TRINITY

Nexus of the Mysteries
of Christian Faith

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The Development of Trinitarian Theology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods

BEFORE WE PROCEED to explore the interconnection of the mystery of the Trinity with other mysteries of Christian faith, we shall first familiarize ourselves with the biblical foundations of trinitarian faith, and with the development of trinitarian doctrine and theology, as expressed in the patristic and medieval periods. There in the tradition we find extraordinarily rich veins of trinitarian spirituality.

FAITH'S EXPERIENCE OF THE THREE: THE ORIGINATING EXPERIENCE

Andrei Rublev's magnificent fifteenth-century icon, sometimes known as "The Hospitality of Abraham," depicts with rare beauty the story, narrated in Genesis 18:1-15, of the three visitors to Abraham, near the oaks of Mamre. In that story, Abraham offers hospitality and refreshment to his guests and they tell Abraham that Sarah will bear a son. At another level of interpretation of the image, the icon depicts the holy Trinity, the divine community of the three coequal divine persons of the Trinity. Indeed, the icon was painted for the iconostasis of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Russia. The three angelic figures, with their beautifully elongated and winged bodies, sit in gentle repose and communion around the table. Their faces are turned in tender loving deference to one another. A sense of serenity and harmony exudes from the icon. With its exquisite interplay of color and light, the icon speaks of the unity and the diversity of the divine persons, their distinctiveness and their equality, the otherwardness of their attention, and the very rhythm and splendor of trinitarian life and love. It is hardly surprising that Rublev's icon proved to be his crowning achievement, so highly esteemed that it was later deemed to be the model for all representations of the Trinity.

But such a trinitarian interpretation of the visitation of the three to Abraham would not have been possible or even conceivable in Old Testament

times. It was only from the vantage point of the divine self-revelation, as attested in the New Testament, that the story of Abraham's hospitality to his three mysterious guests was able to be perceived through a trinitarian lens. Scholars debate the degree to which the New Testament writers were cognizant of "the trinitarian problem" of the existence of the Three in the one Godhead—for problem it indeed is once the question of the Three in the one nature of God's being, and of how this could be so, emerges in consciousness. But there is widespread agreement that there is no sense of a plurality of persons within the Godhead prior to the revelation of God that is given in Jesus. The Old Testament is nevertheless highly significant in the later development of trinitarian conceptuality, for it provided a framework and terminology with which to speak of plurality in God. We turn now to survey briefly faith's experience of the threeness of God as attested in the Scriptures.[1]

The Old Testament speaks, for example, of God as Father, though Father is not a common title in the Old Testament and, when it does occur, it more often refers to the Father of Israel as a nation. The Old Testament also speaks of the Son of God, at first in reference to the people as a whole and sometimes in reference to a king or a judge or an upright Jew. Whether Son of God was used in reference to the Messiah before the time of Jesus is unclear. Messianic expectations included notions of a messianic kingdom and a personal Messiah, although not a divine Messiah. The Old Testament also speaks of the Word and the Wisdom of God, but without personification. In other words, Word and Wisdom in the Old Testament do not refer to personal divine beings as such. Neither Word nor Wisdom is a person to be addressed. They do not connote any kind of plurality in the Godhead. Nor is there evidence of paternity and filiation within the Godhead in the Old Testament. Similarly Spirit, originally meaning wind or breath, as in the breath of life, and at times linked with Messiah, is not regarded as a person as such. Spirit is rather an attribute or activity of God.

While the Old Testament evinces no sense of plurality in the Godhead, what it does provide is, first, a climate within which plurality was later conceivable and, second, a terminology with which to express that plurality. It is no accident, then, that, in the light of trinitarian revelation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the New Testament writers employ notions of God

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1. For helpful surveys of the biblical basis of Christian faith in the Trinity, see Arthur Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1962); Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Hutchinson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 3-33; Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Mystery of the Trinity: Trinitarian Experience and Vision in the Biblical and Patristic Tradition* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999), 13-143. For magnificent recent studies of the resurrection and of the development of devotion to the risen Jesus, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003); and N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God,* Christian Origins and the Question of God 3 (London: SPCK, 2003).

as Father, Son, Word, Messiah, Wisdom, and Spirit to describe and name the experience of the plurality of God in New Testament times. The Old Testament provided terminology and conceptuality for the threefold experience of God in Jesus Christ.

Turning to the New Testament, there are in fact very few texts that make reference to the three *dramatis personae* in the one text. The most notable example is the Matthean baptismal commissioning at the end of Matthew's Gospel: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). There are, of course, a number of scriptural cameos that iconically attest to an experience of the Three: the infancy narrative, the baptismal theophany, the story of Jesus' temptations, the transfiguration, the farewell discourses in John's Gospel, the ascension, Peter's speech at Pentecost, the martyrdom of Stephen, and most importantly, of course, the narrative of Jesus' paschal mystery of death and resurrection.

While the full threefold reference can rarely be found in single passages, there are many texts that refer to two of the Three. Certainly, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each emerge in clear distinction from the other two. Jesus' relationship to the Father is clearly unique, unlike any other, as quintessentially expressed in the remarkable intimacy with which in prayer he invokes the Father as Abba.[2] The Father–Son relationship is evidently a highly privileged one in the New Testament, and is especially strongly depicted in John's Gospel. The Holy Spirit emerges with considerable vibrancy and with a distinct personal reality, particularly in the Paraclete passages in John's Gospel and in Paul's letters.[3]

The Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles provide clear witness to the belief that God is one. God is sometimes called Father. Jesus is referred to as Son of God in a way that indicates more than messianic sonship. Mark's Gospel, for example, describes Jesus as "the Son of God" (Mark 1:1; 15:39), while, in Matthew's account, Peter declares: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).[4] At times the texts seem to indicate that Jesus is subordinate to the Father; at other times, the title Son of God seems to

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2. See Joachim Jeremias's classic study *The Prayers of Jesus*, Studies in Biblical Theology, 2nd series 6 (London: SCM Press, 1967). Wolfhart Pannenberg, in regard to Jesus' use of Abba, refers to L. Snidler's argument that there is evidence of the use of Abba in the Talmud, and to Helmut Merklein's claim that it is the frequency and normalcy of Jesus' use of Abba that is distinctive and original or unique. See Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 260.

3. Some biblical scholars argue that John's Gospel comes closer than any other New Testament writing to a trinitarian position. See, e.g., Fortman, *Triune God*, 30. Arthur Wainwright notes that the threefold pattern is absent from the Letter to the Hebrews (*Trinity*, 255).

4. N. T. Wright points out that "'Son of god' is a notoriously fluid title in early Christianity. It is all too easy to jump to conclusions about what it meant to the original writers and their first readers" (*Resurrection*, 724). For Wright's discussion of the meanings of "Son of God," see *Resurrection*, 723ff.

refer to a divine sonship, in other words, that the Son is strictly divine as the Father is divine. The title Son of Man is often used by Jesus himself. It does not affirm divine sonship, but it is associated with the power to forgive sins and with power over the Sabbath. The title Lord is only rarely applied to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. When it is used in relation to Jesus in Acts, it would seem to ascribe more than messianic lordship to the risen Jesus. Stephen prays: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. . . . Lord do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:59-60). While the Holy Spirit is usually depicted as a divine force or power in the Synoptics and Acts, the distinct personal existence of the Holy Spirit is suggested in the theophany at the baptism, the baptismal command, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. If we define "trinitarian" to refer to the existence of three coequal persons in the Godhead, there is no trinitarian witness as such in the Synoptics and Acts. There are, however, undoubtedly traces of what we could call triadic patterns that attest to a sense of three *dramatis personae* in God. Matthew's Gospel, for example, begins with the infancy narrative and concludes with the baptismal command. Jesus is more than a mere man and enjoys a unique relationship with the one whom he calls Abba, Father. There are thus clear intimations of a trinitarian pattern. In summary, there are definite traces of a triadic pattern in the Synoptics and Acts, but there is no trinitarian doctrine as such, and there is no sense of "a problem" with the Three.

In Paul's letters, God (*ho theos*) is Father and Jesus is Our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul would seem to be reluctant to call Jesus God, preferring the title Lord. Indeed, that Jesus is Christ and Lord is the very kernel of Paul's gospel. Paul often refers to Jesus as Son of God, frequently in the Old Testament sense of the one divinely chosen for a divine mission. In other words, it has a soteriological function rather than an ontological reference—though it is sometimes more than merely functional—and affirms the divinity of the Son in relation to the Father (God), as when, for example, Paul speaks of "when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal 4:4). Paul too is at times subordinationist, but the Son is never a creature in Paul's witness. The full divinity of Jesus is attested in terms of Jesus' origin, power, and sonship, a divine sonship that is proved in the resurrection. Whether and to what degree Paul is aware of the problem of Christ as Son, in terms of his relationship to the Father, are unclear. His concern is to trace the pattern of salvation history. Paul gives the Holy Spirit a fuller treatment than any other New Testament writer. He notably underscores the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life. Paul closely associates Christ and the Holy Spirit in the work of sanctification, but without identifying them and without articulating the relationship between them. Paul writes of the double mission of Son and

Spirit: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son . . . so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba! Father'" (Gal. 4:4-6). The Spirit is not merely a divine impersonal force but a distinct personal being. Although Paul's writings provide many triadic texts, indicating an essentially economic understanding of the Three in the work of salvation, the relations of the Three to each other and to the unity of being of God is approached only tangentially, if at all.

In John's Gospel, Father is the most favored name for God, and the Father–Son relationship is strongly depicted. Jesus is the Word, and John emphasizes the participation of the preexistent Word in creation. In the prologue, the Word is God. After John 1:18 ("No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son . . . who has made him known"), John makes no further reference to the Word. It is Jesus as the Son of God that emerges most clearly in John's Gospel. As John writes, "these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God" (John 20:31). For John, this title, Son of God, has not just ethical or soteriological but metaphysical and ontological implications. John clearly calls Jesus God in John 1:18 and John 20:20. Thomas calls the risen Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). But the Johannine text "the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28) will later be used to justify and bolster the argument that the Son is subordinate to—indeed a creature of—the Father. The person of the Holy Spirit emerges clearly in the Paraclete passages (14:16, 17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15), and John attests to a distinctly personal reality more explicitly than anywhere else in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit is the Paraclete, the Consoler, the Advocate, the Intercessor. More clearly than any other writer, John evinces and emphasizes an understanding of the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit as person, thus laying the foundations for a doctrine of the Trinity. In summary, John comes closer to a trinitarian position than any other New Testament writer, demonstrating a certain degree of awareness of the trinitarian problem.

In the context of feminist concerns regarding the strongly masculine imagery in naming the persons of the Trinity, Geoffrey Wainwright argues that the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are given to us in revelation and are not to be lightly set aside:

In sum, it seems to me that the trinitarian name of God is *given* to us with Jesus' address to "Abba, Father," his self-understanding and career as "the Son," his promise of the Holy Spirit. Christian reflection upon the divine self-revelation and the experience of salvation it brought led to the conclusion of an eternal divine Tri-unity. Classical Christian worship . . . has

normatively employed the given name of the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—whenever the Trinity has been solemnly invoked. Thus the historic identity of the Christian faith is at stake if that structure is obscured or the best name we have is abandoned.[5]

But while we can agree that the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are given in revelation and are not to be lightly set aside, issues remain regarding an authentic interpretation of those names and, no less importantly, of their use in the Christian tradition and in Christian life. As William Hill explains, in a discussion of the New Testament matrix of the Trinity:

> Father, Son and Spirit are not so much proper names in the New Testament, with immediate connotations of personhood, as they are symbols of God arising spontaneously out of the religious experience that in its tripartite character is indigenously Christian. God is grasped by those who "follow after Jesus" as utterly transcendent (but lovingly and trustingly so in the mode of a caring father), as mediated and available to us in the reality of a human life (i.e., as saving us through the humanity of Jesus), and as immanent in the world (i.e., as a force working invisibly in the depths of human consciousnesses forming the believing community).[6]

The New Testament does not contain a doctrine per se of the Trinity, in the sense of an understanding of three distinct coequal subjects within the one Godhead; indeed, it leaves open the issue of the relation of the Son and Spirit to the Father, as later controversies amply demonstrate. What the New Testament does is to attest strongly to a profound sense in the early Christian community of the threeness of God, with references that are admittedly probably more liturgical than confessional and certainly not creedal. Triadic resonances and an abundance of fragmentary arcs and intimations throughout the New Testament combine to reinforce the threefold pattern that emerges there. While the Scriptures do not give an explicit *doctrine* of the Trinity, however,

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5. Geoffrey Wainwright, "Trinitarian Worship," in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism*, ed. Alvin F. Kimel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 218-19. Aquinas holds that "Father" is a distinctly personal name. *STh* I, q. 33, aa. 2-3. For discussions on this issue, see Gerald O'Collins and David Kendall, who argue for the traditional naming of the three persons of the Trinity as irreplaceable, while also not endorsing its exclusive use (*The Bible for Theology: Ten Principles for the Theological Use of Scripture* [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997]). For an excellent study of the understanding of the fatherhood of God in the early church, see Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). For a well-balanced and informed study of the issue from a feminist perspective, see Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992). See also Anne Hunt, *What Are They Saying about the Trinity?* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1998), 22-34.

6. William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 26.

they do more than simply pave the way for it: they attest to the vibrant lived experience in the early Christian community of the threefold structure of God's self-revelation; they witness to the threefoldness of God as expressed in liturgical and sacramental practice; they provide clear intimations of a trinitarian pattern; they establish a rhetoric for the expression of trinitarian faith; and they provide the basis for later development of trinitarian doctrine.

THE EARLY DISTILLATION OF TRINITARIAN FAITH

An eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon drawing shows the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (depicted as a dove, seated on the head of Mary, who sits next to the Father and Son, with the child Jesus on her lap).[7] In that icon, Satan is depicted as a devil beneath the heavenly throne. Represented on Satan's right and left are the two arch-villains in the history of Christianity: Judas and Arius. The traitor Judas is well known in the Christian tradition. The story of his betrayal is annually recited in the Easter Triduum. But who was Arius, the reader may well ask, and what was the heinous crime that warranted his depiction in art as one comparable in villainy to Judas, who betrayed the Lord for a mere thirty pieces of silver?

Arius (d. ca. 336) was a presbyter from Alexandria in the early fourth century of the Christian era. To summarize the matter very briefly, he denied the full divinity of the Son. That betrayal was his crime, a crime—so the unknown artist depicts it—comparable with Judas's betrayal. Arius, concerned to protect the divine unity, immutability, and impassibility, reasoned that the Word, while preexistent in regard to the world, is a created intermediary, a kind of demi-god, neither fully God nor fully human. He argued that the Logos is not eternal, that it is foreign to the divine nature, that it is not God as the Father is truly and fully and eternally God. He argued that the Logos is a creature, created out of nothing, and had a beginning. "There was when he was not," Arius argued, and this expression effectively served as the Arian slogan. Only a lesser god, of reduced divinity, was capable of suffering, Arius reasoned. How else could God suffer? Hence Arius adopted a subordinationist stance in regard to the question of the divinity of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son and Word. Arius's religious imagination simply could not accommodate a God who did what Jesus Christ had done.[8]

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7. *The Father and the Son and the Dove of the Holy Spirit with the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child*, British Library, Cotton MSS Titus D. xxvi and xxvii.

8. For discussions of the Arian controversy, see Lewis Ayers, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988); Rowan Williams, *Arius*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2001).

So great was the fracas in Emperor Constantine's only recently united Roman empire that this theological debate threatened to split the empire asunder. There were enough troubles on the boundaries of the empire without troubles within. Constantine proceeded to bring imperial pressure to resolve the dispute and restore religious unity and peace. He called a universal council of the newly imperially sanctioned church at Nicaea in June 325. It was to be the first-ever formal council of bishops representing the whole church to resolve a question of doctrine (and hence began the tradition of *ecumenical councils*). The council was opened by Constantine, and he maintained a keen interest in the proceedings, determined above all to have a clear resolution to the controversy. According to tradition, about three hundred bishops gathered at Nicaea, including Athanasius, most of them from the East. The controversy focused on the generation of the Word or Son from the Father. The real issue was Christian realism: Is the Son truly God or is that designation merely a courtesy title? The issue was brought to a head when pressed to its soteriological consequences: Are we really and truly saved or are we not? The council resolved that the Son is truly God and not by way of a courtesy title. In response to the Arian slogan, the council replied that "there was not when he was not." He was the eternally begotten Son of God. He was not a creature of the Creator. He was not created out of nothing. The resolution was articulated in the Creed or Symbol of Nicaea. In that creed, the council used the unscriptural word, *homoousios,* "from the same being/substance," to state that the Son is truly, fully, equally and eternally God, as the Father is God. The Son is begotten, eternally, from the very being or substance of the Father. The creed of the Council of Nicaea stated:

> We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible.
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> And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten generated from the Father, that is, from the being [*ousia*] of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being [*homoousios*] with the Father, through whom all things were made, those in heaven and those on earth. For us human beings and for our salvation he came down, and became flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day. He ascended to the heavens, and shall come again to judge the living and the dead.
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> And in the Holy Spirit.[9]

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9. DS 125; ND 7. Four anathemas are included at the end of the creed: "As for those who say: 'There was a time when He was not' and 'Before being begotten He was not,' and who declare that He was made from nothing [*ex ouk ontōn*], or that the Son of God is from a different substance [*hypostasis*] or being [*ousia*], that is, created [*ktistos*] or subject to change and alteration,—[such persons] the Catholic Church condemns." DS 8; ND 126.

Arius and his supporters were exiled. The Council of Nicaea was not, however, the end of the matter. The bishops returned to their communities, but the trouble was that there was no unanimity of understanding as to what the *homoousios* really meant; its meaning had not been clearly defined. The problem was compounded by the fact that the language of the church in the East was Greek, while that in the West was Latin, with difficulties in translation further exacerbating the problem. In some ways, *homoousios* was redolent of what was known as modalism, the heresy that understands the three divine persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as merely different "modes" or manifestations of God's presence at different times in salvation history. A good number of bishops, having supported the anti-Arian *homoousios* at the council, became concerned that *homoousios* had modalist overtones and did not adequately protect the real distinctions between the divine persons. They were therefore inclined to favor a more explicitly antimodalist term, *homoiousios* (of *like* substance). Meanwhile the question of the divinity of the Holy Spirit had also emerged as an issue of dispute. Is the Holy Spirit truly, fully, and eternally God, as the Father is? The emperor Theodosius called another council, this time at Constantinople in 381. Here too Athanasius played a significant role, and here too the soteriological perspective served to clarify the matter. As Athanasius explains: "But if, by participation in the Spirit, we are made 'sharers in the divine nature,' we should be mad to say that the Spirit has a created nature and not the nature of God. For it is on this account that those in whom he is are made divine. If he makes men divine, it is not to be doubted that his nature is of God."[10] Thanks to the unifying conciliating work of Athanasius, the Council of Constantinople reiterated the *homoousios* and clarified that the Holy Spirit was also truly, really, and fully God, stating that the Holy Spirit "is Lord and Giver of Life. He proceeds from the Father. He is worshipped and glorified." The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed proclaimed:[11]

> We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
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> And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, generated from the Father before all ages, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being [*homoousios*] with the Father, through whom all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came

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10. Athanasius, *Epistle* 1.24, in *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit*, trans. C. R. B. Shapland (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 126–27.

11. The reader may well notice a number of differences in word order and sentence structure between the two creeds. For a discussion of the relationship of the Constantinopolitan Creed to the Creed of the Council of Nicaea, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, 1960), 296–331.

down from the heavens, and became flesh from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake too he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. On the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, he ascended to the heavens and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; to his Kingdom there will be no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord [*to Kyrion*] and Giver of life, who proceeds [*ekporeuomenon*] from the Father,[12] who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. [And] in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.[13]

At this point then, in 381, the trinitarian faith of the church was distilled and proclaimed in what came to be called the Nicene Creed, which Christians continue to recite today as the symbol par excellence of our faith.[14] Trinitarian doctrine was effectively settled. The task of meaning-making and interpretation remained, however, as indeed it does for every generation. Theology at this stage moves from a dogmatic stage, wherein doctrine is formulated and promulgated, into what we might describe as a more properly theological stage, wherein our faith seeks understanding of the mysteries we proclaim.

THE CAPPADOCIANS IN THE EAST
AND AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO IN THE WEST

The challenge in trinitarian theology is how to talk coherently and intelligibly about the reality of God as both three and one. Clearly, precision in terminology and clarity in conceptuality are required. Conceptual clarity demanded terminological clarity. Two terms in fourth-century Greek emerged in Christian theological usage in the East, *ousia* and *hypostasis*, both of which refer to something that subsists. However, the terms were effectively

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12. Note that the phrase "and the Son" (Latin: *filioque*) is not included in this creed. Its later unilateral inclusion in the Western church contributed in large measure to the continuing division between the East and West. (See appendix for a brief survey of what is called the Filioque Controversy.) Note, however, that the creed does not say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *alone*.

13. DS 150; ND 12. The Second Council of Constantinople (553) would later reiterate: "If anyone shall not confess that the nature [*physis, natura*] or essence [*ousia, substantia*] of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is one, as also the force and the power; [if anyone does not confess] a consubstantial [*homoousios*] Trinity, one Godhead to be worshipped in three subsistences [*hypostaseis, subsistentiae*] or Persons [*prosopa, personae*]: let him be anathema" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 14:312).

14. The creed made its way into the Western church in a slightly different form.

synonymous at that time. The Council of Nicaea, for example, uses both, without distinction.[15]

The Cappadocians—Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), his brother Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394), and their little-known sister and ascetic Macrina (d. 379), and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390)—came from Cappadocia in the East, part of what is now modern Turkey.[16] They contributed significantly to the development in the East of the terminology and conceptuality with which to speak about the mystery of the Trinity.[17] Gregory of Nazianzus, for example, explains:

> God is three in regard to distinctive properties, or subsistences [*hypostases*], or, if you like, persons [*prosōpa*]: for we shall not quarrel about the names, as long as the terms lead to the same conception. He is one in respect of the category of substance, that is, of godhead. . . . We must avoid any notion of superiority or inferiority between the Persons; nor must we turn the union into a confusion, nor the distinction into a difference of natures. (*Oratio* 39.11)[18]

In his *Oration on the Great Athanasius,* Gregory of Nazianzus teaches: "We use in an orthodox sense the terms one Essence [*ousia*] and three Hypostases [*hypostaseis*], the one to denote the nature of the Godhead, the other the properties of the Three" (*Oratio* 21.35).[19] Basil of Caesarea compares the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* to the distinction between the general and the particular, and explains: "Therefore in respect of the godhead we acknowledge one *ousia* . . . but we also confess the particular *hypostasis* so that we may have an unconfused and clear conception of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (*Epistle* 236.6).[20] Although the process was a long and circuitous one, thanks in large measure to the Cappadocians, *hypostasis* (person) gradually

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15. See the anathemas at the end of the creed of the Council of Nicaea, where *hypostasis* and *ousia* appear to be used synonymously.

16. For an introduction to the Cappadocians generally, including Macrina, and to Gregory of Nazianzus, in particular, whom the Fathers acclaimed as "Gregory the Theologian," see John McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).

17. See, e.g., John D. Zizioulas, "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: The Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution," in *Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on Divine Being and Act*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 44-60.

18. This translation is from *The Later Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St Cyril of Jerusalem to St Leo the Great,* ed. Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 118.

19. "On the Great Athanasius," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 7:279.

20. This translation is from Bettenson, *Later Christian Fathers*, 77. See also *Basil,* Letter 38, "Concerning the difference between ousia and hypostasis" (traditionally attributed to Basil although also found in the works of Gregory of Nyssa and possibly written by him) in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 8:137-41.

emerged as the term with which to refer to the Three in their distinction from each other within the One God, while *ousia* (substance) emerged as the term to refer to the Oneness of God. In 381, the Council of Constantinople, in the letter addressed by the Synod of Constantinople to the Western bishops, spoke of the mystery of the Trinity in terms of three *hypostases* and one *ousia* (though the distinction is not expressed in this way in the creed of the council as such).[21]

The Cappadocians distinguished between the Three in terms of their origin and mutual relations: the Father is font or cause; the Son is begotten of the Father; and the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father.[22] While recognizing that the person of Father is source or font or fountainhead of the Godhead, they insisted that the Son and Holy Spirit are not subordinate. They recognized, in a counter against the charge of tritheism, that the unity of the three persons is expressed in their unity of activity or common work.[23] They explained the mystery of the unity of the three hypostases in the one divine *ousia* in terms of the notion of coinherence in each other.[24] In the eighth century, John Damascene would speak in terms of perichoresis.[25] The Council of Florence (1438-

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21. Council of Constantinople, The Synodical Letter, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 14:188-90. For a careful study of the history of the so-called but arguably overstated "Cappadocian solution" (one *ousia* and three *hypostaseis*) to the fourth-century trinitarian controversy, see Joseph T. Leinhard, "*Ousia* and *Hypostasis*: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of 'One *Hypostasis*,'" in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity,* ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 99-121.

22. Gregory of Nyssa, for example, distinguishes between the processions of Son and Spirit: "And again we conceive of a further difference from the cause: the one [i.e. the Son] is derived immediately from the first cause, another [i.e. the Spirit] through that which is thus immediately derived. So the status of the Only-begotten attaches incontrovertibly to the Son, while the Spirit is unambiguously derived from the Father: the mediation of the Son safeguards his character as Only-begotten, without precluding the Spirit's relationship to the Father by way of nature." "Quod non sunt tres dei," from Bettenson, *Later Christian Fathers*, 154. Basil writes of "the Holy Spirit . . . conjoined as He is to the one Father through the one Son." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 8:28; see also 8:29.

23. Wolfhart Pannenberg notes, in contrast, that theology in the second and third centuries had based the distinction between the persons on the idea of different spheres of operation. See Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1:278. As Pannenberg points out, this notion of the common activity of the three divine persons meant, first, that the common activity was not constitutive of the divine persons or their relations and, second, that another basis had to be found for the trinitarian distinctions, which the Cappadocians then located in the relations. Pannenberg also points out that Gregory of Nyssa had to concede that the unity of action did not necessarily mean unity of substance. See Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1:395 n. 110.

24. See Basil, *Letter* 38.8, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 8:141.

25. John of Damascus, "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," 1.8; 3.5; and 4.18, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 9:11, 49, 90, 91. Hilary of Poitiers also expressed the notion of coinhering relations in God. See *De Trinitate* 3.1; 4.1; 9.69, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, vol. 9. Note that the word perichoresis does not share etymological roots with *perichōreuo* ("dance around") but rather relates to *perichōreō*, meaning "to encompass" or "to permeate," although the notion of dancing around is considered to be a most apt image for the divine unity. Walter Kasper observes that the concept of perichoresis (mutual indwelling or interpenetration) first occurs in Gregory of Nazianzus,

1445) later articulated the doctrine of the perichoresis, or circumincession, the coinherence or mutual indwelling of the divine persons, as an explication of the true identity of substance in the Trinity.[26]

Augustine of Hippo in the West (354-430) brought a new level of conceptuality to trinitarian theology and had a profound influence on the development of Latin trinitarian theology in particular.[27] His book *The Trinity (De Trinitate)*, although not the only trinitarian writing by Augustine, is his most significant work on this subject. It was written between approximately 400 and 420.[28] Appealing to the text from Isaiah that "unless you believe, you will not understand" (Isa. 7:9), Augustine's aim, he explained, was to show how faith, assisted by reason, can proceed toward an understanding of the mystery of the Trinity, in other words, the unity and equality of the Three and their real distinction. Augustine begins with a discussion of the unity of God, but this does not mean that Augustine understands the divine essence to be prior to the divine persons. In *Letter* 120 (ca. 410), where Augustine explicitly addresses the question of the unity of the Godhead and the distinction of the persons, he expressly argues against the notion that the substance of the Trinity is anything other than the Father, Son, and Spirit:

> The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Trinity, but they are only one God; not that the divinity, which they have in common, is a sort of

in relation to the two natures in Christ (*Epistle* 101.6; see *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 2nd series, 7:440) and that it is John Damascene who first applies the term *perichōrēsis* to the Trinity of divine persons (*The God of Jesus Christ,* trans. Matthew J. O'Connell [New York: Crossroad, 1988], 284).

26. DS 1331; ND 326. The Greek word, *perichōrēsis*, is translated into Latin as *circumincessio* (from *incedere*, "to permeate and interpenetrate") and *circuminsessio* (from *sedere* and *sessio*, "to be seated"). The former conveys a more active and dynamic indwelling and coinherence and is usually the preferred Latin form. Actually, the notion of perichoresis is arguably best rendered by the combination of *circumincessio* and *circuminsessio.*

27. For a classic study of Augustine, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000). For helpful discussions of Augustine's trinitarian theology, see Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity,* Introducing Catholic Theology 4 (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985); Basil Studer, *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God: Christocentrism or Theocentrism,* trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1997); Lewis Ayers, "The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology," in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner,* ed. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2002), 51-76; Michel René Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*, 145-76; Neil Ormerod, "Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Lonergan's Realms of Meaning," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 773-94.

28. Other discussions in regard to the Trinity can be found in Augustine's earlier *Letter* 11, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 1st series, 1:228-30; in "A Treatise on Faith and the Creed" (*De fide et symbolo*), in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 1st series, 3:327-31; in Tractate 39, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* 1st series, 7:222-24. See Barnes, "Rereading Augustine on the Trinity," 145-76, where Barnes also discusses *Sermon* 52, and No. 69 of Augustine's Eighty-Three Different Questions, *Div. Quaest.* (See *Fathers of the Church,* vol. 7.)

fourth person, but that the Godhead is ineffably and inseparably a Trinity. (*Letter* 120)[29]

Later in this same letter, Augustine reiterates this point:

> You know that in the Catholic faith it is the true and firm belief that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, while remaining a Trinity, because they are inseparably of the one and the same substance, or, if this is a better word, essence. . . . It remains for us, then, to believe that the Trinity is of one substance and that the essence is nothing else than the Trinity itself.[30]

Augustine made a number of highly significant contributions to the development of trinitarian theology in the Latin church.[31] He distinguished between the visible (incarnation and Pentecost) and invisible missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. With remarkable insight, he recognized that the missions reveal the processions; in other words, the missions are the processions revealed in time. He distinguished between mission and procession, in terms of temporal and eternal, *ad extra* and *ad intra*. He distinguished between substantial and relational categories (categories relating to substance and categories relating to the relations), and this distinction provided a coherent framework within which to accommodate both the distinction among the Three (in terms of relational categories) and the unity of the one God (in terms of substantial categories). He recognized that the unity of the one God requires that all the works of the Trinity *ad extra* are indivisible, as from one principle. He maintained, however, that each of the divine persons possesses the divine nature in a particular manner and, thus, in the operation of the Godhead *ad extra*, it is proper to attribute to each of the Three a role that is appropriate to the particular divine person, by virtue of the trinitarian origin of that person. Through this strategy of appropriation, wisdom is appropriated to the Son, love to the Holy Spirit; and the work of creation to

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29. From Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *Letters,* vol. 2 *(83-130),* trans. Wilfred Parsons, *Fathers of the Church* 18 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 300-317, at 311.

30. Ibid., 314, *ut ipsa essentia non aliud sit quam ipsa trinitas.*

31. The relationship between Augustine's work and that of the Cappadocians remains a matter of interest and debate. It would seem that Augustine, who by his own admission did not read Greek easily, had Latin translations of at least excerpts from the writings of Athanasius, Basil of Ceasarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus. In *De Trinitate* 3.1, Augustine refers to some works in Greek. Augustine also refers to Hilary of Poitiers' work on the Trinity in 6.1. For a helpful overview of contemporary systematic appropriations of Augustine's trinitarian theology and a critique of the assumption of Théodore De Régnon's nineteenth-century Greek/Latin paradigm, see Michel René Barnes, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 237-50.

the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Spirit.[32] Augustine settled somewhat reluctantly for the term "person" for the three hypostases, recognizing the need to say something in response to the question of what to call the Three. As the Cappadocians had done, he distinguished the Three in terms of relations of origin or mutual relations within the one Godhead (Father unbegotten; Son begotten; the Holy Spirit their common gift, bond of communion, the mutual love of Father and Son). He too understood their unity in a perichoretic way. As he explains, they are "each in each, and all in each, and each in all, and all in all, and all are one" (Augustine, *De Trinitate* 6.12).

As well as clarifying a number of vital terms and concepts in trinitarian theology, Augustine invoked the use of a number of so-called psychological analogies, drawn from reflection on the experience of the self-conscious human subject, as a way to understand the mystery of the Trinity. His use of the psychological analogies, whereby the inner-trinitarian processions of Word and Spirit are tentatively explained chiefly in terms of our conscious experience of the mental acts of knowing and loving, was fundamentally based on the biblical understanding of the human person as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). Always acutely aware of their limitations, he intended these psychological analogies simply to be helpful in advancing our understanding of how it is that God could be both One and Three.

In his *De Trinitate,* Augustine presents more than twenty triadic psychological analogies for exploration, of which we shall mention only a few (Augustine, *De Trinitate* 9-11; 14). From the analogy of mind or memory, knowledge, and love (*mens, notitia, amor*), Augustine moves to memory, understanding, and will (*memoria, intellectus, voluntas*), and memory, understanding, and love (*memoria, intellectus, amor*), to memory, knowledge, and love of self (*mens meminit sui, intelligit se, diligit se)*, and thence to the human self engaged in remembering God, understanding God, and willing or loving God (*memoria Dei, intelligentia Dei, amor in Deum*). Augustine at this point concludes: "Now this trinity of the mind is God's image, not because the mind remembers, understands and loves itself; but because it has the power also to remember, understand and love its Maker" (*De Trinitate* 14.15).[33]

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32. Augustine, while not actually using the term "appropriation," wrestles with the issue in *De Trinitate,* books 6 and 7. Thomas Aquinas, following Augustine, also engages the strategy of appropriation. See Timothy L. Smith, "The Context and Character of Thomas's Theory of Appropriations," *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 579-612; Anthony J. Kelly, "A Multi-Dimensional Disclosure: Aspects of Aquinas' Theological Intentionality," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 335-74.

33. In 14.6 Augustine adds a poignant note: "if it is with reference to its capacity to use reason and understanding in order to understand and gaze upon God that it was made to the image of God, it follows that from the moment this great and wonderful nature begins to be, this image is always there, whether it is so worn away as to be almost nothing, or faint and distorted, or clear and beauti-

Here, in the consubstantial, coequal, really distinct dynamic acts of the inner self-remembering, understanding, and loving God, Augustine finds the image of the triune God in the human person. The procession of the Son corresponds to that of understanding (*intelligentia*) from the mind (*mens*) or memory (*memoria*), while the procession of the Holy Spirit corresponds to the procession of love (*amor*). Note, however, that Augustine insists:

> I do say that the Father is memory, the Son understanding, and that the Holy Ghost is will. . . . I do not say that these things are to be equated, even by analogy, with the Holy Trinity, that is to say are to be arranged according to some exact rule of comparison. This I do not say. But what do I say? See, I have discovered in you three things which we see as exhibited separately but whose operation is inseparable. (*Sermon* 52.10.23)[34]

Augustine wrestled with the question of how to distinguish the procession of the Holy Spirit from the procession of the Son by generation or begetting from the Father. He concluded that the procession of the Holy Spirit is only able to be distinguished from the Son if we say that he proceeds from the Father *and* the Son (*filioque*, meaning "and the Son"), in a common spiration, as from one source or principle (*De Trinitate* 5.15). Augustine thus laid the foundation for the inclusion of "and the Son" (*filioque*) to the section in the Nicene Creed concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit, an inclusion that was to prove so vexatious and so costly, contributing in large measure to the schism between the Church in the East and in the West.[35]

THOMAS AQUINAS: GOD IS THE PERFECTION OF BEING, *ACTUS PURUS, IPSUM ESSE*

Strongly influenced by the burgeoning of Aristotelian philosophy in the emerging university centers of Europe in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225-1274) refashioned the richly experiential and intuitive approach to the mystery of the Trinity that was the Augustinian inheritance.[36]

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ful." See also Walter H. Principe, "The Dynamism of Augustine's Terms for Describing the Highest Trinitarian Image in the Human Person," *Studia Patristica* 18 (1982): 1291-99.

34. In *Prayers of St. Augustine*, ed. Barry Ulanov (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1983), 127.

35. The Second Council of Lyons (1274) and the Council of Florence (1438-1445) later defined that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and Son as from one principle, that is, by one single spiration. DS 850, 1300-1302, 1330-31; ND 321, 322-24, 325-26.

36. For a most helpful introduction to Aquinas's trinitarian theology, see Herbert McCabe, "Aquinas on the Trinity," in *God Still Matters,* ed. Brian Davies (London: Continuum, 2002), 36-53; and Aidan Nichols, *Discovering Aquinas: An Introduction to His Life, Work and Influence* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002). For more detailed discussions of Aquinas's trinitarian theology,

In the *Summa Theologiae,* his theology primer for beginners,[37] Aquinas, concerned for systematic intelligibility of the sacred mysteries in a way that was never part of Augustine's intention, first reverses Augustine's more historical order of approach, which begins with the missions of Son and Spirit, and instead begins his explication of the mystery of the Trinity with a consideration of the processions, then moves to the relationships of the divine persons *ad intra,* and *finally* to their missions *ad extra.*[38]

For Aquinas, God is *Esse,* the perfection of "be-ing"or "is-ness." (The Latin *esse,* "to be," is a verb, not a noun.) Indeed God is *Ipsum Esse,* sheer actuality, sheer being, in which we participate to a limited degree. This sheer liveliness of God in God is expressed in terms of insight and joy or delight. The fullness of insight naturally expresses itself in a word that is intelligible to itself, and sheer joy or bliss issues lovingly from the delight in that word. (Here our own human experience of "getting a joke" or the "Eureka experience" of Archimedes' fame when "we get it" serves as an apt analogy. Think of your own experience of the sheer joy that accompanies the intellectual experience of "getting it," the delight that we feel when whatever it is makes sense to us and "we get it"!)

Aquinas then takes up Augustine's experientially based psychological analogy, in terms of the mental acts that issue in word and love, and transposes it into a metaphysical understanding of God as the perfection of spiritual being, Pure Act, *Actus Purus.*[39] In God as Pure Act of Be-ing, *Ipsum Esse,* to be, to know, and to love perfectly coincide. They are distinct yet inseparable. The immanent act of self-understanding issues in the inner word, the

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see, e.g., W. J. Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Rowan Williams, "What Does Love Know? St Thomas on the Trinity," *New Blackfriars* 82 (2001) 260-72; Anthony Kelly, "Multi-dimensional Disclosure"; and two magnificent recent studies of magisterial import, Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 2 vols., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), esp. vol. 2, *Spiritual Master*, 1-224; and Gilles Emery, *Trinity in Aquinas,* with a foreword by Jean-Pierre Torrell (Ypsilanti, Mich.: Sapientia Press, 2003).

37. So Thomas himself describes his work in the prologue to the *Summa Theologiae.*

38. For a helpful comment on Aquinas's trinitarian thought, see Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. David B. Burrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), 206-15. Anthony Kelly provides a contemporary overview in "Multi-dimensionsal Disclosure."

39. William Stevenson, in "The Problem of Trinitarian Processions in Thomas's Roman Commentary," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 619-29, argues that Aquinas, after an initial exploration, rejects the analogy of memory, understanding, and will and turns to the analogy based on intelligible emanations to explicate the divine processions; see *STh* I, 27. Stevenson observes that Aquinas's treatment of the *imago Dei* is separated from his consideration of the trinitarian processions by sixty-seven questions, and figures in terms of theological anthropology as distinct from trinitarian theology. In other words, Stevenson argues, Aquinas's treatment of the Trinity in the *Summa* involves a much more radical appropriation of Augustine. Neil Ormerod argues that Augustine's *De Trinitate* chapter 9 is the real foundation for Thomas's treatment of the processions in the *Summa.* See Neil Ormerod, "Augustine and the Trinity—Whose Crisis?" *Pacifica* 16 (2003): 28.

verbum—thus, the first procession whereby the Father conceives the Word or generates the Son. The Word is God understanding God, God's self-understanding (*STh* I, q. 34, a. 2, ad3). It is conceived by God; it has the same nature as God (*homoousios*); it is God. The two are distinguished from each other in their relation to each other. Turning now to consider the second procession, we know from our experience that knowledge is not disinterested or without affectivity. Recall our sense of the joy that comes with understanding. In this sense, the intellect is inclined to what is known and to what is good; it takes delight in its understanding. The emanation of the Word is thus followed by the procession of Love, a bliss, a joy, and a delight in the self-understanding that is expressed in the eternal Word. This, then, is the procession of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God loving God; God's self-love. Thus, in the generation of the Word, God knows Godself and, in the procession of the Holy Spirit, God loves Godself. Here then is Aquinas's explication of the two processions in God: the procession of the intellect, God's self-knowledge, which is the generation of the Son or Word, and the procession of joy or delight in that self-knowledge, God's self-love, which is the spiration or procession of the Spirit. As Aquinas explains:

> There are in God two processions, namely the procession of the Word and another. To see why, one must bear in mind that in God procession corresponds only to an action which remains within the agent himself, not to one bent on something external. In the spiritual world the only actions of this kind are those of the intellect and the will. But the Word's procession corresponds to the action of the intellect. Now in us there is another spiritual process following the action of the will, namely the coming forth of love, whereby what is loved is in the lover, just as the thing expressed or actually understood in the conceiving of an idea is in the knower. For this reason besides the procession of the Word another procession is posited in God, namely the procession of Love. (*STh* I, q. 27, a. 3)

Aquinas thus proceeds to an elegant and refined rendering of an understanding of the divine processions in terms of the Aristotelian categories of the intellect and will, the dynamic activities of knowing and loving.[40] In Aquinas's hands, Augustine's more intuitive and subjective interior approach to the psychological analogy, that was grounded in his reflections on the experience of human consciousness, is rendered anew with exacting method-

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40. Note that Aquinas, in *STh* I, q. 93, a. 7, ad 3, following Augustine, locates the image in the *activities*—not the faculties—of memory, intellect, and will, explicitly correcting Peter Lombard in this regard.

ological rigor, considerable metaphysical refinement and arguably unmatched explicative power. As wrought by Aquinas, the psychological analogy was to serve as the most privileged and esteemed method of explication of the mystery of the Trinity for centuries, almost to the point of dogma! It was, for example, affirmed in the catechism of the Council of Trent and in a number of papal documents, and served, unchallenged, as common doctrine until relatively recently.

The Augustinian-Thomistic analogy of human understanding and loving for explicating the mystery of the Trinity as three coequal, consubstantial (same substance) divine persons, so coinhering in each other as to be one, is superb! It fits well with the biblical teaching that the human person is created in the image of God and therefore reflects in a preeminent way the mystery of God's being. It resonates strongly with the scriptural references to the revealed processions of God's Word and Love. It acknowledges God as the perfection of consciousness and intentionality. It accords with an understanding of human being as participating, in limited degree, in the divine consciousness. It comes closer than any analogy to the mystery of the divine perichoresis (the mutual indwelling or coinhering of the Three).

RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR: GOD AS TRINITY OF LOVE, *IPSUM AMARE*

Although it was Thomas Aquinas's explication of the mystery of the Trinity in terms of the psychological analogy that was to enjoy virtual hegemony through the succeeding centuries, in this brief survey of the development of trinitarian theology it is also appropriate that we advert to other important contributions. One of those comes from the medieval mystic Richard of St. Victor (d. ca. 1173).

We have noted that Augustine's exploration of the experience of the human person as analogy for an understanding of the mystery of the Trinity yielded more than twenty variations of what came to be called the psychological analogy. One of the analogies that he presented for consideration in his book *De Trinitate* is the analogy of interpersonal love: the trinity of love that comprises the loving subject (the lover), the object loved (the beloved), and the relation or bond of love (*vinculum caritatis*), the love which unites them (*De Trinitate* 8.14; 9.2; 15.10). Augustine, however, quickly set this analogy aside. As an interpersonal as distinct from an intrapersonal analogy, it risked a tendency to tritheism. Compared to the intrapersonal psychological analogy, and its explication of the Trinity in terms of the human acts of subjectivity, the interpersonal analogy of love was far less intellectually

satisfying: the three elements (lover, beloved, and their love) are clearly not consubstantial (same substance); nor do they together render very satisfactorily the mystery of the trinitarian perichoresis (the mutual coinherence or indwelling of the Three). Augustine considered the intrapersonal psychological analogy to be far superior. Yet, while the analogy of interpersonal love fails to satisfy at the level of consubstantiality and coequality of the three elements and their mutual coinherence, there is surely something that is really and deeply true that is encapsulated in the analogy of interpersonal love. After all, the Scriptures attest that God is love. So do the mystics. We too know from our own limited and flawed experience that we are our "best selves" when we are "in love." Surely the analogy of interpersonal love is especially apt in rendering the mystery of the mystery of the God who is Love, the God who is Trinity.

It is here that the medieval mystic Richard of St. Victor—whom Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), in the *Divine Comedy*, described as "in contemplation more than man"[41]—emerges in the history of trinitarian theology, with a retrieval of the analogy of interpersonal love, the analogy that was at best tangential in Augustine's exploration of the mystery of the Trinity and which he set aside in favor of the intrasubjective psychological analogy of the acts of memory, understanding, and love. Richard of St. Victor's interest found its focus not in the experience of human consciousness and the operations of knowing and willing but rather in the experience and the nature of interpersonal love.[42] Richard thus undertakes a psychological exploration of interpersonal self-transcending love. His focal image is that of human love as a reflection of divine love. The paradox inherent in Richard's theology is that he uses reason to explore the experience of human love and to demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity. In the process, he brings an exemplaristic metaphysics to his theology: God is the exemplar of human (and all) being; the human being is as image of God; human self-transcending love provides an image of trinitarian love. He also brings a metaphysics of participation to his theological endeavors: the limited perfection expressed in human experience is a sharing in the absolute perfection of the Godhead.

Richard's exploration of the mystery of the Trinity begins with the notion that God is the fullness and perfection of all goodness. Richard then reasons

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41. Dante, *Divine Comedy*, "Paradise," Canto X, line 121, in *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Charles Eliot Norton (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 121.

42. For a helpful introduction to Richard of St. Victor's trinitarian theology, see Zachary Hayes, *Saint Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity: An Introduction and a Translation* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan University, 1979), 13-24. Although Hayes's primary interest is the influences shaping Bonaventure's theology, he provides a helpful introduction to Richard of St. Victor's contribution and its influence on Bonaventure's theology.

that, of all things that are good, charity is the greatest good, for nothing exceeds charity in goodness. God must therefore possess charity in the highest degree. As Richard explains: "where the fullness of divinity is found, there is the fullness of goodness, and consequently the fullness of charity" (*De Trinitate* 5.7).[43] An analysis of charity, as the supreme form of the good, then serves in Richard of St. Victor's trinitarian theology to demonstrate—indeed almost to prove—that there must be a plurality of persons in the Godhead.

Richard argues that charity necessarily involves another, apart from oneself. Indeed, the greatest charity is self-transcending love for another person, who is one's coequal. Hence, he argues, there must be self-transcending love for another coequal person (*condignus*) within God. Moreover, the lover and beloved wish to share their love. Mutual love, to be perfect, must be shared with a third; therein lies its consummation and perfection. In other words, since love by nature involves relation to each other, the perfection of love demands that the two persons in love share that love with a third person. Two persons in the Godhead would lack the perfection of that charity which can only be achieved by sharing their love with a third. Without the third, the perfection of love would be lacking. Richard explains:

> Sharing of love cannot exist among any less than three persons. Now, as has been said, nothing is more glorious, nothing more magnificent, than to share in common whatever you have that is useful and pleasant. But this cannot be hidden from supreme wisdom, nor can it fail to be pleasing to supreme benevolence. And as the happiness of the supremely powerful One and the power of the supremely happy One cannot be lacking in what pleases Him, so in Divinity it is impossible for two persons not to be united to a third. (*De Trinitate* 3.14)[44]

Supreme charity, Richard reasons, thus demands consummation of their love by being shared with a third coequal one. In other words, the fulfillment of their mutual love requires not just love (*dilectio*) but a shared love (*condilectio*) for a third subject; hence the necessity of a third person (*condilectus*). All three share the one love, each in the mode of love unique to that person (*De Trinitate* 5.16).

The interpersonal analogy of love—a marginal element in Augustine's theology—is thus taken up in a new and original style of trinitarian theology by Richard of St. Victor. In Richard's hands the analogy of interpersonal love

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43. See Richard de Saint-Victor, *La Trinité,* trans. Gaston Salet (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1959), 316-17.
44. See *Richard of St Victor, Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. Grover A. Zinn (New York: Paulist, 1979), 388.

shifts from the triad of lover, beloved, and their mutual love (*vinculum cari-tatis*) to a triad of symmetrical and consubstantial interpersonal relations between coequals, where there is no hierarchy and where each person is at once lover and beloved. Given that it speaks deeply to and from human experience, it is hardly surprising that Richard of St. Victor's psychological analogy of interpersonal love has enjoyed considerable appeal in modern attempts to reinvigorate an understanding and appreciation of the mystery of the Trinity. Despite its perennial appeal, it was, however, never to achieve the status and influence of the intrapersonal psychological analogy, as developed by Augustine and refined by Thomas Aquinas and sanctioned in papal documents. It did, however, profoundly influence the trinitarian theology of another great medieval theologian, Bonaventure, a theologian whom Karl Rahner described as one of only a small number of Christian thinkers who evince "an authentic trinitarian mysticism."[45]

BONAVENTURE: GOD IS GOOD AND GOODNESS IS SELF-DIFFUSIVE

Bonaventure (ca. 1221-1274) is known in the tradition as the Seraphic Doctor. Pope Leo XII referred to him as "the prince of mystical theology."[46] Bonaventure was a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas and followed Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Order of Franciscans, as seventh minister general of the Friars Minor.[47] His extended period of leadership of the order earned him the title of "second founder of the Franciscan Order." Bonaventure's inspiration found its profound source in the religious experience of Francis of Assisi. Indeed, as Hans Urs von Balthasar explains: "His world is Franciscan, and so is his theology," and yet, as von Balthasar also explains, "Bonaventure does not only take Francis as his centre: he is his own sun and his mission."[48]

Inspired by Francis of Assisi, who, through his experience of Christ, had emphasized the nature of God as good and loving, and by the New Testament, which attests to goodness as the proper name of God: "No one is good

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45. Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (London: Burns & Oates, 1970), 10.

46. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson/Gale in association with the Catholic University of America, 2003), s.v. "Bonaventure."

47. For helpful introductions to Bonaventure's trinitarian theology, see Hayes, *Saint Bonaventure's Disputed Questions*, 13-66; idem, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 39-125. For an introduction to Bonaventure's mystical writings, see Zachary Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings* (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

48. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2, *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*, ed. John Riches, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 263.

but God alone" (Luke 18:19; Matt. 19:17), Bonaventure's trinitarian theology begins with the notion of God as good. Bonaventure, like Aquinas, then draws on the Augustinian inheritance, but, unlike Aquinas, he also draws on the Pseudo-Dionysian view that goodness, which is naturally and necessarily self-diffusive (*bonum diffusivum sui*), is the pre-eminent attribute of God.[49] Since God is good, and since goodness is by its very nature self-diffusive and fecund, God is necessarily self-communicative and fecund (luxuriantly fruitful). For Bonaventure, this provides the metaphysical basis for the first emanation or procession in God (the Son/Word). The first person, the Father, is "fountain fullness" (*fontalis plenitudo*), "the fountain of plenitude," "the first principle," from whom all comes. The first procession emanates as a natural emanation (*per modum naturae*, i.e., by way of nature), which necessarily and naturally flows from the dynamic fecundity of the divine nature. (Augustine and Aquinas, by way of contrast, envisage the first procession by way of intellect. For Bonaventure, however, the first procession proceeds from the fecundity of the Father. While both understand the first procession "by way of nature," they understand it in quite different ways. For Augustine and Aquinas it is an intellectual procession; for Bonaventure it is a natural procession, which flows from the divine fecundity.[50]) Bonaventure then turns to Richard of St. Victor's reflections on love to understand the emanation or procession of the Spirit, *per modum amoris,* by way of love (or *per modum voluntatis*, by way of will). Bonaventure thus brings together a notion of goodness and the concept of love in his trinitarian theology.

The notion of primacy emerges strongly in Bonaventure's trinitarian theology: the Father is the first and ultimate source of all being; the fullness of divine fecundity resides in him. The Son or Word or Image is the inner self-expression of God and proceeds from the Father by way of exemplarity. Word is Bonaventure's preferred term for the second person, for it expresses the relations of the second person as exemplar both in relation to the Father *and* in relation to creation.[51] In regard to the emanation of the Holy Spirit,

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49. See Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 228-46; see also eadem, "Does God 'Act' in Creation? A Bonaventurian Response," *Heythrop Journal* 44 (2003): 328-44; eadem, *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writings* (New York: New City Press, 2001).

50. For very helpful comments on Bonaventure's understanding of the generation of the Son in relation to that of Augustine and Aquinas, see Hayes, *Saint Bonaventure's Disputed Questions*, 45. Hayes explains: "Bonaventure also sees the intellect to be involved. But his guiding light is the concept of primal, fecund goodness. Intellect precisely as intellect is not fecund; it is so only in as far as it springs from the fecund nature of God. Thus, the primary principle of the Son's generation is the divine nature; the natural fecundity of the neo-Platonic tradition dominates this understanding. The Augustinian tradition is integrated within this framework. That which flows from the divine essence naturally does so as a perfect self-expression of the Father; it is the Word of the intellect."

51. See Zachary Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," *Cord* 46 (1996): 3-17.

Bonaventure appropriates the argument from love from the Victorine tradition and understands the Holy Spirit as "bond of love."[52]

Bonaventure's trinitarian theology also explicitly includes creation in its purview in a remarkably thought-provoking and inspiring way. Creation is another aspect of the self-expressiveness of the goodness that is God. Bonaventure recognizes that, in regard to creation, the cosmos emanates, in and through the Word, from the trinitarian exemplar and itself reflects the trinitarian order at various levels and degrees.[53] The Trinity, as source of all, necessarily leaves its stamp on all creation, Bonaventure argues. Thus, the world as a whole is a vast symbol of the Trinity. It is like a book that reflects its trinitarian author at each and every turn. Bonaventure suggests that it reflects its trinitarian Creator at three levels: as vestige (expressing the Trinity in a distant and unclear way); as image (reflecting the Trinity in a closer and more distinct way); and as similitude (that most intense reflection, which is found in the rational spirit that is conformed to God through grace, which intensifies and transforms the image found in the human person into ever deeper and more personal conformity to the eternal Exemplar). Bonaventure explains that creation is a vast symbol of the triune God:

> The creation of the world is a kind of book in which the Trinity shines forth, is represented and found as the fabricator of the universe in three modes of expression, namely, in the modes of vestige, image, and similitude, such that the reason for the vestige is found in all creations, the reason for the image in intelligent creatures or rational spirits alone, and the reason for similitude in the Godlike only. Hence, as if by steplike levels, the human intellect is born to ascend by gradations to the supreme principle, which is God. (Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* 2.12)[54]

This notion of the cosmos as the artwork of its trinitarian Creator has profound implications for our understanding of our relationship to and responsibility regarding the cosmos and provides a rich resource for an ecologically attuned theology in later developments of trinitarian theology.[55]

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52. For a detailed discussion of Bonaventure's understanding of the Holy Spirit as the bond of mutual love of the Father and Son, see Walter Principe, "St. Bonaventure's Theology of the Holy Spirit with Reference to the Expressions 'Pater et Filius diligent se Spiritu Sancto,'" in *S. Bonaventura*, vol. 4, *Theologica* (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura Grottaferrata, 1974), 243-69.

53. As Zachary Hayes points out, Bonaventure's understanding of exemplarity operates at two interrelated levels—first, there is a trinitarian exemplarity and, second, a christological exemplarity. See Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," 72.

54. Trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), 75.

55. See, e.g., Denis Edwards, *Jesus, the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology* (Homebush NSW: St Paul's, 1995).

JAN VAN RUUSBROEC: TRINITY AS WHIRLPOOL:
LOVE RETURNS WHAT IT RECEIVES

We would not wish to conclude our survey of the development of trinitarian theology without at least brief reference to the mystical tradition. There is, of course, no one tradition of trinitarian mysticism. But among a number of medieval thinkers whom we could mention, including not least William of St. Thierry (ca. 1080),[56] Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179),[57] and Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202),[58] two figures in particular stand out for the brilliance of their trinitarian insight, Jan van Ruusbroec (or Ruysbroeck) and Julian of Norwich.

The Flemish mystic Blessed Jan van Ruusbroec (ca. 1293-1381) is known in the tradition as the Admirable Doctor. Karl Rahner also describes him, alongside Bonaventure, as exemplifying "an authentic trinitarian mysticism,"[59] while Louis Dupré describes him as "Western Christianity's most articulate interpreter of the trinitarian mystical tradition."[60] Although Jan van Ruusbroec is the author of a number of very influential theological treatises and is esteemed as one of the great mystical theologians of the late medieval period—indeed many would count him the greatest—his writing, in Middle Dutch, is relatively little known in contemporary theology, particularly in the English-speaking world.[61]

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56. Odo Brooke comments: "The greatest contribution of William of St Thierry is to have evolved a theology of the Trinity which is essentially mystical, and a mystical theology which is essentially Trinitarian" (*Studies in Monastic Theology* [Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1980], 8). Where for Augustine the psychological analogy serves as analogy for the inner-trinitarian processions, for William, the trinitarian image of God in the human person grounds the dynamism by which the human person is impelled to union with God. For a study of the Augustinian basis of William's spirituality, also see David N. Bell, *The Image and Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality of William of Saint Thierry* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1984).

57. For a recent study of Hildegard of Bingen, see Anne H. King-Lenzmeier, *Hildegard of Bingen: An Integrated Vision* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, A Michael Glazier Book, 2001).

58. With a highly innovative theology of history, Joachim of Fiore is regarded as one of the most creative thinkers in Western thought. In Dante's *Paradiso* (Canto XII, lines 139-41), Bonaventure describes twelve figures, famed for their wisdom, who together form the second ring of the heavenly lights, and among them he includes Joachim of Fiore, as "endowed with prophetic vision." Joachim's attack on Peter Lombard's trinitarian theology was condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, as was his own trinitarian doctrine. For Joachim, history has a trinitarian structure because God is Trinity; the inner-trinitarian relations are expressed in history, with three successive stages corresponding to the three divine persons. See DS 803-6; ND 317-20.

59. Rahner, *Trinity*, 10.

60. Louis Dupré, *The Common Life: The Origins of Trinitarian Mysticism and Its Development by Jan Ruusbroec* (New York: Crossroad, 1984).

61. For a selection of his work in English, see *Jan van Ruusbroec, The Spiritual Espousals and Other Works*, trans. with introduction by James A. Wiseman, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), and Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis, vols. 103, 104, 107 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998-2002).

Ruusbroec takes up Bonaventure's notion of the divine fecundity as the source of the generation of the Son, the eternal Word.[62] The Son is generated from the fecundity of the Father and is the exemplar of all created things. The Spirit proceeds or flows forth as the mutual love of the Father and Son. But here Ruusbroec introduces an innovative element to trinitarian thinking: he reasons that it is the very nature of love to return what it has received, thus enabling the other to give again. As Ruusbroec explains: "From this comes a love, that is, the Holy Spirit, and it is a bond from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the Father. By this love, the Persons are embraced and penetrated and have flowed back into that unity out of which the Father without cease is giving birth" (*Realm of Lovers*).[63]

The Spirit thus emerges in Ruusbroec's thinking not simply as the passive love that proceeds from the mutual contemplation of the Father and Son, and as such as the one who is given, but who does not give. As Rik Van Nieuwenhove explains, for Ruusbroec, the Spirit is rather the active principle of return, *regiratio* (flowing back or return), both within the Trinity, where the divine persons return to their divine unity from which they proceed again unceasingly, and in the created cosmos, whereby all creation is drawn back to its trinitarian source. Within the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, according to Ruusbroec, "flows from them both. For He is one will and one love in both of them, and out of them both eternally flowing-out and flowing back into the nature of the Godhead" (*Twelve Beguines*).[64] Ruusbroec thus envisages the inner-trinitarian dynamic as an unceasing circular movement, rather like a fathomless eddy or bottomless whirlpool; indeed, this trinitarian image is especially dear to him.[65] A remarkably dynamic trinitarianism results,

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62. For discussions of Ruusbroec's trinitarian theology, see Rik Van Nieuwenhove, *Jan van Ruusbroek: Mystical Theologian of the Trinity*, Studies in Spirituality and Theology (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); idem, "In the Image of God: The Trinitarian Anthropology of St Bonaventure, St Thomas Aquinas, and the Blessed Jan van Ruusbroec," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66 (2001): 109-23; idem, "The Franciscan Inspiration of Ruusbroec's Mystical Theology: Ruusbroec in Dialogue with Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 75 (2001): 102-15; Paul Verdeyen, *Ruusbroec and His Mysticism*, trans. André Lefevere (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press. A Michael Glazier Book, 1994); Paul Mommaers, *The Land Within: The Process of Possessing and Being Possessed by God According to the Mystic Jan van Ruysbroeck*, trans. David N. Smith (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), esp. 65-76; James Wiseman, "The Birth of the Son in the Soul in the Mystical Theology of Jan van Ruusbroec," *Studia Mystica* 14 (1991): 30-44; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 5, *The Last Act,* trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 457-62.

63. Jan van Ruusbroec, *The Realm of Lovers*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis 104 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 1535-38.

64. Jan van Ruusbroec, *The Twelve Beguines*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis 107A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 2a, 563-65.

65. See, e.g., *The Spiritual Espousals,* Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis 103 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), c, 215; b, 987 (a flowing ebbing sea); *Realm of Lovers*, 2253; *Twelve Beguines*, 2a,

wherein the divine persons flow back into their shared being through the Spirit in a never-ending dynamic of ebb and flow. The application to trinitarian theology of this notion of *regiratio*, based on an analysis that it is the nature of love to return what it has received, is arguably unique to Ruusbroec's approach and pervades his theology and indeed shapes the trinitarian character of his mysticism of union with God.[66]

JULIAN OF NORWICH: AS TRULY AS GOD IS OUR FATHER, SO TRULY GOD IS OUR MOTHER

Our brief survey of the development of trinitarian theology must also refer to the writings of Dame Julian of Norwich (ca. 1342).[67] An anchorite mystic about whom we know very little (indeed, not even her name with any certainty), Dame Julian provides no explicit or systematic exposition of trinitarian theology as such, but the mystery of trinitarian love thoroughly permeates her writings in a remarkable and profound way.[68] Counted among the theological classics of mystical literature, Dame Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* is based on the revelation to her of sixteen "showings" about the love of God. The mystery of the Trinity figures in her very first vision and prompts her reflection on the mystery:

> Suddenly the Trinity filled my heart fully of the greatest joy, and I understood that it will be so in heaven without end to all who will come there. For the Trinity is God, God is the Trinity. The Trinity is our maker, the Trinity is our protector, the Trinity is our everlasting lover, and the Trinity is our endless joy and our bliss, by our Lord Jesus Christ and in our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Showings,* Long text, chap. 4)[69]

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525. The image of the whirlpool was also dear to the beguine mystic Hadewijch (ca. 1210-1260). See Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism 1200–1350* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 211.

66. For discussions of Ruusbroec's notion of *regiratio*, see Van Nieuwenhove, *Jan van Ruusbroek: Mystical Theologian of the Trinity*.

67. The visionary Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) also records a remarkable vision of the Trinity, now a well-known image of the Trinity, in which the outer circling light represents the Father, an inner red-gold circle represents the Holy Spirit, while a central human figure in sapphire blue represents the eternal Word. Hildegard's writing on the mystery of the Trinity is, however, not as well developed as that of Dame Julian.

68. For discussions of Julian's work, see Grace M. Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1987), esp. 108-26; Brant Pelphrey, *Christ Our Mother: Julian of Norwich* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Galzier, 1989); Kerry Hide, *Graced Origins to Graced Fulfillment: The Soteriology of Julian of Norwich* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001).

69. All translations from *Julian of Norwich Showings*, trans. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

All our life is in these three, she explains: "In the first we have our being, and in the second we have our increasing, and in the third we have our fulfilment" (*Showings,* Long text, chap. 58).

A striking element in Julian's trinitarian thinking that is particularly pertinent to us here is the emergence of the notion of the motherhood in God as Trinity. For, as Julian herself explains, "I saw the working of the whole blessed Trinity. In seeing this I saw and understood these three properties: the property of the fatherhood, the property of the motherhood and the property of lordship in one God" (*Showings,* Long text, chap. 58). Julian thus insists, "As truly as God is our father, so truly is God our mother" (ibid., chap. 59). Admittedly, the maternal image of God is well grounded in Scripture in, for example, the image of the spirit of God hovering over creation (Gen. 1), of God as the woman who will never forget her child (Isa. 49:15), and the Matthean mother hen (Matt. 23:37). There are also traces of the notion in the tradition.[70] St. Anselm, for example, in his "Prayer to Saint Paul," reflects on the image of Christ on the cross, in terms of Christ as mother, travailing in the pain of giving birth to her children.[71] Recall too that the symbol of the pelican, who feeds her young with her own blood, has traditionally represented Christ's motherly love in the Eucharist. But the image of God as mother emerges in a unique way in Julian's writings. She links motherhood to the very nature of God, but she relates it particularly closely to Christ, as the deep wisdom of God and our mother. She explains that "our saviour is our true mother, in whom we are endlessly born and out of whom we shall never come."[72] Julian thus explains: "And so in our making, God almighty is our loving Father, and God all wisdom is our loving Mother, with the love and goodness of the Holy Spirit which is all one God, one Lord."[73]

Having surveyed the development of the main themes of trinitarian theology over the centuries, we are in a position to appreciate the wealth of resources in the tradition that are available to us in our task of rendering trinitarian meaning in our times. We shall now turn to consider the major areas of development in contemporary trinitarian theology.

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70. See, e.g., Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), esp. 110-69; Kerry Hide, "The Deep Wisdom of the Trinity Our Mother: Echoes in Augustine and Julian of Norwich," *Australasian Catholic Record* 4 (1997): 432-44.

71. Anselm, "Prayer to Saint Paul," in *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm*, trans. with introduction Benedicta Ward (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 153-56.

72. Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, Long text, chapter 57.

73. Ibid., chapter 58.

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