

“Spiritual Theology” by Jordan Aumann, OP

Study Questions - Chapter Three

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-Our Life in Christ and Mary-

References: CCC

New Adam: 411 Lord: 446-451 Mary: 501; 968-970; 2617-2619 Luke 1: 26-55
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Other Suggested References:

Ruusbroec: <i>“The Spiritual Espousals”</i> Louis de Montfort: <i>“True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary”</i> Thomas A’Kempis: <i>“The Imitation of Christ”</i> Dietrich Bonhoeffer: <i>“The Cost of Discipleship”</i> Scott Hahn: <i>“Hail, Holy Queen”</i>

Questions

1. What is meant by the term, *“Christocentric”*?

Making Christ the Center of our lives.

2. What is meant by the term, *“Mystical Union”*?

“Pope Pius XII reminded theologians that the union between Christ and the soul surpasses all description and that any exaggeration, even if it be merely a matter of terminology, can have serious consequences in the field of spirituality. He concluded by saying that this union surpasses any moral or physical union just as grace transcends nature, and it is best described as a mystical union.” p. 29; #4’

Rom. 8:29: “.....to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.”

3. The text states that “... *the primary concern of every Christian should be to live the life that Christ brought to us, to be united with Christ to the point of being configured with him.*” How does this statement related to the idea of “*Spiritual Formation*”?

“...the Christian life is configuration with Christ and transformation in Christ.” p. 29; #5

To be inseparable from Christ –as the water and wine during the Mass: “Not only should Christians do all things and ask all things through Jesus Christ, they should also strive to do all things with Christ. We have already seen that this concept of union with Christ appears constantly in the writings of St. Paul. Blessed as he was with a profound understanding of the mystery of Christ, St. Paul could not conceive of anything that would ever separate him from Christ.” p. 35; #5

Via the various means of Dominican Spirituality:

- a. Contemplating the mystery of Christ
- b. Study to discern the Wisdom of God and how that can be played out in our lives
- c. Prayerfully seeking and opening up our lives to His grace
- d. By entering into the sacred mysteries via the Liturgy of the Hours and the Liturgy of the Word, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist

Via the efficacy of the Sacraments

4. What role do the sacraments and faith play in our formation?

“...through the sacraments and through contact by faith vivified by charity..... Christ instituted the seven sacraments as sensible signs that communicate grace to those who

receive them worthily..... we can safely assume that there are many souls who receive grace and grow in the spiritual life without having access to the sacraments. What the sacraments do is provide greater certitude and facility for the reception of grace.” p. 34; #3,4

5. In the Mass we find this statement: "*Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.*" What are the implications of this statement to our spiritual journey?

“The essence of the Christian life can be summarized in the following statement: the glory of God is the ultimate end, our sanctification is the proximate end, and incorporation in Christ is the only way of attaining both ends. Everything depends on living the mystery of Christ with ever-increasing intensity because Christian spirituality is nothing other than an intimate participation in the mystery of Christ. The liturgical formula that best describes the theology of our incorporation in Christ is the one that the celebrant pronounces in the Mass as he holds aloft the sacred species: "*Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, forever and ever.*" p. 35; #3

Reflect on the following statement from the text:

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6. How can individual Christians enter into a deeper appreciation of the mystery of Christ and then endeavor to reproduce this mystery in their own lives?

Via study, prayer, and contemplation

7. According to the text, Christ is our life in three different ways. What are they?_

“Christ is our life in three different ways: as meritorious cause, he obtained for us the grace that is the life of the spirit; as efficient cause he is the very source of the life of grace; and as Head of the Mystical Body he communicates life to the members.”

8. Define each of the following terms:

- a. *meritorious cause*
- b. *efficient cause*
- c. *Head of the Mystical Body*

9. What is your understanding of the following statement from the text: “*When Christ incorporated us to himself and made us members of his Mystical Body, we in a sense became Christ. This being so, all our actions and sufferings take on a Christocentric modality, and it is now no longer we who live and act but Christ who lives and acts in us (cf. Col. 1:24; 1:29; Matt. 10:42)*”.

10. *What was the primary reason for the Incarnation?*

The primary motive of the Incarnation was the redemption of the human race... Word that came down to earth to assume our human nature, to be like us in all things except sin. As the Incarnate Word of the Father, Jesus Christ thus becomes for us the perfect ideal whom we ought to emulate and to whom we should become configured. Consequently, it is through Christ our model and exemplar that we are able to attain a holiness that is truly divine, imaging, however faintly, the sublime sanctity of the Eternal Word.” p. 32; #3

11. In reference to the Blessed Mother, what is the meaning of each of the following terms:

- a. “*Mediatrice of grace*”

“...that Mary is not only the Mother of Christ, and therefore the Mother of God; she is also the Mother and Mediatrice of grace.” p. 36; #6

b. *“Co-Redemptrix”*

“Mary is not only the Mother of Christ, and therefore the Mother of God; she is also the Mother and Mediatrix of grace.” p. 36; #6

c. *“Mater digna”*

“The Church, ever mysterious, calls Mary the Spouse of the Holy Ghost. This expression does not give forth much light, and yet it permits us to assume that the Mother of the Son of God possesses extraordinary importance and dignity....The key to Mary's greatness and dignity is her divine maternity...She was conceived immaculate, preserved from all stain of sin, so that she could be a Mater digna, a Mother worthy of God's only begotten Son.” p. 37; #2, 3

THE NEW ADAM

411 The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the “New Adam” who, because he “became obedient unto death, even death on a cross,” makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience of Adam.³⁰⁵ Furthermore many Fathers and

³⁰⁵ Cf. 1 Cor 15:21–22, 45; Phil 2:8; Rom 5:19–20.

Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the *Protoevangelium* as Mary, the mother of Christ, the “new Eve.” Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ’s victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.³⁰⁶ (359, 615; 491)¹

IN BRIEF

- 413** “God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living.... It was through the devil’s envy that death entered the world” (*Wis* 1:13; 2:24).
- 414** Satan or the devil and the other demons are fallen angels who have freely refused to serve God and his plan. Their choice against God is definitive. They try to associate man in their revolt against God.
- 415** “Although set by God in a state of rectitude, man, enticed by the evil one, abused his freedom at the very start of history. He lifted himself up against God and sought to attain his goal apart from him” (*GS* 13 § 1).
- 416** By his sin Adam, as the first man, lost the original holiness and justice he had received from God, not only for himself but for all human beings.
- 417** Adam and Eve transmitted to their descendants human nature wounded by their own first sin and hence deprived of original holiness and justice; this deprivation is called “original sin.”
- 418** As a result of original sin, human nature is weakened in its powers; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the domination of death; and inclined to sin (This inclination is called “concupiscence.”).

⁶³⁰⁶ Cf. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*: DS 2803; Council of Trent: DS 1573.

¹ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (104). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

- 419 “We therefore hold, with the Council of Trent, that original sin is transmitted with human nature, ‘by propagation, not by imitation’ and that it is ... ‘proper to each’ ” (Paul VI, *CP*^s § 16).
- 420 The victory that Christ won over sin has given us greater blessings than those which sin had taken from us: “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (*Rom* 5:20).
- 421 Christians believe that “the world has been established and kept in being by the Creator’s love; has fallen into slavery to sin but has been set free by Christ, crucified and risen to break the power of the evil one ...” (*G*^s 2 § 2).²

IV. LORD

446 In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the ineffable Hebrew name YHWH, by which God revealed himself to Moses,⁵⁹ is rendered as *Kyrios*, “Lord.” From then on, “*Lord*” becomes the more usual name by which to indicate the divinity of Israel’s God. The New Testament uses this full sense of the title “Lord” both for the Father and—what is new—for Jesus, who is thereby recognized as God Himself.⁶⁰ (209)

447 Jesus ascribes this title to himself in a veiled way when he disputes with the Pharisees about the meaning of *Psalms* 110, but also in an explicit way when he addresses his apostles.⁶¹

GCPG Solemn Profession of Faith: Credo of the People of God

SGS Gaudium et spes

2 Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (104–105). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ex* 3:14.

⁶⁰ Cf. *1 Cor* 2:8.

⁶¹ Cf. *Mt* 22:41–46; cf. *Acts* 2:34–36; *Heb* 1:13; *Jn* 13:13.

Throughout his public life, he demonstrated his divine sovereignty by works of power over nature, illnesses, demons, death, and sin. (548)

448 Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as “Lord.” This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing.⁶² At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, “Lord” expresses the recognition of the divine mystery of Jesus.⁶³ In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: “My Lord and my God!” It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: “It is the Lord!”⁶⁴ (208, 683; 641)

449 By attributing to Jesus the divine title “Lord,” the first confessions of the Church’s faith affirm from the beginning that the power, honor, and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus, because “he was in the form of God,”⁶⁵ and the Father manifested the sovereignty of Jesus by raising him from the dead and exalting him into his glory.⁶⁶ (461, 653)

450 From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of Christ’s lordship over the world and over history has implicitly recognized that man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²⁶² Cf. *Mt* 8:2; 14:30; 15:22; *et al.*

³⁶³ Cf. *Lk* 1:43; 2:11.

⁴⁶⁴ *Jn* 20:28; *Jn* 21:7.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. *Acts* 2:34–36; *Rom* 9:5; *Titus* 2:13; *Rev* 5:13; *Phil* 2:6.

⁶⁶⁶ Cf. *Rom* 10:9; *1 Cor* 12:3; *Phil* 2:9–11.

Caesar is not “the Lord.”⁶⁷ “The Church ... believes that the key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of man’s history is to be found in its Lord and Master.”⁶⁸ (668–672; 2242)

451 Christian prayer is characterized by the title “Lord,” whether in the invitation to prayer (“The Lord be with you.”), its conclusion (“through Christ our Lord”), or the exclamation full of trust and hope: *Maran atha* (“Our Lord, come!”), or *Marana tha* (“Come, Lord!”)—“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”⁶⁹ (2664–2665; 2817)³

MARY: IN BRIEF

508 From among the descendants of Eve, God chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of his Son. “Full of grace,” Mary is “the most excellent fruit of redemption” (SC 103): from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life.

509 Mary is truly “Mother of God” since she is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.

510 Mary “remained a virgin in conceiving her Son, a virgin in giving birth to him, a virgin in carrying him, a virgin in nursing him at her breast, always a virgin” (St. Augustine, *Serm.* 186, 1: PL 38, 999): with her whole being she is “the handmaid of the Lord” (*Lk* 1:38).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Rev* 11:15; *Mk* 12:17; *Acts* 5:29.

⁶⁸ GS 10 § 3; cf. 45 § 2.

⁶⁹ *1 Cor* 16:22; *Rev* 22:20.

³ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (112–114). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

CSC *Sacrosanctum concilium*

L 38, 999): with her whole being she is “the handmaid of the Lord” (PL J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: 1841–1855)

511 The Virgin Mary “cooperated through free faith and obedience in human salvation” (*L^G* 56). She uttered her yes “in the name of all human nature” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *ST^h* III, 30, 1). By her obedience she became the new Eve, mother of the living.⁴

GLG Lumen gentium

hSTh Summa Theologiae

⁴ Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed.) (128). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.