“DIVING DEEPER TOGETHER”
Sharing Christ’s Life

Presentation #3 of a four week Lenten series by Msgr. Zenz
Sunday, March 4, 2018
Holy Name Parish
Introduction and overview: I John 1:1-4

A. Our relationship with Christ is constantly discovered anew and deepened; we are bonded to Him and to each other as one Body (Christus solus numquam solus).

B. Christ is our brother (fully human) yet also our redeemer/God (fully divine); He saves us by being both divine and human at the same time.

C. Eternal Son of God who “leaves” the Father for us and returns to the Father in Resurrection; the “turning point” of the return is the “abandonment” of the cross and the descent into hell.

D. We share in this mystery existentially and sacramentally, especially through radical availability of obedience like Christ and with Christ.

E. Even in His glory, He is also still the wounded suffering Lord.

Part One: Why the incarnation of the Son of God?

A. Traditional teaching from Thomas Aquinas (d.1275): Christ came to “pay the price” of Adam’s sin. His purpose was remedial.

B. Alternative view, not so “sin-centered” but “love-centered:” Christ came to manifest God’s glory/presence.

He came not to “save us from the world;” rather, He was the very reason that the world had been created! The Father wanted a “stage” to present His beloved Son and draw us – freely – to participate in their communion of love.

1) This view resonates with Ephesians 1:3-10 and Colossians 1:15-20 and II Peter 1:3-4; these texts suggest a “pattern of redemption” (i.e. separation and return) present in all things even before the foundation of the world. We were created so as to be “divinized;” to be part of their “ebb and flow” of love.

2) A teaching of Irenaeus (d. 200), Bonaventure (d. 1274) and John Duns Scotus (d. 1308) and resonates with Vatican II (Gaudium et Spes, art 22).

C. More specifically, Christ came to manifest the dynamic process of “obedient love” between Himself and His Father.

1) Even had there been no sin, He would still have come to manifest this love and call us to share it.

2) But since Adam and Eve did sin, He also came for a “remedial” or “re-demptive” purpose.

D. The redemption of Christ is two-fold:

1) “Negatively,” the removal of the “barrier” of [original] sin; bringing reconciliation and healing between us and God and us and each other.

2) “Positively,” sharing in God’s life together ... the solidarity of grace.
E. Christ's "person" [being the Eternal Son] and "work" [sent as Jesus/Saviour/Messiah] are one and the same;
   1) **Within the Trinity**, from all eternity Christ is the "one sent," the one generated by the Father; the Word of the Father, the eternally obedient Son.
   2) **Toward us**, Christ is the "one sent" who helps us know the "Sender" (His Father) and recognize that we can share in His "being sent" by a life of total obedience.

F. The sin of Adam/Eve was disobedience so the resolution of our brokenness was by Christ the new Adam, the fully obedient human being. Christ "emptied himself" of divinity and was obedient even unto death - death on a cross..." (Philippians 2:5-9).

G. A summation: Christ coming to earth was not an "after-thought" because of sin; Christ's coming was the divine plan from the beginning.

But, from the beginning, God also included the possibility of a fall/original sin and structured the human person with a capacity for being redeemed - i.e. the ability to accept underserved love and healing, to override the "selfish gene" of our "ego," setting aside the isolation of self, choosing obedient trust and solidarity with all other persons.

This is what we first experience at Baptism, renew at Easter and celebrate at every Eucharist.

**Part Two: Christ's abandonment and descent**

A. The fullest revelation of Christ's obedience as eternal Son of the Father and brother to us happened through the abandonment of the cross ("My God, my God why have you abandoned me...?" Psalm 22) and the eventual descent into "hell"... Here we see the emptiness of God toward us but also the emptiness within God.
   1) The "separation" of Father and Son "proves" their love for each other and for us at the same time!

B. **Tradition on the descent:**
   1) I Peter 3:18-22 speaks of Christ's descent and "preaching to the spirits in person" (see also I Peter 4:6).
   2) Jonah in the whale three days; see also Psalm 16:10 and 49:16 (rescued from Sheol).
   3) Other references: Matthew 12:40 and John 5:25; dead hearing the voice of the Son of God and coming back to life: also Ephesians 4:8-10 (ascent/descent).
   4) Christ was "made sin" (II Corinthians 5:21) so that He might make us righteous.
   5) This teaching also present in Apostles Creed (but not in the Nicene Creed of 325 AD).

C. **Recent discussion** on the significance of the descent:
   1) Hans urs Von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr.
   4) Archbishops Bruno Forte and Luis Ladaria.

D. Eastern Church's presentation of Resurrection via icons stresses:
   1) From the "underworld." (Sheol)
   2) Communal salvation and resurrection (not Christ alone).

E. Christ's Death and descent are the "turning point" where God's justice (which rejects sin) and God's love coincide: God's righteous "wrath" burns out sin and God's love discloses itself at this same moment.
   1) Christ's perfect obedience fulfills what no human being could do; His obedience in death/descent was a manifestation of His eternal identity and mission of obedience within the Trinity.
2) Our state of being “lost” in our sins is gathered into God by God (Christ).
3) Christ enters into hell, the setting of isolation the sinner has chosen; now the sinner is no longer alone. Christ and the sinner “share” solitude!

F. Throughout the abandonment and descent the Holy Spirit accompanies Christ Jesus. Christ remains God throughout. The bond between the Father and Son is not broken because the love of the one same Holy Spirit informs both the one who Sends (the Father) and the one Sent (Christ).

### Part Three: The Glorification of Christ

A. Resurrection is a spiritual event, Christ’s return to the Father, something invisible.

B. This mystery happens to Christ; He is passive. He is raised by the Spirit and returned to the Father.

C. Signs left for us of this invisible reality:

1) The empty tomb.
2) The apparitions of Jesus in His glorified body still bearing the wounds (identifying marks and a sign of continuity).

D. The Resurrection must be seen as part of the glorification of Christ. In the way Christ died, the glory (presence) of God was already becoming manifest (the “shout” of Mark’s Gospel; the earthquake in Matthew; the veil of temple torn before Christ dies in Luke; the “hour” fulfilled as Christ “lifted up” in John.)

E. The glorification of Christ includes also Ascension (body/enthronement) and Pentecost (sharing of the Spirit and Risen life/forgiveness).

F. Resurrection of Christ is also eschatological: it reveals the future held-in-trust for all of us; the “already” of Christ is our “not yet.”

G. Death-Resurrection of Christ is the “birth” of the Christian community and the manifestation of God’s desire to save us. We meet the Risen Christ – glorious yet wounded – in the community.

H. We are “saved” by immersion into this mystery (Death-Resurrection and commitment to the specificity of our particular community of faith and our family etc.).

### Conclusion: Salvation happens as we accept Christ’s self-gift and share that gift with other believers.

A. Christ accompanies us- even now – in all “dark valleys” of isolation/desolation;

1) He meets us in our darkness and “ugliness.”
2) He absorbs and transforms our anger and neurotic need for control by His perfect love.

B. We are “saved together” as we allow Christ to “work” – through us as we accompany others through hospitality and mutual forgiveness – all of which are experienced in the Eucharistic celebration.

C. Application for our prayer: to/with/through the always wounded yet Risen Christ.
Supporting Quotes

"Through his passion and death on the cross, Jesus Christ does more than put himself “on the side of the victims.” He is a guilty one among the perpetrators. “God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). Christ even shares the guilt and terror of the damned....in the human being of Jesus Christ, God enters fully into the human condition. God’s uniting love for all creatures reaches into every dark, lonely, and tormented corner of existence and brings God into every place, not excluding the suffering of the wicked and the damned. In that darkness and with unfathomable self-emptying God becomes “guilty” and dies in Christ, in a radical act of maternal aching and yearning for the child who has been “disappeared” by evil. God invades the despair of her child with the consolation of her absolute presence and sustenance. In Jesus Christ, God enters all of the human condition, save sin – and human beings enter completely, if eschatologically, into God.

Lisa Sowle Cahill, Theological Studies 68(2007)

Jesus experienced the same human experience we undergo. He became Christ not because He did different things but because He saw so much in all the things we ourselves know and live. Jesus ran as a child along the dusty roads of Nazareth into the mountains where He prayed as a man. He sailed the Sea of Galilee and, in Jerusalem, spoke of His body and blood, of His Easter glory and of the Spirit who was yet to come.

Jesus was born a child so that He might know at first-hand that which His disciples must never lose. He was a child so that He might learn to wonder. Jesus was God’s poet; God’s way of expressing devotion to us. Jesus was the contemplative prayer of a Father who was lost in wonder at His Son and filled with love for His Son’s brother and sisters.

Dawn Without Darkness. Padavano, p. 41

Hospitality is a helpful concept but it needs to be used carefully as it sometimes carries with it the notion of ‘host and guest’. If by ‘hospitality’ we mean us welcoming others into our house then this is metaphor of limited value. But if we understand the house to be belong to God. Then together with God we work to build a house where all belong, open to giving and receiving from each other. It means everyone must be open to change and ready to adapt, not just expect others to fit into our way of doing things. as we share meals together we begin to see the stranger not as threat nor as someone who diminishes our life but as someone who becomes a channel of God’s grace.

Helen Richmond – Sydney, Australia The Furrow
Christ the New Man

In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord. Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling. It is no wonder, then, that all the truths mentioned so far should find in him their source and their most perfect embodiment.

He who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each individual. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.

As an innocent lamb he merited life for us by his blood which he freely shed. In him God reconciled us to himself and to one another, freeing us from the bondage of the devil and of sin, so that each one of us could say with the apostle: the Son of God "loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). By suffering for us he not only gave us an example so that we might follow in his footsteps, but he also opened up a way. If we follow this path, life and death are made holy and acquire a new meaning.

"Conformed to the image of the Son who is the firstborn of many brothers and sisters," Christians receive the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23) by which they are able to fulfil the new law of love. By this Spirit, who is the "pledge of our inheritance" (Eph 1:14), the entire person is inwardly renewed, even to the "redemption of the body" (Rom 8:23). "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom 8:11). The Christian is certainly bound both by need and by duty to struggle with evil through many afflictions and to suffer death; but, as one who has been made a partner in the paschal mystery, and as one who has been configured to the death of Christ, will go forward, strengthened by hope, to the resurrection.

All this holds true not only for Christians but also for all people of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly. "For since Christ died for everyone," and since all are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.

Such is the nature and the greatness of the mystery of humankind as enlightened for the faithful by the Christian revelation. It is therefore through Christ, and in Christ, that light is thrown on the mystery of suffering and death which, apart from his Gospel, overwhelms us. Christ has risen again, destroying death by his death, and has given life abundantly to us so that, becoming sons of the Son, we may cry out in the Spirit: Abba, Father!
The Windhover

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon,
in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and
sliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Dráw Fláme

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
Christ—for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

Gerard Manley Hopkins