

From *Truth* and *truth*

From *Truth* and *truth*:

Volume III— Faith is Married Reason

By

Francis Etheredge

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



From *Truth and truth*: Volume III—Faith is Married Reason

By Francis Etheredge

This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2016 by Francis Etheredge

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-9013-8

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9013-7

CONTENTS

Volume III—Faith is Married Reason

Foreword	ix
Rev. Dr. Richard Conrad, Director of the Aquinas Institute, Blackfriars, Oxford	
Introduction to Volume III—Faith is Married Reason	1
Chapter Nine.....	26
Thinking with the Church: Why is there a Male Priesthood in the Catholic Church? (I); The Incarnation Is a Primary Vehicle for Understanding the Work of God (II); and Our Hope in Mary: the Reconciliation of Man, Male and Female (III)	
Chapter Ten	67
Faith is Married Reason (I); A Brief Theological Definition of Being: “Unity-in-Diversity” (II); A Brief Exposition of the “Beginning of the Person” (III); Defining Death (IV); The Task of Research (Vi); A Catholic University Teaching Hospital (Vii)	
Chapter Eleven	106
The Radical Originality of God: When God Created Man, Male and Female (cf. Gn 1: 27), “He Established Himself” as the “Unoriginate Origin of the Diversity of the Sexes	
Chapter Twelve	139
Part I: St. John Paul II and the Vision of Love Centred on <i>Familiaris Consortio: The Reciprocal Illumination of Nature and Revelation</i> ; Part II: <i>The Nuptial Mystery</i> and the Unique Spirituality of Christian Marriage: Be Open to the Gift of Life	
Chapter Thirteen.....	182
The Holy Family, Celibacy and Marriage: On the “Passage” from the Jewish Rite of Marriage to the Christian Sacrament of Marriage	

Chapter Fourteen	208
Witness “begets” witness (I), Pilgrimage (II) and the Reciprocal Impact of Place and Person (III)	
Chapter Fifteen	228
Marriage and the Eucharist: Drawing on Personal Experience and the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity	
Epilogue.....	252
Bibliography	270

Volume II—Faith and Reason in Dialogue

Foreword

Dr. Petroc Willey, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Consultor to the Pontifical Council for Evangelization and Reader in the New Evangelization at the School of Annunciation, Buckfast Abbey

Introduction to Volume II—Faith and Reason in Dialogue

Chapter Five

The Human Person in the Light of the Anthropology of St. John Paul II: Who is man? The Answer of Reason: the Rational Nature of the Person; and the Answer of Faith: Man, Male and Female in the Light of the Word of God and the Blessed Trinity. Finally, Man, Male and Female, Sin Together, Are Redeemed Together and Are “Taken Up” in Christ and His Church Together

Chapter Six

Renewal Entails Conversion to Christ and the Unfolding of the Life of the Blessed Trinity, the Natural Law as Integral to the Path to Christ and the Church as the “Exteriorization” of the Social Good of Salvation

Chapter Seven

In a Psychology Rooted in Traditional Philosophy Open to Development, Communication is at the core of Human Personhood, Vocation, Marriage, Family and the Politics of the Common Good

Chapter Eight

The Church at the Heart of a Social Dialogue about the Value of the Family: a Personal, Social and Global Good

Epilogue

Bibliography

Volume I—Faithful Reason

Foreword

Dr. Andrew Beards, Philosopher, Academic Director of the *School of the Annunciation*, Buckfast Abbey

Introduction to Volume I—Faithful Reason

Preamble

General Introduction to each Volume

An Overview of the themes in Volume I—Faithful Reason

Chapter One

What is Philosophy? Philosophy is Thinking “through” Reality. Beginning with General Questions about Philosophy and Reason, this Essay Articulates Seven Aspects of Philosophy: Anthropology; Epistemology; Cosmology; Philosophy of Science; Metaphysics; Ethics; and, finally, Politics

Chapter Two

A History of Being “in the Present”: A Dialogue with the Past in the Present. The Philosophical Questions of the Past are able to elucidate innumerable aspects of the Mystery of Being “today”

Chapter Three

Eternal and Natural Law is Embodied and Expressed in Human Personhood. The question of an erroneous conscience helps to “articulate” the Anthropological and Metaphysical structure of the Person; and the Moral Object of Being Open to Life

Chapter Four

St. John Paul II and the *Proportionate Use of Reason* to Determine the First Moment of the Conception of the Person and the Right Response of Love

Epilogue

Bibliography

FOREWORD

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 234, says “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life... the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them.” The Holy Trinity is a mystery, not in the sense of a puzzle to be solved, but in the sense in which the precious covenant between wife and husband has a depth even poetry cannot plumb. The Christian Faith, proclaimed in the Creed, is a common journey, energised by love, *into* Father, Son and Holy Spirit¹; and every “scribe” who seeks to herald the reign of the true God must bring out of *this* treasure, our Trinitarian Faith, new things that cohere with what has been recognised of old.² In recent decades, Karl Rahner, among others, has re-emphasised this project. He urged us to see the Holy Trinity as *a mystery of Salvation* (“*Heilsmysterium*”), and the *self-communication* to us of Father, Son and Spirit as the foundation of the whole sweep of creation and salvation.³ He was affirming a concern I see

¹ In *Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae* Qu. 2, art. 2, Aquinas (following Augustine) discusses the phrases “*Credere Deo*”, “*Credere Deum*”, and “*Credere in Deum*”. The first two refer to trusting God to speak truly about Himself, and to believing true things about God (the MSS differ as to which way round). But the Latin version of the “Nicene” Creed proclaims “*Credo in unum Deum Patrem... et in unum Dominum Jesum... et in Spiritum Sanctum...*”, following the Greek version, which itself employs the non-Classical phraseology of St. John and St. Paul. Believing *into* God is an act of Faith *brought alive by Charity*, which Augustine sees as the “force” that leads us into God. [At least as used liturgically, the Latin does not say “*in ... Ecclesiam*”.]

² Cf. Matthew 13:52.

³ Karl Rahner *The Trinity* (London: Burns & Oates, 1970), I.C. This book translates *Der dreifaltige Gott als transzendeter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte*, Rahner’s entry in *Mysterium Salutis, Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik* (ed. J. Feiner & M. Lohrer, Einsiedeln, 1967; vol. 2, ch. 5). In I.E Rahner agrees that *opera ad extra sunt indivisa* as far as efficient causality is concerned. But if we understand grace, like glory, in terms of *quasi-formal* causality, we can recognise that *each Person gives Himself to us in His hypostatic character*, of course inseparably from the Others. The priority of God’s self-communication is defended in “Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace” (*Theological Investigations*, I, pp. 319-346), and “Nature and Grace” (*Theological Investigations*, IV, pp. 165-188).

embedded in the structure of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. Having discussed the One and Triune God in *Prima Pars* Questions 2 to 42, Thomas devotes Question 43 to the "Missions" of the Son and the Spirit, before discussing creation in the rest of *Prima Pars*, and salvation in the subsequent Parts. *Prima Pars* 43 serves as a "hinge", and in it we find it is true of the Father, as well as of the Son and of the Spirit, that *He wishes to give Himself to us to be known and loved, possessed and enjoyed, now and for ever*. The reason why the Triune God "goes out" in creation and salvation is this desire of the *Triune* God for self-communication.⁴

The self-communication of the Holy Trinity to us was most powerfully enacted in Jesus' Sacrifice, when He revealed His Father most eloquently⁵ and "handed over the Spirit".⁶ This central event, which echoes throughout the whole of history,⁷ is brought home to us by the Scriptures and the Sacraments. It should be no surprise that there are riches still to be quarried in Scripture, and in the Church's God-given sacramental Liturgy. In particular, it seems to me that we can do more by way of seeing the Liturgy as "the work of the Holy Trinity".⁸

The liturgical revisions of the 1960s tended to make the Trinitarian patterns of the Sacraments more prominent⁹ – except in the case of Marriage! The Nuptial Masses and Blessings in the current Roman Missal focus on the love between Christ and the Church. In Mediaeval England,

⁴ The scene has been set for this in *Prima Pars* Qu. 8, art. 3, and Qu. 12; Thomas returns to it in *Prima Secundae* Qu. 110, art. 1, and *Tertia Pars*, Qu. 1, art. 1.

⁵ John 14:7 implies that now that Jesus has entered into His Passion, He is making the Father known and visible.

⁶ Compare John 7:37-39 and 16:7 with John 19:30, 34-37. When Jesus "bowed His head and παρέδωκεν το Πνεύμα" (literally, "handed over the Spirit") He fulfilled His promise to provide the Paraclete through His "going away". This was symbolised by the Blood-and-Water, i.e. Living Water, that flowed when He was pierced in fulfilment of Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11; Ezek. 47:1; Zech. 12:10, 13:1. In *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 6-25, John Paul II explores how the Spirit comes at the cost of Jesus' Sacrifice.

⁷ In John 12:32, Jesus said that when He was lifted up from the earth He would draw all things to Himself. The versicles at the end of Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday in the Dominican and Sarum Rites include the invocation, "*Qui expansis in Cruce manibus, traxisti omnia ad te saecula: Christe, eleison.*"

⁸ This is the theme of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1077-1112.

⁹ For example, the Words of Absolution now speak of how, "through the Death and Resurrection of His Son," God the Father has "sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins."

however, the Preface of the Holy Trinity was used at the Nuptial Mass;¹⁰ and in Poland the custom has been, and is, to sing the *Veni, Creator Spiritus* immediately before the Marriage Vows, implying that the Holy Spirit – “the Divine Personal Love”¹¹ – comes to forge the bond of love between Bride and Bridegroom, and even that this bond is a “participation” in the Holy Spirit. It is therefore particularly welcome that Francis Etheredge is taking a cue from the Polish Pope and (to use De Margerie’s expression) exploring how Marriage is “a created icon of the Holy Trinity”.¹²

Those who share the current interest in “the social doctrine of the Trinity”¹³ would approve of seeing Marriage and the family as “icons” of the Holy Trinity. I suspect some forms taken by the “social doctrine” are not true to the core Biblical doctrine of God’s transcendent Unity. What I like to call the “A-team” – Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas – have taught us that authentic belief in the Holy Trinity involves no watering down of our commitment to God’s Unity. They are reticent about the phrase “three persons” precisely because it can *blunt* the distinctions between Father, Son and Spirit: there is no such thing as “divine personhood” that occurs three times.¹⁴ There is one “Fatherhood”, which

¹⁰ *The Sarum Missal*, ed. from 3 early MSS by J. Wickham Legg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 417.

¹¹ In *Dominum et Vivificantem* 10, John Paul II says of the Holy Spirit, “*Persona-amor est, Persona-donum est.*” See also 21, 39-41 and 67 for the Spirit as Personal Love in the Holy Trinity. See *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1624, for the (implicit) invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Rite of Marriage.

¹² See the section on Vatican II in Bertrand De Margerie, S.J. *The Christian Trinity in History* (Petersham: St. Bede’s Publications, 1982).

¹³ See Stephen R. Holmes, Paul D. Molnar, Thomas H. McCall, and Paul S. Fiddes, *Two Views on the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014) for a recent collection of defences and critiques of this approach.

¹⁴ Athanasius preferred to speak of one Divine ΟυσΙΑ and *one* Divine ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ; he did not see the need for a “three-word” (neither did the “Nicene” Creed!) – “Father”, “Son” and “Holy Spirit” adequately expressed the intra-Trinitarian distinctions. But at the Council of Alexandria in 362, he recognised a legitimate meaning for the expression “τρεις Υποστασεις”. Edmund Hill discusses Augustine’s attitude to “*tres Personae*” in *The Mystery of the Trinity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985) pp. 59-60. Cf. p. 103, where Hill seems not to notice that in *Prima Pars* Qu. 30, art. 4, Aquinas presents the way in which the noun “*persona*” is “common” to Father, Son and Spirit as a “*communitas rationis*”, a mental construct that does not refer to any reality that can be “abstracted” from Father, Son and Spirit. An analogy for this might be the phrase “three units of

as such has no thing in common with the one “Sonship”, which as such has no thing in common with “Proceeding as Love”. What Father, Son and Spirit “have in common” is the One indivisible Divine Being. In *De Trinitate* X, Augustine presents remembering, understanding and loving as the best “model” of the Trinity because, when working as they should, these core mental activities manifest an irreducible distinction that goes perfectly with equality and unity. In my licentiate dissertation “Is One Human Person, or a Community such as the Family, the Better Image or Model of the Holy Trinity?”¹⁵ I pointed out that to use three human beings as a “model” for the Holy Trinity risks weakening our sense, not only of the Divine Unity, but also of the richness of the Divine Distinctions, for it can tempt us to see the Divine Persons as “three of the same” – maybe “three centres of consciousness”,¹⁶ or even three “Cartesian subjects” with distinct minds and wills, who happen to agree with each other.

I argued that Augustine’s and Aquinas’ preference for seeing the *individual* human mind as the best “model” for gaining some purchase on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, actually helps us develop an authentic “social doctrine” which presents the Church and the family as summoned to be icons of the Triune God. I distinguished “model” and “image”: a model gains us some purchase on a mysterious reality,¹⁷ whereas when Augustine and Aquinas explore how the human being is created in the *image* of the Holy Trinity, the train of thought moves in the opposite direction, from the Archetype to its image. Augustine’s *De Trinitate* begins by expounding the revealed, traditional doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and it is only in the light of that that Augustine can move on to discover the image of the Trinity in us, bringing out how we are in God’s image not only by our intellectual powers, but also by our ability to *love*, i.e. by our will.¹⁸ At a kind of climax in his work, Augustine proclaims:...

measurement” that can be applied to an ounce and an inch and a minute, without implying you can add an ounce and an inch and a minute to each other.

¹⁵ Pontifical University of St. Thomas (Angelicum), 1977.

¹⁶ For this expression, see William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), p. 272.

¹⁷ I draw this use of “model” from science where, for example, the behaviour of subatomic particles, which can be expressed by means of difficult mathematics, can be conveniently modelled sometimes by seeing them as “solid lumps”, sometimes by seeing them as wave-motions, though they are not exactly either of these.

¹⁸ In *De Incarnatione*, Athanasius sees us as made in the image of the *Logos*, who is Himself the Image of the Father. This is grounded in Gen. 1:26 (LXX) and Col. 1:15, but fits the Platonic and Aristotelian pictures in which *logos* is the “top

this trinity of the mind is not on that account the image of God because the mind remembers itself, understands itself, and loves itself, but because it can also remember, understand, and love Him by whom it was made. And when it does so it becomes wise ... Let it, then, remember its God, to whose image it has been made, and understand Him and love Him... let it worship the God who was not made, but by whom it was made so that it is capable¹⁹ of Him and can be partaker of Him.²⁰

The self-revelation of the Holy Trinity shows us in whose image we are made, and *for whom* we are made.²¹ This theme is reflected by Aquinas in *Prima Pars* 93 where we find that the *goal* of the creation of the human being is that we should be *in the image* of the Triune God, an image that rises to its perfection in an active knowledge and love of the Triune God.

Mr. Etheredge picks up my suggestion that Augustine and Aquinas help us see the Blessed Trinity as “the transcendent Exemplar of unity-in-diversity”. Augustine gives us hints that this principle can be applied to our inter-personal relations,²² and something of this theme echoes down the history of Trinitarian theology,²³ but it seems to me that only in the 20th Century does it really take off, in a phase of doctrinal development in

power” in the human being, and *orexis* is found “lower down”. Augustine sees us as made in the image of the whole Trinity, and it may well be that he is the one who discovered that, at the “spiritual level” of the human soul, there is *voluntas* as well as *intellectus*. Phillip Cary says: “I agree with Pohlenz... Dihle... and Kahn in thinking that something new and epochal came on the scene with Augustine’s concept of Will: he seems to have been the first to formulate the notion of a faculty of choosing that could not be reduced to some combination of reasoning and desire” (*Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist*. Oxford: OPU, 2003. P. 181 n. 30).

¹⁹ Our being “*capax Dei*” is important for Aquinas (e.g. *Prima Secundae* 113, 10). Although Rahner does not seem to notice how for Augustine and Aquinas we are made in the image of the Holy Trinity for communion with the Trinity, he does contribute a further dimension to this theme, suggesting how, *in our historicity*, we are made receptive to the Father’s self-communication in and through Word and Spirit (*The Trinity* III, A-D).

²⁰ *De Trinitate* XIV, xii, 15f. Translation by Stephen McKenna (Fathers of the Church series; Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963).

²¹ I owe this reading of Augustine to lectures delivered by Giles Hibbert, O.P., at Blackfriars, Oxford, in the early 1980s.

²² For example, in *De Trinitate* VIII, x, 14 he refers to the lover, the beloved, and the love between them.

²³ For example, Richard of St. Victor insists there must be Lover, Beloved and Co-Beloved (*De Trinitate* IV, 19). Cf. *Summa Fratris Alexandri* 1 n 306; n 317 sol & ad 1; 319 ad 4; 324 ad 3. Also Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*, 6, 2.

which Pope John Paul II plays a major role.²⁴ It is in tune with this development that Mr. Etheredge offers us glimpses of how, by creating male and female in His image, our Trinitarian Origin has inscribed a Trinitarian vocation in the interpersonal structure of Marriage and procreation. He sees the Marriage of the first human beings as sacramental; after the Fall, the grace of the Holy Spirit comes (in *every* era of human history) through Christ's saving work to re-integrate human nature and lift it to the divine dignity that was always our goal. Grace does not typically bypass nature, but perfects it, in *all* its dimensions. That is why Sacraments need *ministers*, and are not self-administered;²⁵ God's employment of inter-personal interactions proclaims and begins to effect the healing of such interactions. The sacramentality of Marriage, restored by Christ, in which bride and groom minister the Sacrament to each other,²⁶ brings this out in a powerful way, reminding us that our pilgrimage into the Triune God is essentially a *common* one.

Rev. Dr. Richard Conrad OP
Director of the Aquinas Institute, Blackfriars, Oxford

²⁴ See OUELLET, Marc Cardinal. *Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) for an account of the development of this theme.

²⁵ Of course, the priest who consecrates the Holy Eucharist does administer *that* Sacrament to himself.

²⁶ The Marriage Bond counts as *res-et-sacramentum*, analogously to the "character" imprinted by Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination (this is explained succinctly and attractively by Herbert McCabe, O.P., in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church: A New Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (London: CTS, 1985) 72-74; see also 112). It seems to me it would be fruitful to explore how these enduring realities (a) make the baptized and confirmed person, and the ordained minister, *and the married couple*, "sacramental", and (b) remain a potential channel of grace that can be drawn on.

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME III— FAITH IS MARRIED REASON^{1, 2}

‘[T]he bush was burning, yet it was not consumed’ (Ex 3: 2)

‘Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian; and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt”. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here am I” (Ex 3: 1-4)³. Now the reason for opening with this quotation from Exodus is that ‘the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed’; and, therefore, this is the reality, depicted by Scripture, which illuminates the theme of this volume: *Faith Is Married Reason*. On the one hand, Scripture itself is at once a human and divine word; indeed, as it says in *Dei Verbum*: ‘the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men’ (13). Thus the *word of God* is itself an intimate union of what is human and divine; and, at the same time, the Holy Spirit determines that

¹ The title of this volume of essays is taken from a brief paper given on the occasion of Bishop, now Cardinal Angelo Scola’s presentation on “The Nuptial Mystery at the Heart of the Church” (Oxford Catholic Chaplaincy, 21 March, 1998). The paper “Faith is Married Reason” forms Part I of Chapter Nine in this Volume of the trilogy.

² These essays are a part of the material that originally formed one book proposal that expanded into three volumes; and, once again, I wish to thank Mr. Martin Higgins, MA, and Dr. Anthony Williams, for their invaluable proof reading. Naturally, however, I apologise for any remaining omissions or commissions.

³ The text of this translation of God’s meeting with Moses is from *The Navarre Bible: The Pentateuch*, editors Jose Maria Casciaro *et al*, and for the English edition, James Gavigan *et al*, Dublin: Four Courts Press and Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers, 1999, pp. 254-256.

the Scripture expresses ‘that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures’ (*Dei Verbum*, 11). On the other hand, the very reality depicted, ‘the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed’ communicates in its own, inimitable way, a reality applicable to all nature, namely that grace does not destroy nature but transforms it. Arguably, the change that a human word undergoes is not extrinsic, a kind of *ad extra*; rather, from the very root of the desire to communicate (cf. Ps 139: 4) to the completed text, the word of God comes to exist⁴; and, therefore, there is a kind of *interiority to the word of God which makes it in itself a unique word*. The word of God, then, possesses an *interiority which is not alien to the human word*. The human word, then, in being “assumed” from the very moment of its conception, is rendered communicative in a way which transcends the horizon of a human word. Transcending the horizon of the human word (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 24), however, does not mean contradicting its capacity for communicating meaning; rather, the word of God could be said to express the *infinite reach of a finite word: a kind of “maximal” meaning consistent with graced human action*.

Thus the divine presence, indicated by the ‘angel of the Lord’, the bush not being consumed and God speaking to Moses, is present without the bush being burnt; and, as such, it is possible that this is a kind of reference to the beginning: to the time when creation was fresh from the Creator and spoke immediately of the presence and action of God. In other words, the burning bush, ultimately being a kind of image for the word of God, Mary and the Church, epitomises the fullest expression of the mystery of the Incarnation as it unfolds from the act of creation, through the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and the Church and on until the final consummation of the universe, when God will ‘be all in all’ (1 Cor 15: 28⁵). Within the “dimensions”, as it were, of this extraordinary mystery of the Incarnation and its capacity to reveal reality, we find the “place” within which to understand the “derived” cooperation of man and God in which the Christian participates through grace.

⁴ For a more thorough, but still relatively brief examination of “Inspiration” and “Revelation”, cf. Chapter 4: “Making Sense of Scripture: A Unique Word”, in the book, *Scripture: A Unique Word*, 2014.

⁵ While Scripture references are generally to the RSV Catholic Edition, this particularly reference is to *The New Jerusalem Bible*.

The “descending” fire

The theme of fire from heaven is taken up, particularly, in the life of Christ and the Church; indeed, the presence of God could almost be described as a fire-love: purifying for the repentant; bliss for the forgiven and the forgiving; and “pain” for the unrepentant. In the life of Christ, to begin with, St. John Paul II said: ‘The Holy Spirit as Love and Gift *comes down, in a certain sense, into the very heart of the sacrifice* which is offered on the Cross. Referring here to the biblical tradition we can say: *he consumes this sacrifice with the fire of the love* which unites the Son with the Father in the Trinitarian communion’ (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, 41). If, then, the Holy Spirit is at work in Christ consuming His suffering ‘*with the fire of the love* which unites the Son with the Father’, *then what “happens” in Christ is the archetypal expression of what conversion brings about in each one of us.*

Drawing on tradition, then, the “burning bush” can be seen as ‘an image of the Church which endures despite the persecutions and trials it undergoes’⁶; and, as the relationship of Mary and the Church has become clearer, the ‘burning bush’ is ‘a figure of the Blessed Virgin, in whom the divinity always burned (cf. St. Bede, *Commentaria in Pentateuchum*, 2, 3)’⁷. Thus, looking at the life of Mary and the Church is about learning about the relationship between faith and reason. On the one hand, the grace of God indwelt Mary from conception and, therefore, she is called the “Immaculate Conception”. Created free from original sin, Mary acted in conformity with the grace she received. As salvific events occurred, so Mary ‘pondered’ them in her heart (cf. Lk 2: 19). In view, also, of the emphasis on memory in the life of the Church⁸, it is clear that the Church is at once the bearer of the “memory” of the works of God and, at the same time, called to make what is “past” ever fruitfully “present” (cf. Lk 22: 19; Jn 14: 26). On the other hand, the Church herself, *almost defined as a person in the mystery of the Holy Spirit being “as” the soul in her body* (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 7), is called to “ponder” the mysteries of salvation and, at the same time, to unfold their riches (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 8). Thus, in one sense, to think through the faith is to participate in the “spousal

⁶ Commentary, *The Navarre Bible: The Pentateuch*, p. 255.

⁷ Commentary, *The Navarre Bible: The Pentateuch*, p. 255.

⁸ There are numerous possible references, but to take one of the most recent Pope Francis said in his ‘Homily at Mass in Santa Cruz, Bolivia’: ‘The Church is a community of remembrance’ (http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-francis-homily-at-mass-in-santa-cruzbolivia?utm_campaign=dailyhtml&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dispatch)

response” of the Church to the Word; and, in concert with both natural and revealed truth, to “manifest” the consciousness of salvation history according to the gifts of God. In other words, given that the dialogue between the Church and Christ is already *intra-Trinitarian*, it is as if we are being accustomed⁹ to becoming participants in the *intra-Trinitarian* dialogue of God.

Although our focus here is on the mysterious “inseparability” of faith and reason, grace and nature, man and God, we cannot overlook that God came to Moses for the following reason: “I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know of their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3: 7-8)¹⁰. Moreover, in the context of the life of Moses, the people he led and the surrounding nations and those who heard of these events, God’s promise of deliverance is a word which was fulfilled (cf. Ex 12: 50); and, therefore, the whole event of slavery and deliverance enters the history of salvation as an incredible witness to God’s love of His people. But, lest we are scandalized by the time that the people of Israel had spent as slaves in Egypt or even by how God delivered them from it (cf. Ex 12), we are confronted with the challenge of the identity of God: that God is *the Creator*, the author of salvation history and of the word which, ultimately, resounds through all the cultures of the world.

Our investigation of the interrelationship of faith and reason is, then, in the context of God’s work of salvation; and, therefore, *faith is married reason* both in terms of its own inner nature and in view of the mystery of salvation of which it is a part. Each one of us, then, can find ourselves in the dynamic of *God manifesting Himself to us as Saviour and Lord* and, at the same time, *as both begetting and perfecting the mystery of our participation in thinking through the faith we receive from Him*.

What follows, then, is a further development on the inseparability of faith and reason, concluding with a brief account of personal experience (I). Then there is a short response to this volume as a whole (II) and an introduction to each chapter and part (III).

⁹ It is possibly St. Athanasius who speaks of Christ accustoming us to the company of God.

¹⁰ Biblical text from *The Navarre Bible: The Pentateuch*, p. 256.

I. General Introduction

General Introduction to Volume III: Faith Is Married Reason.

Considering, then, the particular nature of Scripture, the whole humanity of the author is “permeated” by the Spirit of God; and, at the same time, is neither destroyed nor detracts from the writing of a divinely inspired, truly human word. As St. John Paul II says about the ‘biblical text’ in *Fides et Ratio*: ‘The world and all that happens within it, including history and the fate of peoples, are realities to be observed, analysed and assessed with all the resources of reason, but without faith ever being foreign to the process’ (16); and, in addition, he says on the nature of faith: ‘Faith is in a sense an “exercise of thought”; and human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to the contents of faith’ (*Fides et Ratio*, 43). As it says in *Dei Verbum*: ‘To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more’ (11). The intimate interrelationship of faith and reason was exceptional in the case of Scripture and yet, at the same time, it was a kind of “precursor” to the mystery of the Incarnation¹¹; indeed, while it is not possible to dwell on Jesus Christ at this point, yet the complete expression of His life as *Word of God*, in becoming a human being in reality, deed and word, reveals the ultimately mysterious depths of “compatibility” between grace and nature: between God and man. Perhaps the Incarnation manifests, in essence, that God chose man as the vehicle of His own “visibility”; and, therefore, from the very beginning (cf. Mt 19: 8) God “envisaged” the communication of Himself in the very “visibility” of creation. Furthermore, then, the very existence of creation as the expression of a “divine idea” is clearly a more remote “preparation” for the Incarnation; and, as such, implies a “depth” to the origin of creation in the creative act of God which, almost impossible to describe, is “like”¹² God “turning His interior mystery outward”. Just as a sacramental sign is an outward indication of inward grace, so the “grace” of creation is to be an outward expression of the inner nature of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

¹¹ Cf. “Address on the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (1993), article 6. The latter is found in the following publication: “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church: Address of Pope John Paul II and Document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission”, Sherbrooke, Quebec: *Editions Paulines*, Vatican translation, 1994.

¹² Clearly analogies are both inadequate and indispensable help in our communication: in our thinking through the faith (but cf. CCC, 43).

To draw upon the scholastic adage, *activity manifests being*, then the creative act of God is a disclosure of divine Being; but the Being disclosed by the creative act of God is, at the same time, a disclosure from which nothing good, true and beautiful is excluded. Clearly, then, there is a kind of “oceanic intergalactic wealth” to the interrelationship between the Creator and creation.

The Personal Nature of Divine Being and the help that Moses needs to enter into dialogue with God

In the dialogue between God and Moses, God makes visible an extraordinary event; and, on the basis of Moses’ response to a bush being burnt but not consumed, God opens a dialogue with him. ‘And the angel of the Lord appeared to [Moses] ... in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and [Moses] ... looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt” (Ex 3: 2-3). It is then that God speaks to Moses: ‘When the Lord saw that [Moses] ... turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And [Moses] ... said “Here am I” (Ex 3: 4). In other words, it is not just that God sought to speak to Moses, but that also God began to communicate His mystery to Him in the very event which preceded the opening words of the dialogue. Thus it is almost as if we can call the burning of the bush a kind of “non-verbal” communication in the context of the “ordinary” nature of what was happening and what Moses was doing, namely, leading his father-in-law’s flock to ‘Horeb, the mountain of God’ (Ex 3: 1). It is “circumstantially” possible that the very fact that this mountain was regarded as ‘the mountain of God’ could have helped to prepare Moses for his encounter with the living God (cf. Ex 3: 6; Mt 22: 32). What is more, it is precisely this dialogue in which God tells Moses that He is the ‘God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’ (Ex 3: 6), that Christ “continues” with His contemporaries when He says that God “is not God of the dead, but of the living” (Mt 22: 32).

More generally, then, God had prepared Moses through his failure to be able to deliver his fellow Hebrews from the injustice of their slavery (Ex 2: 14-15) *that began the more remote preparation for Moses meeting the living God*. In other words, taking up the cause of human justice and seeking to free ‘his people from oppression and slavery, and bringing about peace and unity among them’,¹³ may well have helped Moses to

¹³ Commentary, *The Navarre Bible: The Pentateuch*, p. 251.

understand the answer to the question posed by one of his fellow Hebrews: “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” (Ex 2: 14). For it could have been this question, “Who made you?”, with its call to discern not the strength of human effort but the call of God, that fundamentally disposed Moses to meet the living God; and, as such, was both what enabled him to see that he could not deliver his fellow Hebrews from slavery and that, if it was going to happen, it would take the help of one more powerful than he was. Thus the very “evidence” of a burning bush not being consumed and, at the same time, an angel of the Lord and a dialogue with God, were what started to convince Moses that if it is true, that this is a manifestation of God and His power, then there arises, too, the hope that God can help. Moreover, the participation of Moses in the work of God to deliver the Hebrews was itself an answer to the question posed to him: “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” (Ex 2: 14).

“I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3: 14)

As the dialogue between God and Moses unfolds, however, Moses is made aware of an ultimate mystery in the nature and name of God; indeed, just as the appearance of God was a help to Moses and his people, so the mysterious name of God indicates, in a veiled way, that God Himself is the ultimate destination of everyone: ‘God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end’ (CCC, 213). Thus God says of Himself, in answer to the question concerning His name: “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3: 14); and, while this is in one sense the expression of ‘the refusal of a name’¹⁴, it is also possible that it expresses the mystery of God who is the ultimate and inexhaustible destination of us all. With the coming of Jesus Christ, then, who says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (Jn 14: 6), there is both the tremendous “echo” of “I AM” (cf. also CCC, 211 and 205-231) and, also, the unmistakable expression of the unique relationship of Son to Father, through the Holy Spirit, who is the “path” of all relationships to God: ‘no one comes to the Father, but by me’.

Christ at the centre of the mystery of faith being married reason

In Christ, then, it is as if the interior mystery of God is both decisively begun to be made “visible” and, at the same time, the intimate interrelationship of faith and reason is shown to be “open” to the whole

¹⁴ Commentary, *The Navarre Bible: The Pentateuch*, p. 259, quoting CCC, 206).

created order and to the action and word of God Himself; and, therefore, it is not so much that faith and reason is a “unique instance” of the union of man and God, as that this expresses a “core” relationship which unfolds in the “multiplicity” of human action, culture and creation as a whole. Just as reason does not exist in isolation from the whole person¹⁵ but, as it were, manifests and expresses *the mystery of personhood*; neither, then, does faith exist without reason’s intimate involvement and the whole presence and progress of the person’s free self-gift to God. What is more, however, is the realization that dialogue befits us because it is intimately characteristic of God; and, indeed, consistently characteristic of how God has addressed us from the beginning (cf. Gn 1: 28-30). Dialogue, then, the first conversation between God and man, male and female, could well be construed the “crowning of creation”. In other words, it was not just that man, male and female, was made by God distinctively, ‘in our image, after our likeness’ (Gn 1: 26), but that this entailed being creatures to whom God spoke; and, in speaking, stimulated the beginning of a dialogue which was already characteristic of God (cf. Gn 1: 1-25¹⁶). Thus the creation of man, male and female, is at the same time to be brought into the living relationship of the divine Being; and, therefore, to be called to communion through graced communication. This vocation to graced communication is pre-eminently expressed in the life of Christ; but, as is abundantly evident, conversation is both the “natural” way of God and the Church: of both the Blessed Trinity and man, male and female.

Thinking through the paths of truth: both natural and revealed

When it comes, then, to thinking through the faith of the Church, there are, as it were, the several factors of the men and women of the times through which the reality of salvation history was lived and written, the mystery of Christ Himself and, finally, *thinking with the Church*. But, in addition, there is that path of truth which, implicitly, is also indicative of God coming to meet each one of us on the path of life and leading us, via the difficulties of life that teach us the impossibility of doing the good we want to do, that what is impossible for us is possible for God. In other words, just as Moses walked the path of self-knowledge that led to God, yet there was an encounter with God which itself began a new relationship, so it

¹⁵ Cf. Volume I-Faithful Reason, Chapter 1, for a discussion on reason as rooted in, and expressive of, the whole person.

¹⁶ Cf. Chapter 8 and other essays in *Scripture: A Unique Word*, Cambridge Scholars Publications, 2014, too.

could be argued that we must encounter our own inadequacy if we are to be well disposed to encountering God. Thus the vocation to the truth takes two, complementary forms: thinking through the natural truth and thinking through the truth of faith. In one sense, then, while these “wings of truth” (*Fides et Ratio*, Prologue) are complementary, they are also different; and, in so far as the earlier volumes have often explored the first type of truth, without completely neglecting the second, this final volume seeks to investigate, particularly, the second type of truth: revealed, spiritual or theological truth. Thinking through the truths of faith, then, entails the whole variety of life as well as the centrality of a variety of cultural expressions of our faith.

The psychological and spiritual insights in personal experience

It is almost impossible to summarise personal experience as it accumulates and, at times, poses more questions than answers; nevertheless, there are certain events and insights that stand as monuments to a “moment” that are a kind of watershed in terms of the emerging reality of self-knowledge and the knowledge of God. In this short account, I hope to illustrate the path between an emerging, psychological self-knowledge and the watershed of a conversion to faith in God at forty.

At around fourteen I had already run away from home and at sixteen I had tried to commit suicide and experienced a kind of presentiment of judgement; and, in response, I drank a lot of water and hoped the tablets would not do anything. Even as I got older, I did not know why I was unhappy but I did know that I had no close friends, I did not know what to do with my life and was already in the process of starting and stopping any number of courses of study as none of them seemed to be what I wanted to do. Beginning to read more than comics made me wonder about the process of psychological development and its problems; and, at the same time, there were various dreams that stood out, particularly one about trying to climb a slippery slope to a golden citadel during a storm and constantly slipping down. Then there was a “two part waking dream”. The first part was about trying to throw off a creature that had fastened itself to my hand; and, in a certain sense, I understood this to be about trying to get rid of the habit of masturbation. The second part of the waking dream was of a dam breaking and a river of memories streaming through my mind; and, as it happened, so it became clear to me that there was so much that I had not just forgotten but repressed.

A few years later, after coming across the contrast between a psychoanalytical and physical based understanding of mental illness, I

ended up in a remote place in Ireland, wondering about the value of a “return to nature”. I had been invited to visit a remote place in Ireland and was surprised to discover that it was, in part, for people who wanted to be naked in the landscape. As I was trying to sleep there was an invitation to accept the presence of the *Good Shepherd*; and, at the same time, a kind of bewildering joy arose in me, that then seemed to fizzle out with the dawn. I thought it was a call to the Catholic priesthood but nobody I talked to understood it. It did not occur to me or to anyone else to think of myself as a lost sheep; and, consequently, I strayed further and further into the uncertain depths of self-analysis and several years of a kind of trial and error response to what to do with my life. Nevertheless, possibly as a result of this visit of the Good Shepherd, I began to notice and to listen to St. John Paul II; indeed, without ever meeting him personally, he began to become formative of my thinking through his universal ministry. Thus, through turning to the work of St. John Paul II, I also discovered the balanced and beautiful expositions of papal and magisterial works in general; indeed, they began to inspire an investigative spirit that opened upon vista upon vista of the interrelated elements and mysteries of life.

Eventually, without thinking it through, I kept turning to the Church for help and for years went from one kind of assistance to another, including Christian psychiatric help; however, none of these people managed to answer the basic questions of my life and, if anything, raised more problems than they were able to solve. In answer to the suffering of losing a child through abortion a Christian psychiatrist recommended having another child outside of marriage. As regards the moral teaching of the Church concerning contraception, either it was never mentioned or religious priests were considered enlightened if they rejected it; indeed, it was all too obvious that they did not even think in terms of the naturalistic view that an obstruction between lovers is obviously an impediment to the gift of self. What followed was the beginnings of friendships, discussions, wondering what the Church was about and a kind of return without conviction or understanding but in response to various invitations to meet Christ.

The first major insight, then, that summed up these years was realising, in my thirties, that the sufferings that I had hated so much as a child, such as being mocked and punished for failing at school by a particular teacher and headmaster, were a sign of a deeper crisis: the crisis of hidden wrongdoing. I also understood that I had repressed these sufferings because I was too proud to admit how much it all hurt. In other words, the injustice that I had always experienced as a painful humiliation, the experience of failing at school in everything except the one conversational

subject which I had enjoyed, namely religious education, was suddenly understood as revealing a deeper, moral degeneration which had begun even earlier with stealing and lying. Thus the outward sign, as it were, of being unable to build a life was a sign that inwardly my life was “unbuildable”.

Passing from psychological insight to conversion to Christ

The transition, however, from “psychological insight” to spiritual conversion was to take another several years and could be summarised in the following moments. The first moment was finding myself in the Gospel of the man thrown out of the wedding feast because he did not change his clothes (cf. Mt 22: 1-14); and, like the dog that returns to its vomit (cf. Prov 26: 11), I returned to the self-seeking that I had construed as romantic love. Then, in the depths of my lonely misery, I saw three possibilities: mental illness; descending further into sin; and suicide. As I was once more studying, this time theology, I was reading the *Catechism* and discovered that if God can create the heavens and the earth out of nothing He can make a new beginning for the sinner (cf. CCC, 298); and, for the first time, I believed in the possibility of the help of God. Now, nearly twenty years later, I am married with eight children and writing a trilogy of investigations.

The wisdom of God expressed in the providence of God

The point to recognise is that the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ, had been in my life for a long time; but, unable to see my sins, I did not recognise myself as one of His sheep. But, finally, the grace of God “acted” in a moment to show me that the mess in my life needed the help of God and I “took that help” and hoped in God. Thus, even if there had been a growing recognition of all kinds of personal insights, it was not until I recognised how destroyed by sin I was that the help of God made sense; but, even then, it is a grace to be given faith in God: a belief that God can actually help. Indeed, it is almost possible to pursue the study of theology without, in a sense, encountering conversion; however, I remember failing an exam in moral theology and regarding it, as it were, as a just indictment of my life. I also remember being refused absolution, in the sacrament of reconciliation, as I was considering marriage in a registry office; indeed, I was both confused and ignorant about the actual sacrament of marriage. At the same time it did not seem possible to live the vocation to chastity or to abandon the impulse towards it.

Thus there is an almost “perfectly” human moment for the awakening of the “gift of faith” by God¹⁷; and, blessed be God, that gift of faith, however imperfectly I have lived it, continues to transform my life, my marriage and my family life. Thus, in terms of the thesis of this volume, there is a definite emergence of *thinking through the mysteries of the Christian Faith: a gradual process of coming to Jesus Christ and discovering His loving help of the sinner*. But, in my experience, this is far slower than I would have believed possible; but, being slow does not mean uncertain or indecisive. Rather, it is clear that the grace of God builds the “moment” of coming to Christ which most completes the development of our self-understanding and witnesses to God’s extraordinary and fantastic providential love of each one of us.

II. An Overview of the Themes in Volume II: Faith and Reason in Dialogue

In brief, then, there are many ways that the dialogue which begins through reason and which encounters God and the Church, becomes a living dialogue in daily life. While, therefore, there is a natural emphasis in these essays on a variety of questions which pertain to living the Christian life, there is also a constant articulation of the challenge to understand God’s revelation of Himself as the Blessed Trinity. Thus there is an account of going on pilgrimage as well as a discussion on the spirituality of marriage. Similarly, there is a consideration of the need for a Catholic University Teaching Hospital as well as the need to consider the passage from a Jewish understanding of marriage to the Christian Sacrament of Marriage.

Clearly, the lay vocation being diverse, invites a whole range of reflections which would go well beyond the scope of these books; for

¹⁷ Having just come back from a “Convivance” of the *Neocatechumenal Way* (Friday to Sunday, 10-12, July, 2015), I can testify that there is nothing quick about a genuine conversion; and, indeed, it is both an incredibly slow process and entails a fantastic amount of support and involvement of others. On the other hand, almost by way of contradiction, perhaps there is a “well prepared” moment of conversion which is decisive, in the context of providence, for the change of life which follows it (cf. Karol Wojtyła, on the conversion of St. Paul, “The Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity” (25 January 1966), pp. 115-117 of *The Word Made Flesh: The Meaning of the Christmas Season*, translated by Leslie Wearne, London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1985. Nevertheless, as I say, the work of conversion is, essentially, ongoing; and, as such, is a continuous work of God who *precedes us, acts, and accompanies us*.

instance, the fruits of suffering an injustice in the work place, the nature of Christian business, the urgency of going beyond “band aid” solutions to the poor and the impoverishment of the environment. Maybe reading these essays will stimulate your own contribution to thinking through the faith of the Church.

III. A Brief Account of Each Essay

In what follows there is a short response to each of the remaining seven chapters and their parts; furthermore, each general introduction is repeated at the beginning of each chapter and part of chapter. Thus it is hoped that the reader will find the “repetition” of each General Introduction an aid to navigating the whole collection.

General Introduction: Chapter 9: Part I: Thinking with the Church: Why is there a Male Priesthood in the Catholic Church? It seems as if there is a contradiction: a teaching of the Catholic Church and the possibility of research? Does not a settled teaching preclude the possibility of research? It thus depends on what is understood by research. If by “research” there is implied the freedom to reject a truth already known, then “research” is really a synonym for “rejection”; and, if rejection, then there needs to be an investigation of the motive for rejecting a truth as revealed and consistently held across the centuries. Research, then, does not presuppose the rejection of what is already known; indeed, research “presupposes” what is already known. Just as a study of water discloses a certain attraction between water molecules, so the study of clouds presupposes the “tendency” of water vapour to “clump” together. One investigation, then, complements another. In other words, just because we know that the ordained priesthood of the Catholic Church is reserved to men this does not preclude research. Rather, according to the principle that the truth of faith both builds on nature and anticipates or expresses a divine reality, then it is possible to understand research as a further thinking through of the “datum” of faith. In other words, what is the “enduring” significance of an ordained priesthood being reserved to men?

It would seem, however, that there is both research according to the “mind” and “heart” of the Church. On the one hand, What is research according to the “mind” of the Church? This suggests a coherent understanding of principle and practice, drawing on the interrelationship of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium. But then, following the beatification of Cardinal Newman, perhaps we need to speak of research according to the “heart of the Church”. “Since it is born of love, [truth] ...

can penetrate to the heart, to the personal core of each man and woman' (*Lumen Fidei*, 34). What, then, is research according to the "heart" of the Church? This suggests an understanding of the Catholic priesthood which is, as it were, an expression of the love God expressed in the Incarnation of the Son of God (cf. Jn 1: 14, 18); and, at the same time, it implies that a coherent understanding of womanhood is the legitimate and indeed *real* context for understanding that the Holy Spirit is, as it were, the soul of the Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 7).

This reflection, then, takes up the following aspect of this question: What does it mean to think with the Church (*sentire cum ecclesia*)¹⁸?¹⁹ Thinking with the Church is understood here, then, to mean that more complete "pondering" which is thinking with the heart (cf. Lk 2: 19).

General Introduction: Chapter 9: Part II: The Incarnation as a Primary Vehicle for Understanding the Work of God: The Seed and The Second Vatican Council. There are many different ways that it is possible to encounter the marvellous coherence between nature and grace: the natural and the supernatural; but one of them, clearly, is the way in which nature can yield an almost inexhaustible range of preliminary "figures" that can "bear" a spiritual meaning in the context of the history of salvation and the development of philosophy and theology. This "coherence" between the natural reality of a seed and the spiritual reality that it can communicate is a witness to a single origin to the whole of creation; for, if this were not so, then how would it be possible *for the coherence between the natural and the spiritual reality to fit so perfectly?* In other words, the very "hierarchy of meaning" that makes possible the understanding of the spiritual dimension of reality on the basis of natural reality, together with the human ability to do this, is itself a testimony to *both an integral beginning and, implicitly, to the whole of creation being "ordered" to the person and the personal meaning of existence.*

It could be argued, then, that the interrelationship between seed and its spiritual significance *points to the origin of everything being conceived and expressed as a whole.* Therefore, this inseparable interrelationship of

¹⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*, articles 35 and 37.

¹⁹ A version of this piece was published in the 2009-2010, *Bulletin of Research and Academic Development (of the Maryvale Institute)*, when Dr. Petroc Willey was the Dean of Research and I was the Graduate Assistant to the Research Degree Programme. Although Dr. Willey was the Editor, he granted me a tremendous freedom, as Assistant Editor, in developing this publication over a number of issues. Indeed, in that particular issue I also wrote: "Francis Etheredge *On Developing the Research Bulletin*", p. 8.

the natural and the spiritual indirectly implies an “existential” foundation to the possibility that the first and original expression of creation was, in fact, that expressed in the concept of “original justice” (CCC, 376).

Although this essay is a particular exploration of the meaning of seed and the mystery of the Incarnation, so fundamental a coherence could be said, then, to presuppose the *Catechism’s* account of original justice: ‘The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman²⁰, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called “original justice” (CCC, 376). In a word, then, is the hierarchical nature of the human communication of meaning *a witness which implies a single, graced beginning to the whole of creation?*

General Introduction to Chapter 9: Part III: Our Hope in Mary: the Reconciliation of Man, Male and Female. Just as the actual history of sin brought a problem between the sexes (cf. Gn 3: 16-17) so the reality of salvation history entails a remedy to the problem between the sexes. In other words Mary, as the Mother of the Redeemer, both brings Jesus Christ into the world and, through Him, is given the vocation to restore the good order between the sexes (cf. Jn 19: 26-27) which sin disfigured. Thus our relationship to Mary is not an *ad extra*; rather, it is fundamental to recognising the *order of salvation established by Christ*. The saving work of God in the life of Mary, the Mother of the Lord, is not only about the way she intimately participates in the saving work of her son; it is, too, about the way she participates in the plan of God as a whole: the salvation of the human race and, therefore, the reconciliation of man, male and female. The actual history of salvation is, therefore, a comprehensive remedy of the whole problem wrought by sin: a remedy that both addresses and transcends the fallen nature of our sinful condition.

In the focus of this essay on hope, then, it is more than fitting that we hope in Mary; indeed, to hope in Mary is to receive the very prescription of our Redemption in Christ. It is God, then, who has ordained the nature and history of our salvation. Therefore, pondering the mystery of what God has actually done helps us to recognise how *perfectly salvation answers the reality of sin*.

General Introduction to Chapter 10: The five short essays that comprise this chapter, although written at very different times, are nevertheless at home with one another and contribute to understanding how faith and reason are ordered to one another. In so far as they are in order, the first essay is presupposed by the following four. In other words,

²⁰ At this point the *Catechism* cites the following: Cf. Gen 2: 17; 3: 16, 19.

the relationship of reason to faith is fundamental to all our thinking as Christians; however, this is not to suppose that we have acquired an “informal” infallibility. Rather, it is to suppose that faith and reason interact, influence, inform, enlighten and enrich one another. From the second to the fifth essay, then, in that they presuppose an interrelationship of faith and reason, engage that interrelationship with four particular questions: the transmission of life; the definition of death; the nature of research; the possibility of a *Catholic University Teaching Hospital*. These are not exhaustive analyses; rather, they point to particularly acute questions: questions that go to the heart of marriage, what it is to die, how and where to carry out fundamental research in the service of life.

General Introduction to Chapter 10: Part I: Is Faith Married Reason?²¹ This is the first short essay on the relationship of reason to faith; indeed, in this one, it is clear that as reason is taken up into the Christian life, so reason is itself transformed and becomes, as it were, “married reason”. In other words, it is not as if reason ceases to be what it is, namely an “instrument” of our understanding; rather, reason is now, in a sense, more completely itself because it is “operating” on the basis of a more complete and integrated expression of the human person than it was prior to conversion. For, prior to conversion, reason is “*in potentia*” to a number of spiritual truths which, now that it can presuppose them, it is also free to investigate them. Thus, prior to the gift of faith, faith itself eludes the grasp of reason; and, therefore, the gift of faith, for example, that it is possible to marry in the hope of the help of God, now becomes an “object” of the analysis of reason. Furthermore, the “activation”, as it were, of the gift of baptism or indeed the active reception of baptism, brings to human personhood the very “gifts” that belong to its completion.

It is almost as if, then, the “re-integration” of the human person that is possible through the grace of God is an actual transformation of all that constitutes the human person. This does not mean, for example, that all that the Christian thinks is “free from error”; it is, rather, to reflect on the more complex reality of what “being Christian” contributes to “being human”. For, being human since the fall of Adam and Eve, is about receiving personhood in the context of the human race having fallen from the original grace of being created in a state of “original justice” (CCC, 376). Thus, in the light of conversion and the gift of faith, it is necessary to

²¹ This paper was first presented as a response to an address by Bishop (now Cardinal) Angelo Scola; the Bishop’s paper was called “The Nuptial Mystery at the Heart of the Church” (Oxford Catholic Chaplaincy, 21 March, 1998).