

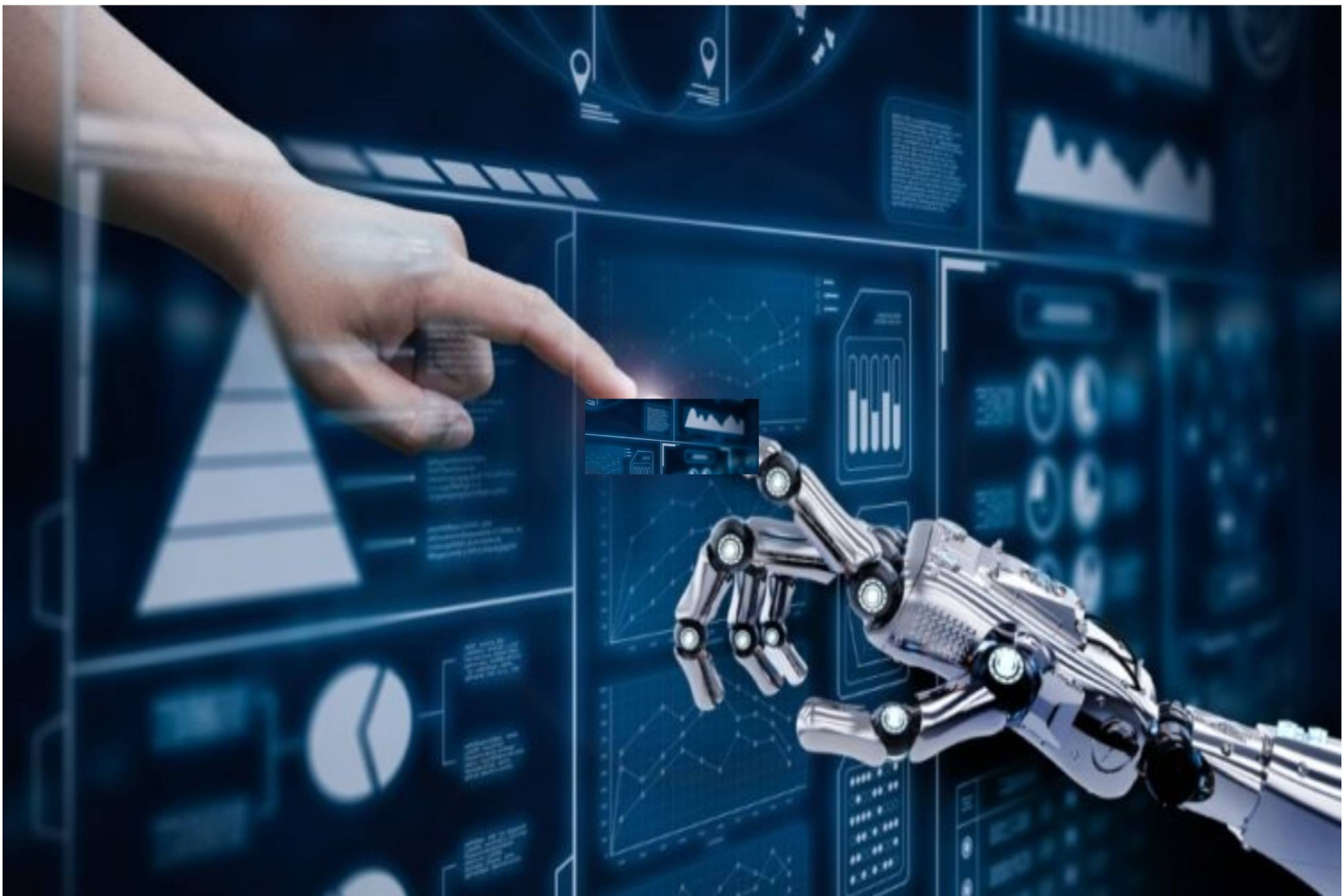
The word became flesh ... will it become a machine?

A human as an image of God in the light of emerging technologies



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Abbreviations and acronyms

OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
DV	Dogmatic constitution <i>Dei Verbum</i>
LG	Dogmatic constitution <i>Lugem Gentium</i>
GS	Pastoral constitution <i>Gaudium et spes</i>
SC	Constitution <i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>
QA	Encyclical <i>Quadragesimo anno</i> by Pope Pius XI (1931)
VS	Encyclical <i>Veritatis splendor</i> by Pope John Paul II (1993)
PP	Encyclical <i>Populorum progression</i> by Pope Paul VI (1967)
AG	Decree about the missionary activity of the Church <i>Ad gentes</i>
PO	Decree about the priesthood <i>Presbyterorum ordinis</i> by Pope Paul VI (1965)
RN	Encyclical <i>Rerum Novarum</i> by Pope Leo XIII (1891)
LS	Encyclical <i>Laudato Sí</i> by Pope Francis (2015)
CV	Encyclical <i>Caritas in veritate</i> by Pope Benedict XVI (2009)
EG	Apostolic exhortation <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> by Pope Francis (2013)
OT	Decree on Priestly Training <i>Optatam Totius</i> by Pope Paul VI (1965)
CCC	Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae
SRS	Encyclical <i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i> by Pope John Paul II (1987)
SDC	Social Doctrine of the Church
ITC	International Theological Commission
RH	Encyclical <i>Redemptor hominis</i> by Pope John Paul II (1979)

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Foreword

What? This work attempts to deal with several arts of reductive approaches reinforced in present culture by emerging technologies (ETs). It endeavours to lead a dialogue using philosophical and theological categories. Based on a hypothetical state of a *wise society*, which allows for the non-reductive treatment of human nature, this work proposes a hermeneutical structure that will permit in the future, the evaluation and ethical discernment of ETs, that is, how they contribute to the fulfilment of the destiny of humankind, its *telos*. The entire work is elaborated around the classical theological categories put in the perspective of new revolutionary technologies discussing the consequences of competing worldviews about humans and their position in the world.

Why? ETs, many of them autonomous systems propelled by AI, are *welcomed* today with acritical optimism, especially those developments related to superintelligence, and an ingenuous faith that new technology solves any problem. Concurrently their presence gives rise to fears and even threats regarding the very existence of humankind. However, no one can deny the rapid expansion of ETs and their concomitant power which is changing the very *life forms* and is reontologizing the world. In short, our growing dependence on technology presents significant epistemological challenges, as ETs are revealing our technosocial *blindness*. Technological progress leads today often to the idea of technological self-sufficiency, especially “*when too much attention is given to the ‘how’ questions, and not enough to the many ‘why’ questions underlying human activity*” (CV 70). Once again resonates here the biblical wisdom, an illustrious divine counsellor teaching people what to do (Cf. Pro 8; Wis 1). This situation – aggravated by the mutual incommensurability of many technically realizable goals of ETs – requires a criterion for decision-making, specifically a benchmark that would indicate “where to go”. When the only criterion of truth is efficiency and utility, authentic development is impossible (Cf. CV 70). The concept of the *wise society* as an evaluative criterion of ETs within the proposed framework can respond to this situation, namely dissipating unjustified fears (avoiding thus opportunity costs due to underuse or underdevelopment of ETs), and drawing attention to justified ones (reals threats and problems to be addressed). Furthermore, the *wise society* contemplates the non-reductive nature of a human, created in the image of God (Cf. Gn 1:26).

How? Several anthropological, philosophical, and scientific assumptions, principles, and prejudices configure the relationship between humans and technology. ETs are gaining ground in ‘knowledge’, ‘intelligence’, and to a certain extent, even expertise. Nevertheless, ‘wisdom’ seems for machines not only impossible but also unnecessary. From the Christian point of view, human wisdom participates in divine intelligence and is thus an exclusive characteristic of a human among all living creatures. Over the course of this work, an integral philosophical and theological argumentation will lead the dialogue with several reductive approaches trying to show the possibility of a rational yet not reductive exposition of a human by employing new technologies. Wisdom as the constitutive differentiating principle between machines and humans will serve as the basis for elaborating a hypothetical state of a *wise society* constructed either as a set of wise persons

or as a set of values characterizing the wise society. For each value describing a *wise person* in the former case and for the selected values of the *wise society* in the latter case, there exist, in principle, satisfactory conditions for the realization of the said values in the real world. Subsequently, these conditions (such as “control of a person over her personal information”) can coincide with the impact of ETs influencing thus (positively or negatively) the realization of the values of *wise society* (e.g., informational privacy). Nevertheless, the proposed framework is no simple technological impact-assessment that considers a technological change within the cause-and-effect scheme but rather a complex evaluation that *embeds* technology in a broader social context and respecting human dignity at the same time. The pivotal idea of the entire procedure is to find a framework that would enable an evaluation of the contribution of ETs to the authentic, sustainable and integral development of a human (Cf. LS 13).

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1 Introduction

1.1 Technology and Humans

Technology and humans have always interacted bidirectionally: Technology has been shaping a world in which humans live through unfolding new possibilities and imposing constraints and limitations, and humans, in turn, have been moulding the development and use of technology through social and legal norms, cultural expectation, and others.

Christianity, science, and technology have a long history of mutual relationship. Far from truth is the since 18th century declared animosity between both.¹ Conversely, the Bible, from its very first lines, presents some use of technology. Animal skin (the first-ever “technological product”) protects the first couple in Gn 3:21, in Gn 6-8 Noah constructs his arc that saves the life on earth. Technology enables a person to exercise dominion over matter, to reduce risks, to save labour, to improve her conditions of life and helps a person to forge her humanity (Cf. CV 69). It is, however, the same human intellectual capacity that misuses the technology in Gn 11 to build a tower that would reach “up to the heavens” to be “like a God”. The problem is essentially the same as in the case of Adam and Eva in Gn 3. Humankind breaks its essential anthropological characteristics – a relational being that is fundamentally-oriented towards its Creator on whom depends its happiness and sense of life. Humanity aspires towards development which can (particularly today) give rise to the idea that technology is self-sufficient. However, authentic development does not consist merely in economic or technological efficiency and utility, but rather in grasping the meaning of these activities holistically without forgetting the connection between freedom and moral responsibility (Cf. CV 70).

Autonomous cars, trading stocks, medical images, UAVs, flying and landing of aeroplanes, controlling the tactical decisions of automated weapons, making financial decisions, automate production, and caring robots are only some of the examples of the applications of artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and nano-, bio-, info- and cogno-technologies (NBIC) which this essay designates as emerging technologies (ETs). These “wonders” – which pervaded not only very specialized fields, but also even the most common areas of our everyday life – have radically begun to change our world and our expectations, hopes and dreams. Moreover, with an extreme acceleration of technological progress and the rapid spreading of ETs in all areas of human life, it is more common to hear about the inevitability of certain developments or the quasi omnipotence of technological solutions.

What is more – sometimes imperceptible, yet seemingly unstoppable –, a transformation of the original subject of these changes, of a human being, is underway. Humans have always tried to improve their lives through work and innovations. These days, however, thanks to new ETs, humans have succeeded in expanding their dominion over almost all nature.² “*How can we not weel gratitude and appreciation for this progress*” (LS102). However, humans themselves have become an object of possible technological modification, of an *enhancement*. Consequently, the

1 Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2013).

2 Cf. GS 33.

old danger – to fall in the trap of a desire to be “like god” – awakes. In some extreme cases, some speak about the possibility of mind upload, that is, about detaching the content of the brain, the mind, alleged “human personality” with all its properties, from its physical carrier, that is, the body. Thus, a person residing now in a non-organic vessel would be, in a way, immortal.

It is undeniable that we live in a time of profound and accelerated changes. And even though human beings have increased their power and possibilities immensely, sometimes, they do not to put the new inventions at the service of the common good. Humanity – more precisely, those who have the knowledge and especially the economic resources – has never in history had such a tremendous power (Cf. LS 104), so many options, economic power, and wealth; nevertheless, suffering and misery (Cf. GS 4) – physical and psychical, emotional, and spiritual are still present.

1.2 Novelty of Emerging Technologies

ETs are radically changing and reontologizing³ the world in which we live, the very life forms⁴. Many goals of ETs – out of an extensive range of technically realizable – are, naturally, mutually incommensurate. However, independent of the “final goals” and objectives, more resources mean better and safer achievement of almost all goals⁵. In the case of developing some “smart enough” ET, it would have a direct incentive to compete⁶ with humans for resources.⁷ Especially AI-systems with explicit criterion function are known for finding unexpected solutions. These often do not conform to the intentions of their creators. This claim follows as a possible interpretation of the *principle of the ecology of action*⁸. Combined with the competition-for-resources-claim, they might pose a serious threat to humanity⁹. At the same time, we witness almost acritical optimism – technology shall solve virtually all current and future problems¹⁰ – often related to the development of superintelligence¹¹. This paradox is caused partially by – as will be argued in the following section – false assumptions of technological optimism, technological determinism and technology perceived as a mere tool, and scientific principles of reduction and disjunction that in ‘classical science’ led to marvellous and positive developments of scientific knowledge up to the point, when the limits of intelligibility which they constituted,

3 Luciano Floridi, “The Ontological Interpretation of Informational Privacy,” *Ethics and Information Technology* 7, no. 4 (2005): 185–200.

4 Langdon Winner, “Technologies as Forms of Life,” in *Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, ed. Ronald Sandler (Springer, 2016).

5 Stephen Omohundro, “The Basic AI Drives,” in *AGI*, vol. 171, 2008, 483–492.

6 Cf. Nate Soares and Benja Fallenstein, “Aligning Superintelligence with Human Interests: A Technical Research Agenda,” *Machine Intelligence Research Institute (MIRI) technical report* 8 (2014): 1.

7 Even though this thesis was criticized by some as unsustainable (Ben Goertzel, “Superintelligence: Fears, Promises and Potentials,” *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 25, no. 2 (2015): 66.), for the extent of consequences and non-zero probability, it should certainly be taken seriously.

8 The principle of the ecology of action says that from the moment an action enters a given environment, it escapes from the will and intention of that which created it, it enters a set of interactions and multiple feedbacks and then it will find itself derived from its finalities and sometimes to even go in the opposite sense (Edgar Morin, “Restricted Complexity, General Complexity,” in *Worldviews, Science and Us: Philosophy and Complexity*, ed. Carlos Gershenson, Diederik Aerts, and Bruce Edmonds (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2007), 25.).

9 Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

10 Ray Kurzweil, “The Singularity Is Near,” in *Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, by Ronald Sandler (Springer, 2016).

11 Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2017).

became more significant than their elucidations.¹² How is the danger/threat due to ETs relevant? AI-agents are already today regarded by many as a competition or even as a replacement for humans. However, as a complement to human skills and competencies, they could boost human capacity immensely. Is, nevertheless, the intelligence of machines like that of humans? Can a human be perceived as a machine? What role plays the Incarnation of the Son of God assuming the flesh?

1.3 Assumptions, Presumptions and Prejudices

In debates – not only in the general public but also among experts – related to ETs and their effects on our lives, some implicit assumptions and presumptions are present, that – despite the affirmations about the end of grand narratives¹³ – embody an allegedly veritable scientific knowledge, legitimized through a scientific narrative. Consequently, due to the reputation of sciences in general in our society, these – supposedly scientific – assumptions play an influential role in these debates and mould them into a particular direction. The three most conventional to western society are as follows:¹⁴

- a) Technology is considered a **tool** to fulfil one’s dreams and objectives and is frequently contemplated as amoral, value-neutral *per se*, with a moral value instilled only by a user or its action. Then, such technology is considered an instrument of *dual use*¹⁵, that is, something to be used for good or ill.¹⁶
- b) The next common characteristic is the **technological optimism** of current society that believes that technology will provide us with a solution to (almost) each of our current and future problems. There is as good as nothing which would not have a technological solution, now or in (near) future. Due to an accelerated technological advancement, we shall witness solving most of our current problems and the rest before long. Thanks to these frenetic developments, we shall be able to surpass, for example, many of biologic limits discovering thus new forms of life, based on merging biological and other elements.¹⁷ Technocratic ideology is so prevalent today (Cf. PP 34) that some would entrust the entire development to technology alone (Cf. CV 14).
- c) At last, since the onset of modern science and technology, the **belief in technological determinism** – even though in its various forms, even though in its various forms, e.g., technological innovation as the principal cause of changes in society¹⁸ that imposes and

12 Morin, “Restricted Complexity, General Complexity,” 6.

13 Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

14 Ronald Sandler, “Introduction: Technology and Ethics,” in *Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, by Ronald Sandler (Springer, 2016).

15 Thomas King et al., “Artificial Intelligence Crime: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Foreseeable Threats and Solutions,” *Science and engineering ethics* 26, no. 1 (2020): 89–120.

16 Arnold Pacey, “Technology: Practice and Culture,” in *Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, ed. Ronald Sandler (Springer, 2016).

17 Ray Kurzweil, *Menschheit 2.0: Die Singularität Naht*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Lola Books, 2014).

18 Winner, “Technologies as Forms of Life,” 97.

controls a specific direction of the development without many possibilities to do anything about it¹⁹ – is almost ubiquitous.

And yet, the three classes of frequently implicit, culturally imbued, and thoughtless assumptions do not cover the whole picture of the issues and challenges linked with technology. The following observations aim to enrich and embed them in the broader social and cultural context. Accordingly,

- a) technology is neither a mere tool, nor it is culturally, morally, or politically neutral²⁰. It is an important – though not a unique – factor shaping and forming the physical and social worlds of a human²¹ and restructures its very *forms of life*²². ETs – especially AI and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) – reontologize the reality²³ and even a human itself who is not anymore only a subject using tools to achieve some desired ends, but has become an object among other objects, a *homo faber*, who becomes both the subject and the object of the experimentation.
- b) Technology has been indeed profoundly changing our lives over the centuries; however, the extent and character of these changes are nowadays more rapid, more profound, and fundamental than ever (Cf. LS 106). Seemingly there are plenty of reasons for limitless optimism as some problems that used to be unsolvable are being solved and we are provided with comfort never even heard of before. Yet, we witness that many technological promises fall short, and not seldom a mere technology solution brings along new problems by addressing the old ones, which becomes even more evident when there is no criterion for a final objective or incorporation of a technical solution in a broader context. Entrusting the entire process of development to technology alone means to proceed blind leading thus even to degradation and anti-human values (Cf. CV 14). We are sometimes – metaphorically speaking – running inside of a train to come even faster to our destination, however, without having verified before getting onboard whether it goes in a desirable direction. Indeed, the belief that it is possible to optimize existing

19 Principally, it does not negate the person's free will. Nevertheless, technological determinism is presented as an external factor with such power and influence that an individual has only limited possibilities to do something about it.

20 There are different options on how to treat technology – nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but rather to slow down and look at reality differently (Cf. LS 114).

21 How we spend our time, whom we interact with and how, what are our dependencies and vulnerabilities, what values we attend to, etc. ETs not only give us new possibilities, but they change how we think about the problems, about the world, and consequently, they change our choices and way of life.

22 Winner, "Technologies as Forms of Life."

23 ETs in general, and AI in particular, work with symbols that intrinsically have no semantics, and therefore, the links between symbols and objects are provided by a human. AI excels in the tasks, where the map (symbols) equals the territory (objects) which, however, is not generally a case. The "trick" of engineering is that instead of producing technology that would mimic the behaviour of a person, the "world" (environment) is remade to meet the requirements (limits) of the technology (Ángel González, "Pensar Filosóficamente La Inteligencia Artificial," *The Xavier Zubiri Review* 15 (2021 2019): 93.); the humans are reontologizing the world for ETs (Shannon Vallor, "AI and the Automation of Wisdom," in *Philosophy and Computing: Essays in Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Logic, and Ethics*, ed. Thomas M. Powers, vol. 128 (Springer, 2017), 329.). Yet another example is a radical change of the informational environment due to digital ICTs, that is, the very nature, the very ontology of infosphere is changed (Floridi, "The Ontological Interpretation of Informational Privacy."), re-ontologized in a sense of re-engineering.

systems according to abstract objectivity and neutrality is false as no set of practices and institutions can be ethically neutral among different conceptions of the good.²⁴

- c) It appears to us, the witnesses of the immense advances of the past decades, that the scientific and technological progress is unstoppable. The most eminent figures of tech-industry try to convince us about the necessity of technological developments and their direction. However, not only the tragedies of the 20th century but also an everyday experience teach us the opposite. Technology indeed moulds society, however, not in a deterministic fashion, and certainly not unidirectionally. This influence is rather bidirectional, co-determined by social and material contexts and interpretative frameworks that govern the use of technology.²⁵ The humans themselves and their social context must be seen as a part of the creative process and not separated from it. When we look at the history of the much-celebrated technological progress, up until the 19th century there was remarkably little interest in it and not seldom many actively fought against it due to, for example, negative impact on employment and social cohesion.²⁶

In addition to the three mentioned assumptions, “classic science” has been for a long time using the *principles of reduction*²⁷ and *disjunction*²⁸ as fundamental explanatory principles²⁹ and in many areas, and they are still deeply rooted. However, complex systems require different paradigm³⁰; one that comprehends the relations between the whole and the parts: not only the knowledge of the constituents, nor merely of the whole as a whole, if one ignores its composing element; but the knowledge of the entire system and its parts, and their mutual relationship. The new principles that substitute the old ones both respect the distinction and establish the relations. They conceive a relation between order, disorder and organization and can therefore supplant the generalized determinism.³¹ As the complex systems change their characteristics according to the environment, the context and contextualization are of capital importance.³² In the context of ETs, a complex perception of the system beyond simplistic cause-and-effect relations becomes paramount for their ethical analysis and evaluation.

All these assumptions, prejudices, and principles (implicitly or explicitly) play their part in the encounters of different worldviews and will be addressed in the following sections.

24 Ben Green and Lily Hu, “The Myth in the Methodology: Towards a Recontextualization of Fairness in Machine Learning,” in *Proceedings of the Machine Learning: The Debates Workshop*, 2018.

25 Philip Brey, “The Strategic Role of Technology in a Good Society,” *Technology in Society* 52 (2018): 39–45.

26 Oxford University Development Office, “How Will the Automation of Jobs Likely Progress? | University of Oxford Podcasts - Audio and Video Lectures,” Futuremakers, n.d., accessed August 31, 2020, <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/how-will-automation-jobs-likely-progress>.

27 The principle of reduction claims that any composite is known only from the knowledge of its principal constituting elements.

28 The principle of disjunction consists of isolating and separating cognitive difficulties from one another and lead thus to the separation between disciplines.

29 Morin, “Restricted Complexity, General Complexity,” 5.

30 The fragmentation of knowledge helpful for a concrete application often leads to a loss of appreciation for the whole and hinders to see the bigger picture (Cf. LS 110).

31 Morin, “Restricted Complexity, General Complexity,” 11.

32 *Ibid.*, 19.

1.4 Human Person, Intelligence and Wisdom

The three prior assumptions (technology as a value-neutral tool, technological optimism, and technological determinism) are associated with – and sometimes direct ramifications of – a particular anthropological view of a human originating in the 18th century. Then dominant science was fascinated by presumably (to some finite set) reducible machine-like models of a human. Later, the development and the specialization of the sciences and models of increasing complexity – perhaps quite surprisingly – have not changed the fundamental understanding. What is worse, what incipiently served as a *model* of a human and was intended only for a particular purpose, has become a generally accepted description of *human nature*, which thus remained reduced to its directly observable empirical qualities. For example, an Oxford philosopher N. Bostrom thinks that achieving human-level AI via whole-brain emulation should not require any considerable breakthroughs.³³

The Human Person and its Multiple Dimensions

The Christian understanding of a human person is very different from the one described above. Humans comprising multiple, not disjunctive dimensions are irreducible to their respective dimensions or their subsets. Human dignity is based on being created by God as His image and likeness. Humans are neither – due to their constitutionally relational character – only an individuality nor a mere particle of a larger organism. Additionally, a human person comprises one nature only – traditionally dubbed as soul and body; there is no place for any dualism (two natures composing a person). The corporal dimension enables the execution of human freedom, while the spiritual one opens them for transcendence. Because of their intelligence, humans participate in the light of divine intelligence. A human is thus intelligent, self-conscious, and capable of reflection. However, neither intelligence, nor consciousness, nor freedom defines a human person. On the contrary, a person as such is the very basis (=a condition of possibility) of the acts of intelligence, consciousness, and freedom.³⁴

With the rapid and immense development of new technologies, several sciences – automatically taking the aforementioned reductionist presumptions for granted – consider intelligence (or brain as its location) as a complete description of a human person. Then, they argue, there is, fundamentally, really no difference between a human and a machine.

The Christian point of view concurs: If we reject the transcendent dignity of a human being, if we allow a human to be reduced principally to their empirically describable properties, then, in consequence, there is indeed no difference between a human and a machine. The 19th– and 20th–century socialism missed³⁵ the right reasons for human alienation, yet its consequences and the loss of meaning of life³⁶ are indeed observed in the Western (and today even other) societies.

33 Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*, 48.

34 This means that the person will “subsist” even when intelligence, consciousness or freedom are not present.

35 As the principal reason for the alienation – according to socialism – was the way of production and propriety of production means, the solution shall comport some kind of collectivism. Thus, the essential elements of human nature – their autonomy, freedom, and dignity – were abused.

36 Cf. CA 41.

Intelligence

The Occidental philosophy, contemplating (at least since Kant) the intellectual knowing resulting from the process of data given by the act of the sensing “to” the intelligence, empowered the mentioned reductionist thinking. The primary and suitable object of the *sensible intelligence* would be, therefore, the sensible³⁷. This “classical” view of intelligence is very convenient for an algorithmic description of human nature: Sensing and intellection are divided into two acts enabling a better formalization of AI and its inherent dualism (“SW” and “HW”). However, even though this is a dominant conception of intelligence today, it is not the only one.

The alternative conception offered by Zubiri³⁸ rejects Kant’s theory of “posterior” synthesis of the intelligence working on the sensed data, of intelligence, constituted aloof to senses. He argues for “sentient intelligence”, where intellection and sensing are two modes of a single act.³⁹ The formal object is not given by senses “to” intelligence but “in” intelligence. Thus, the very mode of intellectual knowing is to sense reality.⁴⁰

Consequently, AI is not intelligent in the same sense as humans are: The intellectual act is not primarily a data-processing⁴¹ or decision-making but a single act of apprehension of reality. The said unity of the two moments means that HI is not independent of a physical medium; it is decisively a corporal intelligence. Although AI can be implemented on an arbitrary physical medium, it cannot “understand” beyond the content of the sensed, that is, the formality of reality. This formality is the physical and real character of the otherness of what is sentiently apprehended in the sentient intellection. What is sentiently apprehended, is presented to a person not as an effect of something beyond what is apprehended, but as being in itself something “in its own right”, *de suyo*⁴².

Of course, one can argue that sentient intelligence is only an attractive theoretical concept, a description that enables differentiating between a human and a machine. The present expansion and dominance of the classical conception of intelligence (=sensible) are so significant because sensible intelligence virtually makes an empirical approach to human nature possible. However, that does not mean that it is a “true” description of intelligence.

Typically, an intellectual act and an understanding of intellected knowledge accompany the ethical aspects of decision-making, followed by the assumption of responsibility. However, AI

37 Thomas Fowler, “Artificial Intelligence in Light of Zubiri’s Theory of Sentient Intelligence,” *The Xavier Zubiri Review* 15 (2021 2019): 73.

38 According to Zubiri (Cf. José Luis Cabria Ortega and Xavier Zubiri, *Relación Teología-Filosofía En El Pensamiento de Xavier Zubiri* (Gregorian Biblical BookShop, 1997), 137.), the double error of occidental metaphysics has been the “reification of the reality” and “logification of the intelligence”, that is, in his view, the intelligence is more than pure formal faculty with the task of conceptualizations and judgments of the objects. Nevertheless, this is precisely how the Enlightenment-like modernity conceptualizes intelligence, as a work in progress (Nick Bostrom, “Human Genetic Enhancements: A Transhumanist Perspective,” *The Journal of value inquiry* 37, no. 4 (2003): 493–506.). Due to its *logification*, human intelligence and nature are considered as something describable, as an algorithm, as some sequence of impulses or synapses. Admittedly, this is simply an updated version of the past human-machine reductionist concept.

39 González, “Pensar Filosóficamente La Inteligencia Artificial,” 119.

40 Fowler, “Artificial Intelligence in Light of Zubiri’s Theory of Sentient Intelligence,” 73.

41 AI operates based on signs and symbols that *per se* have no meaning unless it is given to them from outside. The links between symbols and objects must be created by human minds.

42 Xavier Zubiri, *Sentient Intelligence* (Washington: Xavier Zubiri Foundation of North America, 1999).

lacks anything like the human capacity to deliberate about what its ultimate goals ought to be.⁴³ Moreover, sound moral reasoning requires the cultivation of emotional responses⁴⁴ (e.g., guilt, indignation, and empathy), and these are exclusive to human beings. It is therefore questionable whether AI can make a “real” decision because of deliberation; whether it is sensible and sensitive enough to distinguish between so many nuances important in moral decision-making, and, consequently, whether it is reasonable to talk about the responsibility of AI-agents (moral agents). Only *sentient intelligence*⁴⁵ of a human – intelligence that can do even that what cannot be programmed and reduced to rules – enables the concept of responsibility. Yet, the question of attributing legal accountability to ETs is different from moral responsibility. Traditional legal accountability seems inadequate for many modern autonomous applications of ETs.⁴⁶ In analogy to *legal persons* such as corporations, municipalities, etc., it might be reasonable to ascribe legal personality to ETs as well, particularly for those applications based on bottom-up approaches that are highly unpredictable.⁴⁷ Presently, four models of liability that could address the problem of legal liability and moral responsibility of ETs, are under investigation.⁴⁸

Even though for engineering purposes some reductions of reality are practical and necessary, one should not forget that reality is neither fully describable by some set of symbols, nor by their reshuffling and combinations, but that it is radically and constitutively open⁴⁹; life is not entirely predictable and reducible into a symbolic formalization. Sometimes, the broad life reality is set equal to the canon of *scientific reality*⁵⁰. The complex reality, in which human reasoning processes and a lifetime of experience is needed to formulate a complex objective and to decide, is reduced to a simpler environment in which humans begin to get the shorter end of the stick in the competition with the machines. According to Zubiri⁵¹, the double error of occidental metaphysics has been the *reification of reality* and *logification of intelligence*. In his view, intelligence is more than pure formal faculty with the task of conceptualizations and judgments of objects. Nevertheless, this is precisely how the Enlightenment-like modernity conceptualizes intelligence, as a work in progress.⁵² Due to its *logification*, human intelligence and nature are considered some sequence of impulses or synapses, as an algorithm. Admittedly, this is simply an updated version of the past human-machine reductionist concept. But “*if Man chooses to treat himself as raw material, raw material he will be: not raw material to be manipulated, as he fondly imagined, by himself, but by mere appetite, that is, mere Nature, in the person of his de-humanized Conditioners*”.⁵³

Wisdom

43 John Tasioulas, “First Steps towards an Ethics of Robots and Artificial Intelligence,” *Journal of Practical Ethics* 7, no. 1 (2019): 52.

44 Cf. *ibid.*, 59.

45 Zubiri, *Sentient Intelligence*, 31.

46 Brent Daniel Mittelstadt et al., “The Ethics of Algorithms: Mapping the Debate,” *Big Data & Society* 3, no. 2 (2016).

47 Cf. Tasioulas, “First Steps towards an Ethics of Robots and Artificial Intelligence,” 70.

48 King et al., “Artificial Intelligence Crime: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Foreseeable Threats and Solutions.”

49 Fowler, “Artificial Intelligence in Light of Zubiri’s Theory of Sentient Intelligence,” 96.

50 *Ibid.*, 101.

51 Cf. Ortega and Zubiri, *Relación Teología-Filosofía En El Pensamiento de Xavier Zubiri*, 137.

52 Bostrom, “Human Genetic Enhancements: A Transhumanist Perspective.”

53 Clive Staples Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 31705th ed. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2015), 39.

Intelligence from the previous section is only one of more internal cognitive states: Knowledge, intelligence, understanding, and wisdom form part of a metaphorical cognitive ladder.⁵⁴ Humans need not compete with a machine at a level where they probably lose. Today, we witness the growing knowledge, intelligence and in some sense even expertise of ETs. However, wisdom – the last rung of the said ladder – is for machines not only impossible but also unnecessary as they lack those distinctive social and psychological conditions of humans that make wisdom possible⁵⁵ and at the same time, the absence of these conditions makes machines so efficient. With the words of Pope Benedict XVI (CV30):

“Knowledge is never purely the work of the intellect. It can certainly be reduced to calculation and experiment, but if it aspires to be wisdom capable of directing man in the light of his first beginnings and his final ends, it must be “seasoned” with the “salt” of charity. Deeds without knowledge are blind, and knowledge without love is sterile.

This wisdom represents a complex moral virtue that is a successful integration of a person’s moral habits, knowledge, and virtues in an intelligent, authentic, and expert manner, in short, wisdom is responsible self-regulation, the *“fruit of self-examination”* (LS 47). A wise person not only knows what should be done but also excels in identifying and mastering the psychological obstacles in fulfilling the task.⁵⁶ The significant threat to human wisdom in an actual situation is “instrumental” culture that searches for immediate economically optimal results leaving thus fairly little space for the development of authentic wisdom that requires expertise. The escalating pressure for optimal solution results in a displacement effect, when humans have increasingly fewer opportunities to make failures paramount for the growth in expertise and are substituted by machines that operate on humanly intractable data- and timescales.⁵⁷ Machine knowledge (or intelligence) displace human wisdom, and the rule of games have been systematically (though many times unconsciously) bent in favour of technology. Paradoxically, in this situation, when we need the wisdom most, we believe in it least, although this phenomenon is much less the crisis of knowledge or intellect than of moral faith and of the will to the responsibility.⁵⁸ However, growing in wisdom is the only way how to progress in the perfection of human nature and how to become more human (Cf. GS 15). Consequently, the central question is how to harmonize the rapid development and extensive spread of new technologies with the necessity to preserve the capacity of human beings to contemplate and to admire, which are, in turn, indispensable as conditions of possibility for wisdom.

1.5 Justification of the Work

The Oxford Philosopher L. Floridi says that we are the last generation that has experienced the analogue world to its full extent. Many experts claim that even though we have already been able to feel some consequences of the growing digital reality, especially the one linked to and

54 Vallor, “AI and the Automation of Wisdom,” 308.

55 Ibid., 317.

56 Shannon Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 247.

57 Ibid., 325.

58 Ibid., 334.

propelled by AI, we are still standing only at the beginning of the epochal breakthrough⁵⁹ after which life will be fundamentally (and not only gradually) different than that we have known for centuries. Some of these claims are based on the assumptions addressed in the previous sections and, especially, on a reductive conception of a human: This is particularly visible in the conviction of many scientists that human nature is fully describable by some empirical values, say, through the conception of intelligence. This work aspires to discuss the relationship between ETs and humans, which do not need to be seen as a threat, competition, replacement, but rather as a cooperative complement.⁶⁰ Such vision is, however, possible only when a human being receives the full acknowledgement of dignity and the reductive approaches to faith, to transcendence and the very human being are not the uniquely accepted and promoted principles of a human-machine relationship. Christianity has almost always tried to lead a dialogue with a contemporary culture seeking an appropriate language⁶¹. I believe – given the essential role that emerging technologies will play shortly – it is of prime importance for Christianity to search once again for such an appropriate language. In analogy to the double task of Fundamental Theology, this work tries both to lead a dialogue (in a “correlative manner”) between technology and theology and to establish solid foundations of theological concepts to lead the mentioned dialogue at a rational level (1Pe 3:15-16). The work synthesizes the theological reflection of bachelor studies at the Pontifical University of Comillas and organizes it around the articles of Credo with a particular emphasis on the new emerging technologies.

59 Some authors called this point “Singularity” (Kurzweil, *Menschheit 2.0: Die Singularität Naht.*).

60 John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

61 The CVII inaugurated a very important change by formulating the necessity to express the truths in the contemporary language that would be understandable to modern people (Cf. GS 44.62)

2 I believe (but how and what) or “I know”.

2.1 Preface

Due to the assumptions mentioned in Chap. 1.3, a human is often presented by modern sciences as reducible (Chap. 4 will cover the topic in detail) to some psycho-somatic states fully describable by empiric sciences. Faith, religion, and God often have a similar destiny. They are claimed – depending on a field and a theory – to be produced or projected by humans. In the last two centuries, there has been a whole set of such reductionist approaches, e.g.,:

- Anthropological reductionism (See Chap. 4) of, for example, L. Feuerbach claims, faith, religion and God be only the projections of a limited human towards some ideal.
- Rationalist reductionism embodied by Spinoza or Hegel deems religion be a form of rational knowledge; the entire religious experience is reduced to a theoretical search, a doctrine, and speculation of reason.
- Sociological reductionism (preferred by Durkheim) considers religion a sacralization or hypostatization of social binds. Religion would be a mere transfer (and sacralization) of the personal relationship to a higher level, a synthesis of some sublimated dreams of progress and happiness of a community.
- Psychological reductionism represented by Freud affirms that religion is a vehicle to the psychological well-being of a human, a neurosis or a mere projection and illusion, a product of a psyche. The transcendence would be only an escape that demonstrates the weakness of an incompetent person who is unable to remain “faithful” to the earth.
- Moralism reductionism formulated by Kant tries to find new answers to the – for centuries – unresolved problems by reformulating the interrogatives from “what is it?” to “how can I know it?” changing thus the classical ontological paradigm to the epistemic one. To reconcile the existence of “Nature” and “Freedom”, he posits God as a supreme being that can fully realize what it wants, as a necessary connection between *freedom* and *the empirical world*. Faith is then an essential postulate in the realm of Moral, an element between *hypothesis (belief)* and *empiric knowledge* in the realm of Nature. God is a “warrant” of the hope that one day, Nature and Moral within (and outside of) a human reconcile. Religion is reduced to human activity and a religious experience to an ethos.

The condition for the fruitfulness of a dialogue between new technologies and religion requires, both a solid foundation of the concepts such as faith, religion, or revelation and the humble acknowledgement of sciences and current culture that the world is not merely a sum of empirically describable entities but goes far beyond, and that one can lead a rational dialogue with this “beyond”. Nevertheless, Christians must also “*be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks [them] to give the reason for the hope that [they] have*” (Cf. 1Pe 3:15). In the first step, they shall ponder the meaning and content of the revelation, and then, in the following stage, some version of a correlation method will conduct a dialogue searching for answers to the surfacing questions. So shall also proceed this work.

2.2 To believe

Religion

How are *faith* and *religion* conceptualized in Christian theology? The theological concept of religion is very different from one seen in the previous section, which was an approach so frequently assumed by religious studies. It is neither a pure anthropological projection – despite having been rooted deeply in the anthropological structures of a human (See Chap. 5.1) – nor a mere doctrine, a social projection, a psychological trick, nor a simple moral praxis.

Maurice Blondel, respecting the principles of autonomy and immanency, presented a human that is constitutionally open to a possible revelation, to a heteronomy, however from within. He based ‘his’ human *capax Dei* on discovering the essential disproportion⁶² between willing will (*volonté voulante*) and the willed will (*volonté voulue*), between the plans and their realizations. The distinction shows a real insufficiency between the two elements. However, how can a human – a finite being – consistently desire something which cannot be fulfilled? Blondel asserts after a thorough investigation of the possibilities of the contingent entities that the only real possibility to solve the said insufficiency is supernatural and claims that the said discrepancy is precisely an ontological trace in human beings that makes them *capax Dei*, that opens them – as a possibility – to transcendence. Thus, the religious experience⁶³ is rooted and facilitated by the very anthropological structure of a human:

- As yearning: an attraction exercised by *eros*, truth and good was mentioned already by Plato; Tillich speaks about the motion of that what is lower in power and signification towards the superior; a human has *corda inquieta*.
- As fallen: Blondel addressed this issue by his concept of a gap, discrepancy, or disproportion between a desire and an action, between wishes and the “real I”, between words of the impetus of transcendence within a human and all the inner resistance of a human. Thanks to the consciousness of the fundamental discrepancy within oneself, a human is principally open to transcendence.
- As escaping: the ultimate essence of a human is impossible to get to know fully, it has a character of certain in-objectivity, un-measurability, impossibility to define.
- As absolute: every human qua human has intrinsic dignity which defines a human as an *ex-centric* (or *ex-static*) being that meets the plenitude in the dialectics of alterity.
- As transcendent: humans with their capacity of knowing, feeling, and experiencing the world and at the same time “applying” these to themselves.

Thence, the very anthropological structure of humans enables them a religious experience, a human experience of a Mystery. The Mystery is an invisible, ineffable, and eminently transcendent reality that affects intimately and unconditionally a human.⁶⁴ A particular relationship between a human and the Other manifests itself in religion: The Other reveals itself

62 Maurice Blondel, *La Acción (1893): Ensayo de Una Crítica de La Vida y de Una Ciencia de La Práctica; Introducción de Juan María Isasi y César Izquierdo* (Madrid: Don Ramón de la Cruz, 1996).

63 Blondel introduces five different kinds of experience, namely aesthetical, ethical, interpersonal love, theoretical life and religious experience.

64 Juan Martín Velasco, *Introducción a la fenomenología de la religión* (Madrid: Trotta, 2017).

as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. It leaves “effects” of its presence in a person, namely, awe (tremendum) – but not as fear but rather as amazement, and acknowledgement of the reality which transcends a human. At the same time, there is an element of fascination (*fascinans*) and attraction. They awaken admiration and recognition of the Mystery. The pivotal effect is then a renunciation on egocentrism, it is a movement towards the Mystery, commitment to the Mystery in confidence. In the confrontation with the Mystery, a human experience can be described, on the one hand, – negatively – as a feeling of inadequacy, impurity, contingency and, on the other hand, – positively – as an acknowledgement of the transcending Other that offers salvation. This openness towards the Mystery – a religious stance – is an attitude of recognition of the Mystery that involves salvation.⁶⁵ Despite a human opening to this reality, their fundamental limitations of being in space and time mean that they cannot directly access the Mystery but only through a series of mediation in which the Mystery manifests⁶⁶ itself, its presence in the world.

Thomas Aquinas considered religion a moral virtue appended to justice.⁶⁷ As a moral virtue it is a *habitus*, a specific structuring of the subject that connaturalizes it with the yearned object. In this sense, religion would be a disposition that helps a human to enter a relationship with God. A religion, from the etymological point of view⁶⁸, dates back to Cicero⁶⁹, Augustine⁷⁰ and finally to Zubiri, whose *re-ligare* aims at re-connecting, at a rejoining with the Triune God. The Christian religion is a redeeming relationship with God; it is a relationship in which a search for salvation plays an important role. With the words of Aquinas, it is necessary to do a step towards *ordo ad Deum*⁷¹, to orient the own life towards God, to enter absolute relationship⁷² with him. According to Tillich:

*“Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of a meaning of our life.”*⁷³

The capacity to enter a relationship with God is, however, not imposed from without, but it is rather a particular property of the very human nature, as implied by Blondel.

Revelation

Christianity considers itself a revealed religion, a self-communication of God in Jesus Christ – the Incarnate Word who revealed the Father – and actuating in the Church through Holy Spirit.

This concept comprises a threefold meaning, namely: First, an *aesthetic* form, which understands revelation as an event, as an eruption of some phenomenon into the reality that somehow

65 Formally, a religious stance comprises two aspects, namely the recognition and transcendence and salvation (the ultimate sense of the being).

66 Eliade calls these manifestations of the Mystery *hierophany* (the reality in which the Mystery manifests itself).

67 Cf. Pedro Rodríguez Panizo, “Teología fundamental,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 44.

68 Cf. *ibid.*

69 Religion as *re-legere* means a particular re-lecture of what concerns a divine cult.

70 Religion as *re-eligere* understood as a new election of the broken relationship with God after the original sin.

71 Religion understood not as faith, but as an interpreted and an announced faith, expressed by the external signs.

72 Through *religious acts* such as prayer, piety or a cult.

73 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

transforms the “vision” of the affected person – she can see the very same reality from the new perspective. Second, the *phenomenological*⁷⁴ form – religious studies discovered by studying the phenomenological structure of the revelation that most religions consider themselves God’s creation, and – to have a rigorous phenomenological definition – that the divine action determines the vital centre of a religion – a salvific event.⁷⁵ Finally, the *theological* form intends to rectify the shortages of the previous models, for example, the isolation of the expressive forms of the phenomena of their historical context leads to a loss of meaning because of generalizations of realities that are only seemingly similar. The theological concept understands revelation as a *self-communication* of Triune God in Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of humankind; a free self-communication (not obliged, not necessary as of Hegel’s emanation of the Spirit) that is affectionate. In Christianity, the revelation of Jesus is complete and ultimate, singular, and unique. This understanding is, naturally, a result of a long process, namely:

- In the OT, Israel experiences God who freely manifests himself to his people in the act of love. The typical figures are theophany (e.g., Moises, Abraham), history (chosen people, liberation from Egypt), and the word given to the prophets.
- The NT represents the fulfilment of promises anticipated in the OT in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word of God.
- For the experience model of Pannenberg, revelation is a manifestation of the salvific power of God in the acts and events and, first and foremost, in His Word. A serious disadvantage of this model is the “dependence” of faith and revelation on the human experience.
- Conceptual (theoretic) – for centuries prevailing model – understands revelation as an object of reflexive effort, a consequence of using the reason. Consequently, revelation is a “package” of revealed truths and faith an acceptance of these truths. Fideism and traditionalism surged as counter-reactions. Finally, CVI formulated a “third way”, claiming in *Dei Filius* that revelation is not a result of a philosophical search for the improvement of a human, but historical events and facts entrusted to and guarded by the Church. In opposition to fideism, a human can recognize God by the natural light of human reason reflecting on the creation. Faith is not a blind movement of the soul, it does not act against reason, even though it is a supernatural gift. The chief problem of this model is its extrinsic character.
- A concept of self-communication of God overcomes the shortages of the former models. In this salvific model, God is not only an author but also the content of revelation. Moreover, he invites people to enter the dialogue with him.

The theological concept of revelation has several consequences for the understanding of the Christian faith:⁷⁶ It determines the *content* of faith and legitimises it by channelling and steering its manifestations and, finally, it serves as an interpretive rule for the Magisterium, the Church

74 Van Baaren presents the most comprehensive phenomenology composed of five elements – of an author of the revelation, the phenomenon of mediation, content, an addressee and an effect (salvation).

75 Cf. Rodríguez Panizo, “Teología fundamental,” 51.

76 Cf. *ibid.*, 54.

and theology. The revelation character of Christian theology means that even though the human reason is a necessary condition of any theological reflection, due to the original sin it is “*partly obscured and weakened*” (Cf. GS 15) and can never fully penetrate the Mystery (Cf. *Dei Filius* and Chap. 4).

Faith and Mediation of Revelation

The CVII inspired by Rahner claims that Trinitarian God reveals Himself in gestures and words and that Christ is the mediator and the plenitude of revelation (Cf. DV 2). In Christ coincide its author (God who manifests himself) and object. He is the one to put trust in and, at the same time, the content of the faith – traditionally expressed by the terms of *fides qua* and *fides quae*, respectively (Cf. DV 5). Revelation is thus neither a package of the truths to believe, nor a mere doctrine, but God Himself:⁷⁷ *Verbum aeternum* who made Himself both *Verbum incarnatum* in Jesus Christ and *Verbum scriptum* in the Scriptures, and finally, *Verbum praedicatum* through the activity of the apostles and the Church (Cf. DV 7).

The incarnate Son, the culmination of the Revelation (Cf. DV 4), reveals the Father. The human faith is consequently a free response, a free “self-commitment” to God. This faith is “assisted” by grace which is incited by the Holy Spirit not only in the originating moment, that is, *initium fidei*, but serves a human as a constant aid (See ‘theological virtues’ in Chap. 5.1). Since faith comprises consent⁷⁸, abandonment⁷⁹ and recognition⁸⁰ (Cf. Chap. 5.1) as its constitutive elements, it cannot be an individual and private act. Although faith is eminently a personal act – as ‘I believe’ of the Credo testifies – it is an act within a community of other faithful. The transformation of life and a new orientation opens a person towards others; faith becomes confessional and active in favour of others.

However, despite Christ’s being the plenitude of revelation and the most privileged communication of God, chronologically, He is not the first one, as “[i]n the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways” (Heb 1:1). God has always spoken in history. Since ancient times, the OT has testified His self-communication facilitating so the growth and maturing of humankind in its knowledge of the Creator and Saviour. Christ revealed in plenitude through His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection, what was throughout history understood only partially and in an imperfect way. Jesus Christ stands, consequently, clearly over Scriptures – He is more than a prophet, (Cf. Mt 10:16; Mk 9:25) and more than the Law (Cf. Mt 5:22). The entire Bible is the word of God written in a human language (Cf. DV 12). Therefore, it is imperative to put it in the historical contexts⁸¹ and circumstances, and to understand the language of the authors. It is the Holy Spirit that inspired the Scriptures and has been inspiring their faithful interpretation within the Tradition. Revelation

77 Cf. *ibid.*, 58.

78 Consent in an OT-tradition is an existential acceptance of God’s Word and life, accordingly. It is not a mere intellectual assent, but a vital decision to accept God’s message.

79 Abandonment means, above all, to put all faith and confidence in God’s hands. It is a waiver on all self-assured plans, “idols”, etc. It means to renounce on all types of presumed salvation but God’s.

80 Recognition, the last element of faith, is an acknowledgement of God as an absolute and all-powerful with all accompanying paradoxes.

81 Pio XII: “*Divino Afflante Espiritu*”.

comprises the Scriptures interpreted within the Tradition, and the Tradition judged in terms of the Scriptures. The Scriptures and the Tradition are not two parallel sources of revelation (as was understood by CVI) but rather two “testimonies”, two modes of the single Revelation (Cf. DV 9), Jesus Christ. “*Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church*” (DV 10). The Word of God, Christ, as *norma normans, non normata* gives thus the testimony of Himself in the Scriptures (*norma normata primaria*) interpreted within the Tradition (*norma normata secundaria*).

The task of authentically interpreting the word of God [...] has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, [who] is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on (DV10).

The Scriptures are the norm of the faith of the Church (her *canon*). There is no external criterion⁸² for the canonicity of the books as their recognition itself is a part of the revelatory process.

2.3 Summary

One of the main postulated interrogatives Chap. 1 was about the difference between a machine and a human. Chap. 1.4 claimed that because of the different conceptions of intelligence and inability of technology to attain wisdom, machines are not equal to a human as far as dignity, rights and responsibility. This debate came up with a new differentiating attribute: Humans are *capax Dei* due to their very anthropological structure, that is, for having a fundamental aperture to fellow humans and the Other, humans are essentially *homo religiosus*. No machine can transcend itself in this sense, nor has for the very existence of a human – a constitutional longing for the meaning of the whole (including their own) existence. The ontological trace within a human, an existential thirst for the sense of life and of own existence cannot be satisfied by any contingent entity, and no science can fill this void. The only real possibility of finding an answer consists of the acknowledgement of the aperture towards transcendence.

Most religions describe a human as constitutive open to a mystery. Revelation plays a crucial role in Christianity, as well. Throughout history, many attempted to sustain the factuality of

82 From the 2nd century, there existed criteria for the recognition of different traditions. Apart from the principal normative, the fidelity to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the three categories of criteria include external (e.g. apostolicity, orthodoxy, concordance, and unity with the rest of the Bible), internal and ecclesial (liturgical use, universality, ecclesial reception). The bull “*Cantate Domino*” of the Council of Florence (1442) defines the canonicity of the Scriptures related to their inspiration. The CVI confirmed this interpretation in “*Dei Filius*” affirming that the canonicity is an internal quality of the books; they are canonical due to their inspirational character.

revelation.⁸³ As it has an ultimate character, it requires an unconditional commitment of a human.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, how can this claim be conjugated with the affirmation of the historical-critical methods that historical truths have only a contingent character thence they can establish no unconditional claims? Every reductionist approach either denies such a possibility or exile it to the realm of irrational beliefs. The extrinsic solutions such as that of CVI had become more and more unsustainable with the advance of modern sciences. Only an intrinsic solution (e.g., the ontological trace of Blondel, the existential of Rahner) can legitimate the unconditional and a historical claim of revelation. It can have an ultimate character, only when 'I' that was appealed by the Mystery (in the encounter with that Mystery) is constitutionally able to respond in its freedom, committing itself to the Mystery. When 'I' is constituted through a free recognition of being appealed by the Other, by another Freedom. If a call to otherness from outside is ontologically constitutive for a human then, there is no human unless there is the Other to issue this call.⁸⁵

“No one shapes his own conscience arbitrarily, but we all build our own “I” on the basis of a ‘self’ which is given to us. Not only are other persons outside our control, but each one of us is outside his or her own count” (CV 68).

Although Fichte, Freud, Husserl, Buber and others proclaim the necessity of the Other in the process of the constitution of 'I', they differ in “details”. These authors cannot imagine the communion in the difference. While in patristic thought, the Other is both the cause and the ultimate destination of particular beings, the post-modern thought has constant destabilization and movement that never rests.⁸⁶

Thence, the person is an identity that emerges through relationships:⁸⁷ 'I' cannot exist without the relationship to the other which affirms its existence and otherness. As a practical consequence, the transmission of revelation is possible only in a process in which freedom of a particular person is claimed unconditionally – no historical and objectifying approach that methodically abstracts from such a commitment can describe an unconditional claim of an ultimate revelation. So objectifying and reductive methods can transmit only a “historical Jesus”, but not Christ, the Saviour. Only an existential commitment of 'I' – this acknowledgement of an appealing mystery guaranteeing and constituting the 'I' – enables an unconditional claim of revelation transmitted by the Tradition.⁸⁸

83 Justin considers the fulfilled prophecies as a sign of the veracity of the revelation. While Justin considers the fulfilled prophecies as a sign of the authenticity of the revelation, Agustin does not ask for its factuality, but rather for the sense of the whole history of salvation. Miracles serve then as an allusion to the eschatological power of God. For Spinoza, every revelation is contrary to God as nature is one of his attributions. Hume's sceptical empiricism refuses miracles at all. A very complex and laborious approach by Lessing claims that historical truths are contingent and, therefore, cannot imperatively be confirmed by revelation. For Kant and Hegel, revelation has only a pedagogical character with no constitutive function of God's Word (Jesus) for faith. Finally, the CVI declares miracles and prophecies for reliable signs of revelation that forms a “package” of affirmations and truths to be believed.

84 Hansjürgen Verweyen, *Gottes letztes Wort: Grundriss der Fundamentaltheologie*, 4th ed. (Regensburg: Pustet, 2002).

85 Cf. John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. Paul McPartlan (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 42.

86 Cf. *ibid.*, 53.

87 Cf. *ibid.*, 9.

88 The Revelation of the Word of God closes with the apostles. However, its understanding and interpretation is a constant self-transmission of the Word by the Holy Spirit within the Church (as a doctrine, the life of the Church

The Tradition is neither a mere doctrine nor ethics, but it refers to the founding acts, to the person of Christ confessed as the Son of God who died in the Cross and resurrected.⁸⁹ It has a sacramental structure: An actualized sign of the self-surrender of Christ, a prolongation of the original experience of revelation and its actualization in the present time. Revelation can be transmitted in the Tradition only by an existential decision of a person saying yes to the appeal of the Mystery. No machine, no AI-agent, and no ET can make such a commitment. Therefore, they are constitutionally closed to making such a transmission of revelation.

and a cult) for the salvation of humankind (Cf. DV 8). Both the Scriptures and the Traditions form a unique deposit of the faith. They are two mediations and not two different sources. They are not independent because the Revelation is the Scriptures read within the Tradition, and the Tradition is judged in the light of the Scriptures (Cf. DV 9).

89 The expression “tradition” means “to deliver”, “to surrender”, but also “to pass on what was received” (Cf. 1Cor 15:3).

3 One God or “Mother Nature”

3.1 Preface

It could not be further from the truth when the interpretation of the title of this section would read two different “origins” of the world, God and Mother Nature, respectively, or two opposing “forces” which are “ruling” dissimilar spheres. The theological affirmation about creation is not a scientific one and does not aim at making any statements about the origins of the world. When the existence of God is not discarded ideologically even before postulating any further questions, a new opportunity of understanding the theological narrative about biblical creation arises, namely a description of a relationship between the contingent world and the absolute Transcendence.

The questions about the meaning of all reality have decisively influenced the history of thinking. The “occidental thinking” is distinctive for its claim of rational reality not exposed to actions of some (irrationally, a-rationally or accidentally) acting entity (e.g., destiny). It is then when the discovery of nature and its regularities begun. Still, the road to the systematic (re)search of her laws was yet to begin. Over the centuries, more and more knowledge has been acquired, many questions answered, enigmas solved. For the modern science of the 18th century, the millennia-old questions about the meaning of reality seem to be principally answerable by applying the same rules and principles as for the sensed reality. The ever-growing part of the empiric world did not need anymore the “hypothesis of God” for its understanding. Many started to enquire whether God as such is needed at all. Was it not Mother Nature that arranged through evolution everything? God was proclaimed dead, and “science” with its knowledge and technical applications seemed to be able to celebrate the final victory. But what kind of God has died? What will happen when humans claim the place of God for themselves and their creation, ever-smarter ETs?

3.2 God as Mystery

The question of the Christian revelation moves within the context of the problem of the meaning of reality. Is it something rational; does it have some logic and structure? It is, indeed, a question about the relationship between God and a human. Traditionally, theology answers this question by employing the concepts of knowledge and experience.

Knowledge has been possible thanks to the human reason participating in the divine Reason. Starting with Wis 13:5 and Rom 1:20, throughout the centuries, humans were able to know God by entering a relationship with Him and the Creation⁹⁰. Nevertheless, extreme positions emerged as well, namely *fideism* (which completely rejects the reason for the rational justification of faith) and both philosophical agnosticism (=no positive knowledge of God is possible) and *extreme*

⁹⁰ Despite the substantial progress in the understanding of wisdom in the biblical tradition – from the classical (Cf. Pro 8), critical (Cf. Job 28) to the religious (Cf. Sir 24, Sab 8) forms – and the changing ways to access the wisdom and her relationship with God, she always moderated somehow the relationship between a human and God.

rationalism (which overvalues the reason and strips God of his character of mystery). The CVI, specifically, the dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius* clarified the possibility of rational knowledge of God (Cf. DH 3004): “*God, the principle and end of all things, can be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason from created things*” (DF, Ch. II). Since faith is a human act, it implicitly brings along rationality and freedom; faith assumes the natural reasoning in freedom as a condition of possibility. This line of reasoning is developed and improved by the CVII that inserts all the knowledge of God in a historical (acts of God in human history) and Christocentric perspective (Christ that reveals the Father): The creation itself manifests God and His initiative that is a foundation of every possible knowledge through the created things⁹¹ (Cf. DV 3). Pope John Pole II in *Fides et Ratio* argued that the gratuity of the revealed love by Jesus at the Cross is the threshold between faith and reason.⁹² However, although observing the creation facilitates and allows for the natural knowledge of God, it is not “an automatic” and “deterministic” way of “getting know of God”. Unfortunately, remaining at the level of the creation and not transcending to God often leads to idolatry, agnosticism and atheism.

Experience: As religious experience is rooted in human nature, it is primarily a human experience (See Chap. 2.2). Therefore, as a human and a religious experience, it is not separated from other human experiences be it ethical, aesthetic, and scientific, but rather demonstrates itself within them more radically and profoundly. At the same time, it is qualitatively different as it is not an experience of yet “one another object”, but of a horizon of the human life itself.⁹³ It transcends human life in its daily reality, even though, occurs within human reality. Such an experience is always personal and affects the person in its totality. It leaves a person bewildered, decentralized, and opened to the reality which exceeds and surpasses her causing a change and a conversion. According to Rahner, an experience of God is not external but rather the most internal experience possible. It constitutes humans and gives them God as a foundation. Since God is an infinite, absolute, and incomprehensible reality, there is always a danger of misconceptions while speaking about Him. Therefore, the only language apt for talking about God is an analogy.

Language: When speaking about different realities (God and a human) in a human language, there is always a danger of falling into a univocal (no distinction between two different realities: God understood as an object among other objects) or an equivocal (God and a human have nothing in common, it cannot be said anything about God) trap. The only suitable language seems to be an analogy, that is, an intent to ascribe some properties to the infinite God using human language with all its limitations. The council of Letran IV (1215, Cf. DH 806) expressed that “*between creator and creature there can be noted no similarity so great that a greater dissimilarity cannot be seen between them*”.⁹⁴ The protestant theology refused *analogia entis* (analogy of creation, e.g. Karl Barth) concerned with possible reification of God that would set

91 Cf. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 102.

92 Cf. *ibid.*

93 Cf. *ibid.*, 99.

94 Andrew Davison, *Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 65.

Him at the same level as a human – the only knowledge of God is possible through *analogia fides* (=analogy of scripture in the protestant theology). The modern catholic theology defends *analogia entis* by considering it not as an abstract concept (of the relationship between God and a human) but rather a specific one, with its maximal exponent and consummation in the person of the incarnate Son of God who is both God and a man (e.g., Balthasar⁹⁵), the perfect and the true image of God. Grace does not destroy or diminish human nature but perfects it (See Chap. 4.2). While the flip side of knowledge of God is atheism, that of analogy is idolatry.⁹⁶

3.3 The Trinitarian God

This God–Mystery is a paradox that presents Himself in three different perspectives⁹⁷, namely the revealed God in human history and the God of reason⁹⁸; God as a revealed and as a concealed reality⁹⁹, and finally, God in Himself and God for the humanity¹⁰⁰. The last perspective, God thought of by theology in two different forms, namely God in Himself and God in relation to the world, is expressed by *theologia* (the ontological perspective) for the former case, and by *oikonomia* (the historical-salvific viewpoint) for the latter case. In the words of Irenaeus, we know God only when we know His relation to us (*oikonomia salutis*). Due to the dogmatic disputes about the character of the Son of God, the gap between *theologia* and *oikonomia* began to grow from the fourth century onwards. This tendency lasted till the early 20th century with re-discovery of the importance of the relation of both concepts by Rahner through his claim that economic and immanent Trinity are two inseparable and complementary attitudes describing how God reveals himself. From the point of view of *ratio essendi*, the immanent Trinity saying how the God Himself is, has the priority. However, according to *ratio cognoscendi*, the “gate of access” to God for us is through the economic Trinity. To avoid possible misunderstandings, the ITC completed the theorem of Rahner by the word “freely” and “gratuitously”. The Mystery of

95 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 105.

96 Cf. *ibid.*

97 Cf. *ibid.*, 90.

98 The God of faith and the God of reason are not two completely different entities but rather two different approaches to the Mystery of the Trinitarian God that walk together over the centuries, sometimes more in proximity, sometimes losing sight of the other. Nevertheless, since they have the same founding, complete divergence is impossible.

99 Not falling in the extreme positions require retaining both perspectives: God absolutely revealed, scrutinized, known, without “surprises”, “tamed” and at a disposition is presently the major risk for those who still believe in God and for the science that boasts itself of having deciphered the mysteries of nature. The other extreme represents God totally in the shadows, a mysterious God without the possibility of access, unknowable and unknown, some transcendent force that cannot be understood. The whole history of theology, the religions themselves, oscillated between “Goethe” and “Wittgenstein”, between a cataphatic, totally positive, and an apophatic, completely negative, pole (Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 96.). Christianity has succeeded to strike a balance between the two perspectives claiming the God-Mystery to have both dimensions. It is possible to say something about God thanks to his self-communication (self-revelation); however, He is no enigma expecting the deciphering. The more the Mystery reveals Himself and the better we understand Him, the more it is inscrutable. The Cappadocians, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, brought important insight into our understanding by claiming God to be cognoscible and incomprehensible at the same time. For Rahner, the Mystery is not a limit of knowledge but rather a reality in excess that founds and sustains us; for Balthasar, it is a revelation in concealment, and for Jüngel, it is an unrepeatable and absolute singularity which overgrows our explanatory capacity of the reality from our experience.

100 *Oikonomia* and *theologia* are only two different, very intertwined, perspectives of understanding God. The revelation and the actuation of God in human history, His missions, have their ontological foundation in the intra-Trinitarian life, the processions. However, without manifestations humanity would not know anything about the inner life of God.

God will always carry along certain tension: God will always remain in a sense incomprehensible and transcendent; however, He communicated Himself radically in human history in His Son.

Dogmatic teaching, reflecting the knowledge about the Trinitarian God, had grown only gradually and often as a response to some misconception. Though there is no direct and explicit comment on the Trinity in the Scriptures, the life of Jesus Christ, his words, actions, and particularly his relationship with God Father lay foundations for Trinitarian faith, more specifically, his relationship with the Father, his announcing of the Kingdom of God and his destiny at the Cross. Even though it is the totality of his person that deciphers and interprets God's revelation, the Easter Mystery has a special place and bears the "first-class" testimony to the unique relationship with his Father and the meaning of his mission. The God of Jesus is the God invoked by the Jews (= a continuation of the tradition); however, the whole NT testifies about a new level of intimacy of Jesus and his Father, whom he calls *abba* in the moment of the highest anxiety and agony in Gethsemane (Mc 14:36), and in many of his parables (Lk 15:1-2), teachings (Lk 18:9-14), actions and prayers¹⁰¹ (Mt 6:9). Even though Jesus never declares himself explicitly God, he dubbed himself the Son, and called God his Father (only the Son knows the Father, Mt 11:25-27; only the Father knows the hour, Mc 13:23) and expressed the consciousness of his mission which was about to end with a violent death¹⁰² (Mt 12:1-12). Although Christological titles (See Chap. 4) do not describe all reality of Christ, they helped the first Christians to understand his identity. They used the OT-categories for describing the Easter events and reinterpreted the old hopes and promises of the Chosen people in new Christian categories. Soon after the death of Jesus, the young Christian communities confessed through the first hymns Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Despite the frequent appearances of the Holy Spirit in the NT, the corresponding dogmatic expressions were developed only gradually. There was a long way to see him as the third person in the Trinity: First as wind, breath, air, vital principle of creation, impersonal force, then inspiration, and personified mediator of God (the Spirit of God). The Scriptures offers a possible double lecture of his relationship with Jesus: Either a perspective of the OT (described in Mt and Mk) of the Christology of the Spirit¹⁰³ with the Holy Spirit inspiring and motivating¹⁰⁴ Jesus, or a perspective of the Christology of Logos¹⁰⁵ (preferred by John and Paul), when Christ is the one who donates us the Holy Spirit. The Christology of Logos prevailed for centuries;¹⁰⁶ then, the 20th century brought a renovation of the Christology of the Spirit with an essential role¹⁰⁷ in the Incarnation.

101 Schürmann interprets the life of Jesus based on "Our Father": Two lines of explanation shed life on the whole life of Jesus and his very being. The vertical dimension describes his life as one from the Father and for the Father – it is a doxological dimension when God manifests his Name. The horizontal dimension represents Jesus's actuation towards people that brings us salvation. The orientation of Jesus towards the Father and people is not only something accidental, depending on his mission, but essentially forms his being.

102 Jesus demonstrates in the parable of the tenants his consciousness of his mission as the Son, as the last and eschatological representative of the Father (Cf. Pérez, "El Misterio de Dios," 112.).

103 Three decisive moments for the Christology of Spirit, revealing the special relationship between Jesus and the Spirit, are the incarnation, the baptism, and the mission (Cf. Ibid., 115.).

104 However, Jesus assumes the entire authority by teaching: He never teaches inspired by the Spirit.

105 The decisive moments for the Christology of Logos, showing Christ as a dispenser of the Spirit, are his death, resurrection, and the mission of the Church (Cf. Pérez, "El Misterio de Dios," 115.).

106 The emerging questions about the status and character of the Son of God were the principal cause.

107 Although the subject of the Incarnation is the Son – and according to St. Agustin, it is him who creates the human nature and immediately assumes it – the Holy Spirit acts with his creative power over Mary (an allusion to the spirit of God over the waters during the Creation) and makes the Incarnation possible.

Heresies and the First Councils

The NT continues the monotheistic faith of the OT with an (implicit) Trinitarian structure.¹⁰⁸ Although the Scripture does not explicitly introduce the Trinitarian doctrine, it builds up the said Trinitarian structure by dedicating much space to describing the respective persons of the Trinity, e.g., two different missions proceeding from the Father, specifically, one of the Son and the other of the Holy Spirit (Cf. Rom 8:1-16; Gal 4:4-6). The ambiguity and possible polyvalence of the biblical interpretations soon lead to emerging a variety of thought currents ranging from subordination to modalism, to tritheism.¹⁰⁹

Bauer presented in 1934 a theory of a “victorious” dogmatic school (out of more competitors) proclaimed orthodoxy (all others would be marked as heretical). Although his view is assuredly an extremist one, the traditional view of heresy as a deviation from the orthodoxy is also oversimplified. A heresy often departs from the very same nucleus as the orthodoxy, but it omits some important “detail” or does not consider the complexity of the teaching and the understanding of the Mystery.

The 3rd and 4th century-debates with different accents in the West and the East shaped the understanding of the Trinity and leading to three principal classes of Trinitarian heresies:

- Monarchianism emphasized God as a person defending His absolute unity against ideas such as the Trinity, which interpreted as tritheism. Two types of modalism extended rapidly: Sabellianism (one God appearing through different modes¹¹⁰, Father, Son, Holy Spirit) and Adoptionism (the only God has granted the godhood to Jesus as a reward for his perfect life and the realization of salvific plans of God)
- Subordinationism is a position that subordinates the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father. It thrived in various versions, e.g., soteriological (apologists: the Father as the source and the Origin without origin from which the Son and the Spirit proceed) or ontological (Arianism: Jesus of a different essence, *ousia*, was promoted to God).
- Tritheism is a position affirming three different substances leading thus to three gods.

Several Councils attempted to address these challenges (See Chap. 4.2).

How to understand the Trinity

Over the centuries, the concepts such as missions, processions, relations, persons or *perichoresis*, have been developed to describe the being and the inner life of God with a view of three main mysteries of Christian faith: The Trinity, the Incarnation and the divinization of a human. *Homo capax Dei* (see Chap. 2.2) is possible only because God has revealed Himself (see *oikonomia* in Chap. 3.2).

108 The NT claims that Jesus had a divine origin and status (Cf. 1Cor 8:6; Phil 2:5-8; Rom 10:9).

109 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 125.

110 Otherness almost disappears from the being of God (Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 33.).

The *missions* stand for the forms of the visible manifestation and presence of the divine persons in the world, that is, in the History of Salvation¹¹¹. The God Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit to the world with specific missions for the salvation of the world: While the activity of the Son (Gal 4:4) is visible in the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection and founds thus the objective dimension of Christianity, the mission of the Spirit (Gal 4:6; Jn 14:25) is immanent grounding the subjective dimension of Christianity manifesting itself in grace. To the two missions as “external” manifestations of God in the world, correspond the two *processions* as an expression of the inner life of God, for example, the personal relationship between Jesus and the Father exemplified by *Abba*.¹¹²

The God Father is the Origin without an origin from which the Son and Spirit proceed, namely the Son as begotten (*generated*) and the Holy Spirit who *proceeds* (*ekporeuesis*) from the God Father. The Oriental tradition distinguishes the essence of God from the divine *energies* without entering details. The occidental tradition speaks about the Trinity using the metaphor of mind, knowledge, and love (Augustin, Thomas) or perfect love that wants to express itself (the lover, the loved one and the mutually loved one (Richard of Saint Victor). Yet the modern authors (e.g., Pannenberg, Greshake) criticize the classical conceptions of the Trinity (paternal *monarchia*) for being excessively focused on the Father; these approaches prefer an image of *communion*, of a space of perfectly symmetrical relations among the divine persons. Nevertheless, despite the praiseworthy effort, the biblical, liturgical, and ecclesial traditions based on the theology of the *monarchia*¹¹³ of the Father, preserve better the correct understanding of the unity and equality of Trinitarian God from the dangers of tritheism, Sabellianism and subordinationism. Understanding paternity as an infinite capacity of communication, love, and donation also addresses the worries of the “predominance” of the Father.

The three constitutive Trinitarian *relations*¹¹⁴ are paternity, filiation (the Sonship), and passive expiration. The relations allow for a different view on the divine being than the traditional description in terms of *substance*. There are centuries-long-discussions and clarifications of the expressions such as *persona*, *prosopon*, *hypostasis* behind this shift that required to rethink the philosophical basics for God being *relation* and, at the same time, the relation, being an accidental property – which was impossible for God as it would mean His mutability.¹¹⁵ An ancient concept of *perichoresis*¹¹⁶, applied this time to the question of the unity of God, expresses

111 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 150.

112 Cf. *ibid.*, 151.

113 For instance, according to Augustine, there is an ontological priority of substance over against personal relations in God (Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 33.) and Zizioulas argues against the divine unity safeguarded by the unity of substance and rather supports the *monarchia* of the Father (Cf. *ibid.*, 5.) expressed already by Cappadocian theology.

114 Two processions correspond to four relations, namely paternity, filiation, active and passive expiration. However, only three are constitutive, as the active expiration equals the paternity and passive expiration (Cf. *ibid.*, 156.).

115 Cf. *ibid.*, 157.

116 In the 4th century, Hilary of Poitiers used the expression to show the unity of the two natures of the Son and the Father; Gregory of Nazianzus spoke about the two natures of Christ.

a mutual permanent presence¹¹⁷ of divine persons that not only relate with each other but “cohabit” within each other. The expression emphasizes thus the unity of God, the differences of the persons¹¹⁸, and the aperture of this unity for the integration of the world and history into the divine inner life. It is much more than the mere unity of wills, missions, or relations – it is an essential unity that is neither prior nor posterior to the Trinity.¹¹⁹ The unity has always been understood as “guaranteed” in the person of the Father. God is love (1Jn 4:8), and since His being is essentially relational, the principal characteristic of the Father is to give. He, the reason of all reality, the cause of everything, is the one who donates Himself. Following the same logic, the Son receives and mediates the divine gift to others, and, finally, the Spirit represents the reciprocal love between the Father and the Son that opens this union to the creation.¹²⁰

Moreover, if God is a relation rather than a substance, and if He created a human in his image (Cf. Gn 1:26), then a human is not fundamentally an individual subjectivity (as is the predominant occidental thought since the Illumination, e.g., Descartes, Locke, etc.) but rather a relational being, a being of communion.

3.4 The Almighty God

The question of evil is one of the oldest human challenges. A believer of any religion will be – sooner or later – confronted at both theoretical and existential levels with the interrogative, how the existence of evil is possible given there is a good and almighty God. How is it to explain that we experience so much pain, suffering and evil in the world? Christian theology responded to the ancient question with the notion of sin complemented by God’s grace.

The tradition distinguished between moral (human actions) and physical evils (natural disasters, diseases, etc.), respectively. For Augustine, evil is always an absence of good, *privatio boni*. Hence, evil does not possess an ontological reality but an expression of lack of something or corruption of good. Evil is a substantiation of something: Never a reality in itself but an absence of some good and something always relational¹²¹ (an act or a situation frequently has negative consequences for someone, though positive for someone else at the same time). He strictly denies an “equilibrium” or a fight between two principles, a good and an evil one. The faith in a good creation because of its origin – despite all the evil in the world and all the suffering – is essential for the correct comprehension of reality whose ontology is positive (good). For the Christian tradition, the reality is not value-neutral *per se*; good coincides with the *being* since it proceeds from God.¹²² Nevertheless, the presence of suffering reiterates the question about God’s almighty and goodness. Many consider the world without evil a perfect world: However, here comes the principal issue. The question, ‘whether (and why) the almighty God could not create the world without evil’, is false in the same way as a “perfect creation” is an oxymoron. Nothing which is

117 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 164.

118 The otherness is constitutive of unity. It is absolute (the three divine persons are absolutely different) and ontological – not merely moral or psychological (Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 5.).

119 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 167.

120 Cf. *ibid.*

121 Cf. Pedro Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 219.

122 Cf. *ibid.*, 220.

not divine can be perfect; everything contingent carries along intrinsically some form of corruption and a possible breakdown. Even the world created by the good and omnipotent God will contain evil because although it proceeds (*ex ipso*) from God (= is good) and is not divine (\neq is perfect).

Throughout history, some attempted to “defend” God against allegations of being the cause of evil by stripping down his powers. However, divine omnipotence is in Christianity crucial for the final victory of God over death and for the possibility of salvation and eternal life. Additionally, God, who gratuitously and freely created the world motivated only by His love, would assuredly want its ‘perfect realization’¹²³. The issue can be addressed again by a deeper understanding of God’s omnipotence: He is above all, Love, Tenderness, Mercy (Cf. Ex 34,7). Unconditional kindness and goodness are His very essence and not accidental properties. Therefore, paradoxically, His omnipotence and the set of the possible actions is limited to those of love, kindness, etc. as He cannot hate or cause evil. His omnipotence consists in an ability to realize the maximal good. Accordingly, the original question about the existence of evil loses its sense. Perhaps, the better question is one about the meaning of the creation (why there is something and not nothing)? Paraphrasing Job, pain and suffering can be so strong that they blind a person allowing her to forget her place in the creation. This person might not be able to understand the meaning of the suffering and the reality of evil; however, a wise person knows that there is somebody who has absolutely everything in His hands and knows the sense of the pain, suffering and evil (Cf. Job 28). The question about the meaning will be responded to in the Easter events when God demonstrates His power, His All-mightiness and gives the clear sign that He has the last word.

3.5 Maker of Heaven and Earth

The concept of creation is quite common to all cultures and nations on Earth. It is a result of a philosophical and theological reflection of a particular experience of contingency and gratuity.¹²⁴ It becomes clear on many occasions that the very being is not absolute, that there is a real possibility (and a threat) of not-being. The reflection of a religious experience kindles the questions about the meaning of life, which gives rise also to the gratuity for the very existence that is not “automatically granted”.

The biblical stories about the creation (Gn 1:1-2:4; Ps 8;104; Prov 8:22ff; Wis 1:14) share with other cultures of the Middle East their mythological origin, though they possess some fundamental differences: They do not have an informational character (about the factual coming into being of the world) but rather try to give meaning to the presence and orient towards future. It is helpful to consider the historical context: The chosen people in the exile were not able to understand the fall of their kingdom, loss of their invincible capital and destruction of the Temple – how was it to explain this national catastrophe that destructed all three pillars of their very identity as a nation. And at about that time surged the biblical themes of creation. The objective was to respond to the incumbent existential questions and provide an orientation for the future. God, whom they believed and trusted, who accompanied their forefathers, was the Creator, the

123 Cf. *ibid.*, 225.

124 Cf. *ibid.*, 188.

Maker of heaven and earth, and therefore, God who had even the future in His hands. The reassurance of the power of this God would be stressed even more in the 2nd century b.C during the harsh persecution and the rebellion of Maccabees, proclaiming God to be the Creator out of nothing, *ex nihilo* (Cf. 2Mac 7:28). The thought was radically novel because, in other traditions, gods *formed* the Universe of some pre-existent matter (e.g., Greek: Demiurge). The formulation *creacio ex nihilo* first and foremost wants to underscore the divine omnipotence and absolute freedom. It implies that “*being does not come from being, which would make it necessary being*”¹²⁵. With Christianity, the decisive development came with the Trinitarian God. The pivotal event was the resurrection of Christ, by which he entered the Realm of his Father. The Son of God was glorified, and he sits at the right-hand side of God (Cf. Sal 110 and Chap. 4.6).

Thomas Aquinas made a considerable contribution – measured even by modern standards – to understanding the relation between God and creation. He firmly argued for the distinction of two levels: The first speaks about the beginning of the time (and space), that is, about the object of the cosmological studies, while the second about the eternity of God (not the time without an end). As a result, creation cannot be considered a divine action *in* time. The second decisive development came with modernity and the new knowledge about cosmology, anthropogenesis, biogenesis, and others, which definitely put to an end the static image of the Universe. The concept of *creatio continua* claims that creation is not a one-time act in the most remote past of the history of the Universe, but a particular relation of the Creator with the creation.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, these ancient concepts did not count with evolution, yet. The question gained importance, and many thinkers tried to find an answer, e.g., P. T. de Chardin and K. Rahner speak about the evolutive cosmos. According to Rahner, there is no such thing as a strict division between matter and spirit, and the whole history is a spiritualization of matter. The key concept is the active *self-transcendence* which connects God to his creation. God grants simultaneously His creation its very being and autonomy, and hence the evolution process contains his creative power. Nevertheless, neither the Universe nor evolution is God Himself. The notion of self-transcendence does not mean that the created life and the finite spirit climb gradually to the “higher existence” up to the Holy Spirit.¹²⁷ The Holy Spirit operates in the creation without depriving it of its freedom. He nudges it towards the full realization in the Creator but simultaneously. He leaves it free and autonomous. God remains thus both absolute immanent and absolute transcendent. The described God is not a God that would be:

- An irrational myth believed as an alternative explanation of physical laws and the functioning of Nature. He is no competition for “Mother Nature”.
- Presumably perceived by the believers to be the *ens summum*.
- Competing with a person in her freedom; one that imposes rules and prescriptions to enslave a human; one that needs to be killed to gain freedom and to emancipate oneself.

125 Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 16.

126 Cf. Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” 197.

127 Cf. Theodor Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática* (Barcelona: Harder, 1996), 612.

In fact, according to Rahner¹²⁸, “[d]ie radikale Abhängigkeit vom ihm wächst nicht in umgekehrter, sondern in gleichen Proportion mit einem wahrhaftigen Selbststand vor ihm”¹²⁹, that is to say, the humans’ power, their own emancipation grows with the proximity of God. This is very different concept of freedom from the present one.¹³⁰ It is the possibility of being free to be yourself as ‘other’, as ontological free.¹³¹

3.6 The Maker of a Human in His Image

A human being, both the masterpiece and a part of God’s creation, enjoys a special status. Despite enormous differences between people themselves, they share a common *human condition*: They are alive¹³², have a sexed body¹³³, are free¹³⁴ and intelligent¹³⁵. Occidental thinking is profoundly influenced by notions of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, by the body-spirit dualism. However, the main message of the whole Bible is the unitary vision of a human. The Scripture does not have a singular term used for a human but employs, instead, an entire spectrum of different perspectives employing expressions such as *nefesh*, *basar*, *ruah* for the designation of a person. Greek translations charged with different cultural meanings that the Hebrew originals caused the first problems. Consequently, e.g., the *soul* does not correspond anymore to the Hebrew description of the whole person, but only to the “spiritual” part.

Although neither Jewish tradition, nor Paul, nor the first centuries of the Christian thinking¹³⁶, nor the documents of Magisterium¹³⁷, speak in these dualist terms, anthropological dualism heavily influenced the popular religious and secular thinking. However, even when theology uses traditional dualist language, it considers a person decisively as a unity. A human does not comprise two “natures”, body, and soul. Having a “spiritual soul” means that human as a relational being (see the next paragraph) is constitutively related to God¹³⁸, is *capax Dei* because

128 Klaus Kienzler, *Bewegung in die Theologie bringen: Theologie in Erinnerung an Klaus Hemmerle* (Verlag Herder GmbH, 2017), 469.

129 The radical dependence on God does grow proportionally to the (human’s) true stand before Him.

130 Today, freedom is usual expressed as a possibility of choice among various possibilities.

131 Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 13.

132 The life as existence has many forms, and humans share these characteristics with many other life-forms; however, only humans feel the necessity to ask for the meaning of their existence and the world.

133 The corporal dimension is both the limit and possibility (Cf. Fernández Castelao, “Antropología teológica,” 183.): The body sets limits for human’s acts and opens the possibilities of relations – with other humans, reality, future and transcendence (see the category of *basic trust* in Chap. 5.2) – an essential trait of a human.

134 Several philosophers and theologians (e.g., Kierkegaard, Rahner) dubbed a human being a “limited (finite) freedom”, that is, a being capable of discernment and choices, that are, however, limited through the series of conditioning, e.g., the physical body, living in the history, their very contingency. Furthermore, and leaving all the mentioned limitations aside, humans experiments in their daily lives principal constraint of their wills: frequently, they do what they did not want to do, and vice versa, do not do, what they wanted to do (Cf. Rm 7:14ss), in other words, they experience an excision in their will (Cf. Blondel, *La Acción (1893): Ensayo de Una Crítica de La Vida y de Una Ciencia de La Práctica; Introducción de Juan María Isasi y César Izquierdo.*).

135 Intelligence allows not only for perception and apprehension but also a transformation of the world. However, humans are moreover capable of introspection and transcendence of both themselves and visible reality.

136 Although up until the 4th century, there existed no ontological dualism in Christianity, the language used to speak about a human already walked toward an ontological dualism which e.g., Augustin took for granted. However, the hylomorphic union (a body informed by a soul) of Thomas Aquinas speaks again decisively for an indivisible unity of body and soul.

137 The Council of Vienne (1312) opposed any concept of the accidental union of body and soul for explaining a human; the similar formulation used the V Council of Lateran (1513) and even the CVII: it affirms a unity of person even though using a traditional language (Cf. GS 14).

138 Cf. Fernández Castelao, “Antropología teológica,” 217.

God was first *capax hominis*. Eastern theologians distinguished between a *person* (*hypostasis*) as the principle of the particular, and human nature (*ousia*) as a principle of the universal. While in God these two coincide, in a human nature precedes the person.¹³⁹

One of the notoriously known expressions of the Bible is that God created a human in His image and likeness (Gn 1:26f). Are we “like God” because of our “spiritual part”, or because of reason, intellect, or something else? Harari¹⁴⁰ with Feuerbach claim that not God created in His image humanity, but rather the humans have created God in their image and likeness; accordingly, entities like God do not exist but are practical for the collaboration. Chap. 3.2 suggested God’s principal characteristics being the Mystery. Consequently, if God created a human in His image and likeness (Cf. GS 12.24), then, except for some participation of human intelligence on the divine, and to be essentially a relational being, a human is a mystery as well. Moreover, when the NT reinterprets the OT-statement, God created a human in the image of His Son, Jesus, who is himself the image of God (Cf. Col 1:15; 2Cor 4:4). And so, humans became the children of God in His Son¹⁴¹ that earns them a special dignity. The Son is the paradigmatic example of the fullness of human nature elevated thanks to divine grace (Cf. GS 22). Humans cannot be reified and posed as an object among other objects and to be treated like one. Human nature resists any denaturing and objectification. Using Kant’s words, a human shall never be used merely as a tool. Thus, this inobjectifiability of humans is one of the elements which makes them similar to God.

Original Sin

Traditionally, “sin” is a theological term for moral evil, both committed and suffered. A sin, strictly speaking, is always personal,¹⁴² an action or an omission of a free human in a precept of justice. Since sin implies the existence of free will, each exercise of it entails deliberation, decision, and responsibility. However, one cannot label sin as an infringement of a divine precept or religious prescription.¹⁴³ It is, rather, an offence of free will against a created good. Paul speaks in his letters about the power of sin and the inability of attaining freedom (from sin) through his own effort (Cf. 7:15f). A rupture of the relationship with God also impacts the relationship with a fellow human and the person herself. The pathology goes back to the very roots of human existence:¹⁴⁴ When Adam refused the Other, and when his self-affirmation meant the rejection of the Other, every ‘other’ became a threat. This fear of otherness is pathologically inherent to our humanity. As a result, a difference was soon identified with the division.

Augustine tried to explain the existence of evil and a human propensity to it, by introducing the concept of the original sin.¹⁴⁵ That would, however, be only a part of the story. He reiterated the

139 Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 56.

140 Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2018).

141 Cf. Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 339.

142 Cf. Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” 231.

143 Cf. *ibid.*, 232.

144 Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 2.

145 Original sin is a concept introduced by Augustine, the story of Eden mentions only a sin of Adam; original sin, moreover, is not an act but a state, a situation of the entire humankind that characterizes its ambiguous character (Cf. Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” 243.). Consequently, it is paramount to distinguish between the core of the original-sin doctrine and its implications (especially later in history).

teaching of Paul that humans cannot save themselves by their own effort. Salvation is a gift that can be accepted or rejected but not conquered or merited.

Unfortunately, what served well the purpose in times of Augustine, became an object of many difficulties later. His principal motivation for this formulation was triple: Firstly, his – to these days correct – intuition about the imbalance that inclines a human towards evil from the very moment of birth, the experience of an internal excision (See Chap. 2.2) and permanent dissatisfaction and a failure to fulfil own desires and dreams; secondly, his fight against Manichaeism that sought – similar to Gnosticism – the origin of evil in the matter, favouring thus “spiritualism”; and thirdly, his arguments against Pelagius for whom the sin was only an expression of lack of will,¹⁴⁶ that is, Augustine fought against the voluntarism that gains today again on popularity: It is enough to yearn something enough, and you will reach it; you only lack a right motivation. Starting with this motivation and own experience and reflection, Augustine became aware of the fundamental disproportion of what he wanted and what he could, a gap between a dream and a realization, between possibilities and reality. This intuition correctly highlights the propensity of the will to evil, that is, the will is not a neutral faculty weighting among and choosing from “equidistant” options.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it does not mean that evil is more powerful than good, or that human nature is substantially bad. Pannenberg explains the problem through the primacy of “self-centred ego” and an absolute character of the “transcendental realities” (See Chap. 4.8 for details).

The solution of Augustine took a deep root in the theological tradition until the CVII that recovered his correct intuition (existence of a mismatch between ideality and reality¹⁴⁸) lost over the centuries, and simultaneously, corrects his misinterpretations by omitting them: The mission of humanity is perfection (but not as a result of the self-optimization), a “grandeur”; it has a sublime vocation, however, at the same time, it experiences the “depths of misery” (Cf. GS 13). Accordingly, a human is an indecipherable mystery; however, Christian faith furnishes the key for its understanding (Cf. GS 22¹⁴⁹). Human nature cannot be conceived only as “tempted”, but as one that is inclined to “fall”, to a possibility of decomposition and fault. Our freedom is not absolute but co-determined by what the tradition calls the original sin.

Grace

For theology, “grace” is a condition of the possibility to talk about sin. Humans cannot overcome the human condition, “corruptibility of a flesh” by their efforts. Therefore, the affirmation of the Creed about the necessity of divine action is understandable – Jesus Christ is God “*who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven*”. There is a profound disproportion between sin and grace (Cf. Rm 5:20). The mystery of evil and sin, *misterio iniquitatis* (Cf. 2Tes 2:7), is incomparable to *misterio pietatis* (Cf. 1Tim 3:16), the mystery of mercy, of the love of God. His

146 At the bottom of the approach of Pelagius is the extrinsic nature of divine grace and the role of Christ – he is introduced only as a good example, as a role model for a human that is, in consequence, not called to a complete configuration according to Christ (Cf. *ibid.*, 245.).

147 Cf. *ibid.*, 235.

148 Blondel’s “ontological trace” also expressed by CA 13: “*A human being feels in their hearth the contradiction between the desire of fullness of good and the own incapacity to achieve it*”.

149 The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light.

grace, the divine self-communication to a human, the love of God manifested unconditionally in Christ¹⁵⁰ – in Paul’s letters understood as a structure of the salvific event of Jesus Christ – reorients the whole existence of a human in the conversion. While the mystery of sin represents the subversion of the constitutive relations of humans (with God, the Universe, fellow humans, and themselves), Thomas Aquinas spoke of the twofold love of God: His love grants the very existence (=loving by creating) and, through grace, He elevates the rational creature over her natural condition to take part in the divine life. God’s grace incorporates a human in the salvific process known either as *filiation* (in the East) or as a *justification* (in the West). According to Paul, baptism inserts humans into the mystical body of Christ. They are, furthermore, justified through unmerited grace and receive the gift of faith¹⁵¹. They experience –incited by the Holy Spirit– God’s love that results in a free response of love towards the other and the Other. Humans are being progressively transformed as they live a new life in Christ. However, God’s grace elevates, remodels, and makes perfects not only His rational creatures but the entire creation – the Scriptures speak about the “new earth” and the “new heavens”.

Actual theology left behind unfortunate post-trident centuries full of catholic-protestant discussions and sees divine grace in relational terms. It embarks both poles, a divine one as a “benign inclination”¹⁵² of God toward humans empowering them for a full and real human life, and a human one, as a graceful person with a possibility of a free response to the divine gift. Divine grace characterizes the divine self-communication as free, gratuitous and unmerited and, at the same time salvific and vivifying for humans. The relationship between God and a human need not be contemplated as competence but as freedom given that the actuation of God and humans are not at the same level of reality. The former functions at much deeper levels. Indeed, it is the very condition of the possibility of actuation of his creation (See Chap. 3.5). God transforms rational creatures by changing their freedom and the life of the rest of His creation.¹⁵³ God liberates a person and guarantees her freedom so she can achieve her real realization and humanity.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, it is not sufficient to conceptualize freedom as a free choice between alternatives, but rather as a voluntary and free affirmation of the very self-realizing¹⁵⁵. Not only freedom “from” (=independence of) but also freedom “for” (=capacity for). Divine grace is an authentic interpersonal relation. Therefore, any reduction into something that is passively received and that influences or transforms a human externally is a reduction of the love and respect of God for humans and their freedom.¹⁵⁶

3.7 Summary

Science and technology give us unprecedented possibilities. Simultaneously, the scientific (≠scientific) paradigm increasingly treats reality as fully empirically describable and researchable. Moreover, the 18th and 19th-century assumptions (See Chap. 1.3) are still widespread and significantly influential in our perception of reality. Mother Nature, a powerful

150 Cf. Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” 247.

151 There are two traditions that have a different sequence of the baptism-faith (See Chap. 5.4).

152 Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 650.

153 Cf. Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” 258.

154 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 661.

155 Freedom *for* the other instead of freedom *from* the other becomes identical with love (Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 9.).

156 Cf. Fernández Castela, “Antropología teológica,” 259.

abstraction ready to be subdued by human power, substitutes God who has no place whatsoever in this system. Nevertheless, this abstraction is possible only due to a misconception of God: It is not the Trinitarian God, the God Mystery, the God Creator of the All, of the space and the time, but rather an *ens summum*, a theoretical concept within the space and time, whose power gradually diminishes and sooner or later disappears with the advance of sciences and knowledge. This *God of Gaps* is a God of “*The Four Horsemen*”, of Harari and other heralds of new atheism. The Christian God is not the God of Spinoza and Hegel, nor the God of Eastern spirituality and so many people of today. He is not Mother Nature encapsulating it all, nor the God of theists and Plato, nor the God of not a negligent number of Christians who understand Him only as a transcendental power that sets in motion the things and “will come again one day to judge people”, however, in between absent from the “real life”. The Christian God is not a competing explanation of the world’s origins (Chap. 3.5), nor an object among other objects in space and time (Chap. 3.2), He is the Almighty God of Love who revealed Himself in his Son, who, in turn, testified through his own life about his *hyper* character. It is unfortunate to formulate the problem – as is done by many since the Enlightenment – as a fight between science and religion, as Lewis¹⁵⁷ aptly pointed out:

“It is not the great Scientist who feel most sure that the object, stripped of its qualitative properties and reduced to mere quantity, is wholly real. Little scientists, and little unscientific followers of science, may think so. The great minds know very well that the object, so treated, is an artificial abstraction, that something of its reality has been lost.”

The God of the Chosen People and Jesus, of Apostles and the Church, is omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, omniscient, and benevolent, God who cannot be described by “a cause and an effect” relation, God who is present in everything and still transcendent, God of paradoxes. The following chapter addressed one of such puzzles – the existence of evil and its presence in the world.

The relationship among humans – created in the image of their Creator, thus constitutively relational – and among nations, can inspire itself in the divine Trinitarian model that teaches us that “*the openness does not mean loss of individual identity but profound interpenetration*” (CV 54). Technologies can be most useful as long as they contribute to the realization of the communion to which the Creator invited all the people.

157 Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 38.

4 One Lord, Jesus Christ or “an Autonomous and Independent Human”

4.1 Preface

The previous chapter discussed the differences between two different conceptions of God. The consequences are visible in the conceptualizations of humans and their relationship with Him.

Kant responded to the question “*Was ist die Aufklärung?*” about the nature of the Enlightenment in the Foreword B of his famous Critic¹⁵⁸ by introducing two notions, namely *reason* and *human freedom*. The reason shall serve as a tool to free oneself from the thousand-year-lasting slavery of a human (=immaturity) to achieve freedom. A part of this emancipation shall be freedom from Nature through the victorious progress of sciences. F. Nietzsche – completing the work of Kant and Hegel – discarded the classical concepts of metaphysics, knowledge and moral, and announced the death of the God of the old metaphysics. On one side, it is a statement of historical reality, on the other side, a programmatic challenge to accomplish: Humans can be free only through their emancipation from the old morale and God who imposes it. Today again, many a techno-optimist¹⁵⁹ see the possibility to fulfil this historical task of humankind to achieve freedom by employing new technologies. This freedom is very different from one treated in Chap. 3.6. It is nowadays frequently understood as freedom of a real choice – not only not impeded by some “taboos” or authorities but as a choice of a virtually infinite number of possibilities thanks to technology. Many believe that it is only a matter of time when technology saves the world from all the pain and suffering, or at least, significantly reduces it. As a result, every “theory of sin” or redemption is redundant.

However, is the gap between human’s dreams and reality, between an ideal and the facticity, between intentions and their realizations only a problem of finding a technical solution? Is *amortality* on this earth an answer and fulfilment of the old dreams of humankind? What price shall be paid, and what costs are yet appropriate? What role – if any – plays human dignity? These interrogatives remind us that a human is not a simple element or a molecule of a social organism. They point out the autonomy and a social character of humans and their transcendent dignity (Cf. CA 13).

The following lines shall introduce the Christian answer to the problem of human greatness and destiny. The role of Jesus for human history is essential for the right understanding of human destiny: “*The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light*” (GS 22). The Father is the Creator (Chap. 3), who creates a human in the image of His Son. The eternal Logos takes flesh and becomes a man; he elevates the fallen human nature and renews the Father's invitation for humankind to participate in His life. Jesus is truly human, and truly God and, therefore, every human vocation is a Christian vocation. Thanks to the Holy Spirit,

158 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft: Vollständige Ausgabe nach der zweiten, hin und wieder verbesserten Auflage 1787 vermehrt um die Vorrede zur ersten Auflage 1781* (Köln: Anaconda, 2009).

159 Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*.

a human can participate in the new life of Christ, although not in its plenitude as the final consummation is yet to come.

4.2 The Only-begotten Son of God, Born of the Father

There are several ways of access to the person of Jesus. For centuries, the “standard” source of information were gospels and the NT in general. However, in the last two centuries emerged historical, social, archaeological (and other) sciences, each with a proper methodology. From the scientific point of view, it became soon popular to make a difference between the Jesus of the History¹⁶⁰ (= provable by science), the historical Jesus (= one who lived in Palestine in the 1st century; a broader concept than Jesus of the History) and the Christ of Faith¹⁶¹. Nevertheless, for Christology and faith as such, it is of utmost importance to articulate the continuity between the history of Jesus (given by sciences) and its dogmatic interpretations.¹⁶²

The first step in this undertaking requires a proper understanding of the histories the NT offers. The narrated histories are neither invented nor false; nevertheless, nor a historical account of the events in the modern sense. It is instead kerygmatic history, a narration with theological intentions and objectives. Moreover, following the teaching of Leontius of Byzantine, the eternal Son of God, Jesus, who assumed the complete human nature, continued to be the same after the Incarnation, the true man and the true God. The Jesus of History is identical to the Christ of Faith.

Therefore, it is not satisfactory to address only the life of Jesus on the Earth, nor merely his divine origin for accurate comprehension of Jesus. It is necessary to allow for a combination of both the ontological and the historical axis, and, additionally, to supplement them by the genesis of Christology. The identity of Christ can be addressed either by philosophical concepts (ontology) or biblical images and categories (kerygma). While the pure ontology without history risks falling into monophysitism, the pure history without ontology could finish in Nestorianism, and neither is understandable without considering how the Christological faith developed.¹⁶³ In the first years of Christianity, in its genesis, the common expressive modes and motives were of Jewish origin. The young Church used the Jewish OT-traditions to interpret the unique experience of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The historical (or dynamical) axis refers to the activity of Jesus, i.e., to his words and deeds. The NT offers a paradigmatic example that combines narrative texts with ontological affirmations: typically, the gospels begin with some ontological claim (e.g., Mk 1: “*the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*”) and then continue with the narrative part. In the end, both the narration and the ontology intertwine one with another.

First, the following paragraph will address the ontological axis – the most significant Christological aspects of the development of dogmas in the first seven ecumenical councils, and then Chap. 4.7 (especially paragraph the “Messiah”) will deal with the historical axis.

160 John Meier, “Conceptos Básicos: El Jesús Real y El Jesús Histórico,” in *Un Judio Marginal* (Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1998), 47–64.

161 Walter Kasper and Severiano Talavera Tovar, *Jesús, El Cristo* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1976).

162 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 280.

163 Cf. *ibid.*, 282.

The history of dogmas describes best the development of the Christian comprehension of the being of Jesus, despite not accounting for the process (the dynamics) of his *becoming*. The young Christianity had to break off from the moulds of Judaism to express itself freely. The NT leaves it clear that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Lord. Then, the principal challenge is the difference between the Jewish and Christian understanding of monotheism. The nascent Church saves the monotheism; however, breaks the Jewish comprehension in favour of the Trinitarian monotheism declaring faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The dogmatic specifications of the formulation came only gradually in time. Frequently they were a reflected response to some heretical tendency. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, i.e., before the First Council of Nicaea, came to light Docetism¹⁶⁴, Marcionism¹⁶⁵, Gnosticism¹⁶⁶, patripassianism¹⁶⁷, adoptionism¹⁶⁸ (Pablo de Samosata) as the principal heretical movements.

To secure a return to the religious unity of the Empire, the emperor Constantine summoned in 325 the Council of Nicaea (DH 125). The principal issue was the posture of Arius, who defended radical subordinationism of the Son, negating His equality with the Father. The point of the departure was his effort to reconcile the strict monotheism (Dt 6:4), the kerygma (Mt 28:29), the status of the Son (Rm 1:3) and His origin (Wis 7:25; Pro 8:22), that is, how to combine the God's absolute sovereignty and transcendence, and His revelation in the immanent history. Inspired by the subordinationsm of Origen, middle Platonism and exegesis of the school of Antioquia (a literal interpretation of the Scriptures), Arius affirmed that the Son was a creature rewarded by the Father (Cf. Heb 1:4; Hch 2:36; Col 1:15) for his merits with the Godship. Consequently, even though he did not deny the Trinity, the only "real", authentic God without origin was the Father. The Council of Nicaea responded decisively by formulating the Creed that declared the full divinity (God from God, true God from true God, begotten and not made) of the Son of the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father. The Trinitarian dogma of Nicaea represents the resolute defence of the biblical Trinitarian message against the Neo-Platonic misinterpretations¹⁶⁹. Despite the "Hellenized" language, it refused unquestionably "Hellenized" philosophical concepts of Christianity¹⁷⁰. Christian East and West interpreted the polysemic expression *homoousios*¹⁷¹ distinctly. Whereas the eastern theologians understood *hypostasis* (a substance of the individual subject, a person) as *prosopon*, the West took for granted a meaning of the common substrate for all beings of the same category. Consequently, the occidental theology was accused by its oriental

164 Docetism affirmed that the body of Christ was not human but either a phantasm or made of real but celestial substance.

165 Marcionism was a dualist belief system that originated in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope in Rome affirming that God of the OT was different from the one of the NT, that is, it negated the unity of the salvation.

166 Gnosticism was probably the most dangerous heterodoxy in the history of Christianity. It affirmed that God is a pure spirit without matter, and therefore, everything material is evil. Jesus is only a kind of demiurge, a god responsible for the creation of the material world. The objective of people is to attain the Wisdom that allows the return to a spiritual state.

167 Patripassianism is a Christian heterodoxy affirming that there is no difference between the Father and the Son, and consequently, the person who suffered at the Cross was the Father himself.

168 Adoptionism denies the Incarnation while the eternal Logos cannot unite Himself with a human body. Jesus was a man who became (ontologically) God after receiving the Holy Spirit in the Baptism.

169 Cf. Pérez, "El Misterio de Dios," 133.

170 Cf. *ibid.*, 137.

171 The term *ousia* can represent both an individual substance of the object (*hypostasis*) and an essence common to all beings of the same art.

colleagues of modalism or Adoptionism, whereas the reproaches in the opposite direction concentrated on the alleged subordinationism or tritheism.

Within less than 60 years, the Church summoned another council to Constantinople (381) to finally settle the Arian question, the status of the humanity of Jesus Christ, and the role of the Holy Spirit; the questions that the Council of Nicaea did not address. First, the Council condemned the teaching of Marcion of Sinope about the double deity affirming the unity of the economy of salvation and the Scriptures. Secondly, the Council condemned the teaching of Apollinaris of Laodicea, who in opposition to Arianism adopted Sabellianism. He argued that Christ, having accomplished his mission on the Earth, returned to the Heavens, “reincorporated” to the Trinity and left everything of his humanity behind. Apollinaris tried to solve the question of the “unity of the person of Christ” granting both his divinity and humanity. The divine Logos was to occupy the human body leaving it thus without free will. There was only one nature of the Verb, the divine one.¹⁷² This position denied, in consequence, an authentic Incarnation. In addition to the condemnation of this position, the Council added references to the events from Jesus’s life, such as his incarnation, birth, crucifixion, and resurrection. Third, the Council declared the holiness of the Spirit¹⁷³ as a property of his very being. He belongs to a divine sphere, to the same category as God; he is the one who sanctifies. He proceeds from the Father (*ekporeutai*, Cf. Jn 15:26) but is not created or made. The Council Fathers did not express the divinity of the Holy Spirit in ontological categories but through a Jewish concept of Glory (which traditionally belonged only to God).

In the following, the Council of Ephesus addressed the question of the hypostatic unity, or unity of the person, as Nestorius claimed that both natures of the Christ were joined not in one person (*hypostasis*) but rather by the will. As a response, the Council declared the motherly status of Mary. She is *Theotókos*, the Mother of God – which was made possible by introducing the *communicatio idiomatum*¹⁷⁴. The identity of Jesus is decisively determined by his being the eternal Son of God, and, at the same time, the son of Mary. *Theotókos* does not mean that Mary is the cause of his divinity, but rather the Mother of Jesus, who is God. Her maternity is closely linked with the true unity of both natures a person of Christ.

172 In Greek formulated as “*mía physis tou logou sesarkomene*”.

173 With the determinate article, the Council of Constantinople left clear its intention to declare the Holy Spirit a person (of the Trinity). The Fathers used the same logic for other definition articles as well to avoid the analogous misconceptions to the *homoousios* of the previous Council (Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 144.) – e.g., the use of the expression “Lord” or “glory” for a description of properties characteristically attributed to God.

174 Communication of the properties is a Christological concept about the interaction of deity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ defined by the Council of Ephesus. Because of the unity of the person of Christ, his human and divine attributes and experiences might accurately refer to his other nature. Therefore, it might be spoken of as “the suffering of God”.

Probably, the single most important¹⁷⁵ Council of Chalcedon (451) polishes the nomenclature used. It distinguished between the properties of two natures and defended the unity of the person of Christ. Furthermore, the Council Fathers established a clear criterion for the integrity of the two natures of Jesus:¹⁷⁶ Each must preserve its characteristic properties. The Council responded to *monophysitism* (Jesus would have only one nature, the divine) of Eutiques by affirming two natures (*physis*) in one person (*hypostasis* or *prosopon*). The *hypostasis* is thus composed of two *physis* “without confusion, without change, without separation, without division”.

The II Council of Constantinople (553) tackled the mode of the said unity of the person of Jesus. Additionally, the language used for describing the Trinity and for the unity of the person of Christ. The human nature (*physis*) of Christ exists in the divine person (*hypostasis*), that is, the human nature of Christ does not exist in a stand-alone human person but rather in a divine person (*enhypostasis*), which means that the human nature of Christ is *ahypostatic*. The humanity of Christ in the hypostatic union with the Logos is potentiated to its maximum. It shows thus the very possibilities of natural dynamism of the creation with grace.¹⁷⁷

The III Council of Constantinople (680) solved the question of the will (and “energies”) in the person of Christ, giving thus full integrity of his human nature without competing with the divine one. To confront *Monothelism* (“one will”), Maximus the Confessor links the will of Christ to the *physis*, thence Christ has two wills, the divine and human, which are both impeccably oriented toward the same objective, the salvation of humanity.

The testimony of the NT indicates that the incarnation dynamics – *teleiosis* – does not include merely the first moments but rather the entire life of Jesus, that is to say, the process of “becoming Christ”. The dynamics – which cannot be expressed within the pure ontological axis – is to be seen in many texts, e.g., Phil 2 narrates the story of Jesus, his obedience, his humiliation, and free will; or along the same lines, Rm 5 recounts the story of disobedient Adam and obedient Christ. These narrations expand the possibilities of the ontological descriptions of an identity. The identity is necessarily co-determined by personal history. The same applies to Jesus Christ as his personal history inevitably and constitutively forms part of his identity.

4.3 Who Came for us Men and for our Salvation

The entire life of Jesus is considered holy and salvific after the legitimization and confirmation of his mission by the glorious resurrection. The eternal divine Verb came to the world and became flesh. Despite being a true man with human limitations, his humanity is singular:¹⁷⁸ Jesus reveals

¹⁷⁵ Although no one can challenge the unique importance of the Council of Chalcedony, the omission of any of the first seven ecumenical councils would mean severe deficits in the understanding of dogmatic expressions of God. That the danger is not only “historic” (= long ago in the past) but actual as well, is attested by the emergence of Nestorianism in the modern era, strictly distinguishing the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith. The Incarnation affects human nature, revealing thus their vocation (anthropology); furthermore, two natures and two wills of Jesus place him in a particular position of a unique mediator between God and humans (soteriology) (Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 359.)

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 354.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 356.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 364.

and authentically manifests the true face of God; his humanity develops through obedience during his life towards perfection; he shows us the true potential of a human that totally relies on God (Cf. GS 22).

Jesus, the Saviour

There are two distinct positions when it comes to interpreting the mission of Jesus in the world. Whereas for Thomas Aquinas, the principal reason for the coming of Jesus to Earth was saving the world from sin; for Duns Scotus, his arrival would have happened in each case as the Incarnation includes salvation without reducing to it. Accordingly, the salvific mission of Jesus is not only his death but his whole life, including all his words and deeds. Indeed, it has both connotations. In the OT, the expression "salvation" means either "liberation from" (slavery) or "expiation" (the rites such as an expiatory scapegoat shall demonstrate the inadequacy of human fight against sin and the necessity of God's intervention). The NT shifts its meaning: It is still the redemption from sin and death (negative meaning, e.g., 1Cor 15:55-57), but it also includes an invitation to enter a new relationship with God (positive meaning, e.g., peace with God, Cf. Rm 5:1; new life in Christ, Cf. Rm 6). The death and resurrection of Christ set the entire process already in motion: We are already at peace with God (Rm 5:1); nevertheless, its final consummation is yet to come. Salvation is a Trinitarian action: The God Father devised the plan, the Son realized it, and we can participate in it thanks to the Holy Spirit. In the person of Jesus, both approaches to the description of salvation are united,¹⁷⁹ that is, descendent – it comes from God¹⁸⁰ (Cf. 2Cor 5:18) and ascendant – Jesus is a man and an authentic mediator (Cf. 1Tim 2:5-6; Heb 8:6;9:15) who saves us through his sacrifice. In his person, true man and true God are united. The ontological axis emphasizes the category of *logos-sarx*; mostly the "positive" aspect of salvation (*for*). In other words, Christ reveals to us the face of the Father and realizes his salvific plan. He is the only one who knows the Father (Mt 11:27), defeats sin and death through his sacrifice securing to us thus the new life of a new creation (2Cor 5:7, Gal 6:15). Christ is the justice of God. We are justified and capable of good deeds only thanks to him (Cf. Gal 5:6). He reconciles us with the Father (2Cor 5,18) to live a new relationship with him. By contrast, the historical axis highlights the category of the *logos-Anthropos*, stressing thus the humanity of Jesus. He is the one that sacrificed himself on our behalf to save us from our sins, to stop the spiral of sin. The expiation takes away from sinners the consequences of their sins and offers to all people the authentic pardon and forgiveness of God.

The universality of Salvation

The affirmation about the universality of salvation in Christ can sound odd in today's plural world. It seems natural and "authentic" to allow for several different lifeways that somehow equally lead to salvation.¹⁸¹ The "pluralists" search for the possibility of its formulating without the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. They claim that all religions offer an equally valid way to

179 Cf. *ibid.*, 369.

180 Furthermore (Cf. *ibid.*, 370.), Christ is the justice of God that justifies humans (1Cor 1:20), reconciles them with God (2Cor 5:18), reveals his Father (1Tim 2:4), and illuminates the nations (Lk 2:32)

181 Jacques Dupuis, *Hacia una teología cristiana del pluralismo religioso* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2000).

salvation of God, who would be its sole guarantor. Jesus would consequently be merely one of the “great figures” or “great leaders” of the world, but nothing more; assuredly not a unique and universal saviour of the world.¹⁸² It might seem that even the CVII point into this direction with an affirmation that “seeds of truth” are present in all religions and cultures. However, this would be a misinterpretation as the Council self affirms the plenitude of the revelation in Jesus Christ (DV 2;4), who is the only mediator (Cf. 1Tim 2,5). Also the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*¹⁸³ discarded the pluralist theology. The key to the understanding of the role of Jesus is the following identity (See Chap. 4.2 and 4.7): If He is the prophesied Messiah, the only Son of God, then he is indeed the only one who intimately knows the Father and the only authentic mediator who brings us the plenitude of salvation.¹⁸⁴ Rejecting its universality in Christ and by Christ means inevitably denying his being God. Although it was, indeed, mediated only thanks to the salvific action of Christ, his mediation need not be within the visible Church (Cf. GS 22) in all circumstances.¹⁸⁵ Each person received already at the moment of creation divine grace that links her to the Eastern events.¹⁸⁶ Jesus Christ as true God and true human died for everyone (Cf. Rm 8,32), even for those who did not know his gospel, who could not come to know his Church or could not with clear conscience enter (or remain) in Her. Furthermore, the notion of *ecclesia ab Abel* (Cf. LG I,2) permits including the “alternative paths” to salvation.¹⁸⁷ Christ redeemed human nature, elevated it to a new dignity, and renewed God’s invitation for a human to participate in His divine life with Him. Therefore, all and every human vocation is a Christian one (Cf. LG 16).

4.4 Incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary

The maternity of Mary is considered a fundamental principle and a normative dogma of catholic theology. It is, therefore, the principle, the essence, and the prototype of the Church. Mary exemplifies a human who entirely collaborates with God on salvation. One of the key exegetic principles, the interpretation of the given text in the dialogue with Scripture in its entirety (Cf. DV12c), gains on importance particularly with “Marian texts”:¹⁸⁸ The concepts and categories concerning Mary use the rich typological tradition and frequently cannot and shall not be understood literally. Four principal images often describe the figure of Mary: A spouse, a mother, a virgin, and a daughter of Zion.¹⁸⁹ These figures and motives, originally taken from the OT, help to understand the daughter of Zion as a figure of Israel, a type of Mary and the Church.¹⁹⁰ Chap. 4.1 explained the connections of the Marian dogma with other areas of theology. They will serve

182 Bernard Sesboüé, “Jesucristo El Único Mediador, I-II,” *Salamanca* (1990).

183 Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe, *Declaración Dominus Iesus. Sobre La Unicidad y La Universalidad Salvífica de Jesucristo y de La Iglesia*, 2017.

184 Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, “Jesucristo, Mediador y Plenitud de Toda La Revelación,” in *Revelación, Tradición y Escritura: A Los Cincuenta Años de La “Dei Verbum”* (Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2017), 80–118.

185 Francisco Javier de la Torre Díaz, *Derribar las fronteras. Ética mundial y diálogo religioso* (Madrid: Desclée de Brower - Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2004).

186 Cf. Santiago Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 477.

187 Cf. *ibid.*

188 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 379.

189 The prophets (e.g., Hosea, Jeremiah) often speak about Israel as an infidel spouse of Yahweh, or about a daughter of Zion with similar connotation. Despite her infidelity, Yahweh takes her as His spouse, and she becomes the Mother of nations, which was only possible through infinite patience and mercy of God.

190 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 380.

now as a categorizing factor for two couples of Marian concepts: Whereas very old¹⁹¹ notions of maternity (*Theotókos*, DH 251) and virginity (DH 151) are rather Christological¹⁹², the “modern” categories of Immaculate Conception (DH 2803) and Assumption (DH 3903) have overtly anthropological¹⁹³ connotations.

The Scripture (Mt, Lk) and Tradition well attest the virginal maternity¹⁹⁴. Since the 2nd century, it has served as a defence of the double nature of Christ (See Chap. 4.2), namely his humanity (against Docetism, Gnosticism, Monophysitism, Monoenergism, Monothelitism) and his divinity (against Adoptionism, Nestorianism). Mary is not the origin of the divinity of Jesus; nevertheless, she is the condition of the possibility of the unity of his both natures. This double provenance of Christ echoed in double *ek*¹⁹⁵ of the Council of Chalcedony (451). The Mother of God is a *figure* (model) of the Church in the order of faith, love, and the perfect union with Christ (Cf. LG 63). By her faith and obedience, she gave the world the Son of God. The primary meaning of virginal maternity is her fidelity and total submission to God. These made possible the realization of the divine plan that would not be possible without God’s grace. The virginal maternity resonates with the maternity of the Church as well (LG 64):¹⁹⁶ She can also “produce” new “children of God” only by total obedience and fidelity to God by His grace.

The action of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation is described as the *second creation*. The Holy Spirit creates a new human nature destined for the Logos – the moment of the assumption is considered the originating moment of the new humanity¹⁹⁷ in the inseparable union of Logos and human nature. The creation of humanity at the time of the assumption (= Incarnation) has fundamental consequences for the understanding of Christian faith: It is not possible to consider any type of dualism, nor some abstract God of deism without engagement in the world: Apart from his transcendence, God has definitely a personal history. The uniqueness of Jesus (the Son of God) and the fidelity to his promise of universal salvation that includes an entire person (inclusive of a body) explain the basic logic behind the two modern Marian dogmas, i.e., the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The former says that Jesus Christ redeemed his Mother to enter the world correspondingly to his holy nature. The latter only confirm the coherency of the promise of life with God after death. In this case, Mary, preserved from sin, was

191 Mary was defined as the Mother of God – *Theotókos* – already in 431 by the Council of Ephesus. Mary – *Always Virgin* – was approved by the II Council of Constantinople in 553 (Michael O’Carroll, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000).).

192 The maternity is connected to the question of Jesus’s origins, virginity points towards the unique provenance of Jesus.

193 In the Assumption, Mary is introduced as a prototype of a believer, and the Immaculate Conceptions indicates the meaning, the potentiality, and the empowerment of a human being by God’s grace.

194 Virginal maternity is a sign of God’s grace acting in a human so that a result can be fruitful even though humanly impossible. Virginity is a presumption and, at the same time, a consequence of the Incarnation. It shows the special dignity of Jesus and the action of the Holy Spirit. Perpetual virginity suggests the total dedication of Mary to God, a complete surrender of her life to the mission.

195 Christ proceeds *from* (*ex*) both *the* Holy Spirit and Mary.

196 Cf. Urribari Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 383.

197 Gregory of Nazianzus claimed that to redeem a human in the totality of his body, soul and spirit, Jesus Christ assumed all the elements of human nature. Otherwise, a human would not have been saved (Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Great Christian Thinkers: From the Early Church Through the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 54.).

assumed to heaven.¹⁹⁸ She serves then, not only as a model for each faithful and typologically represents the Church, but also demonstrates the fulfilment of the promises.

4.5 He Was Crucified; He Suffered and Was Buried

The topic of death (and resurrection) of Jesus is pivotal for understanding Christianity;¹⁹⁹ however, it is often misunderstood both in its causes and effects.

As for the causes of the death of Jesus, a brief review of the importance of the role of the Temple is useful. For Judaism in the times of Jesus, the Temple was crucial. After the painful experience of the Exile in the 6th-century b. C., the sacrifices in the Temple were considered essential for the survival of the nation. The entire functioning of the Temple was based on a system of purity. That was hardly possible²⁰⁰ without the exchange of money used within the Temple and merchants that provide sacrificial animals. Hence, Jesus expelling the merchants from the yard of the Temple did not only “disturb” a business. It was also a direct attack on the core of Jewish religion, on its cult and, at that times, a prevailing image of God. Moreover, he implicitly alludes again to his Messiahship (See “Messiah” in Chap. 4.7): In the messianic times, according to the prophecies (Cf. Is 56:7; Jer 7:1-11), there shall be no differences between pure and impure, between Israel and other nations, and God shall be a merciful Father who does not differentiate among his children according to a nation or a race. Exercising justice was a condition of the possibility of worshipping God;²⁰¹ however, the Temple system gave precedence to the cult and neglects thus justice. The zeal of Jesus (Cf. Ps 69:10) symbolically rectifies the distorted priorities in the worshipping of God. Even his claim about the destruction and reconstruction of the Temple linked to the said expectation of the messianic times in which everything was consecrated to God (Cf. Zac 14:21) and no Temple needed. The whole activity of Jesus refers to the belief that the messianic times have already arrived and God’s universal justice would reign.

The following paragraph will tackle the capital punishment of Jesus from three different angles, namely:²⁰² Religious, political, and theological. The main reasons for the first were Jesus’s critics of the Temple (as mentioned above) and his messianic pretension that shattered the traditional image of the Messiah and the Jewish expectations. From the Jewish point of view, the tragic end of Jesus suggests the failure of his mission and messianic pretension (Cf. Dt 21:21ff). From the political point of view, the crucifixion was – in line with the applicable Roman law – a sentence destined only for slaves or for persons convicted of sedition, which indicates that Pontius Pilate was indeed convinced about the real danger of Jesus for peace and social tranquillity. *Titulus crucis* attests the sentence, which makes explicit the pretension of Jesus. As for theology, Jesus died as an “abandoned son” and provided important hints about the extent of divine love for humankind. To interpret the death of Jesus as an act of love requires to bear in mind threefold freedom,²⁰³ namely, of people who delivered Jesus (Cf. Mt 27:26), of Jesus who freely and voluntarily gave up his life to complete his mission (Cf. Jn 10:17-18), and of God, who accepted the offer of his Son out of love to humans (Cf. Rom 8:32).

198 Cf. Urbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 386.

199 Martin Hengel, “Hymns and Christology,” *Between Jesus and Paul* (1978): 78–96.

200 Otherwise, the key element of purity would be endangered.

201 Special attention shall be paid to a needy, a stranger and a widow, Cf. Jer 7:1-11.

202 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 117.

203 Cf. *ibid.*

As for the effects of his death, the Last Supper and the interpretation of the gestures and used symbols used by Jesus provide valuable insights. He did not perfectly fulfil a ritual of the Supper according to the Jewish tradition. Instead, he introduced a series of symbolic actions giving them a new special meaning (deeds accompanied by the words). Faithful to his habits, Jesus took the images and figures from the OT and gave them a new meaning through his actions and words. He established a New Covenant as described by two traditions, namely Luke (Lk 2:15-20) and Paul (1Cor 11:23-25) that allude to Jer 31:31, and Mark (Mk 14:22-25) and Matthew (Mt 26:26-29) that refers to Ex 24:28. The former speaks about God who gives the Law to the heart (=internalisation) of His people. The latter mentions the blood spilt as a sign and a seal of the New Covenant.²⁰⁴ His words about the bread and the wine clearly show the salvific interpretation of the Supper. He would surrender himself – as a service to humanity (in line with the poem about the Servant of God, Cf. Is 52:13-53:12; the life of service, Cf. Mk 10:45) – for the salvation of the world from sins. It is not conclusive – though very probable – that Jesus himself understood his death as expiatory (“in favour of”, more associated with the words about the blood²⁰⁵). According to Schürmann, Jesus became only gradually aware that his mission would have a tragic end and that his salvific mission would be stauological. At the beginning of his public activity, Jesus considered his mission as the irruption of the Kingdom of God – demonstrated through miracles, healing, exorcisms, the election of the Twelve, etc. However, over time, he came to understand that the Cross is an indispensable part of his mission (e.g., Mk 12:1-12). His death is not only the consequence of his life but also an inherent part of his mission.²⁰⁶ Therefore, the Supper condenses and interprets the life of Jesus as a life of commitment and absolute obedience to the Father, a life of service (Cf. Mk 10:45) that brings the eschatological salvation of God to people.

4.6 And He Rose Again

The Cross is not only a place of the maximal revelation of God but also the context of the real transformation of the world.²⁰⁷ Both the mission of the Holy Spirit and the Church can be traced back to the Easter events. The resurrection of Christ is an action that a) accredits his messianic and prophetic pretension, and legitimates the use of Christological titles (See Chap. 4.7); b) constitutes Jesus as the Son of God with the power (Cf. Rm 1) at the right hand of God (Cf. Ps 110) – Jesus became in his human nature what he always had been – true God from true God; c) enables interpretation of the entire Scriptures (the resurrection is a decisive hermeneutic moment) and the past events; d) manifests who Jesus always had been, the Son of God, that is, the resurrection is a kind of epiphany.

It is also the ultimate consequence of the “historical dimension” (See Chap. 4.2). From now on, it is much easier to understand who Jesus really was (ontological axis). Jesus is alive, however, in a different manner than before. The Resurrected is the same person as Jesus, now proclaimed the Lord. He is sitting at the right hand of God and is the Son resurrected by the Father.²⁰⁸ His

204 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 293.

205 Cf. *ibid.*, 295.

206 Heinz Schürmann and Klaus Scholtissek, *Destino de Jesús: Su Vida y Su Muerte* (Salamanca: Sigueme, 2003).

207 Cf. Pérez, “El Misterio de Dios,” 121.

208 In fact, there are two traditions, the majoritarian speaks about God resurrecting Jesus from the dead; and the Gospel of John proclaiming Jesus who rose himself to life.

filiation, however, is not an adoption – he is the pre-existent Son from eternity. Jesus is now the Lord, the Son of God, the sovereign of history, the eschatological sovereign who defeated the Death, the Sin, and the Adversary.

The NT provides a threefold testimony, namely: hymns and confessions, narratives, and the combination of the former two.

Thy hymns use both “resurrection” and “exaltation” (John uses the expression “glorification”; Heb 2:10 uses *teleiosis*, the “consummation”) for speaking about the Easter events. The confessions related originally to baptism, (Cf. e.g., Act 10:40) or experience of Jesus exalted as the Lord (Cf. e.g., Phil 2:5-11; Rm 10:9) highlighting the adversary actions of humans and the salvific action of God.²⁰⁹

The narrative tradition talks about the empty tomb and appearances of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus is not a reanimation of a cadaver but a complete transformation of the humanity of Christ. It is an anticipation of the plenitude of eschatological times. The appearances with the particular attention to the details try to shed some light on this singular event in history: The Resurrected eats and walks through the closed door, but his friends frequently do not recognise him. That demonstrates his profound transformation: he is not without the body; however, his body is not anymore subject to physical laws.

1Cor 15:3-8 combines the narration and the confessions of faith. Paul refers to the older tradition when alluding to the kerygma (Cf. 1Cor 15:3-4). It explains the reason and consequences of the death of Jesus and describes both the burial and the resurrection. Paul confirms in theological language the Resurrection of Christ not only by personal testimony but of many others (Cf. 1Cor 15: 5-8).

With the resurrection of Jesus arrived a new *aeon*; it means the fulfilment of all the promises of God in the person of Jesus. He resurrected and is with the Father; however, the rest of humanity must wait – the Kingdom has the double character, it is already here (Lk 17:20), but not in its plenitude (Lk 11:2; Mt 6:10); “already” and “not yet” at the same time. The resurrection legitimates and confirms Jesus and his pretension:²¹⁰ His entire life is charged with the new meaning. All his deeds, gestures, sayings, and teachings are sanctified by God. For the first community, the resurrection means a shift in the preaching as well. Whereas Jesus revealed his Father, preached, and announced the Kingdom of Heaven, the community proclaims his death and resurrection.

4.7 Ascended to the Heaven, the Right Hand of the Father

The old Christian hymns (the first hymns exist already around a year 40²¹¹) unite the Christology of ascent (Cf. 1Cor 15:3ff) and descent (e.g., Cf. Jn 1:1-18; Phil 2:6-11) and provides us thus with the enormous density of information of the events after Jesus’s death and resurrection. The hymns treat the three most significant Christological titles, the Son of God, Messiah, and the Lord, providing the first testimony of the faith of the primitive community. They articulate essential

209 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 302.

210 Cf. *ibid.*, 310–311.

211 Hengel, “Hymns and Christology.”

factors of Christology that help us understand the meaning and the identity of Christ. Two expressions, namely “resurrection” and “exaltation” are used as complements; the former refers to the past (change from the state: death → life), the latter (preferred in Gospel by John) indicates the new reality of Jesus’s life. This exaltation understood as consummation (Heb 2,10) shows the new reality of Jesus Christ. Indeed, there is no uncertainty concerning his divine origin and status, no questions about the difference between Jesus and Christ. They serve additionally as a living example of *lex orandi, lex credenti*, as they clearly demonstrate the liturgical expression of the believed content of faith. They are a chanted dogmas with double objective, namely praise and worship to the Lord and a narrative confession of the work of Christ. Naturally, Easter is the moment by which the whole life of Jesus and his words and deeds become a new meaning and is thus a primary object of Christology. However, they do not cease with the Easter events but rather seek eschatological and protological consequences. The first Christians read Ps 110 applied to Christ: He sits at the Right Hand of God, which means that He has the same dignity, the same rank, and the same power. Following the Jewish tradition, who has control over the End, has control over the Origins, too.

In the following, we will have a look at the most significant Christological titles. Jesus understood his task of a Messiah from the figure of the *son of man* that resonated with his lordship and dominion. He interprets his messiahship using the concept of the *Servant of Yahweh* as well. According to Hengel, the most striking example with an extensive usage by the Christian is the messianic figure of Ps 110,1.

To address the entire personality of Jesus requires to employ three dimensions of the investigation (See Chap. 4.2). The Christological titles, treated in the following, express both the identity of Jesus Christ and his deeds. The promises, concepts, and figures from the OT inspired the said titles. Jesus Christ is not only the fulfilment of all promises of God and the Messiah who fully possesses the Holy Spirit to bestow that gift upon all humankind. He is also the correction and overcoming of some of the Jewish imaginations and perspectives. The plurality of the titles beautifully expresses the mystery of Christ that cannot be encompassed by a single definition – each of them reveals a part of the reality. However, not even the sum of all titles can contain the fullness of his identity.

Messiah

The word “messiah” and its transcripts are frequent in the OT and the NT. Their authors present Jesus as a fulfilment of all of the promises of the OT, including those of a messiah.²¹² In the times of Jesus, different currents of Jews had different²¹³ expectations of a messiah, however, speaking generally, he should be related with the house of David (e.g., Ps. 17:21), and anointed by God; he was supposed to congregate Israel, implant law and justice, bring new well-being to the chosen people and Kingdom of God (e.g., Ps. 17:3).²¹⁴

212 Jesus is the fulfilment of the promise of the royal messiah and the offspring of David (Cf. 2Sam 7:14; Is 7:14), He is the expected messiah anointed with the Spirit (Cf. Is 61:1-2).

213 Different currents of Judaism had various forms of expectations of the future messiah: he should be the ultimate interpret of the Law, the high priest, a prophet, a royal messiah.

214 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 327.

The two following tasks address the question of Messiahship, namely the pretension of Jesus himself and the confession of the community. The latter is historically well-proven as we witness countless notions about Christ, a translation of the “Messiah” into Greek in the NT. It was so common that it soon became a part of Jesus’s name. Not only pivotal passages in the gospels and the letters of Paul employ this title, but also the state authorities confirm through *titulus crucis* what was generally believed of Jesus by his contemporaries, be it adversaries or supporters.

The messianic pretension of Jesus is closely related to the four key areas: a) His preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven, b) the relation of Jesus with John the Baptist, c) the miracles, and d) relations with “special” groups.

Jesus is known to speak a lot about the Kingdom (Mk 1:14-15; Lk 4:43-44; Mt 4:17), though he never explicitly said what he meant by that. For proper comprehension of the notion of *Kingdom*, it is necessary to consider a historical context, Jewish expectations, and circumstances of his activity (healing, meals, the pardon of sins, calling the disciples, the rupture with the traditions, etc.). The figure of a king, *malek*, is very common in the OT; however, the Kingdom of God, *malkut Yahweh*, appears only once²¹⁵ (Cf. Wis 10:10). The concept of the Kingdom of God is very infrequent and, in comparison to other categories, marginal. Jesus, inspired by Psalms and DtIs, elaborated his vision of the Kingdom of Heaven. It evokes the sovereign ruling of God over Israel. Due to the Exile in the 6th-century b. C., the hopes and expectations gained increasingly eschatological and even apocalyptic dimensions. Israel did not leave the faith in God and hope for salvation; however, it was displaced into the future and often associated with a figure of a special person, the anointed one, the messiah of God, who would save the people of Israel. The Kingdom preached by Jesus demonstrates its future character precisely by the allusions to the messianic times with consequences for the oppressed, the poor, and the marginalized in general. Furthermore, Jesus's faith and hope in the future consummation of the Kingdom sheds light onto his words and actuation during his mission, and, particularly, at the Last Supper. Even though Jesus spoke about the full consummation of the Kingdom in the future (Cf. Lk 11:2; Mt 6:10), his preaching and practice also testified about an immediate irruption of the Kingdom (Cf. Mk 1:15; Lk 17:20) that was established by his very ministry.²¹⁶

Jesus had, doubtless, an intensive, though only a short, relationship with John the Baptist. His answer to the question of John's disciples, whether he is the expected person (Cf. Mt 11:2-6; Lk 7:18-23), is considered *logion*, that is, the authentic word of Jesus:²¹⁷ He uses the expressions and figures of the OT and changes their meaning for his purposes, even though he sticks to the symbolic language without explicitly answering the original question. In this case, inspired by the prophet Isaiah (describing eschatological times when God comes to save His people), he alludes towards his healing actions, commonly reserved for eschatological times. However, the whole vision of Jesus was not apocalyptic, but rather full of tenderness and love, that is, despite using the figures of the OT, Jesus rectified and amended them.

The miracles of Jesus shall be interpreted in a very similar light as his answer to John: Jesus again makes a significant shift of meaning – the Kingdom of God is not to be expected in the future, but

215 Cf. *ibid.*, 316.

216 “*The Kingdom of God is among you*”, Lk 17:21.

217 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 314.

it has already come. Jesus accredits his words and pretension with four kinds of miracles – exorcisms, healing, resurrections, and “miracles of nature”. He gave the special meaning to the exorcisms he performed – it is the sign that the Kingdom of God has already arrived (Cf. Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20). The sickness was deemed in the old Israel a sign of evil spirits and sins. Therefore, any healing had not only a physical but also a spiritual dimension. By healing, the sin typically disappeared, demons and evil spirits were expelled, and integral sanity (physical, mental, psychical, social, spiritual) recovered. In a nutshell, the actuation of Jesus represents the arrival of the sovereignty of Yahweh with the eschatological triumph over the three principal enemies, namely the Death, the Sin, and the Adversary.

The paragraph “Son of God” will later address the special relationship of Jesus with God, but even a quick peek at his relationship with Torah unveils yet another particularity of Jesus. His free interpretation of the Law of Moises (“*you have heard...but I tell you*”, Cf. Mt 5:21-48) collides with the religious authorities as it is a clear sign of claiming a more-than-a-human authority.²¹⁸

Studying the mission of Jesus cannot circumvent his associating with several highly ostracized groups, that at his times, such as tax collectors, publicans, beggars, prostitutes, and all other types of public sinners. Jesus not only did not interrupt the contact with them but also ate with them at several banquets. It is yet another show of his mercy and a sign of the messianic times announced by prophets referring themselves precisely to the equality of people at that divine time, and spectacular banquets for all.

Yet there are more ways how Jesus addressed himself, e.g., “*son of man*” inspired by Dn 7:14. The celestial son of man was linked to a “group of saints”²¹⁹: Within the historical context and Jewish expectation of the epoch, Jesus gathered the Twelve as a symbolical beginning of the restoration of Israel. However, as mentioned before, He speaks no more about the final judgment, about the terrible future to come, but associates himself rather with service and suffering (Cf. Mk 8:31; Mk 10:45 inspired by Servant of Yahweh, Cf. Is 52:13-53:12). And through this association comes yet another example of the paradoxical way of expressing the identity of Jesus: Messiah was in Judaism not linked with suffering, quite in the contrary. Therefore, in line with the whole message expressed by Jesus, the *son of man* neither directly confirms nor denies his messianic identity. His Messiahship contemplates the figures of the OT but refills them with a new meaning. It is royal but not political; it includes humiliation, suffering and death; it does have some features of eschatological hopes, yet there are many indications that the Kingdom has already arrived and is among us.

Lord Jesus

Jesus as the Lord – *Kyrios* – sitting on the right hand of the Father (Ps. 110 as the most cited Psalm in the NT) is one of the three most eminent titles used by the primitive community, already

218 Cf. *ibid.*, 321.

219 Cf. Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, “Corrientes Actuales de Cristología,” in *Transmitir Hoy La Fe En Cristo: XXIV Encuentro de Obispos y Teólogos: Reunión de La Comisión Teológica Asesora* (EDICE, 2015), 331.

around 35 a.C.²²⁰ Although it is clearly an expression from the period after the Easter, there is a connection with a terrestrial ministry of Jesus as he demonstrated special authority – the teaching with power, calling people to His following²²¹, expulsions of daemons, healing, a new interpretation of the Law²²², forgiving the sins²²³, meals²²⁴ with sinners, the expulsion of the merchants from the Temple, etc. All of these signs correspond to the Jewish understanding of eschatological times and the arrival of God. The notion “Lord” appears more than 700 times in the NT and is used abundantly by Luke and Paul. One of the most striking use is recorded in 1Cor 16:22 (Cf. 1 Cor 12:3; Ap 22:20), whose *Maranatha* originates from the times before Paul and demonstrates both the confession of faith and a petition²²⁵. As already mentioned, the primitive Christian community interpreted Psalm 110 as a direct allusion to Christ and his eschatological and protological powers. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father and shares the same divine throne. He has, therefore, the same rank and dominion as God without competing with Him.²²⁶ Psalm 110 was one of the principal catalysts of the early Christology with tremendous influence on many authors of the NT, e.g., 1Cor 15:25; Col 3:1; Mk 12:36; Heb 1:3. The creation and the salvation with consummation are not the only functions ascribed to the Lord. He is the priest who intercedes for his people (Cf. Rm 8:31.34), too. The exalted Lord “retrieves” the position by his Father; the place that was his since eternity: The question of preexistence is addressed by countless texts, e.g., Col 1:17; Phil 2:6-11.

Son of God

The title of the “Son of God” is the most important one – it accentuates Jesus’s belonging to the divine rank, connects to the Trinity, easily reminds the Incarnation, and shows Jesus as the one who reveals the Father. The link to the Incarnation puts special relevancy to the anthropology as well.²²⁷ God has communicated Himself and brought us salvation mediated by the Holy Spirit (=“top-down” mediation), however, it was thanks to Jesus, a man, who indeed carries out salvation the salvation (= “bottom-up” mediation). The title appears during all decisive events of the gospels – his birth (Lk 1; Mt 2), the baptism (Mk 1:11), the Transfiguration (Mk 9:7), the confession of Peter (Mk 8:27-30), during the Easter events and after the death of Jesus, the baptism formula (Cf. Mt 28:28), or at particularly special positions²²⁸. There is an immense theological significance contained in the title: It interprets the life of Jesus as a mission given by

220 Martin Hengel and José María Bernáldez, *El Hijo de Dios: El Origen de La Cristología y La Historia de La Religión Judeo-Helenística* (Sígueme, 1978).

221 In the OT tradition, no master taught by his own authority, only by one derived from God. Also, the vocation is always given only by God.

222 The Law was given to the Chosen People by God through Moses and, therefore, the “new law” also required the action of God.

223 Jesus was repeatedly accused of befriending the sinners, of “*being a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans*” (Mt 11:18). Compassion and authority were considered two main characteristics of God in the OT.

224 Meals in abundance and banquet with plenty of wine were considered an eschatological symbol, Cf. Is 25:6-8.

225 The tradition has conserved both lectures, “Come, Lord Jesus!” and “Lord Jesus will come” (Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 335.).

226 Cf. Martin Hengel, “‘Sit at My Right Hand!’ The Enthronement of Christ at the Right Hand of God and Psalm 110:1,” in *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 149.

227 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 339.

228 For instance, in the Gospel of Mark, it forms so-called inclusion – it is located at the very beginning and then almost at the end when the identity of Jesus is revealed.

his Father – in the person of Jesus his very being, his identity and his mission are identical (pre-existence²²⁹); it is a condition for an authentic revelation of the Father through the Son – here is the key connection of Jesus with the Trinity and the differentiating factor of Christianity with other religions; the concept of preexistence is the most profound explanation of the affiliation of Jesus and the Father; the title enables the combination of ascending (Jesus as a man) and descending (Jesus as God) mediation of Christ which is the key for the explanation of Christian anthropology as well (Cf. GS 22).

Although the notion “Father” appears frequently²³⁰ in the gospels, there are only five authentic uses pronounced by Jesus – accepted even by the historical critique – out of which only Mk 14:36 (Gethsemane) testifies the use of *abba*. Without a doubt, Jesus used this word in a very confidential manner which presupposed obedience. Although *abba* relates to the notion of filiation, it does not ontologically demonstrate the filiation.

The temptations of Jesus by the Devil in the desert provide an important insight into the Sonship of Jesus. The story of Synoptics, inspired by Dt 8:2-5, is charged with a high theological density: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, can resist the temptations after his Baptism in which both his Sonship and the mode of being the Son are questioned (=an analogy to Israel in the desert with the opposite result). The temptations accredit his authentic Sonship and highlight the characteristics of his messianic pretension: He will never act miraculously for his benefit and will remain obedient even to death.

Looking at the NT, especially at the letters of Paul, the notion “Son of God”, expresses a very close relationship of Jesus with God. Paul’s theology highlights the sending of the pre-existent²³¹ Son for the salvation of the world (liberation from sin and the Law), granting us thus the filial adoption. The title acquires its full power after Jesus's death and resurrection expressing thus the idea of the divine power over death. The Son of God is not merely a Messiah or a *son of man* but a victor over death with the full capacity to redeem.²³² The preexistence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the realization of his filiation, that is, the gradual development of his sonship, is possible only thanks to the consideration of both axes, namely, the ontological and historical. Jesus, viewed from the historical perspective, had been growing in knowledge, obedience, and perfection which attained its climax with the suffering at the Cross. A perfect exemplification of the ascendant perspective is Heb 1:1-4 that repeats the following scheme: The preexisting Son of God lives in the intimate communion with His Father, then, he exercises the salvation of the world through his death and resurrection, he is exalted by his Father and sits with Him at His divine throne.²³³ The Son contemplated in the ontological dimension is the perfect God, the preexisting eternal Son. This second dimension is especially stressed in the Gospel by John (Cf.

229 Heinz Schürmann, “La Originalísima Comprensión de Jesús de Su Propia Muerte,” in *El Destino de Jesús: Su Vida y Su Muerte*, Sígueme. (Salamanca, 2003), 163–209.

230 However, it is not an expression of Paul as it was in use already around year 35, that is, Paul received the notion from the tradition, Cf. Rm 1:3-4.

231 The concept of preexistence is Jewish and is propelled by the reflection on the universality of salvation, that is, the one who reins the eschatological moment, surely reins the protological moment as well. The key texts are e.g., Phil 2:6-11; 2Cor 8:9; 1Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-20.

232 Cf. Uríbarri Bilbao, “Cristología, Soteriología, Mariología,” 341.

233 Cf. *ibid.*, 342.

Jn 1:34.39). In his prologue, the preexisting Logos is divine (Cf. Jn 1:1-3), and at the same time, distinct from God, he is a mediator of the creation.

4.8 Summary

Christians do not consider human freedom separated from the Creator but rather rooted in recognizing God as the only source of the very human existence and a warrantor of freedom. Similarly sounds also the theorem of Rahner from Chap. 3.5. “*God's law does not reduce, much less do away with human freedom; rather, it protects and promotes that freedom*” (VS 35). This freedom was decisively affected by the rupture – traditionally called “*original sin*” – between God and His creation. The narrative of Gn 1 cannot be celebrated as symbolic emancipation of a human from the influence of the imagined power of God. It is rather an endeavour to explain symbolically the human inclination to evil, and their inability to make the full spectrum of their dreams coming true.

For Rahner, the original sin is the original co-determination of own freedom by the fault of others.²³⁴ However, this definition describes a structural sin rather than the original one. A structural sin can be eliminated little by little, not so the original one. Pascal mentions a paralysis of “self-centred I” which makes itself divine by a self-conversion into one absolute that requires everything for itself.²³⁵ A certain imbalance prevails in the process of constituting ‘I’ thus resulting in frustration. This primordial excision is characteristic of the human condition: Instead of realization of its true destiny, to be *ex-centric*²³⁶, ‘I’ does not overcome itself but rather centres everything in itself. The condition of “self-centred I” is well observable by children. This *amor sui* constitutes the core of sin. It is not primarily a moral statement but rather natural conditioning of human existence. However, that does not mean that “evil” is more powerful than “good”, not even in our will. As pointed out by Pannenberg, it is necessary to bring together two factors, namely²³⁷ the natural tendency of “self-centred ego” and the absolute and transcendental character of Good, whereas evil remains immanent. Even though humans are sinners, human nature is not: Self-centred ego is sinful but human nature in its essence is *ex-centric*; it is not correct to judge humans only according to what they are, but rather what they are they called for.

The truth shall not be forgotten at the time of evaluation of the contribution of ETs to the fulfilment of the human vocation. Chap 1.3 emphasized that ETs are not only neutral tools. Their very development and use shall help people in their becoming ex-centric. Unfortunately, we witness today rather an opposite tendency. ETs are developed, promoted, sold, and used such as they orient a person *egocentrically*, infringing thus the basic human vocation. There are cultures

234 Cf. S. J. Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William Dych (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 109.

235 John Cole, *Pascal: The Man and His Two Loves* (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

236 Freedom for someone other than ourselves makes the person *ex-static*, going outside and beyond the boundaries of the ‘self’ (Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 10.).

237 The Goodness, the Beauty, the Truth, the Justice, etc. absolutely surpass the totality of their finite realizations which, therefore, cannot fully realize (here on the Earth) their transcendental counterparts. A human tends to the Goodness; however, in real life can exercise only good things. For their evil counterparts, the logic is inverted: There is no absolute Evil as evil has no ontological basis. However, it is seemingly “closer”, more intimate to a human as it affects their primary instincts. According to Pannenberg, this is the reason why it might seem that humans are “bad” (Cf. Fernández Castelao, “Antropología teológica,” 238.).

in the world today that do not promote life in communion but rather cut people off from one another “in a search for individual well-being, limited to the gratification of psychological desires” (CV 55).

The misunderstanding of the notion of *sin* in actual society and immense faith in science and technology give space to the calls and hopes for a *technological solution* to human pains and sufferings. A modern person is often wrongly convinced that she is the sole author of herself, her life, and society. This presumption is a consequence of original sin. The conviction that a person is self-sufficient and can eliminate all the evil present in history by her own action alone leads to the confusion of happiness and salvation with immanent forms of material prosperity and social action (Cf. CV 34). Nevertheless:

- Many goals of ETs – out of an extensive range of technically realizable – are mutually incommensurate. If there is no *ethical criterion* that furthermore considers the inviolability of human dignity as a priority, a human can readily become an object among other objects and sooner or later – in the case of some “super-smart ETs” – will be replaced.
- For their high degree of malleability²³⁸, autonomy²³⁹, mutual convergence²⁴⁰, the introduction of novel scales and objects, and rapid development and deployment, on the one hand, and interconnectedness and burgeoning complexity of the world, a plurality of morale, principal epistemological difficulties with predictions of future-developments and valuations, and many other factors, on the other hand, ETs cause certain *technosocial opacity*²⁴¹. It is a condition that makes it exorbitantly difficult to predict developments and, above all, to identify an evaluation criterion for them. The traditional prescriptions of justice, fairness, or honesty, etc. are indubitably valid, however, progressively only in a “local” context and short-term human interactions. We witness the growing importance of a collective action, where the agent, their actuation and the effect are not the same,²⁴² that is, even this sphere is globalized as nobody is independent of failures and bad decisions of other humans.²⁴³
- Although ETs significantly increase the human power and potentialities having thus a much more comprehensive social and societal impact, and despite all the optimism and

238 Even their *personal identity*, (Cf. James Digiovanna, “Artificial Identity,” in *Robot Ethics 2.0: From Autonomous Cars to Artificial Intelligence*, by Patrick Lin, Keith Abney, and Ryan Jenkins (Oxford University Press, 2017), 308.) of non-humans – if such thing is possible – due to the capacity of the fast reshaping of their own body (Mario Verdicchio, “An Analysis of Machine Ethics from the Perspective of Autonomy,” in *Philosophy and Computing: Essays in Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Logic, and Ethics*, ed. Thomas M. Powers, vol. 128 (Springer, 2017), 351.).

239 Don Howard and Ion Muntean, “Artificial Moral Cognition: Moral Functionalism and Autonomous Moral Agency,” in *Philosophy and Computing: Essays in Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Logic, and Ethics*, ed. Thomas M. Powers, vol. 128 (Springer, 2017), 233.

240 James Moor, “Why We Need Better Ethics for Emerging Technologies,” *Ethics and information technology* 7, no. 3 (2005): 111–119.

241 Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*.

242 Digiovanna, “Artificial Identity.”

243 Hans Jonas, “Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New Tasks of Ethics,” in *Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, ed. Ronald Sandler (Springer, 2016).

(exaggerated) expectations, we frequently fall into the so-called *bootstrapping problem*²⁴⁴: We want the way out of the quandary (caused often by technology itself, say, environmental issues, or potential threats due to genetical engineering and bioterrorism) by employing more technology (e.g., “protective” AI²⁴⁵). However, in a situation where these technologies are being designed, produced, marketed, and spread by the very same humans whose lack of *technomoral wisdom*²⁴⁶ lead to that situation in the first place, the solution cannot be exclusively the technological one. In fact, an ideal of the Enlightenment – a human conquering Nature – often proves to be a “*power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument*”²⁴⁷. The current efforts to create an AI-agent with some “built-in ethics” in the objective functions fail: It seems that created self-modifying agents will eventually modify themselves into a state where they no longer pursue the same goals they started with. What is more, these states appear to have little consonance with human values.²⁴⁸ It seems that a more viable solution than trying to influence the goals of AI-systems – which is characteristic for AI-agents with explicit utility functions – is to build AI as a complex system that would engage with humans and absorb complex human values from its interactions.²⁴⁹ Then, AI combined with compassionate ethics could help by policing other dangerous technologies.²⁵⁰

As already mentioned, merely technical solutions are blind and unrealistic. Therefore, any viable solution must *perforce* include ethics. Nevertheless, to be a real solution, even *an ethical solution* cannot be arbitrary. Humans and the entire creation are certainly autonomous but not independent of their origin. The “*rightful autonomy of the creature, and particularly of man is not withdrawn, but is rather re-established in its own dignity and strengthened in it*” (GS 41). Human freedom is not limitless; it does not include a “creation of values”, nor enjoys primacy over truth. Therefore, “*freedom cannot lay claim to a moral autonomy*²⁵¹ which would actually amount to an absolute sovereignty” (VS 35). The *rightful autonomy* does not mean creating values, and moral laws, but (learn to) discover them and apply them. *Participated theonomy* (VS 36-37) defends the

244 Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*.

245 Goertzel, “Superintelligence: Fears, Promises and Potentials,” 69.

246 Technomoral wisdom (Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*.) is an expression describing an expression taken from classical virtue ethics, however, applied for a modern society that must make moral choices in an environment fundamentally influenced by technologies.

247 Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 30.

248 Kurzweil, *Menschheit 2.0: Die Singularität Naht*, 62.

249 Goertzel, “Superintelligence: Fears, Promises and Potentials,” 68.

250 Ibid., 70.

251 The theonomic autonomy of Böckle claims the sovereignty of reason in the creation of specific norms. That means that humans would be responsible for establishing the content of the categories of *good* and *evil*. God is under no account a competition to a human, He is conceived as the “support” of specific human life; however, not as a creator of particular moral norms. These are the task of an autonomous human. “Autonomy in the Christian context” of Auer considers the biblical teaching as “context-dependent orientations” whereas the fundamental task of reason would be to create moral norms. According to Auer, reality has intrinsic rationality which is also cognoscible without faith. Since he identifies autonomy with the rationality of reality and subsequently with a human, there would be no need to know or explicitly acknowledge God. Theonomy would not contribute to specific claims, but it would help to understand reality as principally oriented toward its Creator, that is, it would be a hermeneutical key to the reality that provides a human with global orientation and motivation. That would also be the role of the Magisterium – to stimulate, orient and motivate believers to a dialogue.

autonomy of a human against heteronomous determinations. It is, nevertheless, not the autonomy of a completely independent reason, but rather its participation in God's intelligence and discovery of the *natural order* of reality. The light of the truth that illuminates human consciousness has its origin in the Creator, who granted a human a possibility of participation. God not only created Nature inclusive of a human but also inculcated the moral order in it. Human autonomy consists in freedom and rationality but excludes the creation of own values and moral order. A task of a human is to discover this moral order in nature and to live accordingly. Even though moral law proceeds from God, it is not a heteronomous law in a strict sense while it is instilled in the creation. A human reason has the same origin as the rest of the creation. Therefore, there is a direct connection between moral and natural law (=right reason).

Morality is conditioned precisely by fundamental freedom which cannot be viewed as something possessed but rather as a constitutional element of human nature. However, apart from the ontological freedom (=directly connected to human existence²⁵²), there is also practical or moral freedom (=always specific and contextual, situated in the biological, historical, cultural, educational, and other contexts). Human freedom can be experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility.²⁵³ Deliberation, an act of weighing up the arguments and motivations implied in a moral act, traditionally called a discernment, draws from the *fundamental option* of a person. The responsibility is the moral obligation of a free person to respond to her decisions and their consequences.

That said, what are the specific contributions of Christian ethics and what is the relationship between ethics and faith? The principal criterion of Christian ethics considers all the questions *in the light of the Gospel and human experience* (Cf. GS 46). Even though Christianity is not a moral religion, believing in Jesus as the ultimate Revelation and confessing Him as Christ means to adhering to Him, which, in turn, implies ethical obligations. Precisely the reference to Christ as the source and the culmination of the Christian existence is the "particularity" of Christian ethics,²⁵⁴ which is expressed by theological categories such as "following", "realization of the Kingdom of God", "moral of love". Christian ethics is authentically human, entirely respecting what is authentically human; however, faith as the root of Christian moral reflects the life of Jesus and introduces some preferences such as the "absolute value of a human person" or "preference for a weak". The Christian existence formally comprises three elements:

- Fundamental option: A global moral response of a person to her very existence.²⁵⁵ It is a basic 'stance' and attitude to the question of the meaning of life. It is a personal answer to the challenge of what kind of person I want to be. A person can either refuse this invitation intending thus to construct her whole existence centred in her 'I', or she can ignore the call or negate her very existence searching thus frantically (and never meeting) the happiness in her life, or, finally, accepts this appeal trying to live with the full consciousness of her transcendent origin (and end of her life).²⁵⁶

252 Ontological freedom is not simply "freedom of will" but rather the freedom to be other in an absolute ontological sense (Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 11.).

253 Cf. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 187–189.

254 Cf. Julio Luis Martínez Martínez and José Manuel Caamaño, *Moral fundamental: Bases teológicas del discernimiento ético*, Sal Terrae. (Maliaño (Cantabria), 2014), 131.

255 Cf. *ibid.*, 311.

- A moral act: A specific and visible expression of moral life and a personal identity. Its morality depends on – traditionally called as sources of morality – an object, an intention (end) and the circumstances.
- Moral attitude:²⁵⁷ An actual disposition to act towards a realization of ‘good’. It is a classical concept that constitutes *moral habit*. While the fundamental option expressed the acceptance of Jesus Christ as an ultimate source of moral, the moral attitude is its specific expression translated into particular moral acts.

Christianity is not a “religion of sin” but a *good message* of salvation. Over the centuries, there have been countless discussions about the relationship and balance of divine grace and human nature. They were not able to evade some extreme positions such as those of Pelagius (a possibility of human sinless behaviour), Bayo (grace as a natural requirement of human nature) or Jansenius (grace superimposed on the human nature, that is, limitation of freedom). The modern philosophers fell for the very similar trap placing divine grace and human freedom at the same level (in the same “space”) where one competes with another. Then, humans are free then and only then when they cut their dependence on God, and fully emancipate themselves. Indeed, the grace of God and any relation with Him comprehended as dependence, lead especially today to its rejection. The grace of God shall not be described extrinsically, but – using a definition of Thomas Aquinas – as an external reality (=given by God) which acts internally (=not imposed from outside). Rahner's supernatural existential has precisely this meaning, a supernatural grace actuating from within, intrinsically, connaturally, “generating” in a person the theological virtues (See Chap. 5.2). Divine grace transforms human nature and makes her capable of combat sin and egoism,²⁵⁸ and gives rise to an inclination of a human towards its Origin and opens towards a new horizon and possibilities.

The best example of what a human nature with divine grace is capable of is the Virgin Mary. She exemplifies what any human can become with grace and what people are called for and destined to. She is a virgin, and a mother always obeying the Word. This *profile* goes back to Mary as a mother and a virgin and as an exemplary model prophetically indicates the only way of living the Christian life. We can walk towards the plenitude of life only by accepting God in the world, in our lives. The fertility of apostolic work depends on the grace of God; a virgin cannot give birth on her own, only by divine grace.

256 Cf. Juan Martín Velasco, “La opción fundamental: ¿Quién soy yo, qué voy a hacer de mí?,” *Sal Terrae* 82, no. 4 (1994): 256.

257 Cf. Martínez and Caamaño, *Moral fundamental: Bases teológicas del discernimiento ético*, 314.

258 Cf. Fernández Castelao, “Antropología teológica,” 260.

5 The Holy Spirit and the Holy Church or “Emerging Technologies”

5.1 Preface

Chap. 4.8 argued that humankind often lacks today *technomoral wisdom* and wants to solve the current problems by applying even more technology. The transhumanist movement expects ETs will solve obstacles to human flourishing. Age, disability, disease, standard cognitive and physical limitations or even death shall not play the limiting role.²⁵⁹ Transhumanism claims that new possibilities through enhancement are always desirable;²⁶⁰ a research of such technologies shall be fostered, decisions about the self-enhancement left to the individuals, etc.²⁶¹ What is wrong with having new skills, been smarter, enhancement and extension of capacities for human empathy, justice, and other moral traits? Who would not want that – when not for themselves – at least for their own children? The trouble is that today, there is no moral consensus on the ultimate moral goods. Not even about their very existence. However,

[w]ithout truth, it is easy to fall into an empiricist and sceptical view of life, incapable of rising to the level of praxis because of a lack of interest in grasping the values — sometimes even the meanings — with which to judge and direct it (CV9).

Then, how reasonable is it to expect that our progeny will suddenly acquire the moral convictions the current generation lacks to build a future worth choosing? When not, how clever is it to think that they will benefit more from the arbitrary selection – without technomoral wisdom – of their future than the current generation?²⁶² Even the grand promises of transhumanism of the (a)mortality open new questions: More time yes, but what for? Moreover, when certain limits are inherent to human nature, would not their lifting somehow radically change the meaning of what a human is? The current technosocial crisis is an indication that technology is not an end in itself, that ultimate ends must exist and be searched for outside of the technological realm. Shannon Vallor of Edinburgh’s Futures Institute claimed that this “*crisis of wishing is a culturally-induced deficiency or practical wisdom*”, that it is a “*vacuity of moral imagination for live [whose] chief symptom is an appalling restlessness that manifests itself in frenzied but directionless seeking*”²⁶³.

We witness several paradoxes:

Some individuals and nations experience an unprecedented richness, and yet there are millions of the poor without having covered the basic needs for their very existence and dignity.

259 Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*, 358.

260 Nick Bostrom, “Why I Want to Be a Posthuman When I Grow Up,” in *Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, by Ronald Sandler (Springer, 2016), 365.

261 Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*, 359.

262 Ibid., 383.

263 Ibid., 386.

We have always dreamed about the “eternal” life or at least amortality, and these days it is a soon-to-be-achieved result promised by many enterprises. Yet, many call for legal termination of the life of the old and sick.

We often consider ourselves proprietors or even lords of life who have control (still only a partial today, but full possibilities will be available tomorrow, I promise!) over many diseases that radically cut mortality rates. Yet, millions of embryos pay for this advance – but much more often not for an advance but our caprice, egoism, fear – with their lives.

We are proud of a high and mature culture that respects diversity and minorities, freedom, and self-determination, yet in the name of science – and more often due to avarice, greed, lust, and fulfilling our dreams and projections – we either interrupt the unfulfilled dreams of so many unborn lives or try to determine their future through genetical manipulation.

We boast of AI-propelled algorithms that readily match us with a perfect partner and promise a happy life. Yet, we witness so many unhappy relationships and failed marriages. So many couples decide to give preference to their careers, travelling and all possible kinds of self-fulfilment. And yet, after a couple of years, they invest exorbitant amounts of money, time and energy into desperate trials to have offspring, although there are millions of orphans longing for parents.

What does the Church offer, and what can she do in a precarious situation, in which wisdom is sparse, and the promises of salvation are very short-sighted? The Church – as *Teacher in Humanity* (PP 19-21) – can, and indeed does propose some principles of reflection, extract criteria for judgment and give orientations for actuation (Cf. CCC 2423), that is, a set of tools with different level of “force”.²⁶⁴ The following sections will address the reality of the Church, her possibilities and offered solutions, her faith, and her hopes. The last section of this chapter resumes the Christian responses to the challenges presented in this section.

5.2 The Holy Spirit

The principal work of the Holy Spirit is the actualization, prolongation and consummation of the self-communication of God in Jesus Christ,²⁶⁵ and in the Church (See Chap. 5.3). His presence in the Church does not suppose a substantial union between Him and the Christians. It is rather a dwelling that produces the transformation of the Christians and the Church into the Body of Christ.²⁶⁶

The Holy Spirit and the Life of the Church

The comprehension of the notion of “spirit” changed significantly over the millennia. The OT present a rich manifoldness of this notion:²⁶⁷ In the origins, it represents breath, blow, living

264 Cf. Jean-Yves Calvez, “Morale sociale et morale sexuelle,” *Etudes* 378, no. 5 (1993): 1.

265 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 509.

266 Cf. Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” 494.

267 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 516–527.

water, kiss, ointment, seal, force, or a space in which life is possible, but later on, a principle of life (Is), internal presence of God (Ez), and wisdom (Is). Wis 7:22 links wisdom and the spirit (ruah): This wisdom comes from God and has a very particular relationship with him – she is His creature, His daughter, who was present at the time of creation and was with God from the Eternity; one who collaborated with Him (Pro 8:22-36). Particularly relevant for this work is the promise of happiness to those who listen to her (Pro 8:34-35). The spirit, still in the context of the OT, is, similarly to wisdom, an intimate action of God for us and within us. God has been acting within the world and within a human. The significant novelty in the period after the death and resurrection of Christ is the personification of the Holy Spirit. The relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit has a double dimension: Firstly, the Holy Spirit has a decisive influence on the life of Christ – which is evident especially in the Incarnation, in the Baptism, and the Mission of Jesus –, and secondly, Christ is the one, who gives the Holy Spirit – a dimension which is visible especially in the writings of Paul, Luke and John in the moments such as the Death and the Resurrection (Cf. Jn 20:19-36), Pentecost (Cf. Act 2) and the mission of the Church. The key conclusion from the biblical and theological experience with the Holy Spirit is that it cannot be reduced to a single exclusive metaphor, even though the most important ones in the first centuries of Christianity are the following:²⁶⁸ The gift (and the one who gives), life, truth, freedom, and love.

After centuries of neglect and omission of pneumatology (See Chap. 3.3) in theology, the charismatic and ecumenical movements and the CVII as a new Pentecost returned the Holy Spirit his righteous place. The constitutions of the CVII underscore e.g., that thanks to Him, the body of faithful cannot err (Cf. LG 12), and that lay apostolate (Cf. AA 3) and missionary task (Cf. AG 4) have their foundation in pneumatology.²⁶⁹ The Holy Spirit is a constitutive principle of the life of the Church. Not only continues the Church the mission of Christ but also Christ Himself continues his mission within the Church through the presence and actions of the Holy Spirit, who is the principle of the charismatic life of the Church (Cf. 1Cor 12-14), who actualizes the mysteries of Christ (Cf. Rm 8:1-30). He is the vivifying Spirit who gives life; one that grants space for the other enabling thus and promoting freedom; one who makes possible the life in relationship and provides strength to break away from the false securities of a person relying on her powers and strengths. He gives rise to fresh hope in the resurrection and a new life according to His laws, and a new relationship with God.²⁷⁰ A human being as a *new creation* in the Spirit can overcome the egocentrism and egoistic tendencies, and escape the incrimination mechanism that searches for a scapegoat.²⁷¹

The Church is a sign and an instrument of this new communion of life (Cf. LG 1; GS 42), a sacrament of the Holy Spirit in favour of the world. In other words, the Holy Spirit “uses” the Church as an instrument to fulfil his salvific will. Nevertheless, the invitation of the Church to participate in Salvation is not “against the world”, nor is an alternative reality. The Church defined herself and her mission in the constitutions of the CVII. She proceeds from the love of

268 Cf. *ibid.*, 595.

269 Cf. *ibid.*, 590.

270 Cf. *ibid.*, 610.

271 *Ibid.*, 614.

God, the Son founded her, and the Holy Spirit congregated her (GS 40); she is the “*universal mystery of the salvation*” (GS 45). All the people are invited in some way to make up the people of God.²⁷² The relationship between the Church and the world shall be one of mutual enrichment. The Church itself does not live apart from the world but within. There is, consequently, no dissociation between the spiritual life of the faithful and their earthly duties (Cf. GS 43). The Church is also grateful for so many goods, and enrichment received from the world (Cf. GS 44). She offers assistance to every human, and entire humankind with the revelation of the mystery of God and with the meaning of one’s existence (Cf. GS 41), that is, with precisely those unknowns that constitute the core of the current technosocial crisis.

Virtues

Active self-transcendence (See Chap. 3.5), the life of and in the Holy Spirit and divine grace offered to a justified human (See Chap. 4.3 and 4.8) are the perfect starting point to unfold the reflection on theological virtues. The reality of grace offered to a human by God in Christ creates the conditions for a new relationship between God and His creature. The theological virtues, namely Faith, Hope and Charity are specifications of the maturation process of a justified subject who lives the life in God’s grace. In line with the approach specified in Chap. 4.3, they are not extrinsic forces overriding human nature, or a miraculous instrument turning a human into a “super-human” – which, with a bit of exaggeration, was indeed an understanding of the scholasticism posterior to Thomas Aquinas:²⁷³ The theory of the “double end” counted with two ends of human life which were both achievable with a different set of “capabilities”. Whereas the acquired virtues facilitated reaching the *natural end*, sanctifying grace and infused virtues made it possible to achieve the *supernatural end* by transforming the essence (*essere*) of a person and her actuation, respectively. The *infused*²⁷⁴ (theological and moral) virtues were formally converted into faculties (or capacities) to act *supernaturally*; they made a human *capax Dei*. Therefore, the theological virtues were faculties and infused moral virtues were a medium that made it possible for a human to achieve a supernatural end. Such comprehension of the virtues was very unlucky and misinterpreted Aquinas, who was very careful not to speak about two ends. For him, the end of a human is a communion with God (*visio beatifica*). Sanctifying grace transforms the essence of a human being, and infused virtues supply to the faculties of mind and will what they do not have of themselves, namely, the salutary knowledge, desire, and love of God and of His will. These virtues make a person well-adjusted to her end, which is God Himself. Divine grace heals (from the corruption of original sin), completes and perfects human nature.²⁷⁵ The twisted understanding of Aquinas comes with many shortcomings; for instance, to name only a few: A

272 Cf. *ibid.*, 615.

273 Cf. Nurya Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Virtudes Teologales,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 717.

274 For a description of the influence of virtues on human *acting*, Thomas used the Aristotelian teaching of *habitus* but transformed his meaning. For Aristotle, it was through exercising acquired ability that constituted the *second nature* of a human. It not only made an action perfect but the person herself. For Thomas, each act has its end (object), a faculty (a power to act) and a habit (ability to act readily and with dexterity). Then he introduces the hypothetical construct of a *perfect habitus* that does not need exercising and is permanently available. This conception serves as an introduction of *infused virtues*, virtues infused by God.

275 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 638.

duplication of ends of life, a “split” of a human into two orders, duplication of virtues and reification of divine grace.

The post-conciliar theology does not use any more ontological descriptions of human nature and understands grace and human nature in relational terms. Grace can be perceived as a particular *mode of being*²⁷⁶ of a human, not an extrinsic reality. Then, the virtues are anthropological forms of grace, *modes of being* or dispositions that partake in constructing the person's very identity. Moreover, God's grace causes justification of a person, which, in turn, results in *filiation*, in a new relationship with God, whose “products” are precisely the theological virtues. However, grace, and consequently the virtues, are not static elements infused at some particular moment once and for all. They form instead – in line with a concept of *creacio continua* – a life-long process. The divine gift of grace needs an actualization in each moment of life, that is, the permanent and dynamic action of the Holy Spirit and a free acceptance by a person and her effort to live accordingly. Exclusively this divine-human cooperation can bring forth the growth of the Christian life of grace.²⁷⁷ Due to these dynamics, it is appropriate to speak about a virtuous dynamism operating on/within the anthropological structure. In other words – inspired by the language borrowed from chemistry –, the theological virtues work like enzymes that catalyse²⁷⁸ the naturally given; they potentiate the natural anthropological structures of a human being.

The word dynamism refers to several concepts. First, the virtues represent a double-motion dynamism, namely descending (as a divine gift, grace, calling or offer to a human) and ascending (as a free response of a human). Second, the centripetal motion describes the human acceptance of a divine gift, whereas the centrifugal movement expresses the propensity and growing desire towards God and His plenitude. God invites a justified person to a new kind of relationship, *filiation*, a *new life in Christ*, which – when accepted – opens a new way to the plenitude of life. As already mentioned, it is not a single moment, but rather a beginning of the process by which the plenitude – even though not entirely achievable in this life – can be approached. Therefore, the virtues are both a divine gift and a human task at the same time. They enable the long process of maturation, personal growth, becoming more a son with the Son, and becoming more intimate with God Himself. First, a human accepts God's grace as a gift, which means – speaking “analytically” and using an OT-tradition – performing a triple act of consent²⁷⁹, abandonment²⁸⁰ and recognition²⁸¹. The virtues actuate as dispositions of the reception of grace and a personal adhesion to God. Then, secondly, the virtues work in the process of con-naturalization as dispositions of the assimilation: A person receives in this process *sensorium* of God, a capacity to

276 Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Virtudes Teologales,” 714.

277 Cf. *ibid.*, 715.

278 This metaphor (as each metaphor) falls short when it possibly insinuate that virtues as a catalyst are added by a “chemist” from “outside” at some specific moment. Here, the metaphor did not want to illustrate the process of obtaining God's grace, but rather their effect on natural faculties. Additionally, growing in grace requires an “active collaboration” of a person: It is not enough merely to “add a catalyst” that automatically secure the results.

279 Consent in an OT-tradition is an existential acceptance of God's Word and life, accordingly. It is not a mere intellectual assent, but a vital decision to accept God's message.

280 An abandonment means to put all faith and confidence in God's hands. It is a waiver on all self-assured plans, “idols”, etc. It means to renounce on all types of presumed salvation but God's.

281 Recognition as the last element of faith is an acknowledgement of God as an absolute and all-powerful God with all paradoxes that faith carries along.

“see the things as God sees them” (even though not perfectly, yet), to enter a “divine logic”; the virtues actuate “from within” the anthropological structure of a human – a being that constitutionally believes, hopes and loves. As everyone is different, the process of conaturalization or assimilation is individual for each person. The virtues are also the dynamism of transformation, hence, they profoundly change a person's capacity to receive and internalize divine grace and to act accordingly. The threefold gift of God – given to us by the Father in the creation, unfolded in Jesus Christ and actuated by the Holy Spirit – accepted and assimilated by a human being becomes a source of an immense expansion of natural dynamics of the human's anthropological structures opening up for new possibilities. The expansion *ad intra* grants new *organs* to a justified person. The biblical tradition called them *new eyes*, or a *new heart*, *the heart of flesh* (Cf. Ez 11:19) that granted a person a new kind of vision of the reality, the capacity of better discernment between good and evil, a novel sort of energy allowing for living reality as it is (inclusive pain and suffering because even there is God present). The expansion *ad extra* – speaking with Kierkegaard– permits a person completely new options of the previously impossible and grants her the necessary strength. Finally, the more the process of *filiation* advances, the easier is the actuation in favour of and towards *good*; the more lived the experience of God in life, the greater inclination towards Him – a person is attracted toward God. Such comprehension resonates with the conviction of Aquinas that Christian life is principally a successful human existence. That means a life of joy and delight despite possible mishaps and misfortunes.

To sum up, grace provided by Christ transforms humans and renews their anthropological structures. Theological virtues are a structural expression of that answer of a human to a divine call. They also refer to the paramount human experience of the reception of the divine self-communication and their response.²⁸² The virtues are not watertight compartments but rather “totalizers” that refer to an entire person and her existence. The theological virtues – in their totality describing the vital reality of Christian existence – are a threefold divine gift operating on the unique but triple anthropological structure.

The key category for establishing the anthropological unity of the virtues is the *basic trust* based on an experience of the primordial affection²⁸³ – standardly between a mother and a child – that enables full and proper development of a human being, that is, the “correct” hominisation. The basic trust facilitates the development of a minimal self-confidence and self-esteem, a capacity to accept reality as positive, a trust in another person which serves then as a basis for any type of future relationships including the collective ones, and finally, it is a basic presumption for the emergence of *basic hope*, which, in turn, allows for a positive and hopeful vision of the future. With that in mind, a human is fundamentally a fiducial being, that loves and hopes.²⁸⁴ Every person needs to trust herself and others, to love and be loved, and to have minimal confidence in the future. However, despite each person's longing for absolute confidence, disappointments and deceptions are not a seldom experience. Eternal and faithful love is a common dream; nevertheless, at the latest (but in most cases, much sooner) death represents a tragic end of every

282 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Virtudes Teologales,” 718.

283 In the Spanish original *ternura tutelar*, the term within the theory developed by Carballo, Cf. Juan Rof Carballo, *Violencia y ternura* (Madrid: Colección austral, 2000).

284 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Virtudes Teologales,” 739.

plan and every relationship. Therefore, this anthropological triplet of basic trust and hope and primordial love needs an “expansion” that would go beyond the purely human. Thence, theological virtues fulfil the required conditions and operate on and within the above mentioned basic anthropological structure, and their reincorporation in the explanatory circle can solve the problem.

5.3 One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

The Church is a derived mystery that is related to the mission of the Holy Spirit²⁸⁵, who is responsible for the *deification*²⁸⁶ of a human. Even the third article of the Creed expresses the relatedness of the two mysteries when *credo ecclesiam* follows the declaration of faith in the Holy Spirit and is accompanied by the word “holy” which reflect the belief that the Holy Spirit dwell and actuates in her.²⁸⁷ Although the Creed does not profess faith *in* the Church (she is not a divine entity²⁸⁸), it claims that she is the first work of the Spirit. He illuminates and guides her and donates her His gifts and charisms in the sacraments. However, “[t]he Church is a community that lives within the history and therefore within the fallen state of existence”.²⁸⁹ Because the Church comprises sinners, she shares with them the consequences. Yet her essence is holy for her links to God. This holiness is possible only when the core of the Christian existence in the Church is repentance (*metanoia*) and when she mirrors the communion and otherness of the triune God.²⁹⁰ It is not enough to look at the Church only as a historical entity and a potent social organisation established by an ambulant preacher to see the connection between the Trinity and her.

The Foundation of the Church

The question of her origins leads in three domains²⁹¹ that contribute to her better comprehension, namely a) whether Jesus himself wanted to establish a church, b) a specific form of the church that existed in the first communities attested by the NT and, finally, c) how the movement of the partisans of Jesus transformed in the formal structures and leadership of the organized Church. The last two questions are, unfortunately, out of the scope of this work. The query regarding the origins can be reformulated either historically “When was the Church founded?” or theologically “What is the origin of the Church (= where from)?”. The former problem calls for an investigation of the relations between Jesus of Nazareth and his activity and Easter events. The latter needs a theological reflection:

“Coming forth from the eternal Father's love, founded in time by Christ the Redeemer and made one in the Holy Spirit, the Church has a saving and an eschatological purpose which can be fully attained only in the future world.” (GS 40)

285 Cf. Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” 395.

286 One of the three mysteries in the catholic dogmatic (Cf. Karl Rahner, *Sobre el concepto de misterio en la teología católica* (Madrid: Taurus, 1964), 91.).

287 Cf. Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” 398.

288 Cf. *ibid.*, 404.

289 Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 3.

290 Cf. *ibid.*, 5.

291 Cf. Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” 415.

According to this article, the Church proceeds from the eternal salvific will of the Father whose mystery manifested itself already in her foundation by Jesus Christ and sanctification by the Holy Spirit.²⁹² Loosely speaking, she has existed since the very first moment of humanity on Earth: God's salvific plan is visible already in the Eden, with the story of Abel, in the faith of Abraham, Jacob and then the twelve tribes of Israel.

An investigation of the relationship between the terrestrial activity of Jesus and the Eastern Community sheds more light on the above formulated historical question. The complete absence of the notion of the "foundation" in the NT makes the task difficult and requires a search for implicit meanings. The Gospel According to St. Matthew speaks implicitly about the "phases" concomitant for the founding of the Church: The public activity of Jesus (Cf. Mt 4:12ff), the institution and the mission of the Twelve (Cf. Mt 10:1-42; 23:37), the first resistance of Israel and rejection of Jesus captured by the parables of the Bad Tenants (Cf. Mt 21:33-46), the Wedding Feast (Cf. Mt 22:1-14), and the tipping point with Mt 21:43 when Israel loses its election to a new people of God. The consequence of Jesus's refusal by a part of the society was the emergence of the "true Israel" and the gradual opening to pagans. In a nutshell, Matthew does not speak explicitly about the foundation of the Church. Nevertheless, he connects the concepts of the *Kingdom of Heaven* and *the people of God* (=rest of Israel + newly admitted pagans).

Luke's work is valuable because it maps both Jesus's life as well as the period after his death and resurrection (the Acts). The work composed of two books recounts events before and after the death of Jesus. It links the OT and AT with a clear intention to demonstrate the salvific will of God in human history. Luke wants to show that there is only one history of one people of God, even though with various phases. Moreover, according to Lohfink,²⁹³ even though Jesus did not mention a church during his public activity, there is a clear correlation between the historically provable Jesus's preaching the Kingdom of God and the promised eschatological reunion of the people by God. The preached Kingdom of Jesus shows the signs of its being both in the present and future (See Chap. 4.3 and 4.7). Concomitantly, the entire activity of Jesus appoints to the eschatological times when people receive a new heart from God.²⁹⁴ The Church is, consequently, an eschatological work of God that had already begun with the events described by the OT. Then, it entered a new phase with the public activity of Jesus and, above all, his death, his appearances, the donation of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost and the opening of the community to pagans (Acts 20:18-35).

The ITC resumes the foundation of the Church as a process (not a single moment), which covers the whole mission of Jesus, that is, not only his terrestrial life but the entire history of salvation: The promises of OT, the public activity of Jesus, the institution of the Twelve, the attribution of the name to Peter, the refusal of Jesus by many of Israel, his Last Supper, death and resurrection, the sending out the Spirit, the mission to the pagans, etc. Nevertheless, speaking specifically about Jesus founding the Church, the ITC refers to the two vents – the attribution of the new name to Peter after his profession of the Messiah, and the institution of Eucharist by Jesus during his Last Supper. The CTI concludes that although Jesus did not formulate his will explicitly, he clearly wanted to establish the Church as witnessed by his entire life. The category of implicit

292 Cf. *ibid.*, 403.

293 Cf. *ibid.*, 416.

294 Cf. *ibid.*, 417–419.

ecclesiology revolves around the correlation between the *Kingdom of God* and *God's people* and the constitution of the Twelve with Peter as the Head.

The first community of Christians surged unquestionably from the movement around terrestrial Jesus; however, the Easter events were decisive. Jesus initiated the foundation process by his activity on the Earth preaching the arrival of the Kingdom of God, only to become aware later – after the rejecting reaction of Israel – that his salvific mission would have to end at the Cross (See Chap. 4.5). He became fully aware of the account and the nature of his mission (as attested e.g., by Mc 10:45; Mc 12:1-12, or allusions to Is 52:13-53:12). The Church congregated after his death and resurrection, and endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecost, is the very continuation of his salvific mission. Jesus laid her foundations by his words and activity; however, his disciples inspired by the Holy Spirit believed to be empowered to continue the mission of Jesus within a formal structure. Therefore, the Church has a double origin: She was instituted by Jesus Christ and constituted by the Holy Spirit²⁹⁵. She is a direct “product” of the two missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Essential Aspects of the Church

The four properties of the Church enumerated by the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, namely “One”, “Holy”, “Universal” and “Apostolic” are reflected by four categories that express her very identity and nuclear aspects that give an account of her existence:²⁹⁶ The proclamation and a testimony to the gospel, *martyria* (μαρτυρία), goes hand in hand with the common prayer and celebration of the Lord's Supper, *koinonía* (κοινωνία), and sacraments – *leitourgía* (λειτουργία). All that results in an active exercise of faith in the service to people in need – *diakonía* (διακονία).²⁹⁷ These four categories are closely related to the four Constitutions of CVII: DV, LG, SC and GS. The four mentioned concepts sketch the structure of the revelation from the theological point of view: God reveals Himself by means of His incarnate Word, who in turn is an object of the testimony (*martyria*) and – when received – facilitates the creation of the community (*koinonia*). The response incited by the Holy Spirit in the heart of faithful results both in service to others (*diakonia*), and gratitude and worshipping of God that is best expressed in the liturgical celebration (*leitourgia*).

Koinonia (the Fellowship)

The ecclesiology after the CVII revolves around two basic models of the Church, namely the *people of God* preferred by the ITC and *koinonia (fellowship)* highlighted by the Synod of the bishops of 1985. While the ecclesiology of the *people of God* underscores the concepts of the covenant, history of salvation, social dimension of salvation, common priesthood, fundamental equality and a mission, the ecclesiology of the fellowship calls attention to the Trinitarian affirmations, finds its full realization in the Eucharist and is based on the concepts such as Body of Christ, a local church, community-unity, collegiality, ministry, and hierarchy.²⁹⁸

295 Cf. *ibid.*, 427.

296 Cf. *ibid.*, 397.

297 Cf. *ibid.*, 455.

298 Cf. *ibid.*, 457.

However, it would be a profound misunderstanding to interpret both models as mutually competing or even exclusive categories. Such interpretations give place either to sociology (the Church understood singularly as the *people of God*) or to clericalism (the Church understood exclusively as *koinonia*). The lecture of the constitution LG (= the *people of God* called to the *Fellowship*) manifests its proper meaning by connecting modern theology with the Patristics. The four dimensions express the said connection (Lubac):

- The Church is a mystery (LG I), a human-divine fellowship; she is a sign of the unity with the Trinity and all humanity. She is a fellowship of local churches, that – each of them – are fellowships of the Eucharistic communion (1Cor 10:16-17), thus an actualization of the universal Church (LG 23).
- The Church is the *people of God* (LG II) with Christ as the Head. This claim means that the two perspectives are combined, namely one that expresses the universal priesthood and equality, and the other highlighting the difference between a “body” and a “head”. LG presents thus an image of the Church as a compound of various categories, and not exclusively that of *people of God* (LG II), referring thus to its Trinitarian character: The Church is also the Body of Christ (LG III; 1Cor 10:12-26), and the Temple of the Spirit (LG IV; 1Cor 3:5-17).
- The Church is born within God’s eschatological plan of salvation and comprises the *people of God* walking towards her reunion with Christ.
- Mary is a figure of the Church, her eschatological image and a prototype of perfection.

The mystery of the Church rooted in the Trinity translates the notion of the *people of God* in the *Fellowship* (Cf. LG). The Mystery of God’s grace is the foundation of the fellowship: The original vertical²⁹⁹ and descendant motion is transformed into a horizontal one – the service to the others, where the grace of God is incarnated in the community and expressed in the mutual love –, and again to the vertical ascending one when the community celebrates the holy mysteries and praises God.

To sum up, the category of the *koinonia* can be understood as a fellowship with the Father, through Jesus in the Holy Spirit – a *communion* in which a believer participates through the Word and Sacraments; as a unity of the Church, unity of the local churches³⁰⁰ (the relation of perichoresis) expressed through the collegiality of the bishops, and the fellowship among all the believers. Finally, the *fellowship* of the Church as a universal sacrament of salvation, that is, a sacramental sign and an instrument of intimate union with God, and of the unity of the whole human race (GS 42).

Diakonia

299 *Koinonia* in the vertical dimension is the fellowship with the Father (His fidelity and call, Cf. 1Cor 1:9; 1Jn 1:3) and with the Son (ecclesial and Eucharistic fellowship, Cf. 1Cor 10:16-17), and in the vertical dimensions one *of* the Spirit (whose action produces and sustains the Church, Cf. 2Cor 13:13=Rom 5:5; Flp 2:1-4). Naturally, the expression has more meanings (Cf. Ibid., 461.): e.g., a communion of the faithful as the joint responsibility for the life and mission of the Church, or the Church herself as a community – the sacrament for the salvation of the world (Cf. LG 41.42).

300 Despite the existence of multiple local churches, there is only one Eucharist, thus only one Church.

The Church is concomitantly connected to her mission:³⁰¹ The question of her identity is associated with her activity. The former is addressed by LG (the Church *ad intra*: a key category of *koinonia*), while the latter by GS (the Church *ad extra*: a key notion of *diakonia*). The mission is a communication of faith following the commandments of Jesus (Cf. Mt 28:19). Up until the CVII, the common comprehension of the missionary activity consisted in converting the infidels. Then, the Council Fathers found inspiration in the Trinity and the missions of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The Church, in analogy to Christ, opts for its mission within the world (GS 1.4) as a social institution (LG I, IV) that works with human resources and is sympathetic with humankind and its history (GS 1-3, LG 1). She follows in her mission the model of the mission of Christ,³⁰² that is, a life of poverty and service (Cf. LG 8, AD 5). Her solidarity with the world is expressed in GS by its objective (=dialogue³⁰³), content (=compelling questions of the modern world) and methodology (=phenomenology). However, her mission also follows one of the Holy Spirit in its pneumatological dimension: Despite a variety of different ministries in the Church, a plurality of charismas and services, there is only one Spirit.

Succinctly, the general mission of the Church, *diakonia*, can only follow the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. His activity is, in turn, expressed by the triple *munus*. Therefore, all the activities and functions of the Church that form part of its general mission from her very beginning (Cf. Act 2:42) sum up to three groups, namely *martyria*, *leitourgia* and *diakonia* – the service of the Word, divine cult, and charitable love, respectively. They correspond to the mentioned triple task of Jesus Christ (a prophet, a priest, and a king) and comprise the global salvific mission of the Church.

The claim, the “*Church is a universal sacrament of salvation*” (GS 42.45; SC 5.26; AG 1.5) connects the essence of the Church (*koinonia*) with its functionality (*diakonia*). The origin of her mission lies within the mystery of Christ; she is a sign of His presence in the world, “*a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race*” (LG 1). The category of a sacrament refers to both an essential (an institution, visible and invisible at the same time) and a functional dimension of the Church (historical experience of the salvation), however, always in connection with the Trinitarian God. The Church as a sacramental sign implies and transmits divine salvation for humans.³⁰⁴

EG emphasizes the Church's missionary aspect (See Chap. 5.6 for *diakonia* as a social service). The mission is not defined and prescribed geographically anymore; there is no more a division between the Christian world and one of the infidels. The mission is the very identity of the Church expressed by her triple task. Accordingly, she is a *community of missionary disciples* (Cf. EG 24), whose whole structure must be oriented towards evangelization (Cf. EG 27). Everybody

301 In words of Dianich (Cf. Severino Dianich, *Chiesa in missione: per una ecclesiologia dinamica* (Torino: Edizioni Paoline, 1985), 172–173.), the Church not only carries out the mission; the mission realizes the Church.

302 In fact, every ecclesiology presupposed Christology as there is no evangelical service (*diakonia*) without the spirit of Christ (Cf. Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” 469.) as witnessed by the Christian tradition, Cf. Jn 13:12-17 (the lavatory); L 22:24-27 (the Last Supper) and Mc 10:42-45 (a petition of sons of Zebedee).

303 The dialogue with the world plays out at double level (Cf. *ibid.*, 468.): at the first one, the Council Farther try to formulate the thought of the Church about a human, and at the second, they address some “urgent problems” of the world.

304 Cf *ibid.*, 473.

is responsible by virtue of baptism and confirmation for the mission. A permanent mission means a permanent reform, and this is only possible through a focus on the mission. Such a *community of missionary disciples* should offer the infinite mercy of God to the people of the world. She should accompany all the pains and sufferings; she must involve in the lives of the people. Most assuredly, she should celebrate in the liturgy every small victory (Cf. EG 24).

Leitourgia

The CVII does not primarily understand the sacraments using the category of the cult but rather a *mysterion*. Then, the Church is a mystery that participates in the mystery of Christ, and her whole liturgical celebration is the action of Christ (Cf. SC 7), who realizes his salvation in the liturgy (SC 6). Even though the liturgy is already “*a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy*” (SC 8) and the origin of all the power of the Church (SC 10), it does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church (SC 9). The liturgy is oriented toward the mission, namely announcing the gospel, preaching (*martyria*) and the service of charity (*diakonia*). In this sense, the Church is indeed the universal sacrament of salvation (SC 5.26), a privileged way, though not the only one. As a sacrament, she expresses the real presence of Christ through his sacramental presence i) in the members of the Church, and ii) in the ecclesial signs such as a reunion of the ecclesial assembly, common prayer, preaching, sacraments, etc.

The rigid structure from before the CVII, that is, the division of the members of the Church between the laypeople and presbyters conceived in hierarchical terms, changed in favour of a more inclusive model.³⁰⁵ Looking back into history, the structure in the first community was double: Ministries (described in the narratives of the Last Supper using the categories of *election, mission, vocation, power, service*) and charismas (Cf. 1Cor 12). LG reclaims the double structure witnessed in the NT and describes the hierarchy (Cf. LG III) not before but as a part of the *people of God* (Cf. LG II), highlighting that ordained ministry and laypeople have equal dignity. LG II,10 addresses the question of the *common priesthood* of the faithful and the *ministerial priesthood*. The community in Jerusalem initially presided over by the Twelve (Cf. Lk 22:30) with Peter at the head (Cf. Mt 16:13-20) served as the model. Later, with the expansion of the new religion and forced escapes of the apostles in different cities, grew the importance of local groups of *elders (presbyteroi)*, Cf. Acts 21:18) – especially in Jewish communities –, and deacons in the pagan communities (Cf. Act 6:3). Special attention deserves the descriptions of the situation by the epistles of Paul. Three redactional periods of letters of Paul attest three different phases of the construction and development of the communities: His first letters speak about the construction phase of the Church, the deutero-letters of Paul are dedicated to the stabilization of the communities, and the pastoral letters intend to protect the first communities against heresies. Phil 1,1 is the only place in the authentic letters of Paul that mentions *episkopoio* and *diakonoio*. In the second and third period (and corresponding letters), the structure is already well-established. There are several mentions of *episcopoi, presbyteroi, diakonoio* (Cf. 1Tim 2:1-13; 2Tim 2:19-21), that is, the classical triplet also witnessed in 1Pe, 2Jn, 3Jn, Acts. It seems that at the very origins, two lines of structures were prevailing, namely elders in the Jewish (*presbyteroi*) and bishops and deacons in the Greek communities. In the third period, a bishop assisted by priests and deacons,

305 Cf. *ibid.*, 479.

and presiding over the community complemented both structures. Jesus did not himself directly institute this triple structure, but his disciples did. The complete omission of the expression “priest” in the NT is striking and underscores that the first communities did not understand priesthood as a continuation of the Jewish cultic priesthood, but rather it was a ministerial service. It also highlights the character of Jesus’s priesthood that was not primarily a ritual expression but much more an existential realization, that is, the offer of the own life in the service in favour of humanity.³⁰⁶

1Pe 2:5.9 lays the foundations for the notion of the *common priesthood* of faithful. Therein, the *people of God* of the New Covenant are designated as a holy and a royal priesthood. Similarly, Ap 1:6 denotes the faithful ‘priests’. The principle idea of the common priesthood is an existential offer of oneself to God, the following of Christ and surrendering the own life in the service to Him.³⁰⁷ The letter of Hebrews addressed both types of the priesthood given that all Christians have only one priest (Cf. Heb 10:21) who is the High priest (Cf. Heb 4:14). He established a perfect communication between God and a human – an insuperable priesthood forever (Heb 7:28) manifested in both the existential offering of the common priesthood and the mediation of the ordained priesthood. Consequently, even the hierarchical priesthood is situated within the bosom of the ecclesial community. The priests collaborate with the bishops (Cf. LG III, 28) in the mission³⁰⁸ of Christ. The imprinted character associates a priest with Christ the Priest in his mission – an ordained receives a charisma for evangelization, and his identity is comprehensible more from the notion of a mission than from some power over the Eucharist (See ‘Ordination’ in Chap. 5.4).

Martyria

The Church as a fellowship is a community that celebrates (*leitourgia*), serves (*diakonia*), testifies, and transfers the message of salvation (*martyria*). The prophetic function has a double dimension, namely one of all Christians (Cf. LG 12a; Heb 1:1-4) and the hierarchical Magisterium (Cf. LG 24). This function is realized by the testimony, in the confession of faith and by charity. Moreover, a particular form of the prophetic function, martyrdom, has always been present in the entire existence of the Church. Under certain conditions, the whole community is considered infallible.³⁰⁹ *Sensus fidei* o *sensus fidelium* has been based on the presence of the Spirit in her (Cf. LG 12b) from the very beginning (Cf. Hch 2:1-13; 1Tes 2:13; 1Cor 12). Except for the Magisterium and theology, *sensus fidei* o *sensus fidelium* is, indeed, considered a third way of mediating the revelation as an existential form of knowledge. It does not equal “public opinion” but rather manifests faith in its expressions – what and how the Christians pray and what they testify. The CVI treated the question of infallibility and the role of *sensus fidei* that, despite being recognized, was diminished by the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*

306 Cf. *ibid.*, 483.

307 Cf. *ibid.*, 482.

308 PO 4-6 addresses the participation of the presbyters on the triple *munus* of Christ.

309 The notion of infallibility in the teaching of faith and the customs acquires a double form (Cf. *Ibid.*, 490.): a) it excludes the possibility of error in the questions of faith and customs with respect to the announced contents, and b) it guarantees the impossibility of deceiving and being deceived in the teaching and predication. LG explains that these exclusions of error guarantee the identity of faith of the people of God of the New Covenant because it is the Spirit who stirs up and sustains faith of the Church (Cf. *ibid.*, 491.).

to “passive” infallibility. Nevertheless, the constitutions of the CVII returned to the ancient tradition and the importance of *sensus fidei*.

The Magisterium of the Church has a double foundation (Cf. LG 24), namely, a Christological one, considering the bishops who continue as the successors of the apostles the mission of Jesus of evangelization (Cf. Mt 11:5), teaching (Cf. Mt 23:8) and testifying the truth; and a pneumatological one, with the principal role of the Holy Spirit and his mission in the Church, e.g., charismas. There are five different perspectives to treat the ecclesial Magisterium, specifically, according to the subject, the type, the quality, the object, and the infallibility. The most important division is according to the type of the Magisterium:³¹⁰

- Ordinary and not universal (is not infallible): A bishop of a diocese, a conference of bishops, the Pope not speaking *ex-cathedra*.
- Ordinary and universal (it is infallible): A council of bishops together with Pope teaching in a matter of faith and customs some “ultimate doctrine”.
- Extraordinary (it is infallible): An ecumenical council or Pope defining a revealed truth.

In terms of quality, the Magisterium can be authentic or infallible. While the former represents binding teaching which is, however, not infallible, the latter pertains only to an ecumenical council or the Pope speaking *ex-cathedra* defining the truth of faith.

5.4 Sacraments

There has been a long way until the present comprehension of sacraments that moreover inherently connects to a particular understanding of the Church herself and the relationship between grace and nature (See Chap. 5.2). Divine grace expressed in relational terms as a plenitude of human nature and its full realization, and as something not external to a human being, presents sacraments as those privileged ways of actualization of Christ’s salvific work in the liturgy which is “*the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows*” (SC 10). According to Rahner, the Church is the *Grundsakrament*; that fulfils herself through sacraments, which are realizations of her self-fulfilment. Then the celebration of the sacraments can be considered as the unfolding of the sacramental structure of the Church. She is a real symbol and a sacrament of a divine self-communication (Cf. LG1) complemented by sacraments as the manifestations of the liturgy in the world and as ecclesial gestures of Christ in the encounter with a human. That means that a sacrament is not some *reified* extrinsic object providing God’s grace through the power of a priest, but rather a celebration of the mystery that introduces a person into the relationship with the Trinity itself. This celebration incorporates Christians into the Body of Christ and in the history of salvation. The self-donation of God, the donation of His grace initiates the sacramental dynamics. It needs, however, a response of humans as it fully respects their freedom. The community invokes the Father in the Holy Spirit in the *epicletic* action. The “river of grace” passes inevitably through the *anamnesis*, in which the Easter events are commemorated and actualized, and the community is sanctified by the reception of this grace. The dynamism continues in the prognostic (prophetic) action. It demonstrates the presence of the Kingdom of

310 Cf. Madrigal Terrazas, “La Iglesia y su misterio,” 493.

God and its construction through the service of love in the world. Finally, the dynamism turns back to the Father in the *doxological* movement of rendering worship and praising the Lord. In summary, sacramental dynamism is a series of actions with specific consequences:

- *Epicletic*³¹¹ actions realized in the unity of the Spirit who constructs the Church through the Sacraments and prepares Her for the mission.
- *Anamnetic* and *prophetic* actions exercised by, with and in Christ, namely as the actualization and prolongation of his actions in favour of justice (baptism) and self-donation (Eucharist) and the corresponding prophetic acts of hope (confirmation), peace (reconciliation), compassion (anointing the sick), service (ministry), and fidelity (matrimony), respectively.
- *Doxological* actions oriented towards worship and praising the Lord.

The understanding of sacraments as ecclesial acts originated by Christ that sanctify humans, confer grace, edify the Church, and render divine cult, and as the signs and symbols that strengthen faith, prepare for practising charity and send out Christians for the edification of the Kingdom of God, is not original but a result of a long development of thought and understanding the Church and God's grace. For Augustin, a sacrament is an effective sign of invisible grace and a symbol that commemorates the paschal mystery. While the visible part, *signum*, comprises material *elementum* and immaterial *verbum*, the invisible part encompasses *virtus* (=the power of the Spirit that makes it effective) and *res* (the reality actualized by the sacrament). For Isidore of Sevilla, a sacrament is a realization of a rite in a liturgical celebration, *res gesta*. It is not anymore, a commemorative sign that makes an invisible reality visible, there is no reference to Christ's life (and death), but it is rather a concealed divine action of the Spirit on the material thing. This trend to a *reification* of sacraments culminates with Hugh of St. Victor for whom a sacrament is a visible material element that represents through its similarity, signifies because of its institution, and contains invisible grace through the performative words of a minister (Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacr.* I,9,2). Peter Lombard established the Septenary in the 12th century. He and others recover the lost character of sacraments as the signs that not only contain but also confer God's grace. According to him, it is both a sign and a form of grace. Sacraments are, in consequence, an image and a cause of grace at the same time³¹² (Cf. P. Lombardo, *Sent.* IV, d.1, Chap. 4.2). The process of a new vision of sacraments culminates with Thomas Aquinas: For him, a sacrament is not only a container that contains a remedy (=Hugh of St. Victor) but a remedy itself; it is both an effective sign (commemorating the past, manifesting the effects of grace in humans, announcing the future glory), an instrumental³¹³ cause of grace, and essentially an action

311 The invocations of the divinity are present even in the primitive religions; however, in the case of sacraments the pneumatological interpretation highlights the action of the invoked Spirit, that is, the character of relationship and communication between a human and God and avoiding at the same time the eventual interpretation of the sacramental effects as some kind of "sorcery".

312 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 820.

313 God is the primary and principal cause. Sacraments are only separate instrumental causes of grace. The teaching opposed the Franciscan concept of a disposition cause, according to which a sacrament does not cause grace but is rather only a disposition of a soul that prepares a person for grace. Although it might sound like the detail in wording, the principal difference behind both concepts consists in the art of the relationship between grace and human's nature. Only the position of Thomas preserves the dialogical nature of their relationship. The principle *ex opere operato* claims that the efficacy of sacraments depends neither on the faith of a minister nor on the faith

of cult with an objective of the sanctification of humans and worshipping of God. The official teaching of the Church also reflects an advance of theological thought, e.g., the fourth Council of Lateran (1215) or the Decree for Armenians of the Council of Florence (1439). An important question concerns the institution of sacraments: While Hugh of St. Victor and P. Lombard defend a mediated institution – not directly by Christ but rather by his apostles, and Alexander of Hale introduces double institution, that is, by Christ and by Apostles, Thomas Aquinas rejects these attitudes and claims a direct institution. In the posterior development, some nuances rectify the extreme positions and clarify the distinction between a generic and a specific institution. Neither the former nor the latter corresponds to the determination of form and matter (Cf. Lombard). The Council of Trent affirms that the essence of a sacrament is not the same thing as its matter and form³¹⁴ and, consequently, the Church can change their matter or form (*salva illorum substantiae*)³¹⁵; however, it is Christ who institutes the essence of sacraments thus is unchangeable. Rahner defends a direct institution as well: The Church as *Grundsakrament* contains within herself all the sacraments³¹⁶. According to him, the institution of sacraments is associated with the foundation of the Church and not necessarily with a specific word of Jesus for each sacrament. The claim of Schillebeeckx highlights a dialogical character of a sacrament and the immediate institution by Christ: A sacrament is an encounter vital with Christ and, at the same time, a visible act of the Church. Sacraments are specific encounters with Christ, each one in a different form, which expresses themselves as symbolic elements of salvific deeds of Christ acting in the Church.³¹⁷

Without denying the influence and the contributions of many theologians, the teaching of Councils and Magisterium of the Church over the centuries, the principal contribution to the present understanding of sacraments arrived with the early 20th century and culminated with the CVII (Cf. LG 8, 11, 15; UR 3,22; AG 26 and others): In many cases, the theologians in the first half of the 20th century and then the CVII corrected and expanded comprehension of a sacrament distorted and biased particularly by the interpretations of the Council of Trent as a reaction on the Reform³¹⁸ – the role of Christ and Eastern events are absolutely central (Cf. SC 7), the new understanding of the Church in terms of equal dignity (see Chap. 5.3 and the concept of the common priesthood of the faithful e.g., in LG 10) and same fundamental task of a mission (GS, AA 2,3), the ecumenical dimension. Moreover, the ecclesial-communitarian dimension has gained importance by connecting with the conception of *res et sacramentum* of Rahner.³¹⁹ The

of a person that receives a sacrament but only on divine action. It was *de facto* in use already in the 2nd century in the debates about the validity of baptism and the 3rd century in discussions with donatists (Cf. *Ibid.*, 821.).

314 Peter Lombard set the institution and determination of the form and matter equal and identical with the essence of a sacrament.

315 As witnessed in 1947 when Pius XII, indeed, changed the form of the ordination of priests.

316 There were some critics exercised on this statement as sacraments are rather the actualization of the mystery of Christ than of the Church.

317 Cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter With God* (Lanham, Boulder, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1987), 132.

318 Many times, *sola fides* characterizes the Reform. The Council of Trent by *ex opere operato* understood incorrectly as “automatic” reception of grace without faith, consent, or effort of the faithful.

319 Rahner, inspired by the ternary conception of the sacrament, e.g., one of Thomas Aquinas who understood a sacrament as a triplet, namely *sacramentum tantum – res et sacramentum – res tantum*, interprets the middle term, *res et sacramentum* ecclesiastically: Each sacrament incorporates a Christian to the Body of Christ. It is the effect of the former and the cause of the latter. For instance, penitence as a sacrament is self-fulfilment of the

personalist dimension once again becomes highlighted with Schillebeeckx. In summary, the sacraments are:³²⁰ Real symbols³²¹, performative words – a creator of reality³²², transforming representation³²³, celebrations of the Church³²⁴ and signs of the redeemed world³²⁵.

Baptism

This sacrament of faith is a sign of conversion, an entry into a new life, participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, and a gate into the ecclesial community of equals³²⁶. The ecclesial practice of baptism of infants³²⁷ exhibits a certain paradox because it does not fulfil some of the elemental above mentioned elements. The scriptural testimony can bring more light as there are principally two distinct traditions. Firstly, the Acts of Apostles highlight a sequence *kerygma* – faith – baptism that narratively describes the sacrament celebrated by both individuals and entire households. The baptismal formula employs the name of Jesus. Secondly, Paul speaks about the experience of baptism (Cf. e.g., Rm 6) that gives rise to faith and its expansion.³²⁸ Both forms of the sacrament, namely of the adults and the infants – although with different characteristics – have well-established theological grounding.

There are several ways how to describe the “effects” of baptism. Considering a general characteristic of sacraments as symbols,³²⁹ it is a real symbol of the reception of a person into the Church; this communion, in turn, is a real symbol of the communion with Christ, which is, finally, a real symbol of the participation in the life of the Trinity. The NT ascribes to baptism the participation in the destiny of Christ. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit that pardons sins and leads into a new life. The Tradition speaks then about *sphragis*,³³⁰ *indelible character*, *sanctifying grace*, and *infusion* of virtues. Later, the CVII discovers an ecumenical dimension – one of the effects is the

Church, specifically: *sacramentum tantum* is an exterior sign, a matter, and a form – in this case, the Church and the penitent together; *res et sacramentum* is the middle term, invisible, the effect of *sacramentum tantum* – peace and reconciliation with the Church – and the cause of grace (*res tantum*) – unity and charity, that is, peace with the Church and Christ.

320 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 830–839.

321 Whereas a sign only represents and informs; a symbol realizes the represented reality.

322 According to SC7, Jesus Christ is present in the words of the Scriptures. Consequently, both the Word of God and his Body have salvific power (Cf. DV 17,21). Therefore, the Word has a performative character; it creates reality and transforms it internally, e.g., baptism as an entry into the Church.

323 In the liturgical celebrations, the sacraments transform the participants as they really “enter” in the represented “drama” of the celebrated event.

324 The liturgical actions are celebrations of the Church (Cf. SC 26). Therefore, the sacraments are not individual actions but of an entire community (Cf. SC 27).

325 There are two meanings of the sacraments as the signs of the redeemed world. Specifically, they are an expression of faith (in creation) and hope (of consummation), and they show a direction in which one can and should search for redemption and consummation.

326 This equality is based on dignity and resemblance of everyone's vocation to the triple *munus* of Christ as a priest, a king, and a prophet.

327 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 871.

328 Paul describes in his letters various dimensions of baptism: Christological – through baptism we submerge into the death to resurrect with Christ, it is a step from the rein of *sarx* into the reign of Spirit; pneumatological – the Spirit is the first gift of baptism that empowers us for the realization of our filiation; ecclesiological – through baptism we are incorporated into a mystical Body of Christ, in His Church, and finally eschatological – through baptism we participate on the Easter events and the victory of Christ.

329 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 874.

330 *Sphragis* (seal, imprint, mark) has a long tradition of use, both in the Bible and the Tradition.

unity with all the baptized (Cf. UR 22). The most controversial and disputed point concerns the salvific effect of baptism. Is it (and therewith the Church) strictly necessary for salvation? The tension is perceivable already in the Bible with the texts supporting both the necessity of baptism and the Church, such as Jn 3:5 or Mk 16:16, and a universal salvific will of God (Cf. 1Tim 2:1-3) complemented with the sufficiency of “acting” love (Cf. Mt 25:31-46). Even though it might seem that the theological tradition expressed even in the teaching of Magisterium (e.g. the Council of the Florence) had been inclined more and more to the acceptance of the necessity of baptism for salvation, parallel thinking has always been present as well: Scholastic theology developed the theory of *desire of baptism* (having the same justifying effect as the physical baptism); the Council of Trent reclaimed this theology affirming the validity of *desire of God and his salvation* as fulfilling satisfactory conditions of salvation, and finally, the CVII, assumes the necessity of the Church for salvation (Cf. LG 14) as a “standard way”, however, admits the possibility of the salvation for all persons faithfully following their conscience because Christ died for everyone.³³¹ In summary, the only necessary requirement for salvation is the communion with God by living with an acting love to a fellow person, while the affiliation with the Church has a mediating function as God leads a person to faith over many different ways (Cf. AG 7).

From the theological point of view, the baptism of infants is well-grounded; however, in recent years, the dominant (Occidental) culture argues with the free individual decisions of persons in ever-growing areas of life including their affiliation with the Church through baptism.

Confirmation

The sacrament of confirmation was always closely linked to baptism (and to Eucharist) as a constituent of initial rites. Christian initiation is not a series of static acts, moments in which a person “receives” something that accompanies that person further on, but rather a dynamical process of maturation and incorporation of a person into a mystery of Christ and his Body. Sacraments are special moments, whose “fruitfulness”, however, depends also on the “effort” of a person as they have double character, they are both a divine gift and a human task.

With the unitary characterization (Cf. SC 71) of the Christian initiation process, the differences in practice over the centuries in the western and eastern churches (baptism and confirmation separated or joined; emphasis on anointing or imposition of the hands) do not play the crucial role.³³² The new form of the ritual established by Pope Paul VI recovered the crucial symbolic value of the *seal* of the Holy Spirit which in antiquity – when the initiation process was even timely unitary – concluded the rites of baptism and confirmation. Today, although both

331 The affirmation is not absolute; it holds only for people who do not believe in Christ without their own blame (Cf. LG 16) – the statement, however, permits a vast range of interpretations in practice, although the intention seems quite clear.

332 The claim is comprehensible only from the actual theology (Cf. Schneider, *Manual de Teología Dogmática*, 887): The western theology divided both sacraments combining the practical (due to the rapid growth of the communities, bishops could not visit all of them as soon as required for imposition of the hands and anointment) and theological reasons (based on the doctrine of the original sin, the salvation required baptism as soon as possible). Interestingly, even though according to CIC83 in c. 882-888, a bishop is an “ordinary minister” of confirmation, it admits – and the pastoral practice frequently confirms – a confirmation performed by priests (Cf. Cf. *ibid.*, 889.).

sacraments are conferred in most cases at two distinct moments, the symbolism is the same as this *seal* confirms, ratifies, and consummates the initiation process.

Eucharist

This “*fount and apex of the whole Christian life*” (Cf. LG 11) as one of the seven sacraments is a symbol and as such employs the physical reality – bread and wine – for representing the invisible reality of grace. Its origin can be traced back to the three defining moments connected to Jesus’s life: The Last Supper, famous banquets of Jesus with sinners (Cf. Mk 2:18-19) and meals with the Resurrected. The Kingdom of God constitutes the core of Jesus’s words and deeds, and meals and banquets were the signs of the presence of prophesied Kingdom (e.g., Is 25:6-8) and an anticipation of the future messianic banquet (Cf. Mk 2:17, Lk 7:36-50) even for marginalized and excluded, that is, a sign of the merciful God carrying for His people (See “Messiah” in Chap. 4.7 for details). The Last Supper is laden with symbolic meaning – each gesture and word about the bread given out and wine offered determine the meaning of the Eucharist (See Chap. 4.5). Nevertheless, it cannot be explained exclusively by Jesus’s life terrestrial life:³³³ The recall of his life and death could remind him to his apostles, but only the resurrection can cause his real presence in the Eucharist. For a new understanding of Eucharist, the meals with the Resurrected provide a decisive input (Cf. e.g., Lk 24:13-35; Jn 21:1-14) as they help to grasp a new art of the presence of Jesus in the community and their meals. It is precisely the connection between Eucharist and the resurrection that can reconcile two extremes, namely an attempt to reduce the Eucharist to a mere reminder of the Last Supper and the Cross and a danger of claiming the physical reifying presence of Christ in Eucharist.

Eucharist is neither a simple reminder of the past events nor their reiteration. It is rather an *anamnesis*, a *memorial*, an actualization of the unique sacrifice of Christ. His sacrifice at the Cross is unique and unrepeatable (*ephapax*). However, the sacrifice at the Cross and the mass are not two conflicting sacrifices. Eucharist is the actualization of the sacrifice of the Cross (= sacrament) and, at the same time, a transforming power (= sacrifice) and, at the same time, a transforming power (= sacrifice) that engages faithful in the “Jesus’s cause” of *diakonia* (prophetic dimension). Participation in the Eucharist incorporates a person in the Body of Christ, creates the community and preserves unity while maintaining diversity.³³⁴ Although it is the Church that makes the Eucharist (Cf. PO 5), the real acting subject is Jesus Christ. He is not a mere “object” of the sacrifice, a victim, but the High Priest who is present (Cf. SC 7) and offers himself (Cf. Heb 7:27) to open access to God even for the community that can thus participate in his offering (Cf. Heb 10).

Nobody doubted the real presence of Christ in Eucharist in the first centuries, although the mode of his presence was unclear, e.g., St. Ambrose defended the transformation of bread and wine into a new reality, whereas St. Augustine preferred symbolic language of signs and sacraments.³³⁵

333 Cf. Carlos Martínez Oliveras, “Los sacramentos de la Iglesia,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 568–569.

334 Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 7.

335 Cf. Martínez Oliveras, “Los sacramentos de la Iglesia,” 571.

Several councils addressed medieval disputes about the presence of Christ, e.g., IV Lateran³³⁶ (1215), Constance (1415) and Florence (1439), searching for a balance between the extremes of *physical realism*³³⁷ and *empty symbolism*³³⁸. The Council of Trent responded to the objections of Luther³³⁹ with a series of affirmations about the real, true and substantial presence³⁴⁰ of Christ in Eucharist. The CVII recovers the fuller meaning of Eucharist and affirms the presence of Christ in the entire liturgy (in the Scriptures, in the Priest, in the Assembly, etc., Cf. SC 7) and highlights three dimensions of Eucharist, namely anamnetical as a memorial (SC 47), pneumatological (PO 5) and ecclesiological (SC 10; LG 11).

The new post-CVII approaches try to formulate the presence of Christ not as a presence of a thing but of the Resurrected:³⁴¹ e.g., Durwell interprets the real presence with the eschatological meaning – *Kyrios*, the Lord with the power above everything, brings the entire creation (including bread and wine) to its fullness. According to Rahner, the word does not only find its place in the Church (=protestant vision), but the Eucharist is the Word of the Church. The Christ is really present with the *anamnesis* of the words of the Last Supper.

Penitence

A sacrament of penitence is the sacrament **of** and **in** the crisis: The former, while it concerns a person in a state of rupture of the relationship with God and others, the latter, while recent moral subjectivism does not feel a necessity of an “external judge” to decide what is wrong with a person; additionally, it is in a crisis due to individualism and a sensation of unnecessary “mediation” between a person and God and due to the loss of conscience of the notion of sin and, last but not least, because any failure in our culture of success³⁴² is considered unacceptable and in need to hide. It is also a sacrament that has undergone notable changes over the centuries. Perhaps it is precisely the testimony of those changes and the historical development that may cast fresh light on the current situation and opens a possibility of a new form of this sacrament in the future. Two different visions working together comprise the necessary core of the sacrament, namely anthropological and Christological.³⁴³ The former shows a person as a being with the conscience about having a conscience that allows for becoming aware of our solidarity with evil and egocentrism (=the root of sin) and to rediscover our original call of a being *ex-centric*. The latter symbolizes, manifests and realizes promised salvation – without an actualization of the paschal mystery in the sacrament, salvation would be only an empty promise. Therefore,

336 The IV Council of Letran defines the doctrine of transubstantiation according to which the body of Christ is not present according to its natural appearance, but rather in form of bread and wine. In the moment of consecration, the essence of the species changes into a body of Christ, but the accidentals remain without change.

337 Pascasio Radberto defends the posture where the physical body of Christ is identical with the Eucharistic species.

338 Berengar of Tours claims the symbolic and spiritual presence of Christ in the species that is based on the subjective faith.

339 Luther rejected the transubstantiation for its pagan origin but defended the real presence of Christ.

340 The Council of Trent affirms the real presence of Christ with his soul and divinity. Moreover, it confirms the doctrine of transubstantiation (Cf. *Ibid.*, 574.) of the Councils of Lateran and Florence.

341 Cf. *ibid.*, 577–578.

342 Cf. José María Rodríguez Olaizola, “La cultura del éxito,” *Sal Terrae* 90, no. 1059 (2002): 634.

343 Cf. Pierre Tripier, *La penitencia: Un sacramento para la reconciliación*, trans. Ernesto Baquer (Madrid: Marova, 1979), 71–73.

reconciliation is not magic nor psychotherapy but an authentic celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. The purpose of the sacrament is, consequently, reconciliation of “penitent” with God (Cf. PO 5), giving her peace and tranquillity (Cf. DH 1674), with an ecclesial community (Cf. Mt 18:18; Jn 20:23) restoring the ruptured relations due to sin (Cf. LG 11) and with the person herself and the entire creation. It is a dynamic process that integrates the destructive past, a real movement of reconstruction of peace and transparency, and anticipation of eschatological reconciliation (Cf. CCC 1470).

The reform of the sacrament of reconciliation of 1973 recognizes three forms: i) An individual reconciliation, ii) an individual confession and absolution celebrated within a “communal” reconciliation, and iii) a general confession and absolution in serious cases. The most common present form is an individual dialogue with a minister.³⁴⁴ It begins in the heart of a penitent who repents her sins (contrition) and confesses them orally. The process concludes with the absolving words of minister and penance (satisfaction) as a demonstration of the changing dynamics and an effort of a penitent to restore the said relationships. A dynamic character of the sacraments preserves it from reductive visions trying to specify the “time of forgiveness” (reconciliation in the strict sense) either in the moment of inner repentance (=emphasis on subjectivity in the first scholastic) or in the moment of absolution (=total power of the sacrament delivered by the words of a minister, defended by D. Scottus).

Anointment of the Sick

The CVII recovered the old name of the sacrament to the “anointment of the sick” (Cf. SC 73) instead of the ‘Extreme Unction’ or the ‘Last Rites’. The change of a name carries along concomitantly the change of the meaning:³⁴⁵ It is not only a preparation for eternity a dying person (Cf. Thomas Aquinas) but also a sacrament that treats a person in her corporal-spiritual complexity and grants her strength and relief in the sickness at the corporal, psychological and spiritual levels and a pardon of sins. The pivotal idea is a renovation of the relationship with God in acute danger of life. This understanding of the anointment goes back to ancient comprehension of the sickness as a complex phenomenon connected to spirituality (and a question of sin as a rupture of the relationship with God) and not only to a pure physicality. Then, the healing actions of Jesus (Cf. Mt 11:5; Lk 11:20) are signs of God’s visiting of His people and the actions of ministers of the Church (Cf. Mk 6:12-13) as a prolongation of His salvific mission attested from the very beginnings (Cf. Jas 5:14-15). The very symbolic of the sacrament – when a priest lays on his hands on a person and then performs an anointment on the front and the hands of a person while accompanying his actuation with the prayer – well reflects the holistic approach to the person.

Ordination

The meaning and interpretation of the Priesthood changed radically with the new image of the Church in the CVII: She, as *the people of God*, is not a hierarchy of ministers (See Chap. 5.3) but

344 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 953.

345 Cf. *ibid.*, 965.

rather a communion of faithful that are all entrusted triple function of a priest, a prophet and a king. She and all her members shall proclaim the Word (*martyria*), live accordingly (*diakonia*) and celebrate together symbolically what they are called to live (*leitourgia*). This common priesthood of faithful is rooted in the existential sacrifice of Jesus and all the faithful and is closely related to the ministerial priesthood though “*they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree*” (LG 10). Therefore, the difference between the two is not only functional (= protestant understanding). Power of an ordained priest does not consist primarily in the consecration of the Eucharist and pardon of sins (= Trent) but much more in his service to the Church’s unity, and as a representative of Christ (*in persona Christi*) and the Church (*in persona ecclesiae*):³⁴⁶ The priestly ordination through laying on of the bishop’s hands and epicletic action express not only a transmission of a ministry (a function) but a petition of the Holy Spirit that capacitates the person for the new role. It is the very Christ in person who actuates in this sign that realizes the Church. Jesus remains faithful to his promise and his task, and so must the Church – independent of the actuation of an individual priest and his subjective disposition. A priest is a real symbol of Christ’s priesthood as a mediator; not according to his personal faith but in virtue of the *ministry* conferred to him. Additionally, he is a real symbol of the Body of Christ, the Church, in proclaiming her faith and teaching. Therefore, the ordained priesthood is not only a function (= union and edification of the Body of Christ: proclaiming the Gospel, celebrating the sacraments, the direction of the community) but also comprises a sacramental dimension, namely, it is a specific materialization of the sacramental realization of the mystery of the Church, that is, a continuation of Christ’s mission in the Church.

Marriage

The Christian marriage is both an anthropological reality³⁴⁷ and a sacrament, that is, it refers, signifies, expresses, and realizes something beyond the visible reality, namely the divine love towards His people and Christ’s love towards the Church. Thus the marriage between the baptised is inserted in the history of salvation and actualizes not only the relationship between Adam and Eve but also one between Christ and his Church.³⁴⁸ Moreover, the sacramental marriage not only is an image of Christ’s love to his Church, but also a participation in this love (Cf. LG 11, GS 48). The sacramentality of marriage expresses, consequently, that the mutual acceptance of human love represents and realizes the divine acceptance of people, that is, God’s Covenant with humankind (Cf. Gen 9; 15; Os 1-3; Jer 31:3-4) specified further in the identification of Christ with the Church (Cf. Ef 5:25-32). Consequently, a family as a *home Church*, a sign of faith and proximity of Christ, can fulfil in the mutual love the grand mystery of Christ’s love for his Church (Cf. Ef 5:32). The fundamental juridical criterion for the marriage to be sacramental is the baptism of the spouses. A simple vision in which “*validity = sacramentality = indissolubility = impossibility of a new marriage*” is put in the question.³⁴⁹ All the equalities but the first are the dogmatic consequences of the sacramentality: When a sacramental marriage indeed is a symbol

346 Cf. *ibid.*, 986–987.

347 And in this sense, there is not much difference with other cultures and religions. It expressed a constitutive dimension of a person – her relational character.

348 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1006.

349 Cf. *ibid.*, 1009.

of love of Christ and his faithfulness, and the couple participates in this love, then any formal acknowledgement of the dissolution would not correspond to the mentioned fidelity. The first equality – rooted in the Council of Trent that effectively ended a long tradition of alternative forms of marriage – presents a challenge today for many that are only nominally Christians (baptised) but lost their faith. A centuries-long tradition of Orthodox Churches with second marriage (with different level of sacramentality: licit, but sacramentally invalid) could be an inspiring possibility of a solution.

5.5 I expect the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to Come

The title of this paragraph is a literal transcription of (a part of) the third article of the Creed that indicates two fundamental features of the Christian hope, namely the resurrection of the “flesh” and the life of the future world. Nevertheless, it is the second article that provides its rationale. The description of Jesus's life and his past, present and future activity express a dislocation between fulfilment and consummation of his work. The distance between the realization of salvation and its final consummation also marks the life of each Christian.³⁵⁰ Given *eschaton* the culmination and the plenitude of the *proton*, there is also a link to the first article, the God Creator. Thence, the final consummation – both individual and collective – of the creation and the history of salvation is the topic of eschatology, which, in the Christian context, comprises the reflection on the future promise believed by the Christian hope.

Christianity recollected Jewish (and Greek) beliefs and images and adjusting them to the own needs. It affirms that the entire history of salvation with all its hopes found its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, especially in his resurrection. Therefore, Christian eschatology is Christological. Indeed, there are, several eschatologies³⁵¹ oscillating with their propositions between the two poles of comprehension of the arrival of “final” times (See Chap. 4.7 for different conceptions of the Kingdom of Heaven), that is, between the 'already'³⁵² and the 'not yet'³⁵³ of eschatology. These tensions were already present in the first communities e.g., the community of John favours the personified (Jesus is *eschaton*) eschatology of highly presentist nature (Cf. Jn 4:23), whereas the Pauline theology articulates both dimensions, in the present (= we are already redeemed, Cf. Rm 8:23) and in the future (we still await the definitive liberation of the death and final consummation, Cf. Col 2:12; Ef 2:5-6). Yet another approach is a “timeless” eschatology, outside of history, accessible only by an existential act of faith. The meaning of history is available here and now in an *existential transformation*. However, this approach leads to the split between the Jesus of History and the Christ of the kerygma and completely discards the former. Neither

350 Cf. Gabino Urbarri Bilbao, “Habitar En El Tiempo Escatológico,” in *Fundamentos de Teología Sistemática* (Editorial Desclée de Brouwer, 2003), 646.

351 There are up to eight different “collective eschatologies” in present theology (Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1042.).

352 The eschatology of e.g., Schweitzer is exclusively “futurist”, interpreting the death of Jesus as a complete failure, negating thus the value of his resurrection. Jesus of this interpretation is merely a herald of the future age that failed, having left behind only his ethical message.

353 Dodd represents the opposite extreme affirming the full completion of all of the promises of the AT. The Kingdom of God has fully arrived with Jesus (Cf. Mk 1:15; Lk 17:20).

historical Jesus nor some future expectation but only an existential “arrival of Christ” plays the role for the mentioned transformation.

Eschatology is a theological reflection of the Christian *hope* that invites us to look at the dynamic *end*, at a final consummation of the world and history. Not the changes of the *eschaton* but rather a development of human knowledge about it and a movement towards it imply a dynamical character of eschatology.³⁵⁴ Therefore, eschatology is also a constitutive dimension of faith and a structuring principle of Christian revelation. *Hope*, as well as many other Christian concepts, has a paradoxical nature. It opens a person towards the future, but it compels her already today to act in favour of the realization of the Kingdom of God. The foundation of Christian *hope* is not an uncertain unspecific promise but the very person of Jesus Christ and, therefore, is linked to salvation, the plenitude of personal, social, and cosmical realities without forgetting the importance of the “terrestrial” presence and future.³⁵⁵ Over the centuries, the three indispensable elements of eschatology, namely *logos*³⁵⁶, *eidōs*³⁵⁷ and *ethos*³⁵⁸ developed substantially, however, not at the same pace. Therefore, especially in the last 100 years, there is a large discrepancy between an *eidōs* and *logos*, leaving twisted convictions about Christian teaching and hope. Admittedly, there is an urgent need for hermeneutics that would address the mentioned issues. E.g., Rahner speaks about the whole person in her spiritual and corporal unity considered both in the individual and collective sense and, moreover, in her past, present, and future.³⁵⁹ Such a person is capable of *anamnesis* and *prognosis*, she can look both at the temporal past and anticipate the future. The access to this future is limited to the divine revelation, thus preserving its mysterious character and shielding it from a “cheap” detailed description and “absolute certainties”³⁶⁰. It is an experience of a person with the history of salvation that provides her already now with some “hints” about the future.

Several different concepts – such as *resurrection* (Cf. 1Tes 4:13-17), *beatific vision* (Cf. Ex 33; Mt 5:8; 1Cor 13), *being in God* (Lk 23:42-43) or *eternal life* (Cf. Lv 18:5; Jn 3:15) express the content of the *hope* promised by faith; however, they all find their cornerstone in the participation of a faithful in the resurrection of Christ³⁶¹ (Cf. 1Cor 15). The Bible and the Tradition understand it as a liberation of sins and a divinization of a human. The Christian *hope* not only looks at the divine life as its ultimate objective but has been walking towards it since the *eschaton*, the person of Christ, closely links creation and salvation. God created everything in Christ with a clear intention of the consummation of the creation, again, in Christ. The consummation ensures the

354 Cf. Nurya Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” in *La lógica de la fe: manual de teología dogmática*, ed. Ángel Cordovilla Pérez, vol. 6 (Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2013), 633.

355 Cf. *ibid.*, 634.

356 Eschatological *logos*: Words, explications, descriptions, narrations.

357 The ideas, narrations, and expressions are always accompanied by the imagination – images associated with the stories and the concepts.

358 The stories, words, and concepts together with corresponding images influence and, at least to some extent, govern human behaviour. For instance, the terrible descriptions of the afterlife during the Middle Ages wanted to direct people's behaviour in a certain way.

359 Cf. Karl Rahner, “Principios teológicos de la hermenéutica de las declaraciones escatológicas,” in *Escritos de Teología IV* (Madrid: Taurus, 1964), 433.

360 Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” 635.

361 Jesus Christ, risen from death, has become the first fruits of those who had fallen asleep. Thence, he is the totality of the fulfilled promise (Cf. *ibid.*, 636.).

authentic and true way of being in which human nature will be conformed to in the hypostasis of Christ, leading thus to the coincidence of the communion with him while preserving otherness.³⁶² Thence, the promise and hope are not external to the divine creative action but inner elements. Destiny of humankind and the entire creation as a communion with God are inscribed within them from their very beginning. It is Jesus Christ who granted the world and history their definitive orientation.³⁶³ The Holy Spirit makes the work of Christ universal and “personalized” for everyone.

The arrival of the Lord, who “will come to *judge* the living and the dead”, precedes the mentioned *beatific vision* and *eternal life*. It is an equivalent concept to *parousia* (1Tes 5:23), *apocalypse* (1Cor 1:7), the *day of the Lord* (1Tes 5:2), the arrival of the *Son of Man* (Mk 13:26), that all refer to revelation and consummation of the Kingdom, and a transformation of the entire reality to a *New creation*.³⁶⁴ Although the concept of the *end* contemplates three different meanings, namely the *plenitude* or *consummation*, *objective* or *purpose* and the *conclusion* of the chronological times, – and, consequently, distinct orders of the problem of the cosmological *end of times* and the final consummation of the creation – the “temporal” and “absolute” ends should not be considered entirely dissociated because it would cast doubt on the Creator as the real subject of history.³⁶⁵ The eternal God entered time both in the creation and in the Incarnation. Therefore, the connection between the two invites a human to participate in eternity. The Lord’s proximity is enormous as it is present in the Sacrament of Eucharist, which theologically means that his second arrival³⁶⁶ is very close and has a “mobilizing effect” for Christians.³⁶⁷ Their eschatological hope demonstrates itself in the actuation in the direction of that hope (= actions in favour of the Kingdom, e.g., the political theology of Metz³⁶⁸). However, the relationship between salvation (the Kingdom) and earthly progress (liberation, the work for the Kingdom) is far from clear. For example, Rahner presents salvation as a gratuitous self-communication of God to be freely accepted by a person. Freedom in his conception is not elective (= a choice of) but rather entitative (=leading to a full realization of the self). The salvific history occurs in the history of the world; however, the two are not identical. The former serves as a hermeneutical key for the latter. Although a human work on liberation contributes assuredly to the construction of the Kingdom, it is not salvation, because the consummation remains a divine gift (= is gratuitous). The approaches of the theology of liberation³⁶⁹ (e.g., Gutiérrez, Boff, Ellacuría) emphasize the reciprocal implications of the temporal progress and the growth of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, Christian salvation is historic in essence and depends on the history of the universe. The document “*Human Development and Christian Salvation*”³⁷⁰, inspired by the ontological notions of the Council of Chalcedony, states the connection between human development

362 Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 65.

363 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” 640.

364 Cf. *ibid.*, 647.

365 Cf. *ibid.*, 649.

366 The Bible speaks about the single coming of Christ in three phases, namely Incarnation, Resurrection and *parousia*, though the first Tradition mentioned the second coming of Christ, *parousia*, which followed his terrestrial life. The expression *parousia* refers to the final consummation of the world, the last stage of the conformation of the creation to Christ.

367 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” 653.

368 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1044.

369 Cf. *ibid.*, 1045.

(historical contributions to the edification of the Kingdom) and salvation. However, it is a *unity without confusion* (the Kingdom of God is not merely a work of a human) and a *difference without separation and division*.

Parousia, the Lord's arrival, is linked to the *judgment* not in the classical juridical sense of the word,³⁷¹ but rather as a manifestation (= revelation) of the final meaning of history in its totality. It is the moment of the consummation of the world, and the conclusion of history. An eschatological judgment³⁷² is an expression of the faith in the final salvific intervention of God. It is not a judgment of condemnation but of a justification (= of granting a justice) outside of history (= eschatology)³⁷³ that manifests the meaning of the entire universal and personal history. Therefore, the faith in the final judgment is, primarily, a hope for those who suffered injustice:³⁷⁴ It is not a vengeful hope but reparation and a renovation of reality. Christian resurrection follows the faith in the fidelity of God even after the death (Cf. Mk 12:18ff) and has eschatological, Christocentric and somatic character:³⁷⁵ The resurrection is about to happen after a defeat of the last enemy, death (Cf. 1Cor 15:26), that is, it is a part of the promised *parousia*, even though it was already made possible by the resurrection of Christ. "*The final overcoming of creation's mortality and its eternal survival is not to be realized through a loss of otherness*"³⁷⁶, as there will always be a difference between the creation and the Creator. Moreover, the resurrection concerns the whole person (preserving her identity) and not only of her spiritual part. Christian resurrection is neither without the body nor individual³⁷⁷ nor unworldly. It affects a person in her integrity and identity³⁷⁸ inclusive of her personal and cosmic relationships.³⁷⁹ The body is ontologically

370 International Theological Commission, "Human Development and Christian Salvation," *CTI Documents*, last modified 1976, accessed February 4, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1976_promozione-umana_en.html.

371 This affirmation is in line with the biblical testimony that understood the divine judgment as a royal act of sovereignty over the people as a salvific actuation. The idea is also closely related to the sufferings of Israel in the Exile (Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, "Escatología," 662.): The faith in the judgment of the Lord gives people hope that the justice will prevail when the Lord judges the enemies of Israel.

372 Classical exegesis sees yet another judgment, this time, within history, at the moment of individual death. Nevertheless, neither eschatological nor this "personal" judgment corresponds to the juridical reality (Cf. *Ibid.*, 664.). It is much more a self-judgment, a personal attitude towards Christ and his salvific offer (Cf. Jn 3:17). Therefore, the purgatory is not a place but an encounter with Christ revealing a person's egoism. This revelation is painful but purifying and healing. In this sense, the suffering is understandable (Cf. Schneider, *Manual de Teología Dogmática*, 1103.). The famous text of the judgment in Mt 25:31ff is an eschatological judgment based on charity towards the others: Again, it is not a judgment in a juridical sense but a revelation of a person's actuation and attitudes towards others that serve a basis for personal responsibility (Cf. *ibid.*, 1100.). Although the NT highlights the personal responsibility (Cf. e.g., Rom 2:6), there is no explicit testimony of a particular judgment that would be different from the universal general one (Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, "Escatología," 669.).

373 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, "Escatología," 663.

374 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1101.

375 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, "Escatología," 681.

376 Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 37.

377 The ITC confirms the ecclesial character of the resurrection (Cf. International Theological Commission, "Human Development and Christian Salvation.").

378 Ratzinger distinguishes between a corporal organism and corporeality (Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Escatología: La muerte y la vida eterna*, trans. Severiano Talavera Tovar and Roberto Heraldo Bernet (Barcelona: Herder, 2007), 195.): The corporeality as an expression of the expressive force of the "soul" (= Leib) is much more than pure biological materiality (Körper). It is rather an expression of our interior, self-expression, and a possibility of relations with others and the world.

379 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, "Escatología," 687.

constitutive for humans and, therefore, for their identity. “A body without a soul is a corpse, but a soul without a body is a ghost.”³⁸⁰ Humans do not have bodies; they are bodies. The body is what gives personal identity and makes particularity. It also manifests the conflict between *hypostasis* and *nature* (See Chap. 3.6) in a human. The conflict can be resolved only by the resurrection of the body, which includes its change from the *carrier of death* to the glorified body that enables communion concomitantly with a difference.³⁸¹

Two currents of contemporary catholic theology address both a time lag between “individual” and “eschatological” general judgments and a problem of “immortality of the soul”:³⁸²

- “Resurrection in death” represented by Greshake and Lohfink claims that the moment of death means *Ganztod*, the death of the entire person. Since *Ganztod* excludes time after decease, there is also no problem with the *interim* time between the two judgments nor with *dualism* (the immortality of the soul, the mortality of body). This death does not mean complete annihilation but rather a transformation. God Himself sets in motion a process of the resurrection at the moment of the individual death. This process is being progressively performed until the final judgment.
- Dialogical immortality (resurrection) of Ratzinger operates with the new meaning given to the traditional concepts of soul and immortality. God created a human a constitutively relational – oriented towards Himself and others. Because of His faithfulness, He does not let a person definitively succumb to death but “dialogues” with her from the very moment of creation.

The ITC strongly opposes the model of “resurrection in death”. This notion namely contradicts the Scriptures and the Tradition that have always claimed that the object of eschatological hope embraces two phases:³⁸³ In the first – between the individual death and the consummation of the world – a conscious element of people subsists in “soul” (psyche) is a subject of retribution. The second comprises the blessed resurrection at the moment of *the parousia* of the Lord.

A possibility of condemnation (=hell) remains a valid option (=consequence of the free will³⁸⁴) for those who self-excluded themselves from the Kingdom of Heaven by having refused the offer of Christ. However, Christianity does not contemplate a possibility of two ways nor theories of predestination or “bipolar” salvific history.³⁸⁵ The only vocation of humanity and the universe is salvation, which, nevertheless, does not guarantee *apokatastasis*³⁸⁶ as it would effectively destroy human freedom.

380 Georges Florovsky, “The Resurrection of Life,” *Bulletin of Harvard University Divinity School* 71, no. XLIX (1952): 5–26.

381 Cf. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 60–62.

382 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1096–1097.

383 Cf. International Theological Commission, “Some Current Questions in Eschatology,” *CTI Documents*, sec. 4, last modified 1992, accessed February 5, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1990_problemi-attuali-escatologia_en.html.

384 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” 708.

385 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1057.

386 The doctrine of the total and universal salvation of humanity and the universe mentioned already Clement of Alexandria but is attributed commonly to Origen (Cf. *ibid.*, 1073.).

5.6 Summary

Sacraments as Rites of Passages in the Technocratic Society

Rites of passage are – from the sociological and anthropological perspective – rituals and phenomena of rupture with the mundane and profane that help an individual and society to find their place in a new reality and cope with certain situations and to go beyond moments of insecurity and doubt through a set of shared actions. The traditional sociological analysis relegates theology to the margin because – it claims – what matters is the shared meaning generated by the rites through which an individual and a society reaffirm and regenerate themselves. Some authors³⁸⁷ are convinced about their mediating role in accessing the sacred. Our technocratic society witnesses increased pressure and conviction that ritualization diminishes as society becomes complex³⁸⁸ and – because it considers the rites the actions that constitute religion and are constituted by religion – destined to die-out. The sacred dissolves, the “science” and “progress” deconstruct rites as a myth, and the occidental world condemns any belief to the private domain. However, the consequences of this reduced vision of the rites of passage (even from the socio-anthropological point of view) are tragic: Ritual deficit deprives an individual of collective support, leaving her in her intimate solitude against the passage of time.³⁸⁹ The young adults fail to enter fully into life and are left alone with their existential question with an unsolved problem of identity and unclear role in the society; people struggle to understand the sense of their lives and especially in the critical moments of life (e.g., death of the relative, matrimonial crisis) have little or no support. Consumerism in general, first mobile phone as a symbol of passage from the childhood, bachelor, and stag parties of young adults, incessant need to celebrate and to entertain oneself, the disappearance of death (e.g., funerals) from public life and others serve as examples of an *ersatz* solution for symbolic power of rites that, nevertheless, fails to integrate the initiatory and passage function of a rite and to create real support for an individual and a truly revitalizing experience for a society. The Christian Sacraments not only fulfil the mentioned individual and societal functions but also lead an individual into communion with Christ and the Church providing thus support and orientation in existentially important moments of life.

Christian Hope and New Technologies

The spectacular promises of a new human without sickness, ageing, limitations of the bodily form and even death do not respond to the fundamental question posed already by Nietzsche: Liberation and emancipation yes, but what from and then, replaced by what? What should we wish for? The possibility to choose whatever an individual or a group wishes, has “*very little positive substance, it is a moral ghost*”³⁹⁰. When there are no values to orient and no normative ideal to guide, it is impossible to know which choice is “good”.

Christ continues in the Church His salvific mission through the actuation of the Holy Spirit that visibly demonstrates his presence in the Sacraments and theological virtues potentiating the

387 Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (Harper & Row New York, 1965).

388 Max Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

389 Cf. Martine Segalen, *Rites et rituels contemporains* (Armand Colin, 2013), 46.

390 Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*, 376.

anthropological structures of a person leading her towards the plenitude of life. One of the most distinctive expressions and amplification of faith in the Holy Spirit is the faith in the resurrection from death and eternal life.³⁹¹ Transhumanism enthuses over such a possibility; nevertheless, it can only aspire for a prolongation (although very significant) of the current life. The secularized version (visible precisely in the frantic effort to attain a never-ending life) of a vision of death as a punishment for a “sin” is also reductive: A derogation of the vital limits means that our situation of contingency will only be made eternal – a concept which is certainly very distant from Salvation. In Christianity, not death itself is the punishment for sin, but rather the fashion of how it is experimented, namely as something hostile, as a rupture.³⁹² The Christian vision of eternal life³⁹³ is a participation in God’s life which is exactly the condition of possibility of preserving the personal identity as this can survive only if the “*ultimate goal of a particular being is the Other*” and, moreover, this Other can “*hypostasize the particular and elevate it to the status of ontological ultimacy*”³⁹⁴. Therefore any immortality based on the immortality of “soul” as e.g., “mind uploading” is only a chimaera, while we affirm and realize our particularity through the body (See Chap. 5.5). The participation in divine life is not a static and boring contemplation of some reified image of God, but rather a fullness of life, an active and dynamic sharing of the inexhaustible mystery of God and – because we retain our personal identity – full life of all of our relationships,³⁹⁵ even those with the world (worldliness). Dialogical immortality (See Chap. 5.5), a notion that preserves the essential part of a human thanks to a dialogue of love with God,³⁹⁶ expresses appropriately Christian resurrection.

Ethics, Technology, and the Church

Conscience is a presence of an imperious voice in a person (Cf. GS 16), her radical aperture towards the foundation of her being. It is both the *synderesis* (=anamnesis or memory of the original good) and practical *judge* (=which must be “trained”, matured, formed) that must avoid two extremes, namely radical subjectivism (=rejecting the norms and orientations for life) and rigorism (=rigid following of the norms). Conscience is a subjective norm of morality when it actuates with reasonable certainty, integrity (rectitude) and is oriented towards the truth (Cf. VS 60). Today’s world is highly complex, and are the situations that implicate or are being aroused by ETs. No legal framework and many arts of ethics can succeed. The only viable solution – as suggested by AL – is in personal responsibility that actively forms the own conscience and matures in *discerning* each situation (See Chap. 4.8). Moral theology can give a hand to the Christians living in a modern, high-tech society by complementing their scientific knowledge by moral norms (Cf. OT 16.)

391 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” 678.

392 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1090.

393 The expressions “eternal life”, “vision of God” and “divinization” are equivalent (Cf. *Ibid.*, 698.); *parousia* allows for a vision of God as He really is (Cf. 1Jn 3:2) and permits an eternal life in the communion with Him in the plenitude of love (Cf. 17:26).

394 Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 68.

395 Cf. Martínez-Gayol Fernández, “Escatología,” 702.

396 Cf. *ibid.*, 694.

In line with the previously mentioned search for balance, neither the “voice of Church” can substitute human conscience nor can it be made absolute. The Church is certainly not against technology; her relationship with it has almost always been positive and mutually enriching.³⁹⁷ In today’s world with domineering technocratic paradigm and instrumentality, she offers the broader perspective, values and moral guidance, which enable to discern responsibly about technology in general, and applications of ETs, in particular. In consequence, human life can be indeed enhanced while respecting human dignity at the same time. The Church advocates for human life and its dignity from the very first to the very last moments, even when its “utility” diminishes or is non-existent. Furthermore, the attractively “packed” promises and statements prepared by skilful marketers, such as “relief of the pain of the terminal patients”, “giving the parents possibility to improve the future of their children”, “letting a person decide about her future”, “securing a scientific breakthrough” and others, frequently only disguise avarice and ambitions of the individuals or enterprises and egoism that puts the own comfortability and desires above the rights of others and the common good. It is the task of ethics³⁹⁸ to debunk false and reductive affirmations regarding human life and present a broader perspective of reality. For example, a great majority of terminally ill patients or patients with exorbitant pains does not want to die but to be relieved of pain.³⁹⁹ Not only pain exercises influence on their decision but also social and economic pressures, to which are much more susceptible people with less wealth.⁴⁰⁰ The supporters of the artificial interruption of pregnancy frequently argue with the freedom of choice and a possibility of self-determination; however, the statistics⁴⁰¹ show that abortions are a social phenomenon with much higher incidence by the poor. Sometimes it is argued that the health of a mother takes precedence or those genetic impairments are the cause, and yet, e.g., in Spain, these two causes account only for 9% of interruptions, while 90% are due to psycho-socials reasons. Countless examples of the manipulation of the facts by the financial interests (= enterprises) to induce a feeling of “normality” of these acts (especially by various activist groups) or simply to silent the own conscience (when we prefer to continue our egoistic way of life) are at hand. A more general conclusion drawn from these examples suggests that a crucial battleground in today’s cultural struggle between the supremacy of technology and human moral responsibility is the field of bioethics. The fundamental question asserts itself force-fully: *Is man the product of his own labours, or does he depend on God?* (CV 74). Two different narratives or ways of reasoning come here to the word: One that is open to transcendence and, the other, closed within immanence (Cf. CV 74).

An essential characteristic of a human as a creature in the image of God (See Chap. 3.6) is relationality, that is, a dimension that makes a person constitutively open to the otherness. The

397 Brian Green, “The Catholic Church and Technological Progress: Past, Present, and Future,” *Religions* 8, no. 6 (2017): 106.

398 The “ethics” cannot, of course, be a name of an anonymous ideal of some theoretical concepts without life and power, but rather lived principles that are being promoted by so many individuals and organizations and the Church.

399 Instead of focusing the attention to the euthanasia, awareness and resources should be directed much more in the palliative care (Cf. Francisco Javier de la Torre Díaz, *La eutanasia y el final de la vida: Una reflexión crítica* (Maliaño: Sal terrae, 2019), 143.).

400 Cf. *ibid.*, 108.

401 Sarah Kliff, “Abortion Rates in North America and Europe Are Now at 30-Year Lows,” *Vox*, last modified May 11, 2016, accessed January 22, 2021, <https://www.vox.com/2016/5/11/11657174/abortion-rates-falling>.

Church teaches that – and the life experience confirms this teaching – nature is impaired (See Chap. 4.3), and so are even our relationships. The principles of the SDC⁴⁰², progressively gathered in several papal documents over the years, actualized and adjusted to the changing situations and interpreted in the light of the Gospel, decisively contribute to the protection and promotion of life and dignity. The Magisterium emphatically condemns the *throwaway culture*⁴⁰³ (LS 20, EG 53), the economy of exclusion and inequality (EG 53-54) and trickle-down⁴⁰⁴ theories (EG 54), technocratic paradigm (LS 106), and promotes, instead, civil economy (CV 46), complete and common development of a human (PP 43, SRS 21) and exhorts to social justice and solidarity (PP 59) and universal charity (PP 67). Moreover, the expected salvific consummation does not comprise only individual salvation but the entire humankind. Christian hope is also “political”⁴⁰⁵ in the sense of *development* (See Chap. 5.5 for the limits). It is not possible to treat and describe a human and reality in a fragmented manner⁴⁰⁶ by respective sciences without their close cooperation, and at the same time, to pretend to have addressed the whole complexity of a person and the world (Cf. CV 30). The isolated approaches lead to reductive visions and false images. And an incomplete and reductive analysis results in false assumptions and incorrect “recipes” for actual and future crises. The only solution for true and lasting peace and *complete development* is the orientation towards the *common good*, considering the broad scale of *human rights* as a necessary “tool”. The technology itself, without truth and charity, cannot bring authentic development; instead, it leads to “slavery” and reduces a person to a mere object (Cf. CV 14.30).

402 Preferential option for the poor, the value of relationality, the common good, human rights, organic construction of the society, solidarity and subsidiarity, human character of the structures, participation and the universal destination of the goods (Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,” accessed February 5, 2021,).http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

403 The term *throw-away culture* might address in the first moment the problem of the current culture of consumerism, waste, and various forms of environmental pollution; however, Pope Francis broadens the definition beyond the environment. He sees a very dangerous mindset of consuming and throwing away all things, including relationships and people (if and when they are not needed any more).

404 Trickle-down theories are neoclassical economic theories that see the solution to poverty in economic growth encouraged by a free market that would inevitably lead to greater justice and inclusiveness.

405 Cf. Schneider, *Manual de teología dogmática*, 1056.

406 Due to the complexity of the issues, various disciplines must work together in an orderly interdisciplinary exchange (Cf. CV 30).

6 Conclusions

This work described the reductive approaches to faith (Chap. 2), to a vision of God reduced to the natural laws metaphorically expressed as Mother Nature (Chap. 3), to a human reduced to a fully empirically describable ‘biological machine’ (Chap. 4) whose imperfections and failures are repairable and capabilities upgradable by new technologies (Chap. 5), and contrasted them with the Christian vision that does not stand against science and technology but rather understands them within the larger and non-reductive context.

Christian faith is a revealed gift and, at the same time, a decision made by a human. Humans are *capax Dei* (Chap. 2), constitutively opened toward a reality beyond the empirical one, that is, towards the Mystery that revealed Himself as the Trinitarian God. Although present in history, He is neither an entity in space and time nor an object of empirical research (Chap. 3). Although humanity experience miseries, it is created in the image of God and redeemed by His Son and, therefore, called to a glorious destiny of life with Him (Chap. 4). New technologies can – if understood correctly within the ethical context – assist in fulfilling the Christian mission in the world. Therefore, Chap. 4.8 pleaded for an ethical solution that would correspond to essential anthropological characteristics of humans and their existential dependence on the Creator. Even though the promised life is yet to come, a human can already experience the effects of salvation procured at the Cross and actualized in the Liturgy and Sacraments ministered by the Church incited by the Spirit (Chap. 5).

It is now time to delineate a possible solution to the problem of “reductionism” by introducing a hypothetical state of the *wise society* that could serve as an evaluation criterion for ETs. A divine and human collaboration can also be described as a process of consummation through the Holy Spirit. The previous chapters analysed several reductive approaches to humanity and the world. They noticed a loss of orientation in today’s very complex world in which technology, and particularly (almost a blind) faith in it, are becoming increasingly important (See “bootstrapping problem” in 4.8). Any technical solution offered by sciences will be powerless in solving the serious problems if humanity loses its compass (Cf. LS 200). However, it is not possible to flatly discard present “technological faith” or a lifestyle of a substantial part of the Western Society without further ado, especially as all post-CVII documents call for a dialogue. The Church, a *Teacher in humanity*, provides values and moral guidance that helps to discern responsibly even the relevant and morally good applications of ETs. In consequence, human life could be indeed enhanced while simultaneously respecting human dignity.

The hypothetical state of a *wise society* can serve as such a practical evaluating criterion of ETs. This concept, an evaluative benchmark of ETs within the proposed framework (See Appendix: EAET), can respond to the actual absence of orientation, it could dissipate unjustified fears

(avoiding thus opportunity costs due to underuse⁴⁰⁷ or underdevelopment of ETs), and draw attention to justified ones (reals threats and problems to be addressed).

The hypothetical state of the *wise*⁴⁰⁸ *society* for complex⁴⁰⁹ ethical evaluation of ETs follows a difference between a *good life*⁴¹⁰ and a *good society* of Dworkin⁴¹¹. The specific construction of this state is an object of future investigation, and therefore, this work outlines possibilities. The objective is not an analogy to a “just society” of Rawls, that is, a question of political philosophy for designing the institutional framework, but rather a hypothetical state (determined by values, of which justice is a single out of more) which would enable the evaluation of a particular ET.

Conceptually, the *wise society* can be determined in two ways: a) indirectly; composed of *wise* individuals (who have correspondingly *wise* relations, while respecting, for instance, the principles and values of the SDC) or, b) directly; as a society that possesses certain abstract qualities or values (again, possibly those of the SDC). For each of the values characterizing a *wise person* in the former case, and for those selected values of the *wise society* in the latter case, there exist, in principle, satisfactory conditions⁴¹² for their realization in the real world.⁴¹³ Subsequently, these conditions (such as “control of a person over her personal information” or “positive contribution to the *common good*”) might coincide with the impact of ETs influencing thus (positively or negatively) the realization of the values of the *wise society*⁴¹⁴ (e.g., informational privacy or justice). The proposed framework is not a simple technological impact-assessment that considers a technological change within the cause-and-effect scheme⁴¹⁵ but rather a complex evaluation that *embeds* technology in a broader social context⁴¹⁶. Then, the main objective of technological development, production, sale and use is not exclusively the gratification of desires and wishes of customers but also a set of criteria that corresponds to the values defining *the wise society*.⁴¹⁷

407 Josh COWLS and Luciano Floridi, “Prolegomena to a White Paper on an Ethical Framework for a Good AI Society,” *Available at SSRN 3198732* (2018).

408 This work chooses a concept of “wise society” because many an adjective such as “good”, “right” or “just” are already associated with a particular political theory. The adjective “wise” should not have these associations of political philosophy, even though the situation is different in the moral theory.

409 The word “complex” expresses this idea: Not only the morality of the particular ETs is evaluated, nor purely their “technical” impact, but also their contribution to the realization of a *wise society*. As indicated in stage 2 of EAET in the following chapter, the environment and context play an important role.

410 There are many different concepts of *good life* following the variety of preferences and worldviews, and accordingly, the government ought to be as neutral as possible among the notions of the good life and the values that enter that life. However, there is no such neutrality in the case of a good society. Even the liberal positions agree with some necessary presumption on societal values, e.g., sympathy or justice.

411 Mark Sagoff, “Liberalism and Limits of Justice,” *The Yale Law Journal* 92, no. 1065, 1065-1081 (1983): 1076.

412 A specific form of those conditions depends, naturally, on a selected ethical theory, that is, a particular vision of what a wise society is.

413 Brey, “The Strategic Role of Technology in a Good Society.”

414 Though an interpretation within an enhancement-debate is possible, the thesis considers an impact within a much broader context, namely within the mentioned framework For ETs and their interaction with the values of a *wise society*.

415 Philip Brey, “Ethics of Emerging Technology,” in *The Ethics of Technology: Methods and Approaches*, by Sven Ove Hansson (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

416 See the steps of EAET in the following section.

417 Some well-known lists such e.g., well-being, justice, freedom, democracy, and sustainability (Cf. Brey, “The Strategic Role of Technology in a Good Society,” 6–7.) can help with a direct description of a *wise society*, while others e.g., 12 technomoral virtues (Cf. Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*, 190.) such as honesty, self-control, humility, justice, courage, empathy, care, civility, flexibility, perspective, magnanimity and technomoral wisdom help by a description of a wise person.

While constructing a hypothetical state of the *wise society*, it is crucial to distinguish between the ‘values’ and ‘beliefs about values’, between a normative notion and an empirical one, and these two should not be confused. Ethical standards cannot be identified by a mere empirical analysis,⁴¹⁸ yet neither can they entirely ignore it. Additionally, wisdom is a specific human characteristic and an essential differential factor between a machine and a human (See Chap. 1.4). Therefore, the greatest strength (and possibly the greatest weakness in debates on universality) of the *wise society* is the dependence on its defining values (ethical standards) on the anthropological properties of a human being. For instance, justice, autonomous decision-making, or even human work⁴¹⁹ are not only empirically identified values but also rooted in the profundity of human nature.⁴²⁰ The “religious” definition is not the only possibility for expressing the idea of human nature that goes beyond empirical determinations and reductive notions of human beings. Brey, for example, encapsulates a very similar concept⁴²¹ by distinguishing between intrinsic (=worth in and of itself) and instrumental (=the means to an end) values affirming that there are at least two intrinsic values, namely well-being and justice, and additionally, three necessary instrumental values, specifically, freedom (the free pursuit of happiness, freedom of thought, expression, assembly, religion), democracy, and sustainability. A possible argument that some of these notions are relatively new, casting thus doubt on their relationship with human nature, can be dismissed: Even when the nomenclature is novel, the concepts and the ideas behind them are ancient⁴²². But, admittedly, this does not mean that they are static, defined once and for all.

A hypothetical state of the *wise society* could, therefore, serve as an evaluation criterion for ETs (See Chap. 5.6). Within an Ethical Analysis of Emerging Technologies (See Appendix: EAET), it will measure how they contribute to the authentic “hominization” of a person, that is, to her divinization or christification (= becoming more similar to Christ). In terms of the SDC, it is an expression of a contribution of respective ETs to the *complete* human development, that is, to an authentic vocation of every person (Cf. CV 11). Finding the values for the hypothetical state of a *wise society* is a daunting task. Nonetheless, the principles of the SDC can be of great assistance as they have human dignity as a premise that is concomitant with the non-empirical anthropological basis of the values defining the *wise society*. The name of the evaluating

418 Cf. Tasioulas, “First Steps towards an Ethics of Robots and Artificial Intelligence,” 58.

419 From the Christian point of view, ‘work’ is a person's participation in the creation and is constitutive for her well-being (Cf. e.g., the encyclic *Rerum Novarum*). The old intuition and teaching of the Church are supported today by sociological and psychological research about the importance of ‘work’. In consequence, any “solution” of ETs-problems that would mean an idle human, a human without the possibility to participate in the creation giving thus an expression to the own nature, would have fatal consequences for them and the whole society and would contribute negatively to the realization of the values of the *wise society*.

420 This affirmation does not deny different conceptions of, for example, justice in different times and cultures, yet the notion as such is universal and dependent on human nature.

421 Cf. Brey, “The Strategic Role of Technology in a Good Society,” 6.

422 ‘Privacy’ shall serve as an example of a notion that – although unquestionably changed the content over the time – cannot be treated only as an empiric value culturally determined consent of people. Floridi contradicts the affirmation that privacy is a western invention of the 18th century as the key is “*a constructive commitment towards the identification and uncovering of those common and invariants traits that unify humanity at all times and in all places. Privacy is a slippery concept which seems to qualify a variety of phenomena that may change from place to place, yet it is present in any culture*” (Luciano Floridi, “Four Challenges for a Theory of Informational Privacy,” *Ethics and Information technology* 8, no. 3 (2006): 109–119.). Despite the significant changes in the comprehension of privacy over the centuries, its value has always been present as it is concomitant to human nature.

criterion, the *wise society*, alludes to a rich heritage of wisdom-ethics in all major human traditions, namely Chinese, Buddhist, Greek and Jewish-Christian. In Jewish sapiential literature of Proverbs, Wisdom, Job, Ecclesiastes of Qoheleth and Ecclesiasticus of Ben Sirach, there are countless references to the wisdom – a concept, that had changed over the time; however, always retained the fundamental links to God⁴²³ and specifically, to the Holy Spirit (Cf. Sal 150, Pro 1:23, Wis 7:22). “*The Church's culture of wisdom can save the media culture of information from becoming a meaningless accumulation of facts*”⁴²⁴.

The *wise society* as the evaluation criterion will help to organize societal life by incorporating the reality of new technologies. This statement carries along some difficulties as it can only include values that are ‘somehow’ measurable. For instance, the theological virtues treated in Chap. 5.2 are not virtues in the “classical” meaning but rather a dynamism that comprises a God’s gift and a human’s answer. All other kinds of virtues are the *effort* and *merit* of a human, which is not the case of theological virtues. The notion of the *wise society* for EAET draws from the mentioned cultural traditions of wisdom. Therefore, it does not explicitly count with the theological virtues in its construction. A framework for the complex evaluation of ETs based on a hypothetical state of the *wise society* is a hermeneutical structure that will permit the evaluation and ethical discernment of ETs.

We do have the freedom and possibilities to limit and direct technology. We can put ETs at the service of distinct progress than we are experiencing now. One which would be more human, social, complete, and sustainable. One that would respect and promote human nature and its transcendental aperture (Cf. RH 15). “*An authentic humanity, calling for a new synthesis, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture, almost unnoticed [...]*” (LS 112). The very use of language (as we witness in several movements today) can decisively contribute not only to a particular perception but to the very construction of reality. The Christians and the Church shall be capable to communicate that they firmly defend and promote human development (to which new technologies can resolutely contribute), but that technological and economic progress and human development are two different categories (PP 14, SRS 9). Every purely technologic or economic approach without ethics (VS 45-46) and authentic spiritual conversion (SRS 39) is failing and will fail. Only *complete* and *common* development (PP 43) propelled by the charity in truth (CV 1) which respects human spirituality and transcendental aperture, represents authentic human development that also integrates human rights leading thus to the common good.

The pivotal contribution of this work is an endeavour to formulate a criterion (the *wise society*) and a framework (EAET) for evaluating the contribution of ETs to a particular vision of a human. The perspective that the Church safeguards and protects, namely human dignity and relationality.

423 For example, in Pro 1:5, God is a principle of knowledge; in Pro 8:23, the wisdom is with God since eternity; in Sir 24:24 the wisdom comes out of the mouth of God.

424 John Paul II, *Mass Media: A Friendly Companion for Those in Search of the Father*, 33rd World Communications Day, May 16, 1999, accessed February 19, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24011999_world-communications-day.html.

Appendix: EAET

This framework inspired by Anticipatory Ethics⁴²⁵, 6-point ethical framework⁴²⁶ and ETICA-approach⁴²⁷ – has the potential to satisfy the requirement of considering the social and societal dimensions and future-impact of ETs, and it could provisionally⁴²⁸ proceed as follows:⁴²⁹

1. Foresight analysis puts effort in identifying plausible and possible futures, including “*path dependencies, causal relations, contingencies and constraints in the development and use of emerging technologies*”⁴³⁰.
2. Ethical analysis
 - a) Identification of extrinsic concerns of ETs uses some well-known ethical checklists as, for example, MacIntyre's⁴³¹, Vallor's⁴³², “state-reports”⁴³³, or Brey's⁴³⁴. The accumulated experience with ethical issues expressed in the form of principles makes it easier to identify new concerns with their sources. One such set of principles, inspired by bioethics, and distilled from documents of various organizations is the following⁴³⁵: principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, and explicability. Naturally, for a given ET, these general principles are specified and evaluated.
 - b) Power analysis searches for power changes due to ETs, that is, who is empowered and who disempowered and how.
 - c) Life analysis identifies the changes in life forms, that is, how ETs might restructure the activities and the personal, social, and ecological conditions of humans (the changes in the *life forms*).

425 Philip Brey, “Anticipatory Ethics for Emerging Technologies,” *NanoEthics* 6, no. 1 (2012): 1–13.

426 Sandler, “Introduction: Technology and Ethics,” 19.

427 Bernd Carsten Stahl, “IT for a Better Future: How to Integrate Ethics, Politics and Innovation,” *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 9, no. 3 (2011): 140–156.

428 The approach itself will be the object of an investigation. The formal proceedings and their content might change significantly in comparison to the presented proposal.

429 Tasioulas speaks about three interconnected levels at which ethical aspects of AI surge and must be addressed (Cf. Tasioulas, “First Steps towards an Ethics of Robots and Artificial Intelligence,” 53.): A level of laws (public standards to obey), a level of social morality (the entire life is not governed and regulated by law), and a level of the engagement of individuals and associations with AI because of a lag of existing law and social morality concerning the technical developments.

430 Brey, “Ethics of Emerging Technology.”

431 Bernadette Tobin, “MacIntyre’s Paradox,” in *The Ethics of Human Enhancement: Understanding the Debate*, by Steve Clarke et al. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

432 Shannon Vallor and George Bekey, “Artificial Intelligence and the Ethics of Self-Learning Robots,” in *Robot Ethics 2.0: From Autonomous Cars to Artificial Intelligence*, by Patrick Lin, Keith Abney, and Ryan Jenkins (Oxford University Press, 2017).

433 Corinne Cath et al., “Artificial Intelligence and the ‘Good Society’: The US, EU, and UK Approach,” *Science and engineering ethics* 24, no. 2 (2018): 505–528.

434 Brey, “Ethics of Emerging Technology.”

435 Cows and Floridi, “Prolegomena to a White Paper on an Ethical Framework for a Good AI Society.”

- d) Identification of intrinsic concerns are usually independent of technology-impact and formulated in terms “playing God”⁴³⁶, “hubris”⁴³⁷, “respecting nature”. This step constitutes a profound analysis of anthropological assumptions about a human and his nature.
 - e) Identification of alternative approaches for accomplishing the same objectives.
3. Evaluation of the ethical challenges and concerns of an ET identified in the previous stages. When applicable, the calculation of the likelihood of their societal impact enables their ranking.
 4. The recommendations for policymakers based on the previous analyses are developed in the governance stage. Except for the governmental policymakers, the main initiative these days lies with the industrial players⁴³⁸ that develop their principles and standards.⁴³⁹ Nevertheless, to contribute to the development of the wise society, the policies should:⁴⁴⁰
 - a) Ensure that ETs are steered adequately towards promoting the *common good*. This condition shall be commensurate with the *wise society* concept.
 - b) *Take dignity as a criterion* as it provides a well-established ethical, legal, political, and social framework ensuring that the selected value-set will still respect and care for people, their cultures, and their environments. Regardless of theory, the notion “human dignity” counts upon human exceptionalism⁴⁴¹ and forms a basis of human rights, which together with democracy and the rule of law are the core elements⁴⁴² of modern western societies.

436 John Weckert, “Playing God: What Is the Problem?,” in *The Ethics of Human Enhancement: Understanding the Debate*, by Steve Clarke et al. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

437 John McMillan, “Conservative and Critical Morality in Debate about Reproductive Technologies,” in *The Ethics of Human Enhancement: Understanding the Debate*, by Steve Clarke et al. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

438 Corinne Cath, “Governing Artificial Intelligence: Ethical, Legal and Technical Opportunities and Challenges,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 376, no. 2133 (2018).

439 “Private law” in terms of fast-growing self-regulation and industrial standards developed by large global companies gives rise to a serious worry for the democratic character of law in this domain as these powerful companies are beginning to shape laws in ways favourable to their private interests rather than the public good (Paul Nemitz, “Constitutional Democracy and Technology in the Age of Artificial Intelligence,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 376, no. 2133 (2018).).

440 Cath et al., “Artificial Intelligence and the ‘Good Society’: The US, EU, and UK Approach,” 25.

441 Luciano Floridi, “On Human Dignity as a Foundation for the Right to Privacy,” *Philosophy & Technology* 29, no. 4 (2016): 307–312.

442 Cath, “Governing Artificial Intelligence: Ethical, Legal and Technical Opportunities and Challenges.”

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