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subjec,* (New York: Picador, 2004), 15-19, 206, 210-214, 327.
[101] With this Foucault assumes there is something one agrees to return to in the self; which, in the case of mental patients, is untrue. The origin, the point of recollection for them preferably must be heteronomous, possibly God reachable through faith.
[102] One patient, who insists on following this path, persists in unhappiness.

making known." [103]   Derrida arrives at the necessity and sufficiency of kenosis as the 'in-between the self

and the other', not resolving it as a knowable self-gift of or to God, however, but as a human capacity for

emptiness: kenosis of discourse, emptying words of their underlying meaning.   Can there be talk about

love, "this infinite renunciation which somehow surrenders to the impossible? To surrender to the other,

and this is the impossible, would amount to giving oneself over in going toward the other …constituting a

moment of deprivation, …a kenosis so that the other can remain the other." In contrast, to go where it is

possible is not to surrender.[104] These two ways are of an absolute heterogeneity. Any other is totally

other; one cannot even name it… Ricoeur finds kenosis necessary and sufficient to explain reconciliation,

as realized for instance in South Africa with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.[105] What force

makes one capable of asking, giving, and receiving forgiveness? For Kant asserts Ricoeur, forgiveness

includes a promise, a *quid-pro-quo* maintaining a bond between the forgiver and the forgiven; grief remains,

and guilt: there is no freedom gained. The only way therefore, according to Ricoeur, to be in the world, and

deal with forgiving is 'insouciance' or 'careless indifference' about the past: self-emptying without self-

giving. The gift of love to the enemy (Lk 6:32-35), whereby one cannot expect a return, is an image of the

absurdity of the gift of love of God to humans, who cannot give anything of value in return because of the

transcendental gap between the finite and the infinite. Hence, human self-emptying since it remains strictly

on the existential level is fruitless. For Emmanuel Levinas, this gap is unbridgeable, even though the

infinite is in us. Human love substitutes for God[106] because of the essential religiosity of the self [107]

whereby the psychical is originally theological.[108] Therefore God is at an unbridgeable distance, and any

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[103] Jacques Derrida, *On The Name*, 38, 51, 74-76, 84-85.
[104] Cf. the story of the rich young man in Mk 10.
[105] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004),481ff Note: Only one woman was able to forgive the killer of her son, in the entire performance of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Cf. Alejandro Castillejo-Cuéllar "Knowledge, Experience, and South Africa's Scenarios of Forgiveness", *Radical History Review* 2007(97)11-42.
[106] Roger Burggraeve, sdb, "Affected by the Face of the Other. The Levinasian Movement from the Exteriority to the Interiority of the Infinite," in I. Kajon, E. Baccarini, F. Brezzi, J. Hansel (eds.), *Emmanuel Levinas. Prophetic Inspiration and Philosophy* (Atti del Convegno internazionale per il Centenario della nascita, Roma, 24-27 maggio 2006), Firenze, Editrice La Giuntina, 2008, pp. 273-307.)
[107] Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (La Haye: Nijhoff, 1974)150/117).
[108] Emmanuel Levinas, *Transcendance et intelligibilité* (suivi d'un entretien),(Genève : Labor et Fides, 1984),39.

love is a purely human affair.   The subject stands oriented towards the other, thanks to an unending non-indifference, directed by the imperative appeal to responsibility for the other.   The omnipotent God far above and beyond the self must be emptied through kenosis, and declared dead, in order to gain access to the true, transcendent and ethically qualified God.[109] Relational Ethics transcend being human and are the Higher Authority. This "disarmed authority of the Infinite in me", calls me to a being for the other that infinitely surpasses my finitude, to a "divine *more* in the human, finite *less*" that I am.[110] This is counter to Paul's view that the action of the One (God) signifies grace for the other (human), through the 'infinite in us', which is the Spirit who inspires and moves us to divine self-giving love, whereby Christ is the exemplar self-emptying self-giving.[111]

Self-theories when applied in clinical practice appear not successful in bringing mentally ill to flourishing, whereas self-giving does. The latter gives meaning through the building of feeling knowledge by means of corroborative affective and cognitive analysis and creative action *coram*

Deo, coram hominibus, and evaluation of interior and exterior factors, against relative and absolute norms with Christ as exemplar.   Existential emptiness is dealt with through positive self-emptying and experientially filled through self-giving; my abyss is God's presence; the limit is the locus for our encounter.

2.4. What is Self-Emptying Self-giving?

The self-giving dynamic image of God appeared as an insight, to analyze phenomenologically by me. It empowered the patients' and my progressive practical construction of stages of wellbeing. Transiting through them was by means of increasing self-giving and self-emptying. Looking at this with an

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[109] Emmanuel Levinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée,* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1986), 112-113; cf in contrast: 1 Cor 15:46.
[110] Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement que savoir* (Interventions et discussions au *Débat général*),(Paris, Osiris, 1988),85; cf. Ignatius' *magis!*
[111] Roger Burggraeve, "De immanentie van God's Transcendentie", private communication, August 2009.

anthropological perspective one can see a single conscientization of salvation. The four dynamics with self-giving as agent, can be considered a model for the actualization of the image of God.

What is self-emptying? Maybe, I am well enough and am willing to give-myself. If, however, I am filled with suffering, I can maintain the hurt and feed my depression, which leads to worsening and persistent mental conditions, self-hatred, self-punishment, loss of identity. Or I can empty myself of this condition. It requires courage to go beyond the self that I know. It is not only an existential issue, but an ontological one: I must change the character of my being to something I may only suspect, but do not know, requiring 'courage to be', as Paul Tillich proposed.   What remains in me after I give away or throw away what filled my consciousness and memory, is scary emptiness, or so I fear. I can walk away from this liminal situation, and leave things as they were. That has a negative effect: I am less self-giving and hence more self-seeking, sinning; I decrease my wellness; I become less secure, more depressed; less authentic. But say that I do the proper act: and am left with a void, with the recognition that I am an empty space, qualitatively speaking void of valuables. I can let this void be filled with things that make me feel good, or with things that make me good, whereby the feeling of wellbeing is a secondary effect. In the former case we let ourselves be filled with 'worldly goods' by consumer culture or power plays. In the latter case we let ourselves be filled with the Spirit of God and the power to become children of God.

What is self-giving? We give our being to God and or others, which may be symbolized by our giving away of material or spiritual goods, out of love. It is a liminal act that puts us at risk; a dual risk of not being accepted and of being altered by the act of giving. In fact that risk is the only existential certainty we have, balanced by the certainty of obedient love in the hope that comes from faith, God's gift to us; it is the freedom we receive together with the power to be children of God.

Above we reflected on Christ's self-giving as described in some texts of the New Testament: Paul's letter to the Philippians, Luke's and John's gospels.   What does that entail for us? The objective paradigm for salvation is living through Christ in actions according to salvation. These are divine ethics:

living like Christ, we live like God. Humility and obedience even in suffering are paradigm for saved life,

rejoice, be free, of sin. Christ's paradigm says something about God, reveals God. Living in this way we

are the words of God, revealing God, when we act in joy because of humility and obedience even in

suffering. It is the attitude, the behavior of Christ that is significant. Christ did not give up divine essence,

'*en morfe theou*', but the rightful prerogatives of one with the status of '*en morfe theou*',[112] because he did

not consider to use his godliness to his personal gain and profit; in fact he self-emptied himself from being

at par with God, in a freely made decision, by taking on the condition and rank of a slave. But then God

gave him the name above all names: which is 'God' thus identifying Christ the human as the God that he is

preexistent because as God-the-Son he himself emptied his human existence of self-centered behavior

that could have pointed to his Godness. This is the kind of behavior that the Father identifies as

paradigmatic for God: a wise attitude that humans must adopt as only attitude 'in Christ', i.e. in the

community, in the church, in the body of Christ that they are member of. It is the behavior of Paul, and they

can adopt that. Christ's way to becoming God is contrary to self-exaltation; by being self-giving (Phil 2:5)

and self-emptying they join each other and Christ in salvation. Thus by behaving like the son (ethics) we

enable our salvation and reveal the paradigm of God, in unity of behavior.[113]

By calling Christ "Lord" we submit to God's assessment of Christ as paradigmatic for all of us. In

that Paul is the example for us. Christ's submission includes obedience, but is not limited to it; it may just

bring it into execution, when his will resonates with the Father's will, is equal to it, united, one. Christ's own

reflection on equality with God leads him to submission. He symbolized the latter by forsaking his rights to

privileges that come with being equal to God. "Christ's decision to forsake this Godness is approved by

God (Phil 2:9-11) as the right interpretation of the equality with God" because it is freely embraced.[114]

Christ's submission not only voluntarily includes obedience but radically embraces the rights of the other

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[112] Jozef Heriban, *Retto fronein e kenosis* (Roma: LAS, 1983), 263.
[113] Here Paul in the Letter to the Philipians promotes a behavior that contrasts the Cynics/Stoics/Foucault's autarchic unicity of behavior.
[114] M. Sydney Park, *Submission within the Godhead and the Church in the Epistle to the Philippians (*London: T&T Clark, 2007), 12.

over his own – under the OT law– at the risk of humiliation, suffering and death.[115] During his Passion Christ practiced what he preached: accepting humiliation, torture, non violence. In doing so he exposed his society for what it was: selfish, violent, and made it judge itself.   His actions were certainly considered subversive and received violence as a response. Even in acting like this he lovingly gave a gift of insight.

How can I be self-emptying, self-giving? The self-emptying then is the precondition to the new life driven by self-giving, because it allows acceptance of the hospitality of God who is near. Christ humbled himself. Humility is the key to being enabled to be self-giving. Self-emptying, so that we can be filled with the Spirit of God, starts with being humble if not humbled.   That is why this is easier to achieve by the marginal than by the rich. The patients changed when they started being self-giving, when they received the courage to let go of attachments. This caritas requires a community of peers towards whom to freely be humble, more so than a master-pupil relationship. It is by loving each other that God remains among us, and in us, and that we have life in Christ, in community; we can do this because God loved us first, while we were still sinners (1Jn 3,4; Rom 5:8). It is the humility that is missing in the discourses about self-emptying of Levinas, Derrida and other such luminaries.

God's self-giving reaches patients, and invites them to reach out to relatives and to the residents and staff in the State Hospital, thus increasing happiness. By the gratuitous performance of the chaplain they learn the practice of prayer, examen of conscience, discernment, sharing.   God's self-giving is a recursive universal; it makes one transcend oneself to open up to Gods transcendence by being self-giving towards others. To do it, teaches the person to be subject of the self, through evaluation and judgment, in filial relation to God. This gives short term satisfaction and long term *eudemonia*. These self-giving dynamics transform the person's character, and the community's culture, bringing wellbeing to all. Self-giving as act bridges the inner decision making based on inner strength of charitable character to the exterior effects of contributing to the community's wellbeing in a bidirectional way. Indeed discernment

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[115] Paul's view here complements Luke's "Love your enemy" and John's prodigal son discourses.

through practical reasoning and heartfelt feeling balances the interests of a person with a person's long term goals and short term desires, and with the community's needs and reactions. Self-giving therefore is a state, an action, and a norm for a person who is free in the process of decision making. Since self-giving is an exercise of the will balanced by affect, it leaves one in control when managing life in relation to self and others, in the immanent and transcendent presence of God, of which one always can take distance. Thus, self-giving makes one free in threefold action upon the agent; [116] self-giving therefore is agent-based subjective being, grounded in believing in order to understand its metaphoric metaphysics: resonating with God constitutes being alive theologically.[117] To God we give ourselves completely. We are elevated by God's acceptance of our gift, and by the Trinitarian presence that results from it. Hence, self-giving love is not self-sacrifice: we actually gain from this fuller relationship. Love of others while it is not a total giving, still achieves a transcending in harmony to a fuller way of being in relation, to the 'satisficing' maximum possible. Self-giving requires the courage to expose one's deepest self, and run the risk of being judged, by God and by others, lest one judges oneself. This exposure happens in a conscious Space of Encounter with God and others present to our consciousness, where we can understand each other's metaphors: the charity of the one is the wellbeing of the other, human or Divine, paraphrasing Burggraeve and Vacek. Thus, self-giving is a common good; all who accept self-giving can flourish in theosis: how surprisingly accessible is God!

As said above, self-giving necessitates discernment about action here and now. Discernment however, necessitates self-emptying as precondition for indifference,[118] whether within the protocol of Ignatius' major decisions or within the one of Augustine for daily choices. Self-giving, as is clear from the fourth Gospel is a lived experience, transcendent and immanent. It is felt knowledge, which can be practically reasoned about, and theologically conceptualized, but does not need to be determined a priori,

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[116] Cf Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, (Oxford: Oxford University press,1999), 44 'Remainder'.
[117] Cf Slote, Anselm, Augustine and Edmund Hill, Mark Johnson.
[118] Indifference here is used in the Ignatian sense of openness to anything because of God's presence in it; it is not careless ethical impartiality nor distancing philosophical neutrality.

because it is about the why of what is, not the knowledge of what is possible (1Jn3:18-24;1Cor22-23). In self-giving the patients demonstrated Paul's point. They also showed that gratuitous self-giving brings flourishing to all who practice. Furthermore they showed that its absence leads to regression. Self-giving therefore is a necessary good.   Self-emptying is its precondition. Through 'consolations without cause', Triune God's self-communicating presence surprised us. We first saw the Spirit at work teaching us what to say (Lk12:12), turning the clients cooperative and the institutions tolerant towards our theological developmental method. The clients each to their individual ability through worship and prayer developed a relationship with the Father.   Where was the Son in all this? At the end of a first project, contemplating the passion and resurrection of Christ, the bible showed him as truly brother to us, because of Jesus' descent into the hell, our hell, of liminality. We found his death hope-bringing and his resurrection believable. Because of this we were willing to imitate him in Spirit. We did however not yet experientially know how to. We had insufficiently learned the practice of self-giving. We had not gone through the stage of self-emptying. So far, in conversation with God, experts, and science, we had cognitively apprehended the four dynamic stages. We had however performance-wise only progressed through the first two stages of conversion: recognize that we are acceptable to the Father even if the world has cast us out, justifying us to be self-acceptant. [119] That it is Christ who gained us this justification we still had to figure out: we persisted behaving as if we knew it all, and were deploring the lack of control.

We saw self-giving effecting staged development of the patients, out of their maturing relation with God and their environment. After being opened in faith at first they were surprised by their acceptability, as they were. It invited to humbling self-acceptance in their lowly state; they had to empty themselves of their prejudice which made them rejectable in their own awareness, attached as it was to valuations which in the end are tethered to exaggerated exterior expectations. Christ emptied himself of his Godness in order to

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[119] Paul Tillich, claims that faith brings one this far. He does not explicate how to go beyond   The God-beyond-God can only show up after self-emptying, an ontological change which brings about self-giving, an existential habit.

be able to be human; to rely on his omnipotence was the ongoing temptation he had to fight. His solution was to give over control on his life to the Father, whose faithfulness he trusted, through death. With Rahner we see that this self-giving is the essence of God. It is revealed to us in the Father's self-communication ad extra from the Trinity that it constitutes, which we experience in its being present to us in the modes of self-giving love and self-emptying truth, as givable, acceptable, gift. In our well-being we can not return this gift but can hand it over to our neighbors in gratitude for the Father working for us, which is pleasing to him, who enables the work of the Spirit with us and the life of Christ in us. With von Balthasar, we can say that it is by letting Christ's glory work through us that we are the Trinitarian language of God to the world, a language that speaks of the reign of God (Mt 25:34-40) during the mission that Christ commanded us to be (Mt28:19-20) and in which he is with us, Emmanuel (Mt1:23), in the Spirit.   This glory maintains the absolute difference of the Wholly-Other: Christ in us is not us. It is a difference in union, a convergence, not a distance of the infinite-in-the-finite, nor an infinite distance to the Other, as Levinas proposes.   It is the indwelling of the other, who remains other, but with whom we resonate, and harmoniously proclaim his message in conversation and performance in any human language (Acts2:8) addressing hearers with the sign of God that is the self-giving love that comes with self-emptying truth.

3. Hypothesizing "Becoming Children in the Reign of God"

When we are self-giving the Son is what Aquinas calls the exemplary cause which we, reinforced through the Eucharist, allow to operate in the world through our cooperation. By giving ourselves in a self-emptying way we give the gift of God's Spirit activated in us through Christ living in us. By self-giving we allow Christ to open others to receive the same gift of God's Spirit, in such a way that the Father can be revealed. Thus the Triune God appears to all, through all, making all a little more god-like. This is the state of 'becoming children of God' that we must persist in, so as to stay committed to the promise of God:[120] we must be the burning bush that is not consumed but consummated.

In this chapter we consider how we can maintain a state of wellbeing and ongoing conversion. Our experience points to being subject to ourselves in obedient surrender to God's will through which we are in union with God already. This is helped by the techniques that are well known: prayer, examen, sacramentality, which constitute a lived practice of being children of God. What does this entail? The sacramental participation of God in History through individuals in community: the mystical body of Christ.

3.1. Surrender, Resurrection, Persistence, Worship

Through the action of the Son and the Spirit as truth and charity, patients and chaplain came into the presence of the Father and received the power to be children of God. Christ dwells in them "as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover."[121] By professing faith and acting lovingly in self-giving they experience and understand that they are assimilated to the persons of the Trinity by their

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[120] Timothy Radcliffe, OP, "Making Promises…", 96.
[121] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Iª q. 43 a.3 co.

participation in the procession of the Word and Love. Now they must persist in this relation with God, this 'becoming children of God'. How to do this? Jesus said: "Come and see." [122]

With Karl Rahner we tried to explain that the initial evidence showed our dynamics of love to be an image of Trinitarian consciousness. Again with Rahner we explicated as self-giving love the driving force that appears to be the agent for operational development, in humans as well as in the Trinity. Now this is a psychological interpretation with regards to the individual, but it is as well a social interpretation since the transition from one state of development to another can only happen in interaction not only with God, but with neighbor concurrently; to whom are you going to give yourself, unless to your peers (Jas2:14ff)? The scriptural connections for our model of Dynamics of Love are many (Gen 1:25; 1Jn; 1Jas; Lk 6). This self-giving made us imitators of Christ as Paul recommends (Eph 5:1; 1Cor 10:23-11.1; Rom15; Heb 13:7). Conversion was our own response to the Father's irruption into our lives, supported by spiritual exercises, reinforced by our flourishing in the persistent afterglow of the encounter.

After our conversion we arrived at a stable situation, in which we are trying to be self-giving. This may be difficult for us, but it is outright challenging for others who do not see this as a habit, who are not transformed. We see a 'new creation', an ontological change, which comes with accepting the Word through which we receive the power to be children of God. This change comes through baptism in the Spirit through which we take on Christ, i.e. are enabled to let Christ live in us. But God makes the sun shine equally on the wicked and the righteous. So there are two types of sons (Lk15:11-32): those oriented towards God, and those walking away from God, they are all being moved towards union with the Father, because they are all saved. Yet there are those who cannot bridge the transcendental gap, who cannot let go of control. They in various ways like Derrida, Ricoeur, Levinas, like the older son in the parable, or like Martha cannot empty themselves and be filled by the Word; instead they empty the Word of

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[122] Giles Emery, "The Doctrine of the Trinity" in Thomas Weinandy, Daniel Keating and John Yocum, eds., *Aquinas on Doctrine* (London: T7T Clark, 2004); Jn 1:46.

its radical self-giving in various ways. In conversion, we are moved from acceptability to acceptance to taking responsibility in the management of affairs as stewards on behalf of God through self-giving complemented by filial obedience. When the Israelites finally arrived in Canaan from Egypt the manna stopped, instead they took on the responsibility of obtaining their own food (Josh5:9-12). God remains with them, but now in a different way: Christ saving us and making us a new creation (2Cor5:17), baptized and changed giving glory to the Lord. Conversion is always a matter of asking our loving Father: change us and make us in your image. The desire to change is all that is asked of us. [123] The parable of the Prodigal son is the story of the two sons who are so very different and yet both of whom seek to do the Father's will. The older one never gives up his personal values; the youngest one dies and comes to life again: a spiritual resurrection.   One's inability to self-empty blocks progression: missing out on the feast, in spite of the Father's appeal (2Cor 5:21) and forgiveness of our trespasses (2Cor5:19).

These two polarities are in all of us; we move between them through self-emptying and self-giving. After conversion, since we are forgiven, we must also forgive. Not to forgive lets us be stuck by the law; we may be righteous, but we have not chosen the better part (Lk10:42), which is to be with Jesus in the eschatological reign of his Father (2Tim4:1; Mt26:29), where the values already have been reversed: where the poor are blessed, because they are able to love their enemies, and do not seek retribution (Lk 6:20, 27; Mt 5:38). How do I deal with the suffering that imposes itself as pain? ["I was just hurting everywhere" says Ryan]. I will eliminate my pain by reciprocating pain on you, or another, in revenge as my only remedy. ["You can consider it provocation, said the judge"]. In order to exert revenge I must find a culprit in a process of self-justification through accusation of others. In the reign of God, giving up revenge I accept uncertainty.   I need the church, through the sacrament of reconciliation, the Eucharist, the reading of the word of God, Christ who died and went to the grave, in the hope that I can be resurrected with Him out of my emptiness, so that it not be absorbed by the abyss, nor crunched into nothingness by the potency

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[123] Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises,* First Annotation [1].

of the system that oppresses me and keeps me in existence. ["They allow us to exist; they do not let us live"] The power of the system is exerted in the socio-judicio-medico-normalization process that I am an object of. Yet I want to be subject of myself and be liberated of the oppressors, present and past, exterior and interior. Do I have to give up myself in order to be free? Do I have to reverse all the values that I know? Are the Beatitudes to be my guidelines? Ah, metanoia!

Where do I get the courage to contradict the totalitarian hermeneutic that needs me guilty so as to justify itself? [124] That is the very reason why I must reject the system, and open towards its alternative to be saved, as a free person. This freedom I can attain independently from the circumstances and situation, precisely because it is inherently context free, untethered, and unconditioned. The scary part is that I do not know my own possibilities, because abuse and oppression have not let me develop them, except when I was sporting, or painting, or otherwise creatively occupied. Then I could give myself and I was free in the act of giving my all, free of competition.   This freedom in self-giving I remember as an opening to transcendence, a space of pure aperture in which to be possible[125] and to accept myself. I must will to love myself; from there I can give myself to the other, first in lovingly managing my relations affectively and willingly with my peers, and ultimately in surrendering to God the control over all these relations, even the self-giving in self-love.

Self love is different from selfishness. Actions can be from the self, not selfishly for the self. "Not my will but thy will be done" does not eliminate my will, it can mean that there is a cooperation between God and me, a resonance that maintains and expresses my desires. With "Ask and you shall receive" Jesus supports our expression of our desires, not our selfishness. That supposes that we as spiritual beings can accept to be made to transcend our own needs. Deep satisfactions accompany good actions. Reversely, sustained selfishness brings depression and attachment. We are responsible for that part of

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[124] Jean Luc Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 48.
[125] Marion, *Prolegomena,* 51-52.

reality that is ourselves, but we are responsible not only for ourselves.[126] This self-connection makes repentance possible, and God's forgiveness. Then we can trust ourselves to love ourselves in a responsible, non-sinful way. Then we can start thanking God, and bear our cross in humility, and be forgiving. There must be a balance between self-giving love for others and self-giving love for ourselves. Discernment is a necessary tool to achieve this balance.[127] Self-giving self-love is creative in that it encourages the self to reach for more goodness; thus it increases the value of our unique existence in balance with the neighbor. Ignatius' 'Contemplation to attain love' shows how necessary and sufficient it is to give whatever I can give to my peers, relatives, the staff.

Self-giving then for us humans starts with accepting that we are acceptable to God as we are, which we recognize in the hospitality of our neighbors. This first self-giving requires a self-emptying of our pride. It causes a fearful void, which we can fill either with 'worldly goods' or with trust in God. We give ourselves to the world, or to the Father. The former maintains our state of disruptive depression. The latter requires giving in to the courageous absurdity of faith. One of its effects is stability: we may not know our self, but we know it is good, and we can let its emptiness be filled with the goodness that comes from the Father's love, which is his self-giving to us, his presence, his Holy Spirit, who works with us at becoming alive as children of God. Our self-giving to the Father fills us with the joy of being alive: a well-being we can share with others through self-giving in our concrete life situations. As Augustine says, enjoying a human being in God is enjoying God rather than the human being. It is the beginning of our way to salvation by "building up the double love for God and neighbor." [128] By the self-giving in our relation with others we are filled with the Spirit of the Father; we either give over control over ourselves to the Father, or reject him by sinning against the Spirit (Mt12:31-32). And so through our surrender the Father makes us alive, theologically, by making Christ live in us (Gal 2:20). That is the mature stage of our life, even if it is only at

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[126] Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine,* 223.
[127] St. Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* [313-336].
[128] St. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* I, [79ff, 86].

the beginning of the way towards union with God. This requires from me persistence in conversion, which

is justified by the showing of God working with me, for me, and in me, the Holy Spirit, the Father, and the

Son in self-giving and self-communicating, opening me up to transcendental freedom as member of

Christ's body, the Church.

We observed synchronicity between the wellbeing of the patients and their participation in worship

and sacraments, which fills them with joy. Thus they persevere in becoming children of God in community

supported by the church, represented by the chaplain and effected in the sacraments, it brings them

increasing wellbeing. Not to do so decreases their wellbeing and leads to crisis, and certainly tests their

willingness to live theologically. Habitual sacramental Life is necessary for persisting in conversation with,

surrender to and elevation by God through one's neighbors united into being children of God, as revealed

by Jesus Christ, the Son, who keeps us alive theologically.

3.2. Salvation, Church, Eschaton

Experiencing God as children is expressed by letting Christ freely live in us so that the Spirit can

work with us to cooperate with the Father laboring for us. It is an event enabling the reign of God to auto-

actualize through us personally in communion. This happens exclusively through our participation in the

sacramental life of Christ and his Church, revealing diversity in union. In this section we investigate how

others support this concept.

The locus for change is a living loving Space of Encounter, an *ecclesia,* where the patients and the

chaplain experience consolations in their creative rendering of their contemplations and conversations.

That ecclesial encounter with God was preconditioned by individual consolations for sure, but also very

much by the –ever so at the periphery- accreditation of the chaplain by the institutional church. It was that

perceived accreditation that was key to the trust that I was somehow catalyzing the presence of God and

therefore trustworthy myself.   Hence, I deduced that Church is needed to frame ecclesia, within which

individual encounters, conversion, and wellbeing can flourish as common performance and conversation, constituting the self-communication of God. It provides the space within which it is safe to expose one self, including one's doubts, emptiness, suffering, hopes, and loves. It provides the impetus to self-giving after self-emptying. All had the need for confession to me as process for reconciliation with God. Self-giving grew from there. Faith praxis provided the framework the considerable growth actually needed to support transition to higher stages of development.

St. Paul wants Christians to live in this self-giving way because it was the way of Christ (Eph 5: 1, 2; 21; Gal 5), and to express this through serving their peers out of love for Christ. Then God in all things will work for the good of those that grow in likeness to the Son. The Father initiates this call, justifies and glorifies (Rom 8: 28-30). St. John reminds us that refusing to accept the Son means to miss out on having now the eternal life that the Father is, which is the promise of God, and which shows itself as the self-giving love that makes us into children of God (1Jn2:23,25;3:1-2,11,14-24). This love transforms us, and is the sign of our transformation, as we saw actualized in Jesus. We discern that we live according to the truth of self-giving love if we feel flourishing, a wellbeing that we receive with his Spirit.

St. Bernard, according to Jean Leclercq OSB, sees the key to the charity Paul proposes in the "affinity between the Word and the Soul" that comes about in contemplation and action.[129] Life is about Christ, the church, and their union restoring the likeness of God in humans. Wellbeing persists as a state of mystical happiness that pervades one's being, through the enjoyment of the Word: Christ's presence in us. The charity and contemplation he requires of us and makes possible is the restored image of the Word.

Thomas Aquinas teaches that every relation between God and creature is really in the creature, by whose change the relation is brought into being. By Christ's incarnation we are converted. From its effects we see grace at work bringing wellbeing. Sonship is made known by Christ, predestined the Son of God,

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[129] Jean Leclercq, OSB, "Introduction to Saint Bernard's Doctrine in the Sermons of the Song of Songs", *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, Vol 43.3 (2008),48-53; sermo 83.1; sermo 1.8.

fully God and fully human, in his incarnation and passion. Our aim is to assimilate Christ's truth and hence love God by loving our neighbor; it is union already on the way to its fulfillment; God in us. Christ showed that this is possible, through the obediential power of a creature. By letting Christ live in them (Gal 2:20), in as far as human nature is instrument of Divine action, and human action receives power from Divine nature,[130] humans are confirmed in their salvation, and receive the power to become children of God.

According to Sachs, Ignatius had a direct experience of the Trinity and the divine persons expressing an intimate relationship between God and creation, an understanding of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and of the humanity of Christ[131]. For Sachs "the Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus with the Christian, while Jesus is with the Father"[132]. The Contemplation to Attain Love, wants us to desire "intimate knowledge of the many blessings received… that I may in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty".[133] Humans must share in Triune God's presence and involvement with the world so that they may learn to give their very self to God and neighbor, in Love. God's self-gift intends to change us through God's personal presence; that is the reign of God in self-giving. For Brian McDermott, S.J. Jesus as victim died in solidarity with all victims, giving them hope in resurrection. The story of descent into hell is a dramatization of self-giving love for all victims, and for all victimizers: God loves the just and the unjust, the victimizers and the victims without separation. The way of life of the Glorified One allows us to maintain the unity of our being, as long as we are willing to love as Jesus loves. [134] By letting the passion happen to him omnipotent God as victim is co-involved in the victimizing of himself. The patients and inmates can associate with this; they recognize and feel guilty for their co-involvement in the cause of their liminal state. Hence Christ in the tomb visiting hell resonates with them, because this act shows solidarity in Glorified Life

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[130] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* IIIª q. 2 a. 7; Iª q. 3 a 4 ad 2;   IIIª q. 24 a. 2 ad 3; 24 a. 1 co.; q. 11 a. 1 co.; q. 43 a. 2 co.
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[132] John R. Sachs, "The Spirit of the Risen Lord", *Resurrection and Beyond: the Fourth Week* (London: The Way Publications, 1999), 24.
[133] Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises* [233], in Sachs, "Spirit of the Risen Lord", 24.
[134] Brian McDermott, S.J., "Forgivenness Aglorified: The Descent into Hell" in *Resurrection and beyond: the Fourth Week*, 126-128.

that abolishes the distance between the fallen and the Divine. Christ's resurrection becomes the believable

sign of salvation in hope: Glorified Life allows us to overcome history; it is eternal life through self-giving.

According to Karl Rahner God really assumes what human is, arriving among the humans as God

is. Christ's human nature comes into being when the Son expresses himself *ad extra*, in order to show

something about the one who communicates, in order for us to understand that the self-giving self-

emptying self-expression of the Son demonstrates the likeness with the Father. The givenness of the Son

is different from the givenness of the Father and of that of the Holy Spirit, in three relative concretenesses;

yet only one consciousness. [135] Through Jesus Christ, the latter is present to the entire human race

collectively and each human individually in their historicity. Its self-emptying and self-giving fullness can be

apprehended by the individual's consciousness and existence to contain in itself its own validation, even if it

remains an un-thematized confession of elevation-of-being. This self-emptying and self-giving of God is

the primary phenomenon given in faith making the receiving human becoming God's reality; scripture calls

this phenomenon love.

The other side of self-emptying self-giving is obedient poverty. Christ himself became poor by

setting aside his prerogatives as God. In order to follow Christ we give up our attachments, we attune our

thoughts and synchronize our behavior to him, the perfect image of the Father. Johann Baptist Metz

underscores that becoming a human being unfolds in obedience. To become human is to become poor,

which means: no support and no power save commitment in the presence of a transcendent God. Christ

shows us how to do it. He is Son-of–Man. We see our possibilities reflected in God's gratuitous

incarnation, whereby God shows the spirit of poverty, by respecting our humanity, revealing the depth of

our destiny. "Poverty of spirit is the … point where infinite mystery meets concrete existence." Human self-

acceptance initiates the assent to God: we only find ourselves when we lose ourselves transcending.

There are two choices: obediently accept one's poverty of being or become slave of anxiety. Acceptance

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[135] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* 31 note 27; 74.

of our authentic being is self-love in poverty of spirit, is shouldering the weight of self-emptying, it is consenting to self-surrender. "Self acceptance is harmonized with our conscious presence to Being… Our relationship with God is decided in our encounter with other humans… who are sacrament of God's hidden presence."[136]

Edward Schillebeeckx proposes that it is through us that God makes happen the eschatologic Beatitudes already, while the fulfilled reign of God is still to be[137]. Jesus called God 'Abba', father, which points to an intimate relationship which defines his person and is expressed in his words and deeds. In a similar way all humans through their physical activity express their spirit; the physical exteriority is the interiority of the person made visible, in a kind of language. [138] This is the highest level of universal reality that we can achieve; it comes through Christ, sacramentally through his Church as liminal space for the encounter between humans and Trinity. This reasoning enables a phenomenological explanation of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, sacramentally offered through his Church living in him. The question then is what is this reality in which theological and sacramental life is possible? It is the living Spirit of God. Eucharist is then the effect of the Spirit making the 'body of Christ' – the nourishment of his Church in sacramental form for its members. "God acts in the sphere of the actively believing…"

Piet Schoonenberg[139] sees God work in his creation from the outside and from the inside, being immanent in it. Christ is a human person, eternally the same as the Son of the Father, the second person of the Trinity. Did God empty himself in Christ? What does that mean? By having real existential relations with creatures – as opposed to St Thomas' proposition-logical ones - God is our creator and redeemer: "God is Love" (1Jn 4:8-16). That entails change, emergence, and becoming in God, in some divine way different from a human way, in God's relations; with Rahner,[140] Schoonenberg says: "God changes in the

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[136] Johan Baptist Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, (Paramus: Paulist Press, 1968), 26, 34-35.
[137] Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Jesus: het verhaal van een levende* (Bloemendaal: Nelissen, 1973), 141; 21-222.
[138] Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *The Eucharist* (London: Burns & Oates, 2005), 100, 144-151.
[139] Piet Schoonenberg, *The Christ*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1972),69, 73, 83-86 note 16.
[140] Karl Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology", *Theological Investigations* I, 181 note 10.

other". From this perspective it is possible for God to be seen by humans as becoming a Trinity through self-communicating in the man Jesus. That says nothing either way about God's Trinity from eternity.

For de Lubac the Church is the body of Christ mystically signified by the sacrament of the Eucharist. The unity of the members of Christ requires a memory of the Passion, and a true conversion of the heart as offer to the Father. In that sense the church as assembly enables to be children of God and feeds this capacity by making Christ present through communality in the Spirit to the individuals[141]. Only this participation gives theological meaning to one's life. It is a contribution to the community in self-giving remembrance of the self-giving and self-emptying in Christ which makes the self-emptying and self-giving re-enact itself in spirit, and brings the Triune God present to individual and collective history. This fills one with certainty of hope that one can be a channel for the Father at work in the world.

How can we describe directly the interaction of the self and God? God accepts the self without condition and invites the self to dwell in mutual love. The invitation is a mysterious calling of freedom in community by an inner voice heard in feeling and depth that gives meaning through metaphor. It lets us participate in the larger whole of an integral spirituality, which is not a supernatural add-on but the fullness of human development. It engenders empathy, compassion, and unconditional love. Integral spirituality provides a framework of meaning enabling participation in the larger whole that is to dwell in the Living God, who gives meaning to life, God's Word. [142]

The question posed by Hans Urs von Balthasar is how to provide the interpretation for God's Word as revealed in Christ.[143] Obedient faith prepares humans to perceive the manifestation of God's love and to give it its due.

> "The sole authority is the Son who interprets the Father in the Holy Spirit as divine love... One's consciousness, one's self-possession and possession of being can grow only and precisely to the extent that one breaks out of being-in-and-for-one-self in the act of

[141] Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum (*Paris: Aubier, 1949), 199, 281, 283, 294, 310.
[142] Shea, *Finding God Again,* 185.
[143] Hans Urs von Balthasar: *Love Alone is Credible (SanFrancisco: Ignatius Press, 2004),*10, 56.

communication, in exchange, and in human and cosmic *sympatheia*. Man comes to himself only by being addressed… as one who was brought into existence as a creature, he becomes only fully himself by responding. He himself is the language that God uses to speak to him; how could he not understand himself better here than anywhere else? The sign of the God who empties himself into humanity, death and abandonment by God, shows us why God came forth from himself: … This love is …being itself".

Does this teach us anything about God? In what way? Joseph Ratzinger agrees that the reception of revelation means to enter into Christ-reality[144]. Individual propositions are only meaningful in their instrumentality of making the mystery of Christ explicit. "Christ in us" and "we in Christ" are equivalent. Hence the reception of revelation, which is faith, is both an individual and a communal happening; faith and Church are closely connected. Through proclamation of the Gospel the Christ-event is present in the Church, and so is Christ's Spirit.   For Rahner[145] "History in the concrete both individually and collectively is the history of God's revelation." Faith is the reception of revelation, brought in union with the truth that is found in the Church, through a deep "ecclesial", socially formative mediation. For Dietmar Mieth "formative experiences are significant because they encompass human existence in its entire scope." Experience is open ended, yet historically linked to revelation of the un-confined, in a continuous dialogue. Even if one knows that the experience one undergoes is universal, the experience of it is still unique.[146] For David Tracy[147] anyone can experience the transformative possibility for human existence as disclosed in Jesus Christ, either immediately through manifestation, or mediately through critical reflection. Such an event has the force of a "decisive revelation of God, one's self, and of the final meaning of the whole of reality." Revelation then becomes authentically experiential when one has a "hermeneutical sensitivity to its genre-expression." We asked this question about revelation a-posteriori. Given the wellness brought to us by conversion to attunement to Christ, Spirit and Father's presence in our life, given to us in the margin but

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[144] Joseph Ratzinger, "Revelation and Tradition", Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, *Revelation and Tradition* (New Hork: Herder and Herder, 1966), 35-49.
[145] Karl Rahner, "Observations on the Concept of Revelation", ibid., 15f.
[146] Dietmar Mieth, "What is experience", in Edward Schillebeeckx and Bas van Iersel, Eds., *Revelation and Experience* (New York: Seabury,1979),114-115 .
[147] David Tracy, "The Particularity and Universality of Christian Revelation", in Edward Schillebeeckx and Bas van Iersel, Eds., *Revelation and Experience* (New York: Seabury,1979),114-115 .

undoubtedly through the effect of the church, we want to think that this is God self-communicating in revelation to us. Is it licit to think this way, or are we becoming arrogant, and therefore ultimately self defeating. We are closer to the institutional church in performance than in conversation. The sacraments are an integral part of our experience, both in the restoration and the maintenance of the faith that accompanies our self-giving. Yet operationally chaplains are at the fringes of the institutional church; it is hard to get pastoral support from the dioceses, in any of its forms.

3.3. Subjectivity, Authenticity, Distancing

Through faith and love, the Son and the Spirit, self-emptying and self-giving, the Triune God teaches us what Glorified Life is for each of us in community, we receive the power and are made to grow into transcendence and becoming children in the kingdom of God where Love reigns. This is the tenure of our experience and of the above theological explications. Yet enlightened thinkers tend to put progress in the exclusive power of human individuals. We take a look at some of their concepts.

For Immanuel Kant happiness and the enjoyment of life are opposed to satisfaction.[148] One must be beneficent out of duty. If my actions would be good with the goal of attaining anything, then they respond to a command of my will that presumes that the action will be good, since the goal is good, i.e. a hypothetical imperative. However if the action in itself is good, then it corresponds to a categorical imperative command of my will. There is only a single categorical imperative: "act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law. "

For Karl Barth[149] there is only one revelation: God living in Jesus Christ, historically walking around in Nazareth, the revelation of God himself: He is God's Son. True fatherhood resides in God. We humans become partakers in divine nature, because Jesus Christ is the mediator. "This work of the Son of God

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[148] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, Section I.
[149] Karl Barth, "God's only Son", *Dogmatics in Outline*; (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952),82-87.

includes in itself the work of the Father as its presupposition and the work of the Holy Spirit as its consequence."

Functional christologians, such as Oscar Cullman, are not concerned with what Jesus' nature is, but with what his function is. [150] They raise the question of what God does through the historical Jesus. For Pannenberg, all history is revelational, even though it must run its course; only eschatologically can people know Christ's divinity. That end already has begun, so that Jesus' oneness with God is manifested in time through the resurrection.[151] Jesus is present through all eternity in the essence of God, and God is present in history through the resurrection in unity with Jesus, which was hidden until then; all history is salvation history.[152] For Moltmann Christ's suffering symbolizes God's dynamic suffering by the surrender of the Father through the Son in the Spirit because of the Cross.[153] For Moltmann, the Divine life cannot be implemented by a single subject.   The bible reveals a self-giving Trinity in perichoretic formulations: in the paschal mystery we see: Father-Spirit- Son; in the glorification we see: Father-Son-Spirit; in the eschatological consummation we see Spirit-Son-Father. In a similar way the bible points to three orders of the Kingdom: that of the Father, which is creation and preservation through providence and power; that of the Son who in weakness and servitude redeems from sin, so that people can become fellows of the Son and children of God; and that of the Spirit, which is the rebirth of humans though spiritual intelligence, direct revelation and experience of indwelling of the Spirit in charismatic friendship with God. This trinity is a union in a fellowship that is open, and to which through baptism the faithful have access so that they can have a fellowship with one another through the sacraments of the church.

Dietrich Bonheoffer[154] states that moralistic discipleship of our own choosing is without Jesus Christ, the mediating God-man who may call humans to follow him (Lk 9:57-62). A first requirement for

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[150] Oscar Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testsament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963),3-4.
[151] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Revelation as History* (New York: MacMillan, 1968),134f.
[152] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and man* (London: SCM, 1968),322.
[153] Juergen Moltmann, *History and the Triune God* (New York: Crossroad, 1992),xvi.
[154] Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *The Cost of Discipleship (*New York: MacMillan, 1959), 50, 56,74,80,86,216,269-275.

discipleship is to change existence, and accept liminality, where faith is possible. That implies the enacting of obedience, not auto-initiative. Unless one obeys the call of Jesus one cannot believe; faith is a phenomenon a-posteriori. Only practical obedience will solve one's problems and make one become a child of God. That implies to die into Christ from our current occupations. Disciples must die as Christ died on the cross of all human sins and carry their cross. That, they do in the form of temptations which represent the sins of the others. Suffering is the badge of true discipleship; forgiveness is the work to share with Christ. That is so because suffering while connected with God is not felt as true suffering, which is being cut off from God. To choose for Christ is to break with the world; it makes people into individuals, fellows in Christ of his Church, the new humanity, his glorified body. This body is made visible through the preaching of the word through apostolic teaching and through the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. Where Christ lives, the Father also lives, through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity makes its dwelling in the Christian, as Church, and as individual. Thus we become like Christ. We are transformed in his image, as a mirror of the glorified image of God, into imitators of God.

Charles Taylor claims that individualism leads to utilitarianism, justifying the imposition of lack of social, economic, corporeal freedom on individuals and justifying oppression. Individuals undergo a spiritual loss of freedom, as a consequence of concurrent loss of meaning and ethical standards. This has led to autarchy. Under the guise of searching authenticity, everybody individually seeks the good life, rather than the common good with its responsibilities. [155] That makes for moral subjectivism, and forces society into a reactionary position. To define ourselves, that is to realize authenticity, we must find what has value. If 'choice' constitutes value, then difference becomes non-signifying and the 'work' of a person becomes not representative of the person in whom Ignatius saw God at 'work'! If choice is the valuable thing, then recognition of a good choice becomes the determinant of my value, which makes me dependent on others, with whom I negotiate my identity. That makes fairness and love crucial. But does not this

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[155] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity (*Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 17,50.

contradict the very appearance of authenticity? The way around the conundrum is to promote neutrality as the true common good: hang loose, have everybody reach individual progress. Authenticity involves dialectics with established order, but also self-definition in dialogue.[156] To be glorified into this newly created value gives freedom and power. This invites conflict from the oppressors in an institution, which demands external conformity. The way out is to accept responsibility, to surrender to hetero-normativity. Not by jumping out of this world, but by opening up to what? Taylor proposes an ongoing cultural dialectic between the *grandeur* and the *misére* of humanity. I say rather that we open it up to the irruption of God in our life by gratuitous self-giving, which requires a reversal of values as proposed by the Beatitudes.

According to Sigmund Freud,[157] we want to fantasize and relate through transference; for that we need a Super Ego God, which we will never outgrow. This all-powerful God seems able to do anything and we want to cling to this God, because that allows us to take responsibility and manage our relationships, even at the cost of alienation and despair, due to our need to control how this God thinks and acts for our benefit.   We want to hold on to the illusion that we can control life, and hence control or at least hold God accountable if we cannot appease this God.

Shea mentions three main types of repression that represent the institutionalized form of religion based on Freud's Super-Ego God. The first is authoritarianism: The Super-Ego God can be vested in religious leadership, offering human dictates reinforcing the legalistic aspects of the Super-Ego God; with it comes guilt for breaking the law, subjection to hierarchical structures of leadership, all factors that do away with love. The second is rationalism: the understanding that God can be grasped by reason alone, by a religion that only plays in the mind, through intellectual assent to clear contained concepts according to this view; the wholeness of the body-mind person must never be engaged. The third is anthropomorphism: The

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[156] This dialogue however, as in the case of a chaplain can be with a third party; in fact it should be with God as our experience indicates.
[157] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), 38-42.

Super-ego God represents the logic of objective knowing, but includes not only the best but the worst of humanity, and ends up being too small and mean-spirited.[158]

Viktor E. Frankl states that God is unconscious in humans.[159] Religion is genuine by being existential, i.e. by being freely chosen by humans and spontaneously expressed. The human psyche is by nature religious. In that way religion has a therapeutic effect, although religion's purpose is not psychotherapeutic. Logotherapy sees three fundamental facts in human existence: a will to meaning, a meaning in suffering, and a freedom of will. Humans know in an unthematized way that they must give meaning to their work, and to their suffering. This self-understanding has two aspects: a pre-logical understanding of being, and a pre-moral understanding of meaning. Human flourishing requires that one unlock the will to meaning, and recognize one's known limits. What is meant by meaning? A life has meaning in the worst of circumstances. That meaning can be found, through creativity, love or by changing ourselves. The more comprehensive the meaning, the less comprehensible it becomes. Religion is the will to ultimate meaning: God?

William James sees two kinds of conversion: that which is volitional and that which arises from surrender.[160] Our experience seems to confirm this, and also his view that "Man's extremity is God's opportunity". Recognizing that forces outside consciousness bring redemption to individuals shows the harmony between psychology and religion. Conversion leads to saintliness, which for James is characterized by a feeling of a wider life going beyond selfish interests: a continuity of the transcendent with our own life and self-surrender to it, elation of freedom as the constraints of selfhood go away, and a shift towards "loving and harmonious affections." This enables a "transition from tenseness…to inner equilibrium" accomplished by "throwing the burden down." It results in non competition, harmonious life and love, because the interest shifts from having to being. "The fact that the conscious person is

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158 Shea, *Finding God Again*, 141-142.
159 Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning* (New York: Basic Books,2000),141.
160 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004),157-158, 202-204, 214-215, 236, 238, 380.

continuous with a wider self, through whom saving experiences come…is literally and objectively true…"

James quite evidently favors continuous processes, over discrete stage development. He also underscores the objective observability of conversion as a holistic process. Our experience agrees with the observability of the holistic aspect of conversion, but not with the continuity of the conversion process.

According to Martin Seligman evolution endowed us with positive feelings. What are its functions he asks; who has it in abundance; how can you build more persisting positive emotion into your life? He wants to learn about and from the psychology of healthy people, not from the pathology that interested Freud. That there would be a transcendental teleology involved is a priori unacceptable to Seligman, as is a supernatural God. Happiness in the present comes either from pleasures that are sensory induced emotions, or it comes from gratifications that make us lose self-consciousness. Optimism and hope cause positive feelings about the future, while satisfaction, pride, and serenity warrant positive emotions about the past, on condition that one through forgiveness can neutralize the bad memories, which remain unforgettable resulting in a desire for retribution. The purpose is to give meaning to one's own life by attaching one's strengths to a larger something. [161]   Seligman's theory intends the self as the center of one's reflection and about the control to keep it so, in al circumstances.

The initiative is squarely with the individual in all the instances that we reviewed in this section, no matter how complex the situation. This is contrary to our experience where we observe God in all things, as Ignatius proposes.

3.4. Conversing and Performing United in Diversity

It only is possible to be children of God in a contextual plural, in loving and abiding in each other it is a communal reality. To be alive theologically is an ecclesial reality. It requires the filial obedience to the Father of Paul's Christ in the Philippians: self-emptying self-giving is obedience in its self-communication

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[161] Martin E.P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

and is glorifying because it symbolizes likeness with God.   This cannot be achieved by personal initiative of

following the rules of any law or Law, which is a mere grasping and controlling the situation; one gives as

much as the Law requires and knows that one is righteous. Christ's message is radical: give all you can

give. How can suffering persons do that? By seeing meaning beyond their suffering, through their

suffering! The liminality of their situation entices them by its liminality to be self-emptying and opens them

up to be self-giving to others in resonating likeness to God. In that, Christ on the Cross was the exemplar,

the sacramental example. In the suffering of the human the God who had given up godness in order to

adopt humanness emptied himself of this humanness because of his operational and essential faithfulness,

as human and as God, being faithful to the faithfulness of God who is self-givenness. Thus self-

centeredness was overcome, and the transcendental gap between justification and glorification was

bridged into glorified life, giving eschatological hope to humanity in being alive theologically. It is by

absorbing 'differance' (distance-in time) and 'distance' (distance in space) through resonance that glorified

life is possible! There is dynamic union of being of beings, diverse in union with God, in resonance alive

theologically. This experience of God's ongoing liberating presence to us through the *ecclesia*, actualizes

our wellbeing through the sacramental life of the community.

Our condition of togetherness as creatures enables the reign of God to appear. "Revelation [can

be] viewed as the unfolding of otherness within the common space of interconnectedness" as Jacques

Haers says, which is characterized today by global consumerism, competition and conflict. [162] It is

necessary to transform conflict situations into persistent and maintainable peace. Conflicts social or

internal to a person are unavoidable; they can be healthy and constructive. Outbursts of violence – often

the consequence of having experienced physical, psychological, medical, legal violence -- turn conflicts

destructive by destroying a human's equilibrium. Haers proposes that conflict situations provide

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[162] Jaques Haers, "Liberation Theological Perspective on Conflict Resolution", in Lieven Boeve, Hans Geybels and Stijn Van den Bossche , eds., *Encountering Transcendence* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 318.

hermeneutics of revelation for those who suffer, for their communities, and for the third party committed to resolution because he or she is moved by the suffering. Our God-talk involves the concrete material situation in which we live because our condition impacts how we conceive of our relations with the suffering Other, God and neighbor. In the self-revelation of God, creativity in the interaction and faithfulness to the one who reveals are at stake. God's revelation is historically situated both in the life of Jesus of Nazareth and in our world today on existential and referential levels. According to Haers, this begs for a narrative hermeneutical process. That may help to explain why the Ignatian type of contemplation whereby people put themselves with Christ in the situation of the parable has proven to be so effective in transforming the mental patients during spiritual exercises. Vatican II (*Dei Verbum*) and Karl Rahner stress that the revelation is not transfer of knowledge, but the self-gift and self-revelation of God in God's relations with humans. Thus we deal with Christology and ecclesiology when we deal with the idea of revelation to the marginal: Christology because of the referential and existential historical aspect, and ecclesiology because of the communal aspect of conflict and resolution. The trust in the creativity of the marginal reflects the ongoing creativity of the self-giving of God in our world. That there is a preferential option for the poor is clear. 'Preferential' reflects being grounded in the self-emptying of Godself. 'Option' implies a commitment of will, intellect, and affect; 'poor' means the marginal and those addressed by the Beatitudes.

With an estimated twenty percent of the US population at any time in need of mental health care, compared to less than two percent in Flanders, one must ask why that is. The answer is written in history: the influence of monasticism and charity-model of community. Self-giving is not only a matter of individual consciousness, it requires community. It builds identity in communion, which is diversity in union of authenticity, not by copying but by co-opting. This was Jesus message from the Beatitudes onward.

The Fourth Week contemplation of Ignatius Spiritual Exercises brings the exercitants "back to their own experience of God's gratuitous love, the consolation of feeling God's healing love precisely as a sinner, and the desire it has elicited to respond generously to the call of the Kingdom" Christ the consoler

will bestow a peace on the disciples when filled with his Spirit, they are sent by Jesus in the world on a mission of pneumatological consolation.[163] In the 'Contemplation to Attain the Love of God ' Ignatius asks the retreatant to consider the intimate presence of God's own self in all things received, a God who dwells in all creatures and labors for human beings created in God's image.[164] This gives the patients a keen insight that self-giving is the way to flourishing. Christ as exemplar, and Eucharist as sacramental presence combined with prayers to the Father, keeps them on a persistent way to repentance and conversion, providing the sponsorship they need.

Why are the sacraments so important to the patients? The Work Performed (*opus operatum*), the sacrament and the cultic worshiping, only has value and effect when it is appropriated by human subjectivity, which requires proper maturation.   God's presence can only be effective when one is disposed to be affected by it. Sacraments do not relief us from responsibility.[165] They are God's doing only as channels for our self-giving to him, to our peers, in the community of church. We humans must do what God does in the sacraments: render ourselves fully present, thereby giving ourselves, and emptying ourselves.   This allows the dynamics to come into or to persist in resonance. While sacraments ritually confer God's presence, humans must be willing to participate in memory and synchronicity. [166] Rahner's explication adequately describes our experience. Remembering our baptism, we could recognize God calling, and hope for support from the Church. Even though unmeriting[167], we are members, and God loves sinners; we remain acceptable.   Hence we could be sacramentally reconciled with God, and know that we are accepted. We can demonstrate our conversion in the Space of Encounter that the Eucharist

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163 Sachs, "The Spirit of the Risen Lord"), 22-33.
164 Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, [234 - 237].
165 Karl Rahner, "Die Messe im Gesamt des Christenlebens" , *Sendung und Gnade* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1959),160.
166 Carl Jung, "The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*", in Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 8* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), 515–519.
167 Most mental patients and prisoners have a deep seated persistent conviction of their guilt; 'the system' tries to reinforce this feeling as a means to coerce conformance to its behavioral principles, which are based on non-freedom. It is a major achievement for patients to balance their sense of freedom and their compliance with an oppressive system. To reach that is a sure sign of wellbeing, a gift of God's labors.

provides our community: together in hope we are saved, and nourished by God's presence to us, which we confess in gratitude, for all to see.

Their conversion changed the patients as persons, and hence their behavior became free thereby implementing the charitable model of community. This parallels God giving God's own self, which is the essence of loving: dynamically sharing everything one has and is,[168] self-communication resonating in conversation and performance. The theological code for God's self-communication to the world is Trinity, and the name attached to the divine gift as communicated is Holy Spirit. As Sachs explains "God's gift of self intends to transform us and our world as the place of God's reign." [169] This transformation of our being that is mediated by spiritual exercises happens in the Spirit who has been given. Sachs explicates this in a pneumatological way. Yet our experience points to a Trinitarian concurrence. Yes the Spirit is at work in preparing the Space of Encounter in which we can share ourselves with our peers, and where the Father will work for us in response to our prayer for help, whereby our actions are initiated by the Son in us, and are 'inspired' in their execution. The transformation to having Christ in us is the consequence of God's spirit of love present with us, because God as father loved us first (1Jn 4:10). "The power to become children of God" means that Christ works in us *ad intra*; we can constrict this working by fear, by refusing to orient ourselves to the Father, by denying the thought acts whereby the Spirit inspires us towards speech acts or physical acts that through resonating in our exterior relations allow the Spirit as the divine field to involve our neighbors in the activity of God in this world, in short by ceasing to be self-giving out of fear for self-emptying. Yet we found the apophatic experience of self-emptying to be a precondition for the cataphatic experience of God. In the apophatic experience we are made to let ourselves be emptied, and be filled with the power to be children of God. We cannot be 'child of God' in the singular; we are always 'children' in the plural because the dynamism of our development means that we relate to our neighbors through

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[168] "Thou.AND.I" as a tightly coupled union in resonance, not as two othernesses that recognize each other by polarizing (Buber),and distancing (Marion),in polarized quest, causing idolatry even in polarized ethical orientation. (Levinas).
[169] Sachs, "The Spirit of the Risen Lord ", 25.

whom we define ourselves with the help of the Spirit. So both the Son and the Spirit cooperate, the one *ad intra*, the other *ad extra* to make the Father reveal himself to us, through us, and for us and our peers. As Jesus said, "my and your Father" abides in us if we love each other. This concept describes the three divine persons at work in synchronicity, much like St Basil already did, whereby the persons are collegially distributing their energies over, in and for the believers as a loosely coupled Trinity that expresses the one Godness inherited from the Father in three different ways depending on the instantiation of 'divine person', an ontological concept. Our experience therefore is unlike Augustine's tightly coupled Trinity as ontological concept which defines God as three persons united by the single essence and consciousness of God.

Rahner with his axiom that "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity" aims at making us know something about the Trinitarian Persons *ad intra* of the Trinity, from their economic performance *ad extra*, which is what it is because of their being *ad intra*. LaCugna seeks support from Schoonenberg and Congar in rejecting the "vice-versa" in Rahner's axiom. Because there is freedom involved, both from the side of God and from the side of the creature the self-communication of God *ad intra* is different from the self-communication of God *ad extra*, at least in the reception and understanding thereof, and therefore what God is *ad intra* remains ineffable.   She proposes that "economy is not a mirror dimly reflecting a hidden realm of intra-divine relations. The economy is the 'distribution' of God's life lived with and for the creature." Christology is not more nor less prominent than pneumatology; the existence of a "trans-economic realm cannot be established on the basis of the economy of salvation." Thus *economia* and *theoria* are two aspects of the mystery of the communion of God and human.[170]

Our experience is different however. We first recognized God the Father bringing us together and calling us to conversion, in conversation with each other and with God, but also with our surroundings in the mental health system.   It was the Father who showed us that we were acceptable as we were, even

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[170] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us*: The Trinity and Christian Life 209-265,301-305, 368, 404, 410.

though we did not accept ourselves. Through the love of our neighbors we accepted the risk of accepting

ourselves as acceptable since we were accepted by the Father and by our neighbors.[171] That required

taking the responsibility and changing. Guided by the Spirit we did spiritual exercises and contemplated

the passion and resurrection of Jesus as the archetype of transformation that glorifies the Father. We

gradually learned to become self-giving and to love ourselves and our neighbor, out of love for the Father.

This led us to gain some well-being and to start maturing as persons. After episodes of progress

and regress, we were led by the Spirit to opening ourselves to the Father and empty ourselves of our pride

and attachments, and were made to overcome the fear of unknowing. We gradually were filled with the

presence of the Son, as Christ in us, wanting to serve the Father in obedience and love, and thereby letting

God work through us. This state of being children we maintain in communion with our peers and through

the sacraments of the church. It is a kind of Theosis that lets us flourish, and experience the Glorified Life,

precisely through the apocalyptic episodes that brought us and maintain us in a liminal situation which

makes it easier to not rely on ourselves but on God. So we orient ourselves to the Father, in the certainty

of hope for happiness of full union, because we already experience his presence in our lives. Besides, we

experience the Spirit working with us whenever we reach out in mutual self-giving to our peers; which

elevates all concerned. Ours is a concept of Trinity whereby the persons immanently appear at different

tasks which they execute asynchronously and in parallel, the Son in us, the Spirit with us, the Father for us.

Yet we relate to them as one mystery, affectively and cognitively in our consciousness, effectively through

the sacraments of the church, and by participating in the performance of worship and charitable deeds.

That is to say: unless we keep participating in the Eucharist and in reconciliation, we lose intentionality,

which is intensity and direction of desire towards union with God. In that sense we must remain children

ecclesiastically, which is by sharing our wellbeing through self-giving to others, our friends as well as our

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[171] Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* ,155ff. We came to these findings independently of Tillich. Tillich concentrates on faith as engine for change, not self-giving. He sees only acceptability-acceptance-faith as sufficient for personal development, thereby omitting the social aspect of becoming children of God, and ignoring self-giving.

enemies ('the system'), our immediate context supported by the large context of the body of Christ, the Church which mediates the Spirit for us. To the extent that we were shown how the Spirit works for us – inspiring us and helping things come about, whether in thought act, speech act or concrete act–, how the Son works in us –letting us identify with Christ and giving him room to establish the reign of God through us –, and how the Father works for us –through self-giving–, we are transformed into agents for the reign of God, in the image of God. We become more and more aware of our communal and individual likeness to God, who is sacramentally present in us through the church, as a field of Godliness that intensifies with our theosis. By being self-giving we gain meaning and wellbeing for ourselves as agents for the divine persons establishing the reign of God, already now, to be fulfilled in the eschaton. Through our witnessing the reign auto-enacts; all we must do is let it happen, not constrict it. In our conversation and performance with others, in worship, science, daily life, we just must follow the guidance of our heart, as St John writes in his first letter. The Dynamics of Love in Self-giving and Self-emptying construe the performing harmony with the Trinity that makes us children in the reign of God. We secure our understanding of our state as children in the reign of God and express that understanding in the sacraments; of which the foremost is baptism, through which we participate in the death and resurrection of Christ, through self-emptying and being given new life. Practically however reconciliation for self-emptying, and Eucharist, where the Word in person, silently, speaks and blesses, feed our wellbeing with the presence of the Triune God.   The sacraments offer themselves to us as locus of appropriation of likeness of God.

4. Validating through Oblature and Mission

In the final chapter we propose a way for practical realization in mutuality of becoming children of God. We argue that it will change society wherever we become active. It is a matter of re-introducing self-giving love as the life order. This can if done around well-conceived projects with growth potential and theological support. Third-ordership, oblature, confraternities are examples of well known approaches. It is time to apply this form of monastic life order to patrons and service providers alike. We interview the principals and participants of projects that apply parts of the concept, and are successful, but need the other parts to remain sustainable. We report on the reality of living theologically, which is not always easy or encouraged by authorities, even church authority. The real mission is to promote this life order of caritas, communion, and conversion through active communication, thereby changing society, by showing that self-giving gives meaning to all things, not as additional dimension of life, but as immanent life itself. It is the marginal in our society who will show us the way.

4.1. Caritas as Life Order

The Dynamics of Love that appeared and support stages of evolving maturity, with self-giving as an agent of change, and self-emptying as its precondition, show human consciousness resonating in harmony with the Triune-God in whose image it is created. This persistent state of wellbeing is the way to become children of God. Theologians characterize it as self-giving in obedience, gratuitous service, prayer including spiritual exercises and contemplation, and partaking in sacraments. Obedience eventually becomes synchronicity between the will of the Father and our will, but before we get that far we must accept that we are acceptable to God as we are; that requires recognizing humbly that we are sinners. We then can accept ourselves, which sets us on the way to wellbeing through self-giving self-love: we give ourselves to ourselves, and build identity out of our recognition of God's love for us. This self-giving love

we can apply in the management of our relation to God and others, so that we stay in control of our emotions and passions. Our ethical interaction makes us into agents for the Triune God, if and when we relinquish control over to God in self-giving. That however requires self-emptying; we cannot be 'full of ourselves' nor attached to 'worldly' values or choice: we must become free of everything in order to become children of God and become open to anything, in indifference because of the goodness of God's presence in it. [172] To refuse to do so, separates us from our exterior, alienates us from our surroundings, stops our horizon from expanding, and makes us regress, leading to self-centeredness, solitude, vanity, and depression[173]. Self-emptying therefore, as scary as it is initially, is the precondition for receiving God's presence. In this way we grow in our relationship with God, by acting as agents for God. We become the *prosopa* for God's action in his reign. This is a communal effort and builds a network of relations into a single body, the Church, sacrament of Christ, sacrament of Triune God. Self-giving love then can transform the world into the reign of God, when we are ready and turned to God. Through the Church, God supports us in this endeavor with the sacraments. As we said above, conversion, self-emptying, and letting-go of control seems immensely more difficult for non-religious people then for the faithful.

Membership in a religious community through baptism or circumcision, precisely because it permits ritual participation in sacraments as the Eucharist and Reconciliation, or Seders, provides a major gateway to wellbeing. Monasticism is the life order that is built on this principle. If charity is the *raison d'être* of a religious community, and by word and example it teaches society at large to be charitable, and to arrive at peace by doing away with competition, can we observe that? When monasteries are divided by internal strife or compete economically with the secular world, they lose their meaning, interior and exterior; [174] can we see that this generated the energy for renewal? We found that whenever monasteries persist in teaching by word and example, throughout the centuries, the love of Christ that lives in them, that very love

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[172] 'Indefference' here is used in the meaning given to it by Ignatius of Loyola in the Spiritual Exercises; it is not indifference out of separation and distance as the continental philosophers want us to think.
[173] Jean Luc Marion, *God without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991),130.
[174] David Knowles, *Christian Monasticism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 122-123.

forms a people.   The history of Geel and the statistics on mental health seem to indicate just that: Flanders seems a fairly peaceful, easy going, charitable place, through centuries of interaction between its monasteries and its population. Projects like Wellmet and Bethany in Massachusetts provide evidence that treatment of the mentally ill and prisoners centered on charitable communal life, combined with one-on-one counseling, as in monastic communities, work elevating and healing for clients, through the love that grounds the life of the staff, and radiates through the community. They must be mad to work without income, dedicating their lives to that of others in community! Is it an embodiment of the foolishness of Apostolic Life? Punishment, psychotherapy and medication become secondary supporting factors in the treatment of the clients, rather than the primary factor that it currently occupies in retributive policies like those operative in Massachusetts.

In contrast with the medical model, where transference looms, therapy grounded in charity can become bidirectional: the counselor is affected as well as the patient, when in their interaction they identify themselves as expression of God, in the presence of God. [175] This leads to increased subjective wellbeing for both. Our findings seem to reflect the evidence found in studies, namely that Intrinsic Religious Motivation achieved higher degrees of subjective wellbeing than secular motivations such as work, leisure, and plain hedonism,[176] possibly because of the Christian theological value pattern of transcendence and mutual care being central to and pervasive of the identity of a person.

As Dom Ignace, a Carthusian writes about *Conversio Morum:*

It is one of the wonders of a life of overflowing grace that those who started as sick 'demoniacs', are not healed to become 'normal', but instantly take part in the work of redemption. While we are still trying to bear Christ's Cross … Our nature may shrink from this and rebel, yet we know there lays our peace. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you". Do not fear. [177]

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[175] Karl Rahner, "Dialog With God", *Theological Investigations,* XVIII, 128.
[176] Kevin R. Byrd, Andrew Hageman, and Dawn Belle Isle "Intrinsic Motivation and Objective Well-Being: The Unique Contribution of Intrinsic Religious Motivation", *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, Vol. 17, no. 2, 141-156.
[177] Dom Ignace, ocart. "On Profession", *MS Letters.*

Madness, as Foucault suggests, is the absence of works: creative, charitable works. With McDermott and Varenne we must ask: "Who is mad here?" Would a society willing to accept mental illness as any other illness not show increased maturity in its social consciousness? An advertisement campaign by the National Institute for Mental Health is unlikely to change much in that respect. Profound change requires a monk's patience, learning and teaching, conversation and performance. We found evidence that this is part of the Flemish Government's policy of respect and active socializing, where Geel's example of a convivial charity model is acceptable to the culture, which has a goal of attaining the common good as well as subjective well being. In contrast, we see evidence that the privatization priorities and competitive behavior promoted by the DMH does not lead to effective mental health strategies, neither for private treatment, nor for institutionalized treatment. It would seem that the medical model failed, and is being decommissioned, but that it is being replaced with a reduced variant of itself. Timid initiatives in Massachusetts like Wellmet show that otherwise can. A vaster project to reach more concrete strategic directions is worth investigating, towards an otherwise culture.

A life order based on self-giving love, *caritas* appears when the children of God love each other, because God is in them: the parent lives in the children by harmonizing synchronicity; God reigns as Love, because God is Love (1Cor 13; 1Jn 4:8). The one command Jesus gave his disciples was to love: God, their neighbor, themselves, even their enemies. Because God's love exceeds all human expectations, to love in the likeness of God is to love gratuitously. To converse and perform theologically is to love; it is the meaning-giving Trinitarian mission given to the Church by the Glorified Christ. Monastic life, from oblature to eremitical, manifests modes of implementation of this command. In monastic life charity gives meaning and is the meaning of life, indifferent to the status or the circumstance of the charitable person, whose flourishing is the aim of the *conversio morum*. That is why monastic life in its form of oblature, with its convergence on on-going conversion, reconciliation, and transformation is the ideal life for institutionalized

and other poor. Their value is determined by God's normativity of consummating self-giving, rather than on self-centering characterized by competition and consumption and proposed by our current culture.

Self-giving is the same, whether one is rich or poor, whether one lives locked up voluntarily or involuntarily, whether one is the inmate or the staffer. It comes to those born from water and Spirit giving them the freedom of the wind that blows where it wants, the living water that brings fruit to the grooves of our hearts (Jn3:8;Jn7:38). To my delight a few people already have started implementing in their ministry parts of what we learned thus far: charity as life expression of informed faith. These initiatives are very effective. They bring wellbeing to the inmates, the staff, and the providers, directly if they partake in the projects, indirectly as the spirit blows and the water runs.   They offer spiritual exercises, partaking in sacraments, particularly reconciliation and Eucharist; and even oblature as means to remain alive theologically. They function as an instrument for the wellbeing and conversion of the donors, volunteers, and parishioners that support them. The inmates understand that value comes from being self-giving. Their caritas radiates beyond the institution, converting those who work with them and are inspired through them. In that way the inmates fulfill the mission that Christ gave us all, to "teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age (Mt28:20)." In this way Christ is in the inmates and through them works at bringing the reign of God to all involved, making them alive, theologically, to the greater glory of God.

4.2. The Reign of God

St Paul formulates what we mean by being alive theologically: The crucified Christ, Son of God, who gave himself in love for us, lives in us. Thus the Father redeems us, making us alive with the Spirit of life in Christ dwelling in us (Gal2: 19-20; Rom 8).   For those led by this Holy Spirit in the glorious freedom of hope in adoption and justification "are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. "   The author of the

Letters of Peter writes that everything that makes for life was bestowed on us through the great promises that we "may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire." We must supplement faith with endurance, devotion, and love. By letting these virtues increase in abundance, they will ensure that we enter in the reign of God. We must be ready to give account of this hope in conversation and performance of good deeds (2Pet 1; 1Pet 3:15). We must be doers of the word, not just hearers, and care for the poor and the marginal (Jas1: 22, 27).

Augustine wants the external conversion to result in an internal conversion; Benedict wants the internal conversion not to impede the external one. Canons developed John's "come and see (Jn 1:51)" in the offering of examples *coram Deo, coram hominibus* a way of loving God and serving humans. Monks see examples more as shaping the internal life of the individual monk. Von Harnack saw monasticism as a dialectical ongoing reform movement for the Roman Church, and for society; he considers the Jesuits the last true monastic.[178] Like Ignatius of Loyola, St Vincent de Paul promotes dynamics of self-giving love based on a single principle: *Davantage, Magis.* Vincent's spirituality emphasizes closeness, rather than distancing. Monasticism in all its variants attempted to implement a charitable life order. Charity is of divine origin and therefore radically affective and effective.[179] Vincent introduces a dual model whereby charity and expertise cooperate and are professionally distributed and organized.

Reforms of monastic and religious life throughout history seem to start out with a resourcing towards the 'Apostolic Life' as described in the Acts of the Apostles.[180] For some "The élan towards mission, spearheaded by the Jesuits after Vatican II, contaminated the authentic spirituality of monasticism."[181] For others doing the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises was a liberating action,[182] leading towards more mystical inner life, or towards more external charitable activity in a renewed monastery and

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[178] Vaclav Mudroch & G.S.Crouse, "The study of Monastic History Today" in Giles Constable ed. *Religious Life and Thought* 27.
[179] http://www.fracarita.org/documenten/missie/leiderschapsfilosofie broeders van liefde.pdf.
[180] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere verbo et exemplo: an aspect of twelfth-century spirituality* (Missoula: Scholars, 1979), 1.
[181] Fr. Brunings, *Heverlee Interview.*
[182] Sr. Kirsten, *Brecht Interview.*

reconceived community.[183] Others retained their cloistered contemplative life;[184] still, their charitable way of life radiates on the supporting community that they are embedded in and that contextualizes them. It would seem that it is not the rule that makes the monk, but the community in its living of the rule.

[185] Life lived in love for one another, is an essential part of the Christian message, and monastic life is a canonical form of that life. "The goal of monastic life is to be a visible framework and guiding-line to the perfect following of Christ…for the union of [people's] will with that of God." [186] It is incumbent on a monastic community to radiate that love, which they must work at daily: love of God and love of neighbor, love of self and love of enemy. Charity justifies monastic life and gives it meaning in the eyes of the society that forms its context, and for which it intercedes with God. It does so in the way of Pachomius, segregated from it, or in the way of Basil, immersed in it, or in the many variants since Augustine and Benedict of renewed Apostolic Life.

For Fr. Paul De Wit, O.S.A. monastic life could provide a model for psychiatric institutions because intrinsically it leads to inner peace. [187] The interior person is the immanent God who has no implementation for Godself other than through interaction with us. The community stimulates "pacification by peace" by God, who is its common good. Peace within the community is an exterior good that involves the others in one's internal process: peace happens when one drops the need to conquer.[188] Fr. Bernard Bruning, O.S.A., a practicing psychiatrist explains: "Religion is love, for Augustine; love is religion, for Levinas. Living according to Augustine's *'Christus Totus'* is accepting Christ's command of love.[189] God is the common good; privatization is always in conflict with the common good." Mgr. Dom Bär, OSB, Auxiliary

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[183] Sr. Rolande, *Ten Bunderen Interview.*
[184] Sr. Mary Francis, *Jamaica Plain, MA, Interview.*
[185] Sr. Kristina, *Bruges Interview;* Sr. Rolande, *Ten Bunderen Interview.*
[186] David Knowles, *Christian Monasticism,* 227, 243.
[187] Fr. Paul De Wit O.S.A., *Interview at Gent* (August 2008.)
[188] cfr. St Bernard of Clairvaux, "Desiderium sine Anxietate" in *Sermones 84-86 Super Cantica.*
[189] Fr. Bernard Bruning O.S.A., *Interview at St Thomas Villanova Convent,* Heverlee (2008.)

Bishop of Rotterdam (retired) observes:[190] "Peace is a way; it remains a struggle between control/knowledge and submission /affectivity. There is another form of peace: that of knowing that it is good to be on the way." Sr. Kirsten, OCSO puts it this way: "*Conversio Morum*, do it without questioning; union with God will come." Sr. Irene, Congregation of the Visitation, reflects: "The Ignatian Exercises made a big difference. As retiree I have time for contemplation, and mystical experiences; it is not always comfortable". Sr. Mary Francis, OSC:[191] "It is a daily exercise in love by not trying to stand out from the others. Only because all we do is before the eyes of God, with the intention of perfection and obedience, can we persevere; that brings peace." Sr. Rolande[192], General Superior, Congregation of Our Lady Ten Bunderen, comments in the same vein: "In Congo the Bishop shocked me when he said 'You do not love Christ'. Later, after reading Ruusbroeck and doing Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises I was able change."

Our snapshots indicate that communities survived because they adapted to the challenges, whether material or spiritual. – It is outside the scope of this paper to investigate this further; it has been done elsewhere. The Charity Model is apt to adapt because it is a living ecclesial expression of the Spirit acting; monasticism is the major expression of the pneumatic aspect of the Church. [193] After having been merged into the clerical order as its regular branch, losing its otherness, the monastic *ordo*'s radical ideals[194] of a life radiating charity today again achieve an elevated rank among the faithful, who are looking for a model of a superior life order. [195] Charity as a life order was taken over in various ways by non monastic orders and congregations depending on the spirituality of the founders. One such congregation

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[190] Mgr Dom Bär, O.S.B., Dom Phillippe, O.S.B Abbott., Brother Kefas, O.S.B., *interviews at the Abbey of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross*, Chevetogne, (August 2008.)

[191] Sr Mary Frances, OSC, *Interview at convent of the Poor Clares (*Jamaica Plains, MA, 2008.*)*

[192] Sr Rolande, *Interview ten Bunderen.*

[193] Vaclav Mudroch & G.S.Crouse, "The study of Monastic History Today" in Giles Constable ed. *Religious Life and Thought, 27.*

[194] "The Study of Monastic History Today" in Essays on the Reconstruction of Medieval History, Vaclav Mudroch and G.S. Crouse, eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queens University, 1974),40, in Religious Life and Thought (11th-12th centuries), Giles Constable Ed.(London: Variorum Reprints, 1979).

[195] Examples are the Focolare of Chiara Lubich, the Catholic Workers of Dorothy Day, or the Communities of Charles de Foucauld; or tertiaries, associates, and oblate. The OSB currently counts slightly more professed oblates than vowed religious.

are the Brothers of Charity[196] who super-imposed medical expertise upon the charity that they exerted in their care for the mentally ill. Doing so, however, they appropriated the assumptions of their environment. Nineteenth century society was very autocratic, oriented towards production, normalizing, and forcing families to deliver for re-education in asylums those members that were insufficiently productive.[197] Re-education was the goal, segregation was the way. The Brothers of Charity striving for professionalism and care evolved with the needs of individual and society. They maintain however religion as a separate dimension not as the expanded reality of humans encountering God in all things. Currently, FraCarita, the present incarnation of the Brothers of Charity[198] operates every form of mental health service, in thirty-three countries, with self-giving as leitmotiv for individual behavior by the brothers and lay-people in their service, thus teaching by example.[199]

The Charity Model persists in the town Geel, Flanders, Belgium, where the household care for the mentally ill that started in the 10th century is still working today. Enlightenment did away with the practice of exorcism and with the oversight by the Canons, but to this day roughly five hundred patients live and work with the families in town. The Flemish government oversees all programs, inspection, and certification of mental health care. [200]

Period	Concept	Priority
Till 1850	Segregation	Guard
Till 1950	Aggregation	Retain
Till 1990	Differentiation	Cure
From 1990 onward	Integration	Respect, Active Socializing

The above table[201] shows the state policy evolving following the lead of the Brothers of Charity and the catholic organizations that have a serious weight (60%) in policy making. Combined with the tradition in

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[196]Br. Rene Stockman, FCar, Brother General, Congregation of the Brothers of Charity, Interview at Moorslede, Priester Poppe Retreat House.
[197] Michel Foucault, Mauro Bertani and Allessandro Fontana, eds. *"Society Must be Defended" (New York: Picador, 1997),* 51.
[198] www.fracarita.org.
[199] Br. Rene Stockman, MD, *Moorslede Interview* (2008.)
[199] http://staatsbladclip.zita.be/staatsblad/wetten/1997/09/10/wet-1997036010.html.
[200] http://staatsbladclip.zita.be/staatsblad/wetten/1997/09/10/wet-1997036010.html.
[201] B. Cools, "Hoe ver-drijven we de geestelijke gezondheidszorg?" *Alert* 32, 5 (2006), 60-70.

Geel, approximately 90% of the consumers are treated according to the Charitable Model.

Flanders, like Massachusetts has slightly more than six million inhabitants. The community rendered services to approximately 93,000 of the estimated 100,000 mental patients who needed them, and who have an effective input in the services provided to them. Mental health is a community affair! [202] In Massachusetts the government estimates the number of citizens needing mental healthcare at 600,000. The utilitarian medical-juridical model that it uses reaches 17,000 of them.

Started in 1960 by Harvard students, Wellmet in Cambridge, MA offers group homes for people with mental health disabilities based on interdependence in a convivial environment. It is independent from the Department of Mental Health. It does not provide any form of medical treatment. The staff lives with the residents, serving by conversation and performance. [203] It is my experience that patients can get better when, as in the house where I worked, the staff fosters a loving milieu because of their commitment to the Christian charity model. Geel and Wellmet are secular implementations of the charity model tolerating religion as a dimension of human development, whereby only the staff is living a private and hidden theological life. There are epigones of them in the US, mostly small scale, all private initiatives, sometimes connected to university schools of psychiatry. [204]

Andras Angyal holds that spirituality gives meaning and development to life through autonomy and homonomy. Therapy is Recognition, Responsibility, Regret, and Forgiveness of the patient by the therapist's non-judgmental acceptance. [205] He sees this is as similar to the notion of repentance and conversion. God's love in us translates into a sense of communion: people seek the experience of love of God in community. The church is an institution of God's care; we are part of that care. We are instruments of that care. The patient's resonating responsive act of forgiving the therapist, and with that forgiving

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[202] Kirsten Adriaenssens, *Meting van Cliëntwaardering* (Kortenberg: De Hulster),2006.

[203] Charles Zymaris, Director, Wellmet Project, Inc.; Cf.also Dr Charles Swaeringen testimony who also volunteered at the Wellmet Project.

[204] Goldstein, J. (2009). *Geel, Belgium: A Model of "Community Recovery."* Samford University Psychology Department; http://faculty.samford.edu/~jlgoldst/usaprgrms.html;jlgoldst@samford.edu.

[205] Andras Angyal, M.D., "The Convergence of Psychology and Religion" *Journal of Pastoral Care*, Vol. 5, No.4, 1951, 13.

others as well, has a liberating effect. Contrary to Freud, Angyal does not consider transference to be a

problem, rather a benefit, if kept within boundaries.[206] Mediating a relation through love for God, avoids

transference, because of the apprehension of God's work for us.

The Dynamics of Love driven by self-giving, affirming us as images of God, make us move toward

wellbeing with God through our neighbor, in Love. Monasticism implemented this charitable apostolic life

order. Oblature and its variants make this life order accessible and institutionally supported for lay persons.

Ministry to mental patients and prisoners offers an opportunity to implement through oblature this diversity

in union of self-giving that equalizes all stake-holders and brings them to flourishing, whether clients, staff,

relatives, or chaplains. To my delight, I found three examples of active religious initiatives each partially

covering and together validating the model that I am trying to work out. Their principals agreed to be

interviewed.

George Williams, S.J., founded Jesuit Prison Ministries.[207] He explained: "A prison chaplain directly

faces the theological problems of human suffering with people whose lives are filled with extraordinary

sadness and deprivation. They are so much desiring of reconciliation; that sacrament has more meaning to

them than the Eucharist. That is why when we do the Spiritual Exercise we minimize the first week,

according to the 18th annotation; they know their sins. We also work with the staff and the guards. The way

the system is set up it corrupts everybody. There is a lot of support from the Society, but quasi total

disinterest from the Diocese. Anyway we try to bring education to the inmates, to actualize their gaining

value. Ministry can't end when the inmate leaves the facility. So we plan to open a drop-in center or

halfway house for once they are free. We also will try and train volunteers in prison ministry."

Sr. Simone, Sr. Amy, and Fr. Pierre met as chaplains in the NY City prisons of Rikers Island. The

staff relied on the religious to intervene with the internal gangs and abate the violence among the fifteen

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[206] Glen O. Gabbard, M.D., and Eva P. Lester, M.D., *Boundaries and Boundary Violations in Psychoanalysis* (Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2003).
[207] http://www.jpminc.org/index.html.

thousand inmates. Currently they operate Abraham House. It is an alternative to prison, for people on

parole. Upon fulfillment of the program the residents may receive a certificate, which usually results in the

judge letting them off without prison time. Besides the work and education programs for the residents, they

offer an ambulant program and after-school for the children of inmates whose wives are working. The

weekly family reunions according to a "mass, meal, and media" schema are the most important part of the

re-integration program. Abraham house is flexible and very successful in bringing change and wellbeing to

its clients, because of the charity model of the religious allowing the Spirit to work.   Funding is provided

through donations in cooperation with Christian Charities, which owns the buildings that Abraham house

needed for its expansion; it is a tenuous situation. Besides volunteers, a professional staff runs the

operations, now that the sisters and priest are aging. The founders are concerned about the religious

content and context of the house, and the continuation of their charism. Oblates working with them could

provide the expertise, and guarantee the religious character of Abraham House's expert services.

For Ruth Raichle, chaplain at the prison at Norfolk, MA, a major contribution to conversion is the

yearly retreat for the inmates, managed by the local members of Cursillo. [208] In an intense week-end they

teach the bases of Christian faith to the participating inmates. It is a charismatic experience for all

participants that here, now, and immediately facilitates every person to encounter oneself as an essential

element in encountering God and others. Sr. Ruth has organized volunteers who support liturgy,

theological discussion groups, gospel reading groups, prayer groups, adapted to the abilities and desires of

the inmates. She started a third order of the Dominicans in the prison. It currently counts about forty

members. It took the direct intervention of Timothy Radcliffe, then superior general of the Dominicans, to

bring this about. The diocese and the local Dominicans at first resisted the request. Now the chapter

radiates self-giving love not only among the prisoners, but among their relatives, and among the volunteers,

and local parishioners who support the chapter with a consignment store. For most parishioners involved it

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[208] http://www.natl-cursillo.org.

required emptying themselves of the fear for criminals. Thus Sr. Ruth's initiative has become a mission

from the lay Dominican inmates to the citizenry in conversation and performance involving them in a life of

self-giving love that has increased the wellbeing of all and the flourishing of the community. That gives

meaning to the life of the participating inmates. To transcend themselves by gratuitously giving something

of themselves to others elevates them, even in the darkest of spiritual nights. Sr. Raichle and her

colleague chaplain face the same problem as Sr. Simone and her colleagues: they are advancing in age.

Who is going to continue their work? Again, they could attract tertiaries who can continue to guide the

chapter's work, maybe recruiting them from the experts that volunteer already, many of whom are retired

and can spend the time at little cost to the community.

These three initiatives actualize and corroborate the insights that I received during the five years of

ministry with mentally ill and inmates. They show how the 'oblature' transformation brings wellbeing to

people who appropriate its charitable life order, loving and praising God, while loving each other. Inmates

or providers, members all of loving communities, in their space of encounter, meet the Triune God at work

for them, with them and in them, and participate already in the new life that is the glory of God, concretizing

in conversation and performance the mission of making all alive theologically.

4.3. Cultural change

Enlightened Western society labels persons unable to handle complex issues as "disabled". This

stigma often causes the public's reaction of erecting increasing obstacles for the dysfunctional. For the

people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, mental illness carries a big stigma, accompanied by fear

for violence. To that end, the DMH with support of the National Institute of Mental Health has large budgets

available for anti-stigma advertisement. [209]

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[209] Elizabeth Childs, MD, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, *Presentation to the Citizens' Health Care Working Group*, Boston, MA, August 17, 2005.

Disability usually refers to inadequate performance of tasks that are somewhat arbitrarily defined as being essential to daily life. As McDermott and Varesne assert "Everyone in any culture is subject to being labeled and disabled." [210] Culture requires that in order to function its members must possess, and must be known to possess, attributes that symbolize and thereby constitute the reality of their identity to others. Mental patients resist their condition because it makes them less acceptable by others: "Their resistance to what they cannot ignore also reveals the hegemony of all the institutions that originally constructed their problems."[211] They want to shift the issue from what makes them deviant, to what is right about them, and what is wrong with systems that define and treat them as deviant. The people of Geel treat mental patients as part of the community underscoring and substantiating their abilities; they persisted in their charity: No enlightenment or French Revolution could deter the families from caring for their guests, even when the government took away the oversight by the canons, and eventually built a mental hospital in the town. The hospital only handles acute mental care, offering the usual menu of services.

It has however proven difficult to introduce the family based system of Geel elsewhere. [212] Charity is easier said than done, it would seem. Massachusetts has been a leader in caring for people with mental illness since it built its first public asylum, the Worcester State Hospital that opened in 1833. With the construction of the new Worcester State Hospital, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) will reduce to 260, the number of directly managed residential patients.[213] The DMH strategy is oriented towards privatization, whether through agencies or through the families. Competition reigns; normalization emphasizes stigma, contrary to the stated goals. The DMH pursues evidence based treatment practices that ensure cost effective support, generating care with high value to consumers, citizens, and

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[210] Ray McDermott and Hervé Varenne, "Culture as Disability", *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 26:(1995),323-348.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Jackie Goldstein, *Hope for "Community Recovery": Legendary and Modern Examples of Community Mental Health in Caring Communities,* Presentation, UPenn, Collaborative on Community Integration, September 19, 2006.
[213] Massachusetts Department of Mental Health *Annual Report 2008.*

communities, through family driven behavioral services, with resilience and recovery as ultimate goals. [214] This policy in reality aims at reducing cost to the commonwealth by devolving the responsibility for the mentally ill unto the individuals' families. Health insurance policies have caused the reduction of the role of psychiatrists to prescribing medication, during quarterly visits of fifteen minutes. The DMH guidelines[215] exclude psychodynamic therapies, instead relying principally on drug therapy as a quick and cost-effective way of subduing patients into modifying their behavior. Excluding psychotherapy on the grounds of cost is a serious loss to the patients, and an increased indirect cost. There is evidence that a combination of drug and narrative therapies is the more effective way of treating mental illness. [216] Therapy is left in the hands of 'case managers' and counselors with a broad range of backgrounds, but little clinical training. In this way the privatization strategy seems to undermine the essence of the medical model, which is expert care. The State Hospitals -in contrast with the contract agencies that provide close to nothing- still maintain a medical orientation, and provide every form of behavioral group therapy and pharmacology; pastoral services were dropped in 2010. They treat patients under government guidelines with behavioral modification techniques or electroshock. It illustrates governmental attitude towards the mentally ill. In fact 56% of those in prisons are mentally ill, without receiving appropriate care. We see evidence that the 'medical model' focuses on individual humans and their suffering, but that human suffering may be as much a response to the cultural context as anything inherent in the individual. This requires a change such that cultures accept the proposition that all individuals have an equal and intrinsic worth but one that is different for each individual. Instead, the DMH in Massachusetts uses group therapy as main means to impose 'normalized' behavior. The current realization of the 'community care' de-institutionalization programs gives the impression that they mostly are about reducing direct costs to the government and the managed care companies, little

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[214]Center for Mental Health Services, Division of State and Community Systems Development, *Massachusetts Uniform Application fy 2009 - Sate Plan, Community Mental Health Services Block Grant,* OMB - Approved 08/06/2008 - Expires 08/31/2011.

[215] Marylou Sudders and Wendy Warring, *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Bipolar Disorder in Adults (*Boston: Commonwealth Of Massachusetts, 2002).

_____, *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Schizophrenia in Adults* (Boston: Commonwealth Of Massachusetts, 1999).

[216] T.M. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds: An Anthropologist Looks at American Psychiatry* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

about "care", and less even about 'community' for the mental patients.[217] We see that creative and

educative services to the patients have been de facto reduced to almost nothing.[218]

Serendip, the Center for Science in Society at Bryn Mawr College, is formulating a new model of

mental health based on individual psychosocial experience, biology, and neuroscience within communal

social/cultural/political contexts. Such a theory starts from subjective well-being, it restores agency to the

patient.[219] According to Serendip the "medical model", while successfully handling traumatic effects with

simple cause/effect relations, is not effective in mental health situations. This is not only because mental

illness, for instance depression, may have multiple causes, but also because it may be expressed

differently in different individuals. Therefore the adherence to 'ideals' and 'norms', inherent in the medical

model, that lead to assessing 'health' by objective standards exterior to a person, may be very inadequate;

subjective wellbeing is important. The patients must have agency in their 'becoming better' rather than be

the passive recipients of a treatment plan, imposed onto them by external expertise. Serendip therefore

proposes a Biological/Neurobiological/Cultural Model that is committed to "sympathetic and productive

engagement with human suffering" as evolutionary option. Thereby they presume that humans are

"complex assemblies of matter." They emphasize that psychological influences are generated in the brain.

They pay attention to personal choices, diversity, and environmental experiences as contributing factors to

subjective wellbeing. They presume that " some discomfort can be generative of positive change" which

can take a long time, or may never be achieved. They promote a different distribution of responsibilities

between patients and service providers. The cultural/ biological/ neurobiological model, while assuming

that all "human experience is a function of the brain," recognizes that "non-material influences [can] not [be]

rejected out of hand… [and are] instead valued challenges to the further development of such a model." [220]

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[217] Elio Frataroli, "(mis)MANAGED (don't),CARE", *Physician's Travel and Meeting Guide,* April 1993.
[218] There are occasional exceptions: one patient I know obtained a degree as a cook.
[219] Georgia Griffin, "She Blinded Me With Science: A Critical Analysis of the Scientific Model of Health", thesis, Bryn Mawr Philosophy Department, April 18, 2005.
[220] http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/local/grobstein.html.

This approach reemphasizes the individual as the center and norm for self development, the self as subject of the self with a sovereign will.[221] That requires that one must not only compare one's conduct to one's own rules, but also one's rules against one's rules about rules. That may lead to unending self testing against the self-invented "aesthetics of the self". Few people reach this stage of development.[222] God working in patient and community allows love to grow for each other and for God; teaching and learning, by word and example are the dialogical way towards well being, for individual and community.

To abolish stigma and segregation, to accept less than perfect service by dysfunctional people, seems to be beyond the ability of our competitive consumer society. It will take a lot of education and renewing initiatives. Charity as an isolated approach by few, superimposed upon a segregationist medical model, imposed by the state, is not a desirable way to deal with mental health or prison management. The entire local society must be co-involved in the acceptance of less functional citizens. For that to succeed, competition as basic paradigm of Western society must be replaced by charity. Monastic communities and Oblates must teach in conversation and performance how this can work when one lives theologically.

4.4. Friends, Heirs, God Abides

Living informed by faith justifies through charity expressed in service. The referent of love is not taught, since it is encountered by mystical union: the service mysticism of Augustine and Ignatius. What is at stake is competence in the matter of charity. Hence theological life cannot aim at any other progress than that of converging into the Word. "It is finished" (Jn 19:30) is the beginning that all can and must teach (Mt 28:19-20) 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 all the days until the end of time".

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[221] Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 160-166.
[222] James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith, 84, 112-113.

As Jean-Luc Marion writes "Theology alone remains; it claims to tell the living one; it therefore must open up access to the referent; but this referent consists in the past death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ." The text brings him present to whomever alive theologically are children of God, through religious surrender, listening as in Emmaus, performing in the sacraments, contemplating in spiritual exercises. "The theologian lets the word let him speak human language in the way G_d speaks it in his Word." [223] It is not the theologian who must go beyond the text interpreting it from the point of view of the Word, which is the impossible, but the Word who comes forward in conversation and performance (Jn16:13-14), as the truth brought forward and received by the working of the Holy Spirit's self-giving Love[224] making the Father's presence possible that bridges the transcendental gap with feeling knowledge.

Theology lives in conversation and performance: the way, the truth, the life (Jn14:6). Our lives *ad extra* amplify through our words and deeds the life of Christ in us. Theological living provides individual seeds and a communal environment for humans to flourish. Through Christ, the conversational performance of the Son, the Father reconciled all humans who accept him with their Holy Spirit. Thereby they are glorified through the indwelling of the glorified Christ: they already are spiritually glorified and live as θεου λογοι, words of God. As such they bridge the gap between the Triune God's glorious reality and that of creation, no longer like the angels on Jacob's dream ladder but like Christ himself, the living Word of God (Gen28:11–19;Jn 1:51). With the Christ event, the Triune God has explicitly moved creation into resonating harmony with Gods own dynamics. The Son and the Holy Spirit are faithfully present enabling a union with the Father by theologically making human consciousness into image of God by making us live driven by self-giving love. Christ's church as sacramental life of Christ supports us as members, through Eucharist and Reconciliation, to commitment to self-giving. Oblature and other monasticism as a life mode confirm this intention and provide a context alternative to the world in which to practically realize this

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[223] Jean Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 144, 146f
[224] Rahner's attempt at separating out the 'functions' of the individual divine persons is only possible in static situation. Given that we know God only as dynamic 'creator' we cannot know the static God; perichoresis is everywhere.

commitment not in a neutral detached way, but in an indifferently proximate way. Being a bridge we are no longer different or distanced from the other, which is the Father, because the Son and the Holy Spirit activate us and our peers. Unlike Levinas' understanding, which sees only a dead trace of an unattainable God object who is so detached that this God no longer can be an objective, with as consequence that the neighbor becomes the objective of our quest for the infinity of our immanent meaning, so deep down that it is unfathomable. To the contrary it is our understanding that through the activity of the Son and the Holy Spirit the Father makes God felt and known in an unthematized way, always available for interaction, so that in this interaction we can learn about God by doing what God wills. We can measure the effects of what we did in cooperation with God, and hence know something about God. My knowledge will only partially overlap your knowledge but by together performing theologically, we will not only hear the word but make it understandable in mutuality.

Since five years, ministry to the mentally ill has been for me the locus for encountering God in conversation and performance. It led all of us to habitual self-giving love. This amounts to a life order as realized in monasticism, and for us realizable as oblates, tertiaries, or associates, whatever the name. Oblature is the institutional structure that guarantees ecclesial actualization of our voluntary commitment to self-giving. It is something that equalizes all, indifferent of their status in the world. As a form of monasticism accessible to all, oblature appears as an operator of the power to become children of God given to those who accept him, the Word, who makes us words of God alive, theologically.

We investigated monasticism as a strategy for working wellbeing with marginal or institutionalized people. Two models of charitable life order, one more oriented toward the individual and the other more toward community appear to eventually converge. We see that each have different starting points for interiorizing and exteriorizing experiences. They were however both involved in health care, including mental health. One contributing factor was the concept that the body was the ground for the salvation of the soul: it was not the body that fell, but the will. We observe that all religious renewal tends to return to

apostolic life as model for charitable living. We found that it is not the rule, nor the location, but the community that makes the monk, and the monk that makes the community. Flexible monastic communities survive, adapting their habits of prayer and work to the challenges and the context of their environments. We see that through centuries of interaction between community and monks, the community carries on the charitable work, because it becomes part of the culture. It is in the loving of self, neighbor, and God, the common good of all, that communities survive, that charity is distributed to all, because it pervades and stabilizes society's culture. Private interests, as promoted by utilitarianism, are against the common good, which is God pervading all.

Oblature is the sharing of this charitable life order with the community at large. Oblature can be shared by inmates and outsiders, monks all, "shouting no to idols, showing that God does not abandon his children and helps them to live another life that endures forever, that we come and see" [225] through the self-giving love that Christ shows us as message and messenger of the reign of God. The precondition is that we empty ourselves and synchronize our will with that of the Father; in our weakness we are strong, because God can work in us, through us, for us and make us flourish. Through oblature we ecclesiatically formalize this synchronicity and cooperation. Oblature can maintain the monastic character and specific charism of the individual initiatives while they are handed over from vowed religious to promised lay people. While each project has its own character, all share common characteristics and issues. We noted: charismatic leadership and transition; support from a larger community (religious order, university, town); resistance from powers that be (government and church, methods and habits); common spiritual techniques: retreats and spiritual exercises, partaking in sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist, prayer, theological study; mission to the supporting communities, whereby the experience of God *ad intra* of the individuals and the group flows over to the environment of institutional staff, relatives, contextual community. All that brings a new meaning to the inmates that exceeds their economic failure and social

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[225] Pierre Raphael, MdF, *God behind Bars* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1999).

rejection and makes it irrelevant. When like Christ on the cross relegated to the poverty of the Spirit they find through Christ in them the way to reconcile human and divine reality by being unconditionally self-giving in their liminality they allow Christ to perform his mission of redemption by sharing their wellbeing with all the community, as children in the reign of God. [226]

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[226] Pierre Raphael, MdF, *L'appel du Bronx* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 2006), 198.

Recapitulation: Renewing Life through Theology

The decision process puts humans on the brink between exteriority and interiority. This is most acute in mental patients and prisoners (more than half of whom are mentally ill) and all who are marginal who see nothingness on either side. Hence their need for openness to God's offer of acceptability; blessed are the poor in Spirit, to them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven. Living according to the self-giving of Christ brings one to flourishing. This is an experience of the presence of God, unthematized for most, thematized for some. It engenders the concurrent existential and ontological conversion of the person, through conversation and performance with God and neighbors, who in communion support individual gratuitous self-giving, the character of Life given to us when as subject of ourselves we surrender our decisions in obedience to God.

In this essay we related an ongoing event of encounter revealing Triune God as forgiving Father, instrumental Son, and supporting Spirit, who transform us to their likeness. We tried to propose language, theory, technique, and praxis that explicate this transformation and being made alive, theologically. This ongoing event is an offer to grow a felt knowledge of God as all encompassing and accomplishing Spirit, and calls for maintaining a radical conversion towards communion with God the Son. It discloses a cascade of related happenings, unfolding intellectual insights, and felt intuitions about a reality that shows itself to us in the daily occurrences of our lives. We can accept the gift or refuse it in freedom of decision, or be detracted from even considering acceptance of the gift by too ample a choice of alternative apertures. Sometimes God irrupts in our lives and the encounter forces the issue because of the liminality of the situation which has gotten out of our control; we still have the freedom to decide and accept getting to know God's Trinity, or rather to refuse to join in. We can favor delay and distance over filial perspective and presence. If God is Father, then we are children in the image of the Father. That we are led to see

dynamic stages in our focus[227] on the Trinity and ourselves must therefore not surprise us. Is it therefore that our Trinitarian experience shows us Son and Holy Spirit working together? Is it therefore that the Gospels speak of Son and Holy Spirit indistinctly as Truth and Love of the Father? In the dynamism of their action they always work together, even if statically, they are conceivable different divine persons. [228] In our consciousness truth and love develop together: the more we become self-giving in love the more we experience the truth about God and human, including ourselves, in relation. Consciousness for Wagtail appears as one dimension of being, a constituting component, along with will and intellect. Humans "owe to consciousness the subjectivation of the objective." [229] Disclosing inwardly is the reflexive aspect of consciousness. It brings subjectivity in prominent view. When, as images children have likeness with the Father their synchronicity allows them to resonate, and through this resonance know the Father who partakes in their life in union of being: glorified Christ in us, the incarnated Son. Experience is both interior and exterior, and there the Father works for us and the Holy Spirit gives us the insights to act out our interiority and to take in our exteriority. Thus Son and Holy Spirit work together to bring us into resonance and cooperation with the Father. Bernard Lonergan has a similar perspective. Religious conversion is to a self-giving in love as effecting self-transcendence.[230] It leads to authentic holiness, which enables the radical love Christ calls for in the Gospels, making it possible to accept the suffering that comes with acting in the name of the good and letting go of all attachments and idols. The locus of conversion is human transformation.[231] Through conversion, that is to say by resonance in love with the dynamics of the Trinity, humans enable the reign of God to be enacted in the world, having been given Glorified Life, as St John and St Paul teach us: " …to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God…and see we are alive."

Easter 2010

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[227] John J. Shea, *Religious Experiencing* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 64.
[228] Karl Rahner in *The Trinity* sees in Divine life a duality between Truth and Love, Son and Holy Spirit, which is not part of human life.
[229] Karol Wojtila, *The Acting Person*, Analecta Husserliana 10 (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979),35
[230] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 241.
[231] Deborah Savage, *The Subjective Dimension,* 204, 249.

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