

TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA
SYTEMATIC DEPARTMENT

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**PARTICIPATING IN THE DOXOLOGICAL LIFE OF THE
TRINITY**

**A Long Essay Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Ecclesiastical Degree
Baccaiaureate in Sacred Theology**

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NAIROBI 2005

Student's Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB). It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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31 - 1 - 05

Acknowledgement

I want to thank sincerely all my systematic lecturers for enabling me to understand the Mystery better and thus promoting my growth in faith. All I have gained from them has left a great impact on my life. My faith has been strengthened and my love for God cherished. I feel provoked in my faith and renewed from within. The practicability of my faith has been challenged. With my faith built firm, I feel secured and can now live my life in full. This is a credit to you my dear lecturers.

In a special way, I want to thank Fr. Nicholas Fogliacco, IMC, who tirelessly helped me whenever I consulted him in expounding the deep mysteries of our faith. I want sincerely to thank him for his total devotion in directing me in the writing of my long paper. I acknowledge his great effort in this. God bless your Fatherly concern.

I still extend my thanks to all the lecturers I met in the course of the four years of my theological studies for each in his or her own way helped in shaping me to be what I am now as a theologian. I reckon your great efforts in bringing up practical and responsible theologians. May God bless you all!

I thank all the disciples (students) of systematic department who from time to time held heavy discussions with me on some of the mysteries of our faith with a view of building and strengthening our faith. May you all grow strong in your faith!

I thank you all my fellow theologian students and the entire body of students in Tangaza college who as a body and as individuals led to my 'faith-seeking understanding', and as you were the very immediate people to me I could start applying what I had absorbed in the classes from my lectures. May God bless you all!

Dedication

I dedicate this piece of work to all the Christians
and especially the preachers of Good News.

I glory in your life, God,
for you have allowed me to glory in your life,
that you may be glorified.

INTRODUCTION

PARTICIPATING IN THE DOXOLOGICAL LIFE OF THE TRINITY

Doxology comes from the Greek word 'doxa', meaning, 'opinion, reputation, honor, glory.'¹ It is a word that denotes 'divine and heavenly radiance', the 'loftiness and majesty' of God, and even the 'being of God' and His world'.² To understand the term better, we can shift our focus to what is happening in Jn.17:1-5. Here, we have the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son. Jesus glorifies the Father by accomplishing his earthly ministry faithfully. Now, he asks the Father to glorify him, but actually the glorification of the Son is meant for the glory of the Father. So, Jesus is glorified so that the Father may be glorified. Without the glorification of the Son, in this sense, there is no glorification of the Father. But the glory of the Son is only when he is established in his eternal power. He is established in his eternal power so that he can mediate life to God's creation. The Father is only glorified when the creation, especially man is fully alive. Man is fully alive when he shares in the life of God. The whole glory

¹ X. LEON-DUFOUR, *Dictionary of the New Testament*, 169.

² G. KITTEL, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. II, 237.

is aimed to go back to the Father. This is what the mutual glorification is all about as the Holy Spirit participates by making all this possible. So, the life of glory is the life of the Trinity in which we are called to participate, in our capacities as human beings and in all situations of our lives.

What motivates God in this is his essence as love. His love is so strong that He cannot keep it to himself. He cannot- not share it. That is why He creates a being like himself to share His life of love with him. This is how God glorifies us.

Once we have been gifted with this love do we take a chance to glorify God by passing it on to others. Passing it on authentically as limited beings is not easy. Only when we shall be filled by it, (in the full sense of the term) shall we not fail to pass it on to others. This is our participation in the glorification of God. This is therefore, what I shall be developing in this paper.

'Doxa' is a word that is used in the New Testament to mean the same thing as 'glory'. In my usage of the terms, 'Doxology' and 'Glorification', therefore, I shall alternatively and freely employ them to mean the same thing.

Chapter I

Creation Account

1. The Trinity Creates

The term Creator connotes 'That Being' who is able to bring a being or beings into being. He brings things into existence with a view of establishing a relationship with them. He provides the stability needed by all he creates and sustains the creation through-out the process. He directs the creation to the end of the process, only at last, to find its goal in the Creator Himself. The Creator therefore, governs the whole process. When we say that the Trinity creates, we mean that the three divine Persons are involved in the divine creative act. Father is the source of the initiatives. He wills, decides and plans to bring things into existence. He is 'God from whom' creation exists.

When Paul says that 'God created through Jesus Christ', (1 Cor. 8:6) he means that the Father takes all the initiatives, decisions, planning and actualizes them through the Son. For that case, Father is the absolute beginning of everything. Now, since creation finds its goal in the Father, he too remains to be the absolute end of the creation. The Son gets involved in the Father's plan for it is through him that the

Father's plans are fulfilled and without him, it is impossible. Paul as well realizes that Jesus Christ is the one through whom God the Father will hold the creation in being (cf.Col.1:15-18). Christ will be the sustaining cause of the universe. The Father will hold the creation in being and sustain it only through Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit is God's life-giving power. He is the third Person of the Trinity who proceeds from the Father and the Son, primarily concerned with life. He is the power that gives life. He is concerned with the origin and the goal of all life per se! Therefore, he gives meaning to all life. He is the source-value in all life. "...the Spirit of God the creative life-giving power of God, the power that produces, sustains, rules and directs all things. The Spirit is the *Spiritus creator* that is at work throughout the whole created reality."³ To talk of life therefore, is to imply the presence of the Spirit. God gives life to creation. To talk of God giving life to creation means that we have to bring the Paschal event into the fore-front. It presupposes that the Paschal event was conceived before the creation was.

2. God's Motive in Creation

Paul speaks of the world as having been created for Christ. He uses the phrase, 'for him' (col.1:16). In this context, with no doubt, Paul means that creation as a whole is finalized to the Paschal event. Through the Paschal mystery, grace is given in full and through its reception, salvation is attained. The cross of Christ here reveals the

³ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 202.

unlimited love of God which prompts him to share his divine life with the creation, especially man. Such life of sharing of the divine life becomes the very motive of God.

In the Old Testament story of creation, we notice that Adam's sin led to the earth being cursed, (cf.Gen.3:17-19; 5:29). At the same time, in the Old Testament apocalyptic writings we see echoes of a new heaven and a new earth, (cf.Isa.65:17; 66:22). Therefore, this suggests to us of the present situation. It means that we have not yet received our complete salvation. God has not yet finished creating us. In fact, through his grace he continues creating us whereby our complete salvation will only be realized in the Second coming of Christ. This means that creation awaits for its renewal. God has not yet finished working on us. We are waiting for the complete redemption which will come with the glorification of our bodies. This is the time when we shall exist as complete human beings before God whereby God shall be all in all. Our lives with God shall be a communion of glory. God's Spirit is the power behind the realization of all this.

The Old Testament prophesy of 'the glory of God' was understood as the promised divine future. It was highly hoped for as it was related to the liberation of creation, (cf.Isa.6:3; 40:5). Hence, raising Jesus into the glory meant raising him into the promised and hoped for divine future. This is to say that the eschatological future has dawned with Christ. Christ has become the eschaton. He is our eschatological life. The mission of Christ has to reach the absolute end of God's plan. This mission

achieves its "...purpose when men and creation are united in God. In this union God is glorified through men and in it they partake of the glory of God himself."⁴

The Trinity is actively involved in the liberation and healing of creation. The eternal offering of the Son shows how the Trinity is open to the world and to men. The Trinity's life is a life of glorification of the three Persons. The sending of the Son marks a beginning of a history of gathering and uniting the creation of God that is tuned to the divine life. The Paschal event comes to the climax in the sending of the Holy Spirit who authentically hands over Christ's teaching to the people and causes it to be received by the people. This phase goes up to the Second coming of Christ, whereby, "At the end, God has won his creation in its renewing consummation for his dwelling place."⁵ This is the direction of the mind of God. In His divine creative act, God has in mind the new creation that is capable of participating in His divine life as this would mean an invitation of creation, especially man in the participation of the eternal doxological life of the Trinity.

Therefore, the plan of creation was to be finalized in the Paschal event. The Paschal event was God's target for the creation had to be finalized in it. This had to be so, because it is only through the Paschal event that we have an access to the triune life. The new creation that will have access to the eternal life of God will enter in it and participate in it fully. This will be the highest moment of the reciprocal glorification of

⁴ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, 59.

⁵ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, 60.

God and creation; God glorifying creation through sharing his life with it, while the creation shall glorify God by having attained complete salvation.

Chapter II

Original Sin Distorts God's Plan

God the Father's almighty initiatives in creating man was geared to elevating man from the level of humanity to the dignity of being divine children: to be called the sons and daughters of the divine. This means entering into the life of grace that brings with it the participation of the life of God. The story of Adam and Eve as our first parents gives an insight of the beginning of human history. They were created uniquely as human beings so that with the help of grace they may rise to a fuller life of grace. "This participation means a life in union with God, who is 'eternal life.'"⁶

Paul sees Adam as having been created as our universal father. We all were created in him (cf. Rom.5:12-21). Both were placed in a state of sanctifying grace and lived in communion with God. They were enriched with holiness, justice and enjoyed full benefits from the Holy Spirit. Having been created in Adam, we were meant to inherit the original holiness and justice from Adam.

⁶ JOHN PAUL II, *Dominum Et Vivificantem*, 64.

Under this privileged status, Adam, freely and knowingly decided to go against the will of God. He rebelled against God's life which led to a beginning of a life of estrangement from God. "This original disobedience presupposes *a rejection*, or at least *a turning away from the truth contained in the Word of God*, who creates the world."⁷ His sinful act was the first unique act in human history. He lost the sanctifying grace and lost the communion he had with God. He fell into a state of lack of something so precious for his life that he could not live without it.

So, this is the state that we were born into. Having been created in him, when he fell, the human nature itself fell. Therefore, we are born in a state of sin. Through generation we have inherited wounded nature. We have contracted a stained nature. The story of Adam and Eve leads us to this insight.

We have inherited a situation of lack of something that we necessarily need for our living. We have found ourselves in a state of deficiency. This is against God's will for man. "...original sin consists in the lack of that holiness and justice—sanctifying grace—which according to God's will man should possess, only the objective, not the personal, element in grace is taken into consideration."⁸ We need grace. "The condition of man in original sin, then, can be described as an 'incapacity for dialogue.'⁹ The gift of grace helped Adam's freedom to go for the good. But now it is oriented to selfishness and human pride. There cannot be a healthy horizontal relationship once the vertical relationship is broken.

⁷ JOHN PAUL II, *Dominum Et Vivificantem*, 58-59.

⁸ M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma 2*, 190.

⁹ M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma 2*, 191.

Our wills have been darkened. Therefore, "...man is enclosed in himself and cannot, owing to his weakness and his incapacity for love and commitment, break through the walls of his self-imprisonment."¹⁰ Life of deprivation of sanctifying grace and estrangement from God was a distortion of God's original plan.

God's mind works salvifically. His justice is salvific. His mercy is salvific. He sees that this situation has to be corrected since man is destined to God. His gift of the Son corrects the whole situation. The Paschal event enriches us with the Holy Spirit who in turn, being the inner principle of our being, enters into us, fills us with the gift of love and thus makes us new creatures by the virtue of rooting grace in our hearts. But grace is God's life. This grace is our eternal life. Hence, Christ, through his Paschal event gives us the opportunity to participate afresh in the Doxological life of the Trinity.

For that case, encountering Christ means encountering eschatological life that is 'already-but not yet'. "God's self-communication and his giving of salvific grace to man results in a particular state which can be expressed in the phrase 'forgiveness of sin.'¹¹ We inherit from the Risen Lord the gift of the Spirit. Our freedom is given a new orientation, our wills are given new aspirations of going for what is authentic and our being becomes transformed. We become newly selflessness and humble in our being for our selfishness and our pride is being taken care of. Kasper says that,

...the Holy Spirit reveals, and is, the giftness of God as gift, love as love. The Spirit thus expresses the innermost nature of God- God as self-communicating

¹⁰ M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma* 2, 191.

¹¹ M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma Volume Six*, 53.

love- in such a way that this innermost reality proves at the same time to be the outermost, that is, the possibility and reality of God's being outside of himself.¹²

The Paschal event therefore, is our life.

¹² W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 226.

Chapter III

The Incarnation of Christ and the God Who Suffers With Humanity

1. Introducing Incarnation

God assumes a human body. Jesus is the Son of God in the real sense of the term. By virtue of this, he comes to make us be real children of the Father and sons in the Son. His Incarnation therefore, is finalized to making us be sharers in his divine Sonship.

God assumes a human body for he wants to save it. He then enters in human history to accomplish this. In assuming a human body, he becomes 'God-Man', the obedient Son, who bears our salvation. Incarnation comes with a new final stage of God's salvation. God intersects human history to give it a direction and vision of turning more towards the ultimate goal of His plan. This is a turning towards salvation. "...the coming of Christ is the center of history because it gives history its meaning and its saving efficacy."¹³

¹³ THE THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000, *Jesus Christ, Word of the Father*, 26.

It is at this point that the Incarnation of the Son takes shape. Since Incarnation of the Son is aimed at our salvation, then, it directly throws light to the Paschal event that accomplishes our salvation. As the human history grows, therefore, it opens itself and attains its full meaning in the Paschal mystery. Jesus' death on the cross reveals God's unlimited love that led to the Incarnation.

Those who witnessed the risen Christ spoke of his magnificent body. In connection to this, the Incarnation event is a pre-figuration of our new state of life that we shall have when Jesus comes again. We shall have transformed bodies just as Christ's body is glorified, this as a sign of our complete salvation. This is Incarnation targeted at a higher doxological motive.

Incarnation comes with our salvation through the Paschal mystery. "...Christ's Paschal mystery is the redemptive event par excellence."¹⁴ Incarnation therefore, is an event projecting light in our minds to see the Paschal mystery as an event of love of God for his creation. It is an event that anticipates the love of God to be poured on the cross and eventually usher a new life of grace to humanity. It is then we see human history as being finalized into the eternal communion with God. "The Incarnation, as a plan that matured in the heart of the Trinitarian communion, is a gift from on high."¹⁵

¹⁴ THE THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR THE GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000, *Jesus Christ, Word of the Father*, 27.

¹⁵ THE THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR THE GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000, *Jesus Christ, Word of the Father*, 20.

1.1 Revelation

Revelation is God's disclosure of himself to humanity. It is a disclosure aimed at building a dialogue. The God of the Old Testament revealed himself through the prophets. Christ is the fullness of revelation and the fulfillment of the Old Testament revelation.

Jesus reveals God as Trinity. Trinity is revealed in order to be communicated. In this economy of revelation, God reveals himself as a salvation-granting Trinitarian God. Just as Augustine suggests, God reveals himself as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Father's essence is overflowing of life, being and perfection. Jesus is the eternal Son of God for he is the eternally generated of the Father. He is the Son generated from the eternal overflowing of life, being and perfection of the Father. The eternal overflowing of God the Father is the giving of the divinity to the Son. Father and the Son communicate divinity to the Holy Spirit.

So, in this event of self-revelation, God reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is God the Father who reveals himself through the Son, in the Spirit. That means, once God reveals himself through the Son, the Holy Spirit is the principle from which we can fully understand the nature of the revelation and accept it. In order to reveal himself through the Son, the Incarnation had to be. The Son comes and not the Father. He comes to reveal the abundance of life that is in God and mediate it to God's people. He comes to disclose the saving justice of God. Christ comes to reveal the life we are to participate in.

The fulfillment of human destiny has been revealed in Jesus through his resurrection from the dead. Jesus did not experience this event only for himself

but for all men; Jesus' resurrection allowed the destiny of all men to a life in nearness to God, as Jesus had proclaimed it, to appear in him.¹⁶

Hence, revelation brings about the veiling of God's divine glory. At the cross therefore, he reveals God's nature as pure love that God wants to share with man, as a way of divinizing him.

1.2 Salvation

The self-revelation of God is a self-offering. In the course of revealing, God is also offering himself. He offers himself to us through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. This is God communicating himself to us as an offer. In the event of self-revealing as the source of all divine life, Father is both self-offering and self-communicating. But it is Jesus revealing the Father as full of life and as offering himself to man. So, he is the self-communication of the Father. He comes to us as an offer as he is sent by the Father to proclaim the Kingdom of God, inaugurate it and bring salvation to all through his death on the cross. Through him is our salvation from God the Father realized. He is therefore, our total gift from the Father. His presence means the Father's presence of divine life and salvific justice.

This comes as an offer. Just as Mk.1:15 says, the offer is there but it is for us to go for it freely. "...salvation is the work of God, but man obtains it only through a free decision for God."¹⁷ This is God communicating himself as divine life to humanity and for humanity. Our reception of the offer is our salvation attained. This becomes clear to

¹⁶ W. PANNENBERG, *Jesus-- God and Man*, 196.

¹⁷ M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma Volume Six*, 12.

us as the Paschal event unfolds the whole nature of God and his broad plan for man. God longs to enter into dialogue with man. It is a dialogue that is solely meant for the benefit of man, although God himself initiates it and empowers its progress.

It is through the Holy Spirit that the self-revelation and the self-communication of God make a great impact on us. If we refer to St. John, in his last moments with his disciples, Jesus encouraged his disciples to let him go for his going was meant for the benefit of the disciples. (cf. Jn.16:7). Jesus spoke to them as his intimate friends because he knew exactly what the Spirit, who enabled Jesus himself to be conceived, helped him in his public ministry and was about to do in his 'hour', would do to them after the 'hour'.

Jesus knew himself as the grace of the Father to the people, for in fact, he was a 'sign' to the people as John puts it. He was the sign of God the Father per se! who could fully reveal the presence, power, love and life of God to the people. Above this he gives us the 'power' as the ability to go for this divine life. This does not mean dictating our freedom. He respects our freedom. It is in this created human freedom that the Holy Spirit finds activity to play in.

The gift *made by the Son* completes the revelation and giving of the eternal love: *the Holy Spirit*, who in the inscrutable depths of the divinity is a Person-gift, through the work of the Son, that is to say by means of the Paschal mystery, is given to the Apostles and to the Church in a new way, and through them is given to humanity and the whole world.¹⁸

¹⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Dominum Et Vivificantem*, 36.

Once the Holy Spirit is given to us as the inner principle of our being, he enables us to realize God's offer as a treasure and accept it. He finds his dwelling place in our hearts, and eventually divinizes us. We grow in the love of God and become sharers of divine life in the Spirit. Kasper writes that,

In all these ways, the Spirit, who searches and knows the depths of the godhead (1Cor.2.11), enables us to gain an ever deeper knowledge and ever greater love of God. Therefore it is he who also leads us into the depths of God by enabling us to know who God is as Father, Son and Spirit. He discloses to us the triune being of God and makes possible that knowledge of the Trinity in which the deepest mystery of the God of Jesus Christ finds its abiding and binding expression.¹⁹

1.3 The Cross of Jesus and the Hour of Glorification

Through the cross, we are saved and set free. Jesus Christ becomes our salvation, our resurrection and our life. The cross is the triumph. It is therefore, in the cross of Christ that we glory.

The death of Christ on the cross brings us to the glory of the resurrection. Through the Incarnation, Jesus took human nature. It is under this context that the cross makes meaning and gives life to us. As a man he accepted the pain and suffering of the cross freely. In obedience to the Father, he accepted death of the cross. He understood his death as meant for a higher good, which was the salvation of mankind. Jesus underwent the pain of the cross, sufferings and the bitter death, willingly and happily as his highest gesture of love to his Father as Son. His death therefore, became the point of departure for the new way of life, a life of glorification of God.

¹⁹ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 229.

We receive the gift of redemption through the death of Christ on the cross. His cross brought life to the whole creation. Christ himself said that he would draw all men to himself once lifted up from the earth, cf. Jn. 12:32. He actually meant that he would bring those redeemed by his cross to the glory of the resurrection. "The risen Jesus is the new man who involves the whole of humanity in this destiny of newness."²⁰

Through the sacrifice, we are saved, forgiven our sins, receive abundance of grace and are reconciled with God in our communal life.

The resurrection is the event that repairs the friendship between God and man in which the divine life streams abundantly into the humanity of Christ (objective redemption) and, through him, into all of humanity (subjective redemption). This influx of the risen Christ is not merely exemplary or intentional, but real and efficacious. Because he is risen, he has the spiritual power to transform men according to his image in order to make them sons of the Father.²¹

This sacrifice on the cross became the highest moment in which Christ glorified his Father. At the Paschal event, the aim of the Incarnation is achieved. Salvation is fully granted. The Kingdom is universally and fully given.

Death on the cross is the 'hour of glorification.' Jesus dies in total obedience to the Father. His will did not contradict the will of the Father. By dying on the cross willingly and obediently, he glorified the Father. In return, the Father glorified him by raising him from the dead, and by giving him a transformed-magnificent body that could allow him to participate fully as the eternal Son in the eternal glory. "The Son glorifies the Father through his obedience. The Father glorifies the Son through his

²⁰ THE THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR THE GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000. *Jesus Christ, Word of the Father*, 99.

²¹ THE THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR THE GREAT JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2000. *Jesus Christ, Word of the Father*, 99.

resurrection and exaltation.”²² The Holy Spirit participates in this glorification as it is through him, as God’s power, that brings forth the event of the resurrection; and it is through him that the Son’s message universally and authentically reaches God’s people. He participates more in the glorification by being faithful in leading the people to the truth taught by Christ and in making it to be meaningful to their lives that they can accept it and hold it firm. “The Spirit glorifies the Father and the Son by freeing men for fellowship with them, filling men in their freedom with joy and thanksgiving. The glorifying of the Son and the Father through the Spirit sets men on the road towards the glory for which they themselves are destined.”²³

Through the Paschal event we get a glimpse of how eternity is. We would not be scared to say that all about Trinity is a doxological life. Now, since the glory of God is man fully alive, then, the Paschal event existed to elevate man in the participation of the doxological life of the Trinity for through it, grace which is the eternal life of God is given out. Participating in grace is participating in the eternal doxological life of the Trinity. By this participation, we glorify God. At the end God shall be all in all. “The glory of God is only completed (Rom.11.36) when the ‘creation at the beginning’ is consummated by the ‘new creation at the end’ and when the whole redeemed existence joyfully raises the hymn of eternal thanksgiving: ‘To him be the doxa for ever’ (Rev. 1.6).”²⁴

²² J. MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, 59.

²³ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, 59.

²⁴ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, 59-60.

2. God Suffers With Humanity

God is all loving; God is all-powerful. This being the essence of God, how then does he permit suffering to his creation? Human suffering can best be treated in the lines of human salvation. In fact, the Paschal mystery gives the full meaning, direction and goal of our human life. "The cross is then not simply the consequence of the earthly ministry of Jesus but the very goal of the Incarnation; it is not something adventitious but the meaning and purpose of the Christ-event, so that everything else is ordered to it as to a goal."²⁵ Christ suffered and in that sense, we can understand the meaning of the human-divine suffering. He suffered as man and God. He suffered fully as a man and fully as God.

Moltmann connects the power of suffering with love. One suffers in so far as he can love. He is a man bound by compassion. The ultimate end in God comes first. Paschal event reveals to us that God is our salvation for the glory of God is man fully alive. God therefore, uses the way of the cross to enable man to participate in the divine life. So, the cross is our answer to our suffering today. The cross expresses God's suffering; in fact, it expresses the power of God's love to overcome suffering. God is love itself. He suffers out of love to liberate people from suffering.

On the cross, God is experienced as absent. Jesus brings the idea of being forsaken by his Father. Jesus 'seems' to suffer in the absence of the other two divine persons. However, in this, the cross itself unveils to us that suffering is actually in God.

²⁵ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 189.

"Jesus accepted 'The suffering of love.' Not only the Son but the Father as well is not simply 'impassible'; he too suffers something of the suffering of love."²⁶ God suffers as Trinity. Just as the Son looks around and fails to see his loving Father during suffering, so is his Father. The Father looks around and fails to see his agonizing Son. As the Son undergoes death, the Father suffers an infinite pain of love for his dying Son. Jesus death equals to the pain of love of the Father that he has towards his Son. The Father undergoes infinite pain of love over his son's death. Father, who is unlimited-pure-self-communicating love, is overwhelmed by an infinite pain over the death of his Son. This Son who responds to the Father in pure obedience of love to the Father enters into infinite suffering over the forsakenness by the Father. In this experience, the Holy Spirit is their binding factor. Through the Holy Spirit God the Father surrenders his Son and the Son freely offers himself.

The cross reveals to us that such experience undergone by God is solely for the sake of his creation. This is where the Paschal event in the suffering of Christ takes shape. All this happens because God loves the creation unconditionally. God bears the pain of it for the sake of his creation. Through the forsakenness of Jesus we become true children of God who can call God our Father. Jesus in turn becomes our true brother. Today, in our experience of forsakenness, we interpret it in the lines of Jesus' sufferings. "The Christian God, that is, the God who is thought of in terms of Jesus Christ, is therefore... a God of sym-path^y, a God who suffers with man."²⁷

²⁶ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 191.

²⁷ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 196.

In our Eucharistic celebration, the whole event on Golgotha is actually celebrated. What happened on the cross, practically and exactly happens on our celebrating altar. God continues to give himself to and for his people, the believers. He comforts and strengthens those who are suffering today. He suffers with us and bears his suffering for our sake. He suffers a suffering of love that cannot be compared to the sufferings we undergo, for the suffering of love has no measure. It takes the whole heart of the person. The human-divine suffering of Jesus is the divine suffering of God.

So, through the cross we experience God's compassion. God is with us showing solidarity with human beings through the sufferings of Christ. Through Christ's sufferings, God intervenes on our behalf to bring salvation, for he exists as God for us. The Paschal event finalizes itself into a new life of grace. "Because, then, God is love he can suffer and by that very fact reveal his divinity. The self-emptying of the cross is therefore not a de-divinization of God but his eschatological glorification."²⁸

²⁸ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 196.

Chapter IV

Glorification in both the Scriptures and Walter Kasper

1. John's Notion on Glorification

St. John loves using the word 'glory', or rather, 'glorification' in relation to the words 'sign' and 'hour'. In his usage of the term 'sign', he implies the manifestation of the presence and the power of God. He uses the term 'hour' to denote, Jesus' moment of crucifixion on the cross, death and resurrection. It is the hour when both Jesus and God are glorified.

John discusses the glorification of Jesus in 13:31-32. Here, he uses 'doxa' or 'glory' as a foreshadowing of Jesus' death and resurrection which will be the peak event of manifesting God's eternal presence and power. At this hour he will be 'raised up' on the cross and in this way he will be glorified (12:28). It is through his death that Jesus will return to God in the heavenly glory (cf. 3:14; 6:62; 7:33; 8:14; 13:1a; 14:12,28).

Jesus' hour is not a 'passive hour', but rather an effective hour. His darkest hour is his hour of glorification for once Judas leaves the room, it grows dark, (13:30). So, the departure of Judas sets the glorification of Jesus in motion (13:31).

Jesus' work that glorifies God will be confirmed in 17:1-5. The Son glorifies the Father through his work done obediently on earth. The completion of the work will be on the cross when the hour comes. That means "...by completing his work on earth, he takes this glorification of the Father into the 'hour' of the event of the cross and to the climax that embraces all things."²⁹ Hence, having glorified the Father, Jesus too, expects to be glorified by the Father in the same hour. Here, Jesus will achieve the glorification that is due to him in heaven and "...that he is glorified in mediating salvation and in giving life to all believers."

In 17:1-5, Jesus' activity moves towards his hour. To pass to the Father (cf. 13:1), Jesus has to face crucifixion. Jesus requests to be glorified so that the Father may be glorified. Although this is a reciprocal glorification between Jesus and God, this request of Jesus is aimed at the glorification of the Father. This is so because God's glory aims at his joy of making man fully alive. This will be, because Jesus' glorification is an event leading not only to human salvation but also to the mediation of life to God's people. This now sets the point of departure for the whole prayer. Glorification means establishing Jesus in his power.

Once Jesus is established in his power, he will give eternal life to all the people whom the Father 'has given' him (17:2). These are the believers. "In his glorification Jesus will glorify the Father (vs. 1) by the gift of eternal life, for this gift will beget for God new children who will honor Him as Father..."³¹ Therefore, we already know the

²⁹ R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St John*, III, 50.

³⁰ R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St John*, III, 51.

³¹ R. E. BROWN, *The Anchor Bible, The Gospel According To John (xiii-xxi)*, 751.

real meaning of 'doxa'. It is eternal life. 'Doxa' replaced eternal life in the epistle of John (17:5). At the hour, therefore, what is happening is mutual glorification, (17:5). Resurrection is associating Jesus to eternal glory that is his by right from all eternity and by the virtue of being the eternal Son (cf.6:62). This is Father's faithful response to the Son. The new state of Christ will enable the believers to share in that glory, (cf.17:24). Therefore, through the Paschal event, the faithful are incorporated in God's eternal doxology.

We can therefore testify that glorification to John referred to the manifestation of the divine presence and power. Jesus' event reveals the nature of God. God is love. Jesus therefore, is the Father's 'sign per se!' The Holy Spirit glorifies by making the whole event meaningful to us. We now share in his life and glory as this is for the Father's glory.

1.1 The High-Priestly Prayer

Jesus' prayer is in four units. It is in this prayer that Jesus consecrates himself to the sacrificial death that he is to offer to the Father.

1.1.1 Jesus Prays For His Own Glorification (17:1-6)

In this prayer, he orientates everything towards the hour of glorification. On the cross therefore, he will regain the glory that he had with the Father from eternity, (17:5). At the same time he will obtain power that will enable him to give eternal life to those whom the Father entrusted to him, (17:2). This is the main motive of Jesus' prayer. Jesus is aware that his death will bring salvation and mediate life. He prays for this to be

actualized through God's powers to the believers. Jesus is praying to be glorified so that he can be enabled to grant life to men and so that God can be glorified.

This sets up the idea of an offer. Jesus has the idea of judgment in his prayer. Those the Father 'has given' him are the believers for they have chosen to receive Jesus as God's offer. These inherit eternal life from the glorified Christ. Schnackenburg says that, "...Christ regains the glory which was previously his (see 6:62) and which belongs to him as the Son (see 1:14b) and does so also to enable believers to share in that glory (17:24)."³² Through Christ, they will participate in the eternal doxology.

1.1.2 Prayer for the Disciples He Has Already (17:7-19)

Jesus prays for the disciples he has at present. They are the direct recipients of Jesus revelation here on earth. They have known well Jesus' relationship with the Father and have shown their readiness to embrace the Holy Spirit (cf. 14:7). They have formed a community of the elect and therefore have a mission of being a 'sign' of the presence of God in the world.

Their very union with Jesus means that they have already entered in the Trinitarian unity. This means that they share in the divine life of Jesus. So, Jesus prays so that they may be kept in this unity by the Father in his absence. Since the disciples have received Jesus' words as God's words, Jesus is glorified in them. Moloney comments that "...Jesus' words to the Father inform the reader and listener that, as his

³² R. SCHNACKENBURG, *The Gospel According to St John*, 174.

own gift of self in love glorifies the Father, so the ongoing presence of the same quality of love among his disciples glorifies Jesus (v.10b).³³

Jesus requests that they be sanctified, (17:17-19) for his own mission will become their mission. They will be consecrated to the priestly service of the word of truth. Brown commenting on this says, "John xvii 19 has Jesus consecrating himself, seemingly as a victim, so that his disciples may be consecrated—disciples who are with him..."³⁴ Therefore, through living in union with the Father and the Son, they will reveal and communicate God.

1.1.3 Jesus' Prayer for the Future Disciples (17:20-23)

John in 17:24, tells us that the disciples will have a share in his glory. The glorified Christ will communicate divine life to them. 'Doxa' here points at the fullness of divine life that is anticipated in great hope and is to be fully realized in the heavenly world. Divine life is already present in the believers. They are to grow to become perfectly one (v.23b). "In 22 Jesus implies that the oneness of the believers flows from his giving to the believers the glory that the Father has given to him, and so unity comes down from the Father and the Son to the believers."³⁵ Jesus is one with the Father. The disciples are in unity with Jesus. So, through their unity in Jesus, Jesus has included them in the unity of God. Jesus implants divine unity in the disciples by the very virtue of his being 'in them' and the Father being 'in him.'

³³ F. J. MOLONEY, *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13-21*, 113.

³⁴ R. E. BROWN, *The Anchor Bible, The Gospel According To John (xiii—xxi)*, 767.

³⁵ R. E. BROWN, *The Anchor Bible, The Gospel According To John (xiii—xxi)*, 776.

Because of the fact that the Father is 'in Jesus' and Jesus is 'in the disciples', then, the disciples community is entirely filled with God's being. "They can share in the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son (see v.11b)."³⁶ Theirs is to make the mystery of divine unity visible in brotherly love. Through this, the disciples will make Jesus to be known as the one sent by God to bring God's eternal life to the reach of people. Jesus prays that the world comes to witness the loving communion existing between God and Jesus and as the life we are called to share into.

1.1.4 Jesus' Final Plea (17:24-26)

Jesus' desire and will is to share his glory in full with the believers. Salvation thus will entail a personal bond with Jesus. Jesus prays (v.24), for the ultimate consummation of the union between himself and his disciples of all time, as this is the ultimate goal of our salvation. "Jesus' first request in this closing passage (v.24) offers hope to all believers. It transcends their life in the world and their mission to the world; that they might behold the glory the Son possessed before the foundation of the world."³⁷ Christians hope for this. The ultimate goal of our salvation in itself has the notion of fulfillment and consummation.

2. Paul's Account on Glorification

Paul in (Rom.6:4) maintains that Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Glory here is used in the sense of 'power.' Christ was then taken up into the glory of the Father, (1Tim.3:16). It was for the glory of the Father that Jesus was exalted

³⁶ F. J. MOLONEY, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 119.

³⁷ F. J. MOLONEY, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 123-124.

after humbling himself throughout his earthly life, (cf.Phil.2:11). The logic is that Jesus is raised through the glory, brought into the glory, and this is for the Father's glory. Paul further sees the crucified 'Lord of glory' as the coming 'God of glory' (1Cor.2:8). Christ is the radiance of the divine glory that illuminates the hearts of men, (IICor.4:6). Paul in Rom.6; Phil.3, brings the idea of fellowship with Christ in the Spirit. It is a fellowship that entails Christ's sufferings, death and resurrection.

Paul calls Christ 'the hope of glory', (Col.1:27) for Christ unites men and creation with God. Speaking of Christ glorifying our bodies (Phil.3:21), he adds, "Thus the object of hope is well and clearly defined: it is the glory which is to be revealed in us--in our risen bodies at the parousia--when the glory of Christ, who is called 'the Lord of glory' in 1Cor.2:8, is revealed in our mortal bodies."³⁸ For Paul, Christ glorifies the Father by uniting us with the Father. We then through the Holy Spirit partake in God's glory. That is why he identifies the Holy Spirit as the first fruits and guarantee of glory, (cf.Rom.8:23; IICor.5:5). "We now have the first-fruits of the Spirit, in other words, of the glory which pertains to the children of God and which foreshadows their inheritance; we aspire towards the crowning of our destiny as children and heirs of God."³⁹ The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by uniting the believers with Christ and by making God's glory efficacious in their lives. Such glory comes to completion only when the 'old creation' is consummated by the 'new creation' (cf.Rom.11:36).

³⁸ L. CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, 63.

³⁹ L. CERFAUX, *The Christian in The Theology of St Paul*, 195.

Hence glory to Paul would mean the manifestation of the presence of God. Glory is a way of the revelation of the divinity. God the Father reveals his glory through Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, he incorporates us in the participation of the glory. This is to mean that the glory itself is the divine nature we are called to share (1The.2:12). "The hymn in Eph.1:3-14 develops the theme which was begun in Rom.8:29-30: our predestination to the rank of sons of God leads us to eschatological glory. We were predestined to sanctity, to sonship through Jesus Christ, for the manifestation of God's glory in his gift."⁴⁰

When Paul talks of the Man-God having been 'taken up in glory' (1Tim.3:16), Paul seems to say the same thing with John, (Jn.17:5). By his resurrection and ascension, Christ has entered into the divine glory, which is of holiness, of power and of life. "When glory is mentioned in connection with the resurrection, it is directly related to the glory of the parousia. In fact, the same notion of glory is connected very closely with the manifestation of God in the last days of this world."⁴¹

Therefore, the whole life of Christ was a manifestation of the glory of God. The Paschal event, being the climax of this manifestation brought the Holy Spirit to enable us to participate in God's life of glory, (Rom.5:5). L. Cerfaux says that "The glory of the resurrection is given us at this very moment. Just as the moon shines with the light of the sun, so by the very fact of gazing upon and considering the light of glory that

⁴⁰ L. CERFAUX, *The Christian in The Theology of St Paul*, 499.

⁴¹ L. CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, 83.

shines in the face of Christ--the image of the God of glory--our faces shine with that same glory."⁴² He continues to say that

Thus a phenomenon comparable with the transfiguration occurs within us, and this glory which transfigures us in some quite permanent way, is not an ephemeral glory distinct from God, not a mere creation of God as was the glory of Moses in the Old Testament, but it is in a mysterious way the glory of God, eternal, divine, and bestowed upon our bodies.⁴³

Today, we rejoice in the Paschal event as not only bringing redemption, justification and expiation to us but also as enriching us with God's life through the Holy Spirit.

3. Kasper's Notion on Glorification

To expound his knowledge on the doxological life of the Trinity, Kasper goes back to the high-priestly prayer: 'Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee' (Jn.17.1). Kasper pays great honor to the eschatological hour for it is in this hour that he sees the entire work of salvation coming into completion. He notices that the completion of the salvation takes place in the cross. So, Christ's event, (although Kasper does not use this phrase), is the cause of our salvation. In this Paschal event, Jesus becomes the eschatological revelation of God. By the virtue of this, God the Father exalts him, and by so doing, glorifies the Son. Once this happens, the Father's own glorification is revealed. Once the Father glorifies the Son, the Son, in turn, glorifies the Father. It becomes a reciprocal aspect of glorification. The Son asks

⁴² L. CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, 88.

⁴³ L. CERFAUX, *Christ in the Theology of St. Paul*, 88-89.

for glory. But it is 'that glory' which he has with the Father from eternity (17:5). So, it is the glory that he shares with the Father.

So, in the cross, what Jesus reveals is God's glory. For Kasper, God possesses from eternity the glory of his Godness. "It is said that from eternity God possesses the glory of his Godness because the Father glorifies the Son and the Son in turn glorifies the Father."⁴⁴ In this case, when Jesus becomes the eschatological revealer of God, it means that he reveals the essence of God. Kasper himself says that, "The eschatological revelation, then, is a revelation of the eternal being of God, a revelation of the Godness of God."⁴⁵ So, the cross is the eschatological revelation of the glory of God. And this is the essence of God.

The Son has revealed the glory of the Father. The Father too has revealed the glory of the Son. The faithful have accepted and acknowledged this fact. By so doing, the faithful participate in the eternal doxology in which the Son is being glorified in them, (17:10). Such glorification is possible only by the working of the Holy Spirit. Being the Spirit of truth, he guides the faithful into the whole truth, without adding anything of his own. Having acknowledged both the glory of the Father and of the Son, (16:13-15), he leads the faithful to the reality of what Jesus is and what he has from the Father. He himself proceeds from the Father (15:26). He is the 'doxa' of God, that is, the revealedness and radiance of God's eternal glory. He therefore, effects this reality in our lives. Kasper then writes, "The Spirit is, and effects, the concrete presence of the

⁴⁴ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 303.

⁴⁵ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 303.

eternal doxology of the Father and Son in the Church and in the world. He is the eschatological accomplishment of the glory of God; he is its presence within the confines of history.”⁴⁶

Kasper sees the intention of the Trinitarian confession, that is, ‘Glory be to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit’ as the eschatological glorification of God. The eschatological glorification of God is the salvation and life of the world. But to know God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ whom he sent to us is eternal life, (17:3). So, our Trinitarian confession means participation and communion of life with God. The acknowledgment of God’s absolute subjectivity, as Kasper puts it, is that “...this acknowledgement redeems, liberates and fulfills humanity.”⁴⁷ The glorification of the triune God gives both the meaning and the truth about humanity, world and life. It is through this glorification that we are incorporated into the intra-trinitarian glorification. Thus, we have communion with God. In our Trinitarian confession, we anticipate what Jesus taught about the coming of God’s reign. So, we anticipate the lordship and glory of God as life of the world and fulfillment of human hope.

Therefore, Kasper’s line of thought is that, God who Incarnates, reveals himself and eventually grants salvation, does it purposely for the only-one-single motive of God’s glorification. It is for God’s glory, that we participate in his inner life. This is salvation granted to us. So, full salvation shall be attained in participating in this God’s

⁴⁶ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 304.

⁴⁷ W. KASPER, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 304.

inner life, that is, in glorifying God and in participating in the eternal doxological life of the Trinity. God's Incarnation therefore aims at this and has its goal in this.

Chapter V

Our Invitation into the Doxological Life

1. The Christian Involvement in the Glorification of God

Man was created in God's image and likeness, a signification of having a divine seed in himself. He is then called to divinization. Through this, God wanted man to come to a self-realization. In his proud autonomous attempts to realize himself, man distorted the divine likeness. God through Jesus Christ rescued him. In his whole life, Jesus allowed the glory of God's image to shine forth for all, and through the effects of the Paschal event, enabled man to acquire sanctification.

Our life of grace is a life of divinization. God the Father through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit wants to uplift us to the divine life by divinizing us. Such divinization is an interior transformation. When the Son of God assumed human nature, he became fully man and fully God. He was therefore, able to reveal God fully to man. God reveals himself with an intention of communicating himself. Jesus disclosed the mind and the priorities of the Father so that we could make them our own and hence, live them. The Father's mind for man is that man who is created in God's image and

likeness should grow to full realization of himself and thus, come to full communion with God. And the Father's priorities are nothing other than simply living love.

Jesus as man therefore, allowed the Father's mind and priorities to be his own. That is why he decided to live love and grow in love to full realization of himself. This is exactly what Christ wanted to do to us. By making us to be sons in the Son, he wanted to make us live his very own life for this would mean living the Father's intent.

In the process of being transformed and deified by the Holy Spirit, we come to resemble more closely Jesus himself. The Spirit enables us to embrace the enemy, to rejoice in others' happiness, to take care of those who lack in any respect. Conformity to Christ means participating in the very life of God, the life of communion among persons, divine and human, and among all creatures.⁴⁸

Jesus knew that the Holy Spirit would make this effective. On the event of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit would be given, he would dwell in our hearts as the inner principle of our divinization. He then would root the love of God into our hearts and thus enable us to act like God. This is renewing man by an initiative and the power from above. Once the Holy Spirit brings our interior transformation, a state of renewed creation, he enables us to remain faithful critical realists who can act and live like the Father, who in himself is unconditional love. This is the Christian involvement in the glorification of God.

Therefore, our divinization enables us to transcend ourselves authentically and therefore, to think like God, act like God and thus, grow truly human. "Deification means that the Spirit transforms persons in both will and knowledge. The Spirit of God

⁴⁸ C. M. LACUGNA, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 346.

communicates to us the divine reality according to our capacity to receive.”⁴⁹ Now, if in the course of this divinization, we remain truly human beings but are able to love like God, that is, to love all uniformly, isn’t this living the life of God? I reckon it is! Hence, we actually in our life today participate in the Doxological life of God as we wait patiently for the peak of it when Christ comes again.

2. The Christian Sacramental Life

My concern is sacraments as they are understood and celebrated by the Christians and especially by the Catholics. Christ himself instituted the sacraments and entrusted them to the Church for the saving purpose of the Church. “...if they are enacted by the Church in her official capacity as body of Christ, they must be fulfilled with divine reality of salvation proceeding from her risen head.”⁵⁰

Sacraments hence, are visible signs of invisible reality that do not only signify what they contain but, in actual fact, do confer to the recipient what they really signify. And this is grace. So, we receive grace on receiving sacraments. Grace is the life of God; Grace is the life of the risen Lord. “To this extent, then, we could say that the historical saving deeds of Jesus are renewed among us through the liturgy in the sense that they are ‘virtually’ present; that is, their power, their efficacy, is present in the sacraments to effect our salvation.”⁵¹

Today, the Church keeps Jesus’ command, ‘Do this in memory of me’, and hence, she celebrates the very life of Jesus in her Mass. In our Eucharistic celebration,

⁴⁹ C. M. LACUGNA, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 348.

⁵⁰ J. P. SCHANZ, *The Sacraments of Life and Worship*, 41.

⁵¹ J. P. SCHANZ, *The Sacraments of Life and Worship*, 48.

the whole Paschal event is re-presented and the very immolated person of Jesus Christ becomes truly present who, once received, transforms us from within. "The Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, though offered in a different manner."⁵² We are renewed and so gain power to renew the face of the earth. Speaking about the Eucharist, Fiorenza says, "...as the sacrament of God's eschatological people that receives its life and mission from the living presence of Christ in its midst, through the power of the Holy Spirit."⁵³ Our unity with Christ is strengthened, our love for God and for one another is cherished and thus we grow in perfect line with God for God's grace to forge forth fills us. So, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, we not only receive grace proper to this sacrament but also Jesus Christ himself, who is our Lord and God, and the very source of the grace. "...what is given to us in the Eucharist is nothing other than Christ himself."⁵⁴ Therefore, our unity with Christ means our communion with God.

Therefore, our liturgical life, which rotates around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments, is God's life-giving to us and this ends in our communion with God.

The presence of Christ in the sacraments (in the Eucharist in his very substance and in the other sacraments and the rest of the liturgy by his active power) is the heart of the explanation as to how we can make contact with the saving mysteries or salvation deeds of Christ when he was on earth.⁵⁵

The mutual glorification of the Son and the Father is looked at from the death and resurrection of the Son. In our celebration of the sacraments, especially in the

⁵² R. MOLONEY, *Problems in Theology: The Eucharist*, 207.

⁵³ F. S. FIORENZA — J. P. GALVIN, ed., *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*. II, 286.

⁵⁴ E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Eucharist*, 139.

⁵⁵ J. P. SCHANZ, *The Sacraments of Life and Worship*, 50.

sacrament of Baptism, we participate in the death and resurrection of the Son. We die to sin and rise to newness of life. This is how we participate in the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son.

The church therefore, perfectly forms part of the One-Christological phase of God's divine salvific plan in history. We glorify God by our virtue of being renewed by his life and by our renewing the face of the earth through building structures that are worth living.

Chapter VI

Liberation Theology and Human Suffering

1. Doing Liberation Theology

God created man as a free-intellectual being who acts out of his own will. After the fall, God came to his rescue through Jesus Christ. But concupiscence remained as an inordinate power incapacitating man's freedom thus making him 'handicapped' in loving. Man therefore, is not completely free. What is possible to him now is 'selfishness'. Concupiscence has held him a slave of himself. He only finds it easy to seek himself. "What man has lost through sin, according to scripture, is this eschatological freedom."⁵⁶

The greatest offending thing that man can do to God is to exercise pride. Man is a weak and limited being. By himself he cannot control this power (concupiscence) fully, but longs for God's grace to neutralize the lure of the sin. This enables him to be morally and religiously authentic for he can then, live his moral life genuinely, think of God, love him and worship him freely and genuinely. God's grace therefore comes to

⁵⁶ M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma Volume Six*, 14.

set us free by giving us love. "The liberty of fallen man is restored through grace alone. Thus it is that only one who is impelled by grace is really free (Jn.8,31-36; Gal. 5,1; 2,4)."⁵⁷ What else is greater than love? None, for love can do all! Love enables us to transcend ourselves and love freely. The Christian is then liberated for love surpasses all. Such rooting of love in our hearts is our divinization.

Our participation in divine life means our very participation in the glorification of God. When Jesus asked the Father to glorify him, so that he as the Father would be glorified (cf. Jn.17:1-5), this is exactly what he meant, for God's joy is man fully alive. Man can only be fully alive if he can authentically live love. God is glorified when his objective for man is met. Moving from oneself to the love of God and neighbour means growth. Growth in love means growth in self-realization. We realize ourselves as being created in the image and likeness of God and hence, called to live in communion with God. God therefore, wanted us to glorify him through our very self-realization.

Liberation theology is simply a theology of salvation. Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis. This is theology engaged in the transformation of humankind. "The gradual conquest of true freedom leads to the creation of a new humankind and a qualitatively different society."⁵⁸ It comes to challenge Christians. "To be a Christian is to accept and to live in solidarity, in faith, hope, and charity-the meaning that the Word of the Lord and our encounter with that Word give to the

⁵⁷ M. SCHMALS, *Dogma Six*, 14.

⁵⁸ G. GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, 24.

historical becoming of humankind on the way toward total communion.”⁵⁹ This is our human concern for “The people of God march on, ‘accounting for their hope’ toward ‘a new heaven and a new earth.’”⁶⁰ All we are doing is a struggle against unjust tendencies and the creation of a new humanity in the world. This is salvation! That is why liberation theology is busy orientating, transforming and guiding history to its fulfillment.

Gutierrez says, “To work, to transform this world, is to become a man and to build the human community; it is also to save. Likewise, to struggle against misery and exploitation and to build a just society is already to be part of the saving action, which is moving towards its complete fulfillment.”⁶¹ That means we “...become part of a saving process which embraces the whole of humanity and all human history.”⁶²

But we cannot achieve this unless we are liberated from selfishness. Christ is our liberator per se! Through his Paschal event, we have the liberating grace. Grace gives love. Therefore, with love, we can live liberating praxis. “...the purpose of those who participate in the process of liberation is to ‘create a new humanity.’”⁶³ As liberated people therefore, we are called to conceive and built structures that can promote, support and strengthen life in God.

⁵⁹ G. GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, 32.

⁶⁰ G. GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, 33.

⁶¹ G. GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, 91.

⁶² G. GUTIERREZ., *A Theology of Liberation*, 91.

⁶³ G. Gutierrez., *A Theology of Liberation*, 106.

2. Human Existences Are Bound By Crosses

In so far as man is a human being bound by the two principles of body and soul, he has to experience suffering from all corners of life as each principle suffers in its capacity as a principle. The whole person becomes affected. Hence, man suffers in his totality. If by cross we mean suffering, then, it is true that human existences are bound by crosses. The sufferings, difficulties and challenges man faces forms his crosses in life. These touch all the realms of human life.

Jesus warned that those who follow him must take up their cross. By this, they would lose their lives in order to gain it (cf.Mtt.10:38;16:24; Mk.8:34; Lk.9:24; 14:27). Jesus' concern was the 'denial of self', (cf.Mk.8:34). The cross of Jesus is supreme for it gives meaning and fulfills our crosses.

We can look at cross from another perspective. Cross as earlier mentioned means suffering. Suffering has to be looked at from the freedom point of view. I am free and so out of my freedom, I can cause suffering, either to myself or to others or to God's creation. But suffering entails more than human freedom. Some of the happenings leading to the sufferings in the world are beyond human knowledge. We can cite a good example of the recent earthquake (the December 2004 Asian Tsunami) that led to thousands of deaths. Who is the cause of this? God? Well, we understand that God allows evil to take place for he wants to draw good out of it. But we are not saying that he causes it.

One thing we know is that God did not create anything 'perfect'. He created us this way so that we grow to know him, to know ourselves and come into communion

with him. But since, he placed us in a limited environment, it also meant that as we grow, we shall encounter different life experiences, with both positive and negative results. This means that as we encounter these experiences, we are challenged and we not only grow in one perspective, but in the totality of ourselves. At the end of the process, we not only gain knowledge, love what we have known but also become courageous and tough in accepting and resisting different life experiences. However, we should keep in mind that "Not all suffering is specifically Christian; only that which flows from the following of Jesus is."⁶⁴ Theology provokes us to humiliate all and look at future life in faith and with hope for God never deserts his people. Ours is a faithful God.

2.1 Theology Transfigures Human Crosses

Through the Incarnation Jesus became fully man so that he could take upon himself all the human conditions faced by man so as to transfigure and give them meaning. Jesus therefore was able to undergo the experience of pain and suffering and eventually undergo the condition of human death. This is how Jesus builds solidarity with us. And this is how God enters into solidarity with humanity for he wants to liberate it.

When he freely decided to Incarnate in a sinful humanity, he actually wanted to free it from all the boundaries of resistance and allow it to transcend itself. "The only salvation there is, and can possibly be, is grace; not fruit of our observance of the law

⁶⁴ J. SOBRINO, *Christology at the Crossroads*, 215-216.

but a gift from on high to be welcomed by faith.”⁶⁵ God’s salvation to us is complete. He saves the whole person. Hence, we are saved from both the physical and spiritual crosses. What therefore, theology does is to restore the real-proper image of God to us, as God of pure love whose ‘being’ is manifested for his created reality and especially man to be fully alive. Love liberates by transforming, renewing, and recreating.

2.2 Human Crosses And Liberation

The Paschal event for Christians is actually the ‘mysteries of glory’; for through the resurrection, our faith is built and through the ascension, the Holy Spirit is sent to us to build us from within by divinizing us. But we know that when he shall give us God’s grace in full, we shall be as perfect as the Father is (Mtt.5:48). Since Jesus was truly man, on the cross he expressed total love for God and humankind. This event led to his full personal growth, since growth is relational to love. His love matured on the cross. At the same time, Christ’s event mediated salvation.

So, it is not only the pain and suffering that Christ is facing on the cross but also that the cross enables him to grow to full self-realization and at the same time, the cross is salvific. Fogliacco says, “In this life-giving encounter the sinner is reborn to a new life; from this encounter thanksgiving and praise rise up to the Father from the risen Lord and from saved humanity; this encounter opens for mortal humanity a perspective of immortal life.”⁶⁶ Jesus death therefore, shows that there is much meaning in suffering. We do not suffer just for the sake of suffering. Jesus death gives meaning to

⁶⁵ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 60.

⁶⁶ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 46.

our suffering. Suffering caused by evil in this world has its meaning to our lives. So, our perception of our crosses are given new outlook and new meanings.

Since Christ's event was made for our liberation, then, the love poured in our hearts by the given Spirit shall enable us grow to a state of free-self-emptying to meet the demands of others. "Inner liberation and growth in love: these are the two great values secured by the cross."⁶⁷ So, in our sufferings we shall remain human. Through the Spirit, we shall know the root of our sufferings, transcend them and come to their meanings. "If doing God's will under pleasant circumstances produces growth in love, doing the same will under painful conditions represents a greater challenge to freedom, which in turn leads to greater growth in love."⁶⁸

I think we need to have an apocalyptic mind-set, whereby we see ourselves as people of God living already the very last days of God's work of salvation regardless of the experiences we face in life. The Christ event brought God's future into our very disposal. When on the cross he brought the turning of aeons by defeating the evil and thereby, bringing to an end the history of sin thus, inaugurating the age of glory, he meant it that God's people had to live their life in full. We are living the final days. I reckon, therefore, that what should worry me much should not be the crosses I face in life but rather how genuinely I have responded to God's offer. "Beyond any light that emanates from the cross, it is the absurdity of the cross that radiates light: the vivid

⁶⁷ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 61.

⁶⁸ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 62.

sense that *only* God understands the mystery of our suffering, and that our trust in him is all the greater the less we understand about his plan.”⁶⁹

2.3 Glorifying God through Our Crosses

The Christ event was the highest moment of his glorification of the Father. Our carried crosses should too be ways of the glorification of God. If we are able to bear our crosses, (not surely by our efforts though, but by the help of the Holy Spirit), then, we are able to benefit from his (God's) help of grace which is all that we need to be fully alive. So, we glorify God by bearing our crosses faithfully. So, in Parousia God shall glorify us by granting us full salvation and allowing us to enter the kingdom of glory for having carried our crosses faithfully. having been humble and self-giving in love to others and not because we had despaired in life due to the crosses or not because of our selfishness and being full of pride.

Christ's cross engulfs our crosses. It is only that we make present in our world today the cross of the suffering Christ. Christ through his cross brought life and thus, salvation to the world. A Christian cross, although humanly speaking painful, yields life and salvation in its capacity. Jesus Christ who lives in us and for us, is the one who gives our crosses the power to yield life and salvation for the world.

Jesus glorified God through his death on the cross. Jesus shows forth what God was like by dying on the cross. He shows that God was love. So, we can only read the mind of Christ, to know how best to glorify God. But Christ made us sons in the Son.

⁶⁹ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 65.

So, we can best glorify God by living in union with Christ; and so do we. Speaking about the Eucharist, Fogliacco says, "In union with Christ, our entire existence is offered to the Father and becomes a sacrifice in the sacrifice of Christ."⁷⁰

Humanly speaking, our faith is being tested and challenged greatly. The people we are living with and the environment itself throw a lot of challenges to our faith. Some of the things happening like land subsidizing, earth quakes and even untimely deaths like in the course of an accident, leave big question marks and great challenges to us who believe in the complete salvation brought by the Paschal mystery. If we believe that God even after all the revelation we receive from him, remains to be a mystery, then, we should also realize that in everything, what is supreme is our faith in God. All is in control from above and all is for our salvation, as salvation per se! comes from God. The Paschal event remains the answer to all questions as it is the fulfillment of our salvation. The only thing is to open ourselves to be cherished by God's grace. Even in the most difficult moments of our lives, in the dull, dark and doomed moments, our faith should pave its way through, prevail and enable us to remain full in God's life, and strengthened in our being. It is a moment in which our knowledge of God should also grow, learn to love him more and more and get to grow to be as perfect as the Father is (Mtt.5:48).

⁷⁰ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 59.

Chapter VII

Application

1. The Cross of Jesus Transfigures Our Crosses

The cross of Jesus manifests the glory of God. If we agree that glory here means God's direct presence and his power, then, our crosses carried in union with Christ are not simply mere crosses. The point is that as Christians we take our crosses and 'insert' them in the cross of Christ. This is to say that we put them in the glory of God which is the very presence and the power of God. Here, they will be given power to be manifestations of God himself and his glory. This is saying that we give ourselves fully to God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit. We submit our sufferings, worries and hopelessness to God who heals, comforts and consoles through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the cross of Jesus transfigures our crosses by changing them from mere instruments of pain and suffering to a means of being closer to God. The 'inserting' of our crosses in the cross of Christ would mean our union with Christ. Our union with Christ yields to our union with God. This is how we are introduced by Christ

into the doxological life. Christ converts our crosses from being senseless and meaningless crosses to meaningful crosses. He transfigures our crosses from being mere instruments of pain and suffering to means of glorifying God, that is, by being closer to him. Our crosses are being given meaning by the Christ event. Fogliacco speaking on the cross says that, "It is the paradox at the heart of the Christian faith: life comes from death, glory from humiliation, joy from sorrow. But...it is not enough to say that life comes from death: in reality, death itself is life, humiliation is glory, and sorrow is joy."⁷¹ He continues to say that,

We must conclude that the cross of Christ liberates us from suffering, not by eliminating it but by transforming it from within, that is, by changing its meaning and value. Suffering remains, but metamorphoses into a germ of life: from punishment for sin it turns into an instrument of salvation; from a symptom of death into a promise of life; from a curse (Gn.3:16-24) into a blessing.⁷²

Hence, we step 'somehow' on our crosses to reach God and come into communion with him.

2. The Cross of Jesus Is Salvific

Hypostatic union means that God becomes fully man and remains being fully God. By Incarnation God imparts himself to us to show his willingness to become an offer for humanity. By accepting willingly to die on the cross, Jesus showed the humanity's willingness to accept God's offer.

Jesus' death is an eschatological event for it marks the turning point between the two aeons. "He is at once end, goal and recapitulation and also the beginning of a new

⁷¹ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 57.

⁷² N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 57-58.

future.”⁷³ It does away with the present sinful age and inaugurates the future age full of justice and love. On the cross, God judges and condemns evil as sin in this world. He became sin himself (2Co.5:21) to bring the history of sin to an end and reconcile the sinner with himself. Jesus pays the ransom. The sinner eventually receives a free redemption. That is why we would actually agree with the Old Testament when it looks at God’s justice and mercy as basically salvific. God’s justice (sedeque) is that Jesus bears the punishment of sin instead of the sinful man. And the mercy (hesed) of God is that death should be upon Jesus so that man a sinner, be spared. “For that price was actually paid by the Father and the Son. They suffered in order that we might be spared from suffering. And only because Jesus died as our head and representative did humankind, too, pay a price through him.”⁷⁴ At the end God’s unconditional love prevails.

The Man-Jesus has done away with selfishness and has inaugurated love to prevail. Once Jesus’ death defeats evil, good takes over. What pours on the cross as blood of the human person of Jesus turns to be the overflowing mercy of God that leads to the forgiving act of God. “In the Resurrection and Exaltation of Jesus, God also accepted Jesus’ existence for others and finally established peace and reconciliation with the world. In and through Jesus, God’s love is now finally addressed to all men.”⁷⁵

Through the Incarnation, Jesus had entered into solidarity with sinful man to restore salvation to sinful humanity. He offered a perfect sacrifice to the Father in the

⁷³ W. KASPER, *Jesus The Christ*, 218.

⁷⁴ N. FOGLIACCO., *The God of all Consolation*, 58.

⁷⁵ W. KASPER, *Jesus The Christ*, 155.

name of sinful humanity, thus, met our forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Through his humanity, he has brought salvation to all humanity. What predominates now is the love of God inaugurated by the New Adam not the pride and selfishness of the Old Adam. "Jesus' death on the cross is the final spelling out of the only thing he was interested in, the coming of God's eschatological rule."⁷⁶ This is our salvation.

The Spirit enables us to participate in the life of the Risen Lord. We are therefore the eschatological people of God. We are the people of the last days. "What is the goal of the Spirit's presence in us? It is to reproduce in our personal being the image of Jesus, not only as the obedient Son of God, but also as the Messiah sent into the world to reveal (prophet), to liberate from evil (redeemer, king), and to sanctify (priest)."⁷⁷

3. Evaluation

Our human life ends in the beatific vision in God. God initiated the process, gave it full powers to reach this end and guides it to this end. To say that we are participating in the 'Doxological' life of the Trinity does not build ground for us to be proud of ourselves. If we do participate in it as Christians, it is out of God's will that we do so. What I think we need to pay great attention to, is the way we respond to God's offer in every moment of our lives. Our life in glory demands not only to be sinless but also to be completely free from any attachment to sin. We are therefore, called to 'Guard our Death!' This means we always remember death as an eschatological event

⁷⁶ W. KASPER, *Jesus The Christ*, 119.

⁷⁷ N. FOGLIACCO, *The God of all Consolation*, 81.

for it shall determine our eternal destiny. This thence, is the only given opportunity to grow.

John has made it very clear that everything we need for our salvation is with us; Christ is all we need for our salvation. So, all that is expected of us is only to have faith in God, be humble enough before God, and live love. When one manages to be such, God the Father does not see him but rather sees his eternal Son, since such kind of life is lived in Christ.

The Christ event has already brought about the 'turn of aeons.' We are in a new age full of God's life and God's rule. God is quite active in our lives and in the creation as a whole. Although this then, there is still tension between the present new inaugurated age and the future age. Yes, we are already living in the new age, but this is not yet the Parousia. When the Christ event brought the new aeon, it did not mean that he destroyed completely the old age into dust and therefore make it to be non-influential in any way. No, he only brought rule over it. He defeated it and therefore, it still has all its powers. The very old sinful age full of sin is still very active causing tension to the new-holy inaugurated age. That is why we still experience tension in ourselves between holy life and sinful life. The 'Satanic forces' are still strong influencing us to go for selfishness other than love, pride other than humbleness, injustice other than exercising justice, oppression other than liberation, and exploitation other than being brotherly to one another.

We are living in a limited situation. It is only in the Parousia where our salvation shall be complete and hence, we shall have no effects of sin. This being the case, we

expect ourselves, sinners as we are, human beings as we are, limited as we are, to exercise love in condition. We do not yet have pure love. We still find ourselves being selfish. Our freedom is still growing to maturity and so our faith from time to time faints away. We should therefore, 'Guard our death' remembering that it is only in the Parousia when we shall be fully liberated from all that constraints and limits us from growing fully to be authentic human persons who can live God's life in full.

CONCLUSION

We can 'boast' at least of our God because of the nature of life he extends to us. Our lived Christology today has in it now all that we anticipate eschatologically. He was raised to mean that all he proclaimed was authentically true and to point to us how our future life shall be like. Christ is the model of our future life. So, we already know how our future life shall be. By saying this, we are not depriving God of his mystery. He remains to be a mystery regardless of all the revelation we have from him. However, we at least can see God's final creative act in the transformed body of Christ. Hence, we know how our future ending shall be and how we shall be. We shall be God's new creation resulting from his final salvific creative act.

God therefore, highly needs our cooperation. Our eternal destiny shall entirely depend on the cooperation we render to our God in molding us today to be fit for the Kingdom of glory. This is possible for the Holy Spirit enables us to go through our whole life event. Once the Spirit is given, he himself being love, he brings a loving attitude. Where there is love, there is self-transcendence. Where there is self-transcendence, there is personal growth and maturity. This is the highest point of self-

realization as a human person. So, love is all we need to be authentically ourselves as God wants us to be.

Once we are renewed by the Spirit of the Risen Lord, we become new creatures, worthy of participating in the kingdom of glory. In our renewed state, therefore, we are called to take this chance to renew the face of the earth by participating in renewing other creatures and in establishing structures worthy of living by all. So, if the New Heaven and New Earth is the very dwelling place of the Risen Lord, this shall be our immediate world when he shall come again and in glory. Since all were 'created for him' (cf.Col.1:15-18), this time he shall subject all things to himself and then hand them over to the Father, and thereby Father shall become all in all for he shall fill them with his immediate presence. This shall be our life in glory which shall mark our full participation in the 'doxological life of the Trinity.' If we live our lives in such realization, then, in his Second coming, Christ shall be able to lift us up to the kingdom of glory.

ABBREVIATIONS

Cf.	Confer
Col.	Colossians
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
II Cor.	2 Corinthians
ed.	Edited by
Eph.	Ephesians
Gal.	Galatians
Gen.	Genesis
Isa.	Isaiah
Jn.	John
Lk.	Luke
Mk.	Mark
Mtt.	Matthew
NT.	New Testament
OT.	Old Testament
Phil.	Philippians
Rom.	Romans
1 The.	1 Thessalonians
v.	Verse

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