

目錄

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● 引言 -----	3
● 第一章 按天主肖像受造的人 -----	5
● 第二章 天主肖像：位格的共融 -----	14
● 第三章 天主肖像：有形受造界的管家 -----	28
● 總結 -----	47
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	
● Introduction -----	48
● Chapter One Human Persons Created in the Image of God -----	52
● Chapter Two In the Image of God: Persons in Communion -----	62
● Chapter Three In the Image of God: Stewards of Visible Creation -----	80
● Conclusion -----	102

國際神學委員會

共融與服事

按天主肖像受造的人*

* 前言：「按天主肖像受造的人」這個主題被提交給國際神學委員會研究。為準備進行這項研究，委員會成立了一個小組委員會，成員包括狄奈雅總主教（J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P.）、布魯格斯總主教（Jean-Louis Brugès）、施魯克蒙席（Anton Strukelj）、曼蘇爾神父（Tanios Bou Mansour, O.L.M.）、嘉雪雅神父（Adolpe Gesché）、艾克總主教（Willem Jacobus Eijk）、施德羅神父（Fadel Sidarouss, S.J.）、高柳俊一神父（Shun'ichi Takayanagi, S.J.）。該小組委員會就此主題舉行多次會議，並在2000年至2002年於羅馬舉行的國際神學委員會全體大會上，作出有關討論。經國際神學委員會書面表決後，文本獲得通過，並提交信理部部長拉辛格樞機，最後獲他批准刊發。

引言

1. 現代科學知識和技術能力的爆炸性發展既為人類帶來極大利益，但也帶來艱鉅的挑戰。我們認識的宇宙浩瀚無垠，歷史久遠，但由此看來，人類在宇宙的地位和重要性似乎無足輕重，亦非穩如泰山。技術發展大幅提升了我們控制和指揮自然力量的能力，但最終也為我們的環境乃至人類本身帶來意想不到甚至可能是無法控制的影響。

2. 國際神學委員會就天主肖像（*imago Dei*）的教義作出以下的神學默想，以反思當人類面對此等挑戰時，人存在於世的意義。與此同時，隨著天主肖像的教義主題近年獲重新探究，我們希望展示人類在宇宙中的正面角色。

3. 特別是自梵蒂岡第二屆大公會議以來，天主肖像的教義在教會訓導當局的教導並在神學研究中，越來越重要。以前，由於各種因素，天主肖像的神學被部分現代西方神學家和哲學家漠視。在哲學界，「肖像」（*image*）的概念一直是某些知識論猛烈批評的對象。這些知識論要不是看重「觀念」（*idea*）的角色而摒除形相（*image*）（此為理性主義），就是認為經驗才是驗證真理的最終標準，而不考慮形相的角色（此為經驗主義）。此外，還有文化的因素，例如世俗人文主義的影響，以及近代媒體大量運用圖像的情況。這些因素導致難以確認人性對神性事物的嚮往，以及形相的本體地位，但在所有論述天主肖像的神學中，以上兩者都是

基本的前提。在西方神學的領域，對這個主題的輕視也是某類聖經詮釋所致。這類詮釋強調禁止造像的誡命永遠有效（參閱：出二十3~4），或是斷定**天主肖像**的主題在聖經出現是受到希臘文化的影響。

4. 直至梵二的前夕，神學家才開始重新探究這個主題的豐富內涵，以期了解和闡明基督信仰的奧祕。事實上，會議文件也表達和確認了二十世紀神學在這方面的重大發展。在梵二結束後，人們逐漸恢復對**天主肖像**這個主題的關注，因此國際神學委員會致力在本文件接下來的部分，重新肯定一個真理：人是按天主的肖像受造，為使人得以享有與聖父、聖子和聖神的位格共融，且在與聖三的共融之中，亦與其他人共融結合，並以天主的名承擔管理受造界的責任，以此履行其職務。基於這個真理，宇宙對我們來說並非僅是浩瀚無垠而可能沒有什麼意義的，而是一個為位格共融而受造的空間。

5. 我們將會在接下來的數章嘗試闡明：這些意味深長的真理並非已經毫不相干或無關重要。第一章會簡單回顧**天主肖像**在聖經和聖傳裡的基礎，然後我們會進而論述**天主肖像**神學的兩個重要主題：第二章論述**天主肖像**是共融的基礎，包括人與天主聖三的共融，以及人與人之間的共融；第三章論述**天主肖像**是人得以參與天主對有形受造界的治理的基礎。這些反思匯集了基督信仰人類學的主要思想，以及倫理學和倫理神學中某些得到**天主肖像**神學所啟迪的學說。我們深明我們在此嘗試探討的問題涵蓋甚廣，但是我們作出這些反思是為提醒自己和讀者**天主肖像**神學極有說服力，從而重申有關宇宙和人類生命的意義的神聖真理。

第一章 按天主肖像受造的人

6. 正如聖經、聖傳和教會訓導所見證的，人是按**天主肖像**受造的真理是基督信仰啟示的核心。教會多位教父和偉大的神學家都明認這個真理，並闡述其廣闊的含義。如我們稍後所述的，儘管這個真理曾受到部分有地位的現代思想家所質疑，但今日的神學家和聖經學者都與教會訓導當局一致行動，重新探究並重新肯定**天主肖像**的教義。

1. 聖經與聖傳中的「天主肖像」

7. 除了極少數例外的情況，大多數當代釋經學者都肯定**天主肖像**的主題在聖經啟示中的核心地位（參閱：創一26~27；五1~3；九6），將之視為聖經對人性的理解，以及新舊約聖經所有人類學思想的關鍵。聖經認為**天主肖像**幾乎就是人的定義：為了解人的奧祕，不能脫離天主的奧祕。

8. 人是按**天主肖像**受造的概念來自舊約。這概念在某程度上反映了古代近東的思想：君王是天主在世的形像。然而，聖經對此的解讀有所不同，因為聖經將**天主肖像**的概念擴展至涵蓋所有人。聖經與近東思想還有另一相異之處：聖經認為人的要務並非朝拜神明，而是耕種土地（參閱：創二15）。聖經可說是更加直接將敬神

與耕種連繫起來，並認為人類一週六日的活動是為了迎接安息日，祝福和聖化的日子。

9. 聖經的觀點融合了兩個主題。首先，整個人都是按天主的肖像受造。這個觀點摒除某類解讀：天主肖像僅存在於人性的某部分（如正直或理智），或存在於人的某些特質或功能（如性特質或對大地的統治權）。聖經既避免一元論和二元論，也提出一種人觀，而根據這種人觀，人的精神面向必須聯同人的身體、社會和歷史面向一起解讀。

10. 其次，創世紀的創世敘述強調：人並非被天主創造為孤立的個體：「天主於是照自己的肖像造了人，就是照天主的肖像造了人：造了一男一女」（創一27）。天主使最早受造的人彼此相連，成為異性的夥伴。聖經指出：人生活在與其他人、與天主、與世界和與自己的關係之中。根據這個概念，人不是孤立的個體，而是一個位格：在本質上是一種在關係中的存有。天主肖像的本體關係性絕非表示一種只是純粹的實存論（actualism），而否認這肖像的本體永存狀況；反之，人的關係性構成他本體上的結構，而且是人行使自由和履行責任的基礎。

11. 根據新約，舊約所指的受造肖像必須在基督肖像（*imago Christi*）內圓滿實現。新約在發展這個主題時，呈現了兩個特別的元素：天主肖像的基督論和聖三論特色，以及在塑成基督肖像的過程中，聖事的媒介角色。

12. 天主的完美肖像正是基督（格後四4；哥一15；希一3），因此人必須肖似祂（羅八29），並藉著聖神的德能，成為聖父的義子（羅八23）。的確，如要「成為」天主的肖像，人必須以聖子的肖像為楷模，積極投入個人的轉化（哥三10），而基督已藉著祂在歷史中的行動，從降生成人至光榮復活，展現祂的身分。根據聖子最初勾劃的模型，在每一個人身上，天主的肖像都是由個人的歷史旅程構成，從受造開始，經過悔罪歸依，以至獲得救恩，並讓這救恩圓滿實現。正如基督藉著祂的苦難與復活彰顯祂對罪惡與死亡的王權，每一個人也要藉著基督，並在聖神內，獲得其王權——不僅是對大地和動物界的權柄（如舊約所確認的），而主要是對罪惡與死亡的權柄。

13. 根據新約，這種轉化為基督肖像的過程是通過聖事成就的，首先是基督的教導（格後三18~四6）和聖洗（格前十二12）產生的效果。促成人與基督共融的，是對基督的信德和聖洗；藉著聖洗，我們在基督內死於舊人（迦三26~28），穿上新人（迦三27；羅十三14）。這個徹底轉化的過程是按照基督苦難、死亡和復活的模型進行，而在這個過程中，和好聖事、聖體聖事和其他聖事都能堅強我們，並加強我們的力量。我們是按天主的肖像受造，並藉著聖神在聖事內的德能，在基督的肖像內邁向成全，獲得聖父慈愛的擁抱。

14. 在教父所闡述的基督信仰人類學以及後期的神學中，聖經有關天主肖像的觀點一直舉足輕重，直至現代開始後，情況才有所改變。為顯示這個主題的核心地

位，我們可回顧早期基督徒如何嘗試在道成肉身的奧秘啟迪下，解讀聖經所述為天主造像的禁令（參閱：出二十2~3；申廿七15）。事實上，道成肉身的奧秘顯示：人有可能體現降生成人的天主的人性和歷史現實。在公元七至八世紀，教會發生反聖像之爭。當時有人為捍衛那些呈現降生成人的聖言和救恩事件的宗教藝術，而基於對二性一位的結合的深入認識提出理據。根據二性一位的結合的信理，絕不能將這「肖像」內的天主性與人性分割。

15. 教父和中世紀神學在某些方面偏離聖經的人類學，而在另一些方面則進一步闡述這人類學。舉例說，大部分教會傳統的代表人物沒有完全依從聖經的觀點，沒有將整個人看作天主的肖像。聖依勒內對肖像與模樣所作的區分為這段聖經敘述帶來重大發展。他認為「肖像」是指本體上的分受（methexis），而「模樣」（mimêsis）則是指道德上的轉化（《駁異端》V, 6, 1; V, 8, 1; V, 16, 2）。根據戴都良的論述，天主照祂的肖像創造人，並將自己的氣息吹送了給人，使人具有祂的模樣。雖然天主的肖像永遠不會被毀滅，但人可能會因犯罪而失去天主的模樣（《論聖洗》5, 6. 7）。聖奧斯定並無採納這種區分，而是闡述一個更富有位格主義、心理學和存在主義特色的天主肖像。他認為在人的身上的天主肖像具有聖三結構，反映人的靈魂的三重結構（精神、自我意識和愛）或三個心理面向（記憶、智力和意志）。奧斯定認為：在人的身上的天主肖像引導人藉著呼求、認識和愛，走向天主。（《懺悔錄》I, 1, 1）

16. 多瑪斯·阿奎納指出：天主肖像具有歷史性，因為這肖像經歷三個階段：創造（本性）之肖像（*imago creationis [naturae]*）、再造（恩寵）之肖像（*imago recreationis [gratiae]*）、模樣（榮福）之肖像（*imago similitudinis [gloriae]*）（《神學大全》，第一集，第93題，第4節）。阿奎納認為：天主肖像是分受天主生命的基礎。天主的肖像主要是藉著理智的沉思體現（《神學大全》，第一集，第93題，第4及7節）。這想法有別於聖文德提出的觀點。聖文德認為這肖像主要是在人實踐的信仰行動中，藉其意志體現（《隆巴哲學命題注疏》II d.16 a.2 q.3）。艾克哈（Meister Eckhart）依循這個密契觀點，但更為大膽，傾向將天主肖像精神化，將之置於靈魂的頂峰，與身體分離。（Quint. I, 5, 5-7; V, 6.9s）

17. 有關宗教改革的爭議顯示，天主肖像神學對新教和天主教的神學家依然極為重要。改革者指責天主教徒將天主肖像縮減為「本性之肖像」（*imago naturae*）；後者呈現靜態的人性觀，並鼓勵罪人來到天主面前。天主教徒則指責改革者否認天主肖像的本體現實，將其縮減為純粹的關係。此外，改革者堅持認為天主肖像已被罪惡所敗壞，而天主教神學家則視罪為天主肖像在人身上的的一種創傷。

2. 對「天主肖像」神學的現代批判

18. 到現代來臨之前，天主肖像神學在神學的人類學中一直占據核心地位。這教義正是具有這樣的力量和魅力，以至在整個基督信仰思想史上，一直能夠抵擋那些零散的批評（例如在反聖像之爭面對的批評）。這些批評認為當中的擬人論（anthropomorphism）會助長偶像崇拜。然而，進入現代後，天主肖像神學面對更嚴厲、更有系統的批評。

19. 現代科學提出的宇宙觀取代了宇宙是按天主肖像受造的傳統觀念，從而動搖了支持天主肖像神學的概念框架的重要元素。經驗主義者認為這神學是一個與經驗矛盾的主題，而理性主義者則認為這神學含糊不清。然而，破壞天主肖像神學的最重要因素是某種人觀。這種人觀將人看作自主和自我構成的主體，與天主沒有任何關係。隨著這樣的發展，天主肖像的概念再不可能獲得支持。此後不久，聖經的人類學便被推翻，這可見於費爾巴哈（Ludwig Feuerbach）、馬克思（Karl Marx）和弗洛伊德（Sigmund Freud）以不同形式論述的思想：人不是按天主的肖像受造，天主只不過是人投射出來的圖像。最後，如要宣稱人是自我構成的，那麼無神論是必要的前提。

20. 最初，二十世紀西方神學的氛圍並不有利於天主肖像的主題。考慮到我們上文描述的十九世紀的發展，某類辯證神學可能無可避免地認為這個主題表現了人的傲慢，因為這是將人與天主比較或將兩者看作平等。

存在主義神學強調人與天主相遇的事件，對天主肖像的教義所隱含的概念提出質疑；這概念就是人與天主可建立穩定或恆久的關係。俗化神學否定這世界有一個可將人與天主連繫起來的客觀參照。某些形式的否定神學提出天主是「沒有屬性的天主」（實際上是非位格的天主），這樣的天主無法成為人按其肖像受造的模型。政治神學以正統實踐（orthopraxis）為焦點，而漠視天主肖像的主題。最後，神學家和世俗思想的代表人物也提出其他批評，指責天主肖像神學鼓吹忽視自然環境和動物福利的態度。

3. 梵二和今日神學的「天主肖像」

21. 儘管面對這些不利的思潮，但在整個二十世紀中葉，人們逐漸恢復對天主肖像神學的關注。經過對聖經、教父和重要士林神學家的深入研究，人們重新意識到天主肖像的主題涵蓋範圍甚廣，而且相當重要。甚至在梵二舉行之前，許多基督信仰的神學家已在重新探究這個主題。其後，會議為天主肖像神學注入新的動力；其中，《論教會在現代世界牧職憲章》的教導尤其重要。

22. 《論教會在現代世界牧職憲章》（《牧職憲章》）藉著訴諸天主肖像的主題，確認創世紀一26和聖詠八6（《牧職憲章》12）所教導的人的尊嚴。據會議的觀點，天主肖像在於人對天主的基本嚮往，那是人性尊嚴和人不可剝奪的權利的基礎。每一個人都是天主的肖像，所以誰也不得被迫屈從這個世界的任何體制或目

的。人在宇宙中的權柄、人在社會生活的能力，以及人對天主的認識和愛，全都是源於人是按**天主肖像**受造的事實。

23. 會議的教導是以這肖像的基督論特色為基礎：基督是不可見的**天主肖像**（哥一15）（《牧職憲章》10）。聖子作為完美的人，使亞當的子女重拾曾因原祖父母的罪而受損的天主模樣（《牧職憲章》22）。按其肖像創造人的天主啟示了聖子，而正是這位聖子為人解答有關生死意義的問題（《牧職憲章》41）。此外，會議強調肖像的聖三結構：藉著肖似基督（羅八29）和聖神的恩賜（羅八23），一個有能力履行新誠命的新人受造了（《牧職憲章》22）。諸聖已按基督的肖像獲得圓滿的轉化（參閱：格後三18）；天主在他們身上，彰顯祂的臨在和恩寵，作為天國的標記（《牧職憲章》24）。會議基於**天主肖像**的教義教導說：人以天主為楷模，以其活動反映天主的創造力（《牧職憲章》34），且其活動應導向正義和共融，以建立一個大家庭，讓所有人都成為弟兄姊妹。（《牧職憲章》24）

24. 梵二所展現對**天主肖像**神學的重新關注也可見於當代神學。當代神學在不同領域都有所發展。首先，神學家努力闡明**天主肖像**神學如何照明人類學與基督學之間的連繫。他們既沒有否定天主藉著道成肉身的奧蹟賜給人類的獨特恩寵，也願意肯定人乃按**天主肖像**受造的奧蹟的內在價值。基督為人類帶來的可能性並不表示要壓抑人乃受造物的現實，而是道出人應按聖子的完美肖像轉化和實現自我。此外，隨著對基督學與人類學之

間的連繫的重新認識，對**天主肖像**的動態特質也有更深入的了解。人原是按天主的肖像受造；神學家既沒有否定這恩賜，也願意承認一個真理：從人類歷史和人類文化的演變看來，這個**天主肖像**實質上可被看作仍在受造之中。不僅如此，**天主肖像**神學也藉著闡明人怎樣在其自身內分沾了神律，而確認人類學與倫理神學之間進一步的連繫。這種自然律導引世人以行動追尋善。最後，**天主肖像**因而具有目的論和末世論的向度，將人定義為「旅途中的人」（*homo viator*），期待基督來臨（*parousia*），以及天主對宇宙的計畫的圓滿實現，因為這計畫是在各人生命中的恩寵歷史，以及在全人類的歷史中實現的。

第二章

天主肖像：位格的共融

25. 共融與服事是編織成天主肖像教義的兩大主線。本章會論述第一條主線，可綜述如下：三位一體的天主已揭示祂的計畫，就是要與那些按祂的肖像受造的人分享聖三生命的共融。其實，人按天主的肖像受造，正是為了這種聖三的共融。正是由於人與三位一體的天主基本上是相似的，所以這受造的存有才有可能與非受造的天主聖三共融結合。人是按天主的肖像受造，在本質上兼具肉身與精神，而且男女彼此相依，嚮往與天主共融，也追求人與人的共融。人遭受罪的傷害並需要救恩，被預定要藉聖神的德能肖似基督——聖父完美的肖像。

1. 身體與靈魂

26. 按天主肖像受造的人蒙召享有共融和服事實體宇宙。由位格共融和負責任的服事所衍生的活動關乎人的精神能力，亦即智力和情感能力，但並不摒除身體。人是有形的存有，與其他生物活在同一世界。天主教的天主肖像神學隱含一個意味深長的真理：物質世界營造人類彼此委身的環境。

27. 這個真理並不總是獲得應有的重視。當代神學正在致力克服二元人類學的影響。二元人類學將天主肖像完全置於人性的精神面向。基督信仰的神學過去先後受到柏拉圖和笛卡兒的二元人類學的若干影響，傾向認為

在人身上的天主肖像是指人性最獨特的特質，亦即理智或精神。其後學者重新探究聖經人類學和多瑪斯的觀點，對抵擋這種思潮作出重大貢獻。

28. 肉身性是位格身分的本質部分。這觀點雖然沒有成為明文探討的主題，但在對基督信仰的啟示所作的見證中，這是基本的概念。聖經人類學摒除了心物二元論，認為人是一個整體。在舊約聖經中，有幾個用作描述人的基本希伯來文用詞：「nèfèš」表示一個具體和有生命的人（創九4；肋廿四17~18；箴八35）；但這不是說人擁有「nèfèš」，而是說人就是「nèfèš」（創二7；肋十七10）。「Basar」是指動物和人類的肉，有時也指整個身體（肋四11；廿六29）。同樣，這不是說人擁有「basar」，而是說人就是「basar」。新約的用詞「sarx」（肉）既表示人有形的肉身性（格後十二7），也表示整個位格（羅八6）。另一個希臘文用詞「soma」（身體）是指整個人，強調其外表。這也不是說人擁有他的身體，而是說他就是他的身體。聖經人類學清晰地以人的整體性為前提，而且認為肉身性是位格身分的本質。

29. 基督信仰的核心信理將身體看作人的位格的內在組成部分，因此身體也是按天主的肖像受造。基督信仰的創世教義完全摒除二元的形上學或宇宙觀，因為這教義教導說：宇宙萬物無論是精神還是物質，都是天主創造的，因此都是源自圓滿的善。在道成肉身的教義中，身體也被視為位格的內在組成部分。若望福音指出：「聖言成了血肉（sarx）」，以駁斥幻身論（docetism），

強調耶穌具有真實的血肉之軀，而非只有一個有如幻影的身體。此外，耶穌是通過祂的身體所作的每個行動救贖我們。祂為我們獻出身體和傾流寶血，為我們的得救而將祂整個人賜給我們。基督的救贖工程是在教會、祂的奧體內完成，並在聖事中成為有形可見的。雖然聖事的效果是精神性的，但聖事是藉著可感知的物質標記產生效果，而且我們只能以身體來領受這些標記。這顯示不僅人的心靈獲得救贖，而且人的身體也獲得救贖。身體成為聖神的宮殿。最後，對於肉身末世復活的教義來說，身體作為人的本質部分是這教義的必要元素，讓我們得以明白人在永恆之中是完整地存在，兼具肉身與精神。

30. 啟示教導我們：身體與靈魂是一個整體。為堅持這教導，教會訓導當局將人的靈魂定義為「實體型式」（*forma substantialis*）（參閱：維也納大公會議和五屆拉特朗大公會議）。在這方面，教會訓導當局是基於多瑪斯的人類學。多瑪斯借鑒亞里士多德的哲學，將身體與靈魂看作個人的物質與精神始元（*principles*）。我們可見，這樣的解說與最新的科學發現並不矛盾。現代物理學的研究顯示：物質最基本的粒子只具有位能（*potential*），沒有組織（*organization*）的傾向。然而，在宇宙中可發現組織嚴密的有生命和無生命實體，而且從宇宙的組織程度，可推斷某種「資訊」的存在。從這樣的推論可見，亞里士多德的實體型式概念與現代科學有關「資訊」的主張之間，具有某程度的類比關係。例如我們可以說：染色體的DNA包含必要的資訊，讓物質可以根據某一物種或個體的典型模式來組織自

身。類比地說，實體型式為原質提供所需的資訊，以根據特定方式組織起來。這類比必須審慎處理，因為沒有可能將精神方面和形上學的概念與物質方面和生物學的數據直接作出比較。

31. 這些聖經、教義和哲學上的觀點一致地肯定：人的肉身性也是天主的肖像。如果按天主肖像受造的靈魂塑造物質以構成人的身體，那麼整個人都是天主肖像的載體，其精神與肉身都是天主的肖像。若充分考慮到天主肖像的基督論含義，這個結論會獲得進一步的鞏固。「誠然，除非在天主聖言降生成人的奧蹟內，人的奧蹟是無從解釋的。（……）基督（……）藉著揭示聖父及其聖愛的奧蹟，亦向人展現人之所是，並顯明人的至高召叫」（《牧職憲章》22）。人藉著在精神和身體上與降生成人和光榮復活的聖言結合，特別是在聖體聖事之中結合，而抵達其終向：肉身復活，整個人連同肉身與靈魂分沾永恆的光榮，投入天上諸聖共享的聖三共融。

2. 男與女

32. 教宗若望保祿二世在《家庭團體》勸諭中確認說：「人作為具有肉身的精神體，也就是作為一個在身體內體現自己的靈魂，以及一個由不死的精神體所塑成的身體，蒙召以其統合完整的自我去愛。愛涵蓋人的身體，而身體受造是為分沾精神性的愛」（《家庭團體》11）。按天主肖像受造的人蒙召投入愛與共融。這召叫以特殊的方式，藉著夫妻有生育能力的交合實現，因此對於按天主肖像受造人的構造來說，男女之別是其本

質元素。

33. 「天主於是照自己的肖像造了人，就是照天主的肖像造了人：造了一男一女」（創一27；參閱：創五1~2）。因此，聖經認為**天主肖像**從起初就藉兩性之別體現出來。可以說，人的現實境況是藉兩性的差異和多元呈現，故此人只能以男性或女性的身分存在。因此，這絕非人格附帶的或次要的一面，而是位格身分的基本元素。我們每個人在世界上都有各自的生活方式，我們以各自不同的方式觀看、思考、感受，並與他人建立彼此交流的關係，而其他入也是由其性別身分來定義。《天主教教理》指出：「在肉身與靈魂合一之下，人在各方面都受到性的影響。性特別牽涉到感情、相愛和生育的能力，也更廣泛地關係到與別人建立共融的連繫的能力」（《天主教教理》2332）。某一性別承擔的角色可能會隨時間和地域而改變，但人的性別身分並非由文化或社會建構，而是**天主肖像**存在的具體方式。

34. 道成肉身加強了這種具體性。聖言完全攝取了人的境況，攝取了一個性別。祂降生成人有兩個意義：成為人類團體的一員，並成為男人。我們每一個人與基督的關係都是以兩種方式界定的：既取決於個人的性別身分，也取決於基督的性別身分。

35. 此外，道成肉身與復活亦將**天主肖像**原有的性別身分伸展至永恆。這位已坐在聖父右邊的復活之主依然是個男人。我們還注意到已獲聖化和光榮、連同肉身蒙召升天的天主之母依然是個女人。聖保祿在迦拉達書三28宣告：在基督內，所有差異都消失了，男女之別也不存

在了。保祿的意思是任何人性的差異都不能妨礙我們分受基督的奧祕。教會不接受尼沙的額我略和某些教父提出的論點。他們認為復活將消除這種性別差異。男女的性別差異雖然確是以身體特徵展現，但事實上超越了身體本身，而觸及位格真正的奧祕。

36. 男性在本性上較女性優越的概念毫無聖經基礎。儘管兩性有別，但在本質上彼此平等。如教宗若望保祿二世在《家庭團體》勸諭中寫道：「首先必須聲明：女人在尊嚴和責任方面，與男人是平等的。這種平等以卓絕的方式，在婚姻與家庭中實現；男與女從中彼此奉獻自我，也為子女奉獻自我。（……）天主創造了人，造了『一男一女』，賦予男人和女人同等的位格尊嚴，並賜給他們人類特有和不可剝奪的權利與責任」（《家庭團體》22）。男人和女人同樣是按天主的肖像受造。兩者都是具有理智和意志的位格，有能力藉著行使自由來決定怎樣生活。可是，每一個人都是以其性別身分特有的方式行事，因此基督信仰傳統會論述兩性的互惠和互補。儘管這些用詞近年備受爭議，但有助肯定男人和女人彼此需要，以實現圓滿的生命。

37. 當然，罪惡嚴重損害了男女之間的原初友誼。主耶穌藉著在加納婚宴上施行奇蹟（若二1及其後），表明祂是降來恢復男女在受造之初天主所計劃的和諧關係。

38. 天主的肖像必須以這樣的面貌在人性中呈現，而且可藉著特殊的方式，在人與人之間的結合中體現。由於這種結合的目的是圓滿體現天主的愛，因此基督信仰的傳統一直肯定童貞與獨身的價值。這樣的生活既有助於

人與人之間建立貞潔的友誼，同時也是一個標記，預示在末世時所有受造之愛都在聖三的非受造之愛內圓滿實現。正是為此，梵二將人蒙召在大地彼此建立的共融比作天主位格之間的共融。（參閱：《牧職憲章》24）

39. 人與人之間的結合確實可以通過多種方式實現，但今日的天主教神學申明：婚姻是人與人之間彼此共融的崇高方式，也是聖三生命一個卓越的類比。當一男一女以完全開放和奉獻自我的態度在身體與精神上結合為一，他們就形成一個全新的**天主肖像**。他們結為一體不僅只為滿足生理上的需要，也是為回應造物主的旨意：讓他們分享按**天主肖像**受造的福樂。天主教傳統認為婚姻是卓越的成聖之道。「天主是愛，在祂內有一種相愛共融的奧蹟。祂依照自己的肖象造了人類男女（……），在其內銘刻了愛與共融的召叫，也賦予他們相稱的能力和責任」（《天主教教理》2331）。梵二也強調婚姻的深遠意義：「基督徒夫婦以婚姻聖事的效力，顯明和參與這個奧蹟：基督與教會之間的結合和孕育生命的愛（參閱：弗五32）；他們互相幫助，好能在婚姻生活中成聖，並教育他們的子女。」（《教會憲章》11；參閱：《牧職憲章》48）

3. 位格與團體

40. 按**天主肖像**受造的位格是有血有肉的存有，他們作為男性或女性身分將他們導向一種特別的彼此共融。如教宗若望保祿二世教導說：身體的配偶意義是在愛和人與人的親密關係中實現，從而反映至聖聖三的共融，而聖三已藉創世與救贖工程，傾流其互愛。這個真理是基

督信仰人類學的核心。人是按**天主肖像**受造，是有能力認識和愛的位格，包括個人和位格之間的認識和愛。正是由於在這些位格存有身上的**天主肖像**，他們是需要生活在關係和社會中的存有，並生活在一個由人組成的大家庭之中，而教會已同時實現和預示這個人類大家庭的團結合一。

41. 我們所指的位格既關乎個體不可化約的身分和心性（**interiority**），亦關乎個體與他人的基本關係，而這關係是人類團體的基礎。這種位格身分也是一種對其他位格的渴求，而且從基督信仰的角度，這身分本質上是建基於聖三位格。天主不是孤立的存有，而是三位格的共融。聖三只有唯一的天主性體，但各有不同的身分：聖父的身分在於其父性，亦即祂與聖子和聖神的關係；聖子的身分在於祂與聖父和聖神的關係；聖神的身分在於祂與聖父和聖子的關係。基督信仰的啟示促成位格概念的表述，並賦予這概念神聖、基督論和聖三論的意義。實際上，這樣的位格在宇宙之中並不孤獨，而總是與其他位格建立關係，並蒙召與他人組成團體。

42. 由此可見，存有的位格也是社會性的位格。人是身處家庭、信仰、公民、專業和其他類型的群體的位格，而這些群體共同構成他所生活的社會。人只有在這些群體中，實現其位格構造中本質性的社會元素，才能體現真正的人性。基督信仰的文明既肯定人類生命的基本社會特性，但也明認位格的絕對價值，以及個人權利和文化多元的重要性。在受造界中，個人與社會生活的需求之間總是呈現某種張力。在聖三內，天主位格分享同一

的天主性生命，彼此共融結合，和諧一致。

43. 每一個人都是按天主的肖像受造，整個人類團體亦然。亞當是原初團結的標記。在這原初團結中，人類是按天主聖三的肖像受造。人類按照天主的旨意，在歷史的起伏浮沉之中不斷發展，邁向完全的共融。這共融也是天主的旨意，但有待圓滿實現。因此，人類團結合一的境況已經存在，但尚未達成。雖然我們都具有受造的人性，並宣認信奉那居於我們當中的三位一體的天主，但我們仍然因罪惡而分裂，期待基督凱旋再來，為受造物帶來最終的救贖，恢復和重建天主所願的合一（參閱：羅八18~19）。人類大家庭的這種團結合一有待在末世實現。教會是救恩的聖事，也是天國的聖事：教會是至公的，匯聚了各種族和各文化的人；教會是至一的，是合一的前哨，體現天主所願的人類團體的合一；教會是至聖的，既獲聖神的德能聖化，也通過聖事聖化所有人；教會是宗徒傳下來的，繼續履行基督為人類揀選的使命，亦即逐步實現天主所期盼的人類合一，並圓滿實現創造與救贖。

4. 罪與救恩

44. 人類是按照天主的肖像受造，以分享聖三生命的共融，因此人類的構造使他們成為可自由地擁抱這種共融的位格。自由是天主的恩賜，使人得以選擇三位一體的天主賜給他們的共融，視之為至善。可是，擁有自由的人也可能錯誤地行使自由。人類可以拒絕接受分沾天主生命的至善，轉而享受短暫的善，甚至是想像出來的善。罪正是這樣錯誤地行使自由，拒絕來自天主的共融

邀請。

45. 從天主肖像的教義來看，這肖像按其本體結構而論，在本質上是對話性或關係性的，但罪惡使天主與人的關係破裂，從而使天主肖像受損。我們可從天主肖像受罪惡所損害的那些面向，而認識罪惡的面向。這種與天主的基本疏離也擾亂人與人之間的關係（參閱：若壹三17），而且確實導致身體與精神、知識與意志、理智與情感之間的割裂（羅七14~15）。罪惡也影響人的肉身生活，帶來痛苦、疾病和死亡。此外，正如天主肖像有其歷史面向，罪惡亦然。聖經的證詞（參閱：羅五12及其後）向我們展示了罪惡的歷史：罪惡是在人類歷史之初，人類拒絕來自天主的共融邀請所致。最後，罪惡也影響天主肖像的社會面向。我們可見有些意識形態和體制是罪惡的客觀體現，妨礙人類實現天主的肖像。

46. 天主教和新教的釋經學者目前一致認為，天主肖像不會被罪惡完全摧毀，因為這肖像釐定了人性的整個結構。天主教傳統一直堅持認為：雖然天主肖像可能受損或扭曲，但不會被罪惡摧毀。天主肖像的對話性或關係性結構不會丟失，但在罪惡支配下，這肖像不再全力追求在基督內圓滿實現。此外，儘管這肖像的本體結構在其歷史發展中受到罪惡影響，但在罪惡行為的現實中，這結構依然保留下來。在這方面，多位教父曾就玄識論和摩尼派的論點提出反駁：自由定義了人之為人的意義，而且是天主肖像本體結構的基礎；即使行使自由的處境在某程度上受罪惡的遺害所影響，自由也不能

被遏制。最後，雖然有人認為**天主肖像**已被罪惡徹底敗壞，但天主教傳統不認同這觀點，而堅持認為要是恩寵與救贖無法改變現存的人性現實（即使是有罪的現實），那麼這樣的恩寵與救贖便是虛幻的。

47. 從**天主肖像**神學的角度，救恩意味著讓基督——聖父的完美肖像——恢復**天主肖像**的本來面目。基督以祂的苦難、死亡和復活為我們獲得救恩，讓我們藉著參與祂的逾越奧蹟而肖似祂，從而使**天主肖像**重拾正確的方向，走向聖三生命的榮福共融。從這個角度來看，救恩正是要轉化和圓滿實現人類的位格生命：藉著道成肉身的恩寵和聖神的寓居，將本是按**天主肖像**受造的位格生命再次導向天主，真正地分受天主位格的生命。天主教傳統在這方面恰當地談到位格的實現。位格因罪惡而缺乏愛德，要是脫離天主藉耶穌基督彰顯的絕對和仁慈的愛，便無法實現自我。隨著基督和聖神為位格帶來救恩和轉化，宇宙萬物也同樣獲得轉化，得以分享天主的光榮。（羅八21）

48. 神學傳統認為受罪惡影響的人總是需要救恩，但同時在本性上渴望看見天主——人擁有與天主交往的能力（*capax Dei*）。人作為天主的肖像，對天主懷有動態的渴慕。這種渴慕雖然沒有被罪惡破壞，但要是沒有天主的救贖恩寵，就無法體現。救主天主垂顧自己的肖像；這個肖像迷失了方向，但仍然有能力領受天主的救贖行動。這些傳統表述既確認人對天主的渴慕是堅不可摧的，也確認救恩的必要。按**天主肖像**受造的人依其本性追求天主的愛，但只有天主的恩寵才能使人自由地和

有效地擁抱這愛。從這個角度來看，恩寵不僅是罪的良藥，也使人的自由產生質變；是基督帶來這樣的轉變，使自由獲得自由，得以追求至善的天主。

49. 本罪的現實顯明**天主肖像**並非堅定不移地向天主開放，而可以自我封閉。救恩意味著藉十字架擺脫追求虛榮的態度。基督以其苦難、死亡和復活完成的逾越奧蹟使每一個人都有可能死於罪惡，從而進入基督的生命。十字架並非表示人的毀滅，而是通往新生命的途徑。

50. 按**天主肖像**受造的人從基督的恩寵獲得救恩的實效。這位基督是新亞當，也是新人類的元首，藉著為罪人受死和祂的復活，為人類建立全新的救恩境況（參閱：格前五47~49；格後五2；羅五6及其後）。如此，人成為新的受造物（格後五17），能夠享有全新的自由生命，亦即「獲得解救」和「自由尋求」的生命。

51. 人已獲得解救，脫免罪惡、法律、痛苦和死亡。首先，即使人依然要依賴聖神的德能持續不斷地與罪惡戰鬥（參閱：弗六10~20），但救恩已將人從罪惡中解救出來，使人與天主和好。此外，救恩並非使人免受法律約束，而是將人從各種反對聖神（格後三6）和妨礙愛的實現（羅十三10）的法律主義中解救出來。救恩也將人從痛苦與死亡中解救出來，讓痛苦與死亡獲得新的意義：人藉以參與聖子的苦難、死亡和復活，從而獲得救恩。此外，根據基督信仰，「獲得解救」的意思是可「自由尋求」。脫免罪惡是指可在基督和聖神內自由地尋求天主；脫免法律是指可自由地尋求真正的愛；脫免死亡是指可自由地尋求天主內的新生命。耶穌基督是聖

父的完美肖像，是祂恢復在人身上的**天主肖像**，使人得以享有這種「尋求的自由」。

5. 「天主肖像」與「基督肖像」

52. 「誠然，除非在天主聖言降生成人的奧蹟內，人的奧蹟是無從解釋的。第一個人——亞當——是將要降臨的主基督的預像。基督——最後的亞當——藉著揭示聖父及其聖愛的奧蹟，亦向人展現人之所是，並顯明人的至高召叫。故此，難怪上述所有真理都以基督為源頭和極致的體現」（《牧職憲章》22）。這段摘自梵二《論教會在現代世界牧職憲章》的名言很適合作為**天主肖像神學**主要內容的總結。確實，正是耶穌基督向人揭示人的全貌：人性的本來面目、最終實現和目前實況。

53. 我們應在基督內尋求人的起源：「一切都是藉著祂，並且是為了祂而受造的」（哥一16）。「聖言【就是】生命（……）和那普照每人的真光，正在進入這世界」（若一3~4, 9）。人確是從虛無受造（*ex nihilo*），但也可以說人是從基督的圓滿生命受造（*ex plenitudine*）；祂同時是人的創造者、中保和終向。聖父預定我們成為祂的子女，「也預定他們與自己的兒子的肖像相同，好使祂在眾多弟兄中作長子」（羅八29）。因此，只有在基督肖像（*imago Christi*）內，按**天主肖像**受造的意義才得以圓滿揭示。在基督身上，我們看見祂對聖父完全的順從，那是我們的生命應有的特色；我們看見祂以服事的態度接納他人，那是我們對待基督內的弟兄姊妹應有的態度；我們看見基督——聖父的肖像——向我們展示怎樣以慈悲和愛對待他人。

54. 我們應在基督內尋求人的起源，亦要在祂內尋求人的終局。人類嚮往天國，以此為其終極的未來和人生的圓滿實現。由於「一切都是藉著祂，並且是為了祂而受造的」（哥一16），所以人在基督身上找到其方向和終向。天主的旨意是讓基督體現人的圓滿面貌，這必定是在末世實現。在死者復活時，聖神將依據基督完成人的最終建構，但是人在今天已在這個塵世裡，在時間和歷史之中，分受基督這種末世的模樣。藉著基督降生成人、肉身復活和聖神降臨，末世已經來臨；這些事件開展了末世，將之引進人間，並有待最後的實現。聖神在所有心懷善念的人心裡，並在社會和宇宙之中，奧祕地行事，以轉化人類，讓他們神化。此外，聖神也通過聖事行事，特別是聖體聖事。聖體聖事讓人預嘗天上的盛宴，亦即聖父、聖子和聖神的圓滿共融。

55. 在人類的起源與其終極的未來之間，是人類目前的存在狀況，其圓滿意義同樣只能在基督內尋求。我們已經看到：基督藉著降生成人、死亡和復活，恢復在人身上的**天主肖像**應有的面貌。「天主樂意（……）藉著祂使萬有，無論是地上的，是天上的，都與自己重歸於好，因著祂十字架的血立定了和平」（哥一19~20）。人在其罪惡生活中獲得赦免，並藉著聖神的恩寵，體認到他是藉著基督得救和成義。人類日益尚似基督，並與聖神合作，讓聖神特別通過聖事，按基督的肖像塑造他們。如此，每一天的生活意義就是致力日益圓滿地尚似基督，並為實現基督在世上最後的勝利，而嘗試投入生命來奮戰。

第三章

天主肖像：有形受造界的管家

56. 天主肖像神學的首要主題是分受天主的共融生命。如我們所見，人是按照天主肖像受造的，與其他有形生物一起活在這個世界，但因其理智、愛和自由而與別不同，並按其本性嚮往位格之間的共融。這種共融最重要的例子就是男人與女人可孕育生命的結合；這結合反映聖三之愛帶有創造力的共融。罪惡使天主肖像有所缺陷，並對位格個人生活和位格之間的關係帶來不可避免的負面影響，但基督的苦難、死亡和復活已克服這缺陷。人藉著參與逾越奧蹟獲得救贖之恩，從而得以按基督肖像為模型，讓天主肖像獲得重構。

57. 在本章中，我們將探討天主肖像神學兩大重要主題中的第二個主題。人是按天主的肖像受造，以分受聖三之愛的共融，因而按照天主的計畫，在宇宙中享有獨特的地位：他們享有參與治理有形受造界的特恩。造物主賜給人這種特恩，允許那按祂肖像受造的受造物參與祂的工作，參與祂愛與救贖的計畫，甚至分受祂在宇宙的至高權柄。由於人作為統治者的地位實際上是參與天主對受造界的治理，因此我們在此稱之為一種服事。

58. 根據《論教會在現代世界牧職憲章》所說：「人按天主的肖像受造後，天主命令他們統治大地（……），並以正義和聖德管理世界，從而讓人類和宇宙萬有重歸

於天主，明認祂是萬物的創造者，目的是藉著使萬有臣服於人，讓天主的聖名在普世受光榮。」（《牧職憲章》34）人擁有統治權或權柄的這個概念在基督信仰神學中有重要地位。天主像福音比喻所述的主人一樣，指派人作祂的管家（參閱：路十九12）。唯有人是天主特意為其本身而創造的受造物，是有形受造界的冠冕，占據獨特的地位。（創一26、二20；詠八6~7；智九2~3）

59. 基督信仰的神學以家事和王權的圖像描述這種特殊地位。神學借用與王權有關的圖像，指出人蒙召治理世界，對整個有形受造界行使統治權，有如君王一樣。可是，正如耶穌提醒門徒時所說的，王權的內涵是服事：基督是藉著甘願受苦並成為祭品，才成為宇宙的君王，以十字架為祂的王座。基督信仰的神學也借用家事的圖像，向我們展示人類是家裡的管家，天主已將萬物交給他照管（參閱：瑪廿四45）。人可以運用其才智調配有形受造界的資源，並通過科學、技術和藝術，對有形受造界行使他所分受的至高權柄。

60. 人發現有一法律的存在，它高於人自身，但也在其良心深處；傳統稱之為「自然律」。這法律來自天主，而人意識到自然律的存在是因為他分受了神律。這法律向人指出宇宙的真正起源和自身（《真理的光輝》20）。這種自然律促使理性的受造物在行使對宇宙的權柄時，尋求真理和善。人是按照天主肖像受造的，僅是憑天主賦予他的特恩，才能夠對有形受造界行使祂的王權。人仿效天主的統治，但無法取而代之。聖經告誡我們提防這種篡奪天主角色的罪。人在統治有形受造界

時，要是漠視至高的神律，將是嚴重的道德過失。他們是以管家的身分，代替主人行事（參閱：瑪廿五14及其後）。主人賦予他們必要的自由，使託付給他們的恩賜結出果實，並讓他們行事時發揮無畏的創造力。

61. 管家必須交代其管治情況，作為主人的天主將判斷其行為，而判斷標準是管家採用的手法是否道德和有效。科學和技術本身都不是目的。技術上可能做到的事不一定合理或道德。科學與技術必須服務天主對整個受造界和所有受造物的計畫。這計畫使宇宙和人類的各種事業獲得意義。人對受造世界的管理正是一種服事；這服事既分受也從屬於天主的治權。為在受造世界履行服事，人類獲取有關宇宙的科學知識，負責任地對待自然世界（包括動物和環境），並維護自身的生物完整性。

1. 科學與知識管理

62. 在每個時代和幾乎在所有社會中，人類文化的其中一個特色就是致力認識宇宙。從基督信仰的角度，這種努力正是人類按天主計畫履行服事的一個例子。基督徒並不擁護遭受質疑的相容論（*concordism*），卻有責任將現代有關宇宙的科學知識置於創世神學的框架內。對於這個不斷演化的宇宙，現代科學已嘗試重構其歷史，而人類在這歷史中的地位只有在信仰光照下，才能呈現其完整的現實：這是三位一體的天主對其受造物——作為位格的人——行事的歷史。

63. 根據公認的科學學說，在150億年前，宇宙發生了

一次爆炸，稱為「大爆炸」。自此以後，宇宙不斷膨脹和冷卻。其後，形成原子的必要條件出現了，星系和恆星接著凝聚而成。約在100億年後，行星也形成了。在我們的太陽系和地球（約在45億年前形成），已經形成有利於生命出現的條件。對於最早的微生物怎樣出現，科學家眾說紛紜，但大部分科學家都同意最早的生物約在35至40億年前棲息於這個行星上。由於已證明地球所有生物在基因上彼此相連，因此幾乎可以確定所有生物都源自這最早的生物。物理和生物科學領域的許多研究都取得一致的結果，促使人們日益訴諸某種進化論來解釋地球生命的發展和多樣化，但對於進化的進程和機制依然意見不一。當然，人類起源的歷史是複雜的，並有待修正，但是體質人類學和分子生物學都認為人類物種的起源可追溯至約15萬年前，來自非洲具有共同起源基因的類人種群。無論採用哪種解釋，人類起源的決定性因素是大腦體積不斷增長，最終形成智人（*homo sapiens*）。隨著人類大腦的發展，進化的本質和速度已被永久改變：由於引進了意識、意向性、自由和創造力等獨特的人性要素，生物進化呈現為社會和文化的進化。

64. 教宗若望保祿二世在多年前說：「新知識使我們不再認為進化論純粹是假設。值得注意的是：基於各類學科一系列的發現，這個理論逐漸引起研究人員的注意」（《致宗座科學院有關進化論的文告》，1996年）。教宗的訊息符合二十世紀關於進化論的教宗訓導（特別是庇護十二世的《人類通論》），承認有「不同的進化

論」存在，而這些理論是基於「唯物主義、化約主義和唯靈主義」，因而與天主教信仰不符。因此，教宗若望保祿二世的訊息不能被解讀為他認同所有進化論，包括新達爾文主義衍生的進化論，因為後者明確否認天主的眷顧可對宇宙的生命發展發揮真正的影響。教宗若望保祿二世的訊息主要是論述「關乎人觀」的進化論，但特別對有關人類起源的唯物主義理論作出批判，並堅持哲學和神學對於正確認識人的「本體跳躍」的重要性，因為「本體跳躍」無法完全從科學角度作出說明。因此，教會對進化的關注特別集中於「人觀」。教會認為人是按天主的肖像受造，「不得成為純粹的手段或工具而從屬於物種或社會」。作為按天主肖像受造的位格，人類能夠與其他位格和三位一體的天主建立共融關係，在受造宇宙履行天主的王權和服事。從這些表述可見：當有關進化和宇宙起源的理論觸及天主從虛無創世和人是按其肖像受造的教義時，便特別受到神學的關注。

65. 我們已明白人是按照天主的肖像受造，目的是使他們分沾天主的性體（參閱：伯後一3~4），從而分受聖三的共融生命和天主對有形受造界的統治權。天主創世行動的核心是祂渴望讓受造的人成為天主的義子，在基督內分受天主聖三非受造位格的共融。不僅如此，人類的共同祖源和本性上的一致性也是他們在救贖恩寵內結合為一的基礎；人類得以在新亞當的帶領下，在教會的共融內彼此結合為一，並與非受造的聖父、聖子和聖神結合為一。本性生命的恩賜是恩寵生命的恩賜的基礎。因此，若核心真理關係到一個自由行動的位格，就不可

能說創世是迫不得已的事，而分析到最後，要是將造物主說成是某種力量、某種能量或某種非位格性的因，都是不正確的。從虛無創世是某個超越的和具有位格性的動因的行動；祂自由地、有意地採取行動，旨在達成祂涵蓋萬有的行事目的。在天主教傳統中，有關人類起源的教義闡明了一個啟示的真理：天主和人性具有基本的關係性或位格性。創世的教義摒除泛神論和流出說（emanationism），這可被理解為捍衛這啟示真理的一種方式。每一個人的靈魂都是天主直接和特意創造的；這教義不僅是為反駁物質與精神在本體上並不相連的觀點，而且還為另一個觀點奠定基礎：每一個人從其存在之始，已經與天主緊密相連。

66. 因此，從虛無創世的教義以卓越的方式，確認創世行動真正具有位格特性，而且受造界從屬於具位格性的受造物。這受造物是按天主肖像受造，不是在回應某種非位格性的因、力量或能量，而是在回應具位格性的造物主。天主肖像的教義與從虛無創世的教義告訴我們：現存的宇宙是一件完全位格性的事件進行的場景；這事件就是三位一體的造物主從虛無中創造人，然後以愛呼召他。《論教會在現代世界牧職憲章》的話亦表達了這深遠的意義：「在這大地上，唯有人是天主為人的本身而創造的受造物」（《牧職憲章》24）。人按天主的肖像受造，在實體宇宙中擔任負責任的管家。人類獲得天主眷顧的指引，並體察到有形受造界的神聖特質，因而重塑本性秩序，成為宇宙進化過程的動因。神學家以知識管理者的身分履行服事，有責任基於基督信仰有

關受造宇宙的教導處理現代科學知識。

67. 關於從虛無創世，神學家可能會注意到：大爆炸與從虛無創世的教義沒有矛盾，因為我們可以說，宇宙有其絕對起源的假設在科學上並非不可接受。由於大爆炸理論實際上並未排除物質可能有其前身階段，因此應注意這個理論似乎只是間接支持從虛無創世的教義，而我們只能藉信德才能認識這教義。

68. 對於有利生命出現的條件的演變，天主教傳統認為：天主作為普世萬物的超越因，不僅是存在的因，也是眾因之因。天主的行動並不取代受造因的活動，而是確保受造因按本性運作，但也要達成祂預定的目的。天主自由地創造和保存宇宙，願意建立本性秩序，也願意啟動和支持一切能以其活動協助發展這本性秩序的次因。藉著本性因的活動，天主使那些有利生物出現和存在、繁殖和變異的條件得以形成。至於從這些發展中，憑經驗可觀察到多大程度的規劃性或意向性，在科學上一直有爭議，但這些發展確實有利於生命的出現和發展。天主教神學家認為這樣的推論支持了天主創世和天主眷顧萬有的信仰。在出於天主眷顧的創世計畫中，三位一體的天主不僅願意在宇宙中為人類建立其立足點，也願意最終在其聖三的生命中，為他們預留位置。此外，人類是真實的因，即使只是次因，但其行動也有助於轉化和重塑宇宙。

69. 目前關於進化機制的科學辯論有時似乎是對天主作為因的作用有所誤解，因此有需要作出神學註解。許多

新達爾文主義的科學家及其批評者的結論是：若進化完全是一個偶然的（contingent）唯物過程，並由物競天擇和隨機的基因變異推動，那麼天主眷顧作為因的作用就沒有地位了。另一方面，越來越多對新達爾文主義有所質疑的科學家提出萬有出於計畫的證據（例如複雜的生物結構）。他們認為無法以純粹偶然的過程來解釋，且新達爾文主義者也忽略或誤解了這些證據。這場激辯的癥結關乎所作的科學觀察和歸納，在於現有數據是支持萬有出於計畫或偶然：這是一個無法以神學解決的爭議。然而，必須注意天主教怎樣理解天主作為因的作用。天主教信仰認為：受造秩序真正的偶然性與天主眷顧的安排並不矛盾。天主作為因的作用與受造物作為因的作用不僅在程度上有所不同，而且在本質上有天淵之別。因此，即使是真正偶然的本性過程所致的結果，也同樣屬於天主眷顧受造物的計畫。聖多瑪斯·阿奎那認為：「天主眷顧的效果不是讓某些事情以某種方式發生，而是讓事情可以偶然地或必然地發生。因此，如果天主眷顧，預定某些事情沒有差錯和必然地發生，那麼這事情就會沒有差錯和必然地發生；如果天主眷顧，預定某些事情偶然地發生，那麼這事情就會偶然地發生」（《神學大全》，第一集，第22題，第4節，釋疑1）。從天主教的角度，新達爾文主義者以隨機的基因變異和物競天擇來證明進化是一個完全任意的過程，但其實他們的主張超出科學所能證明的範圍。天主作為因的作用可以在一個既有偶然性且受推進的過程中運作。任何偶然的進化機制之所以是偶然的，是因為天主使之成為偶然的。任意的進化過程——因而不屬於天主眷顧範圍的

過程——根本不可能存在，因為「天主是首要的動因，祂作為因的作用擴及一切存有，不僅及於物種的始元，而且也及於個體的始元（……）。萬物只要存在，就必然是受到天主的眷顧。」（《神學大全》，第一集，第22題，第2節）

70. 對於人類靈魂由天主直接創造，天主教神學斷言：雖然受造因依循本性運作，但天主的特殊行動產生的效果可超越這些受造因的能力。這是借助天主作為因的作用來填補因果作用真正的缺口，而不解答仍然無法解釋的問題，但這並不表示要利用天主的工作來填補科學知識的「缺口」（因此有所謂「補缺的天主」）。世界的構造可以說是對天主不間斷的行動開放，因為天主的行動直接促成世界某些事件。天主教神學指出：最早的人類（個人或族群）的出現是一件不能完全以自然原因說明的事件，並可恰當地被認為是天主的介入。天主通過那從宇宙歷史開始就起作用的因果連鎖關係間接作出行動，為教宗若望保祿二世所述的「本體的跳躍」作好準備。這跳躍正是「過渡至精神層面的時刻」。科學能夠研究這些因果連鎖關係，而神學的角色就是基於三位一體的天主的偉大計畫，解讀這個關於人類靈魂受造的敘述：人是從虛無之中並按天主的肖像和模樣受造，並代表天主和按照祂的計畫發揮創造力，對實體宇宙履行服事和行使祂的王權。

2. 對受造世界的責任

71. 在過去一百五十年，科學技術的發展日新月異，為

大地所有生物帶來全新局面。雖然有多方面的改善，如物質更豐富、生活水平提高，健康狀況改善和壽命延長等，但也要面對空氣和水質汙染、有毒工業廢物的問題、脆弱的棲息地被開發甚至破壞等。在這樣的處境中，人類逐漸更強烈地意識到他們與其他生物之間的基本連繫。現在，大自然被看作一個生物圈，所有生物形成一個複雜而組織精密的生命網絡。此外，現在公認的事實是自然資源有限，而且對於人類不斷開發自然資源所造成的破壞，大自然也難以自行修復。

72. 很不幸，近代這種對生態環境的關注導致有人指責基督信仰須為環境危機承擔部分責任，這正是因為基督信仰強調人的地位，認為按天主肖像受造的人是有形受造界的統治者。有些評論者甚至指出：天主教傳統缺乏資源建立健全的生態倫理，因為人被認為在本質上較自然世界的其他受造物優越。如要建立這樣的倫理觀，則有必要借助亞洲宗教和傳統宗教。

73. 然而，這種批評是對基督信仰的創世神學和天主肖像神學的嚴重誤解所致。在談到「生態歸依」的必要性時，教宗若望保祿二世說：「人的權柄不是絕對的，而是公務性的（……），人肩負這使命，但不是作為絕對和毋庸置疑的主人，而是作為天國的理事者」（講詞，2001年1月17日）。誤解這教導可能導致有些人魯莽地對待自然環境，但是基督信仰關於創世和天主肖像的教義從來沒有鼓吹無節制地開發和耗盡自然資源。教宗若望保祿二世的言論反映了教會訓導當局對生態危機的關注與日俱增，這方面的關注是建基於近代教宗的

社會訓導通諭。從這教導的角度來看，生態危機是人類和社會的問題，關係到人權受侵犯和自然資源的不平等分配。教宗若望保祿二世在《百年》通諭總結這方面的社會訓導傳統，寫道：「同樣令人擔憂的，是伴隨消費主義出現並與之密切相關的生態問題。人渴望擁有與享受，而非追求生活和成長。在慾望驅使下，人以過分和紛亂的方式消耗大地的資源和自己的生命。對自然環境無情的破壞是源自一個人類學方面的謬誤。不幸地，這謬誤在今日甚為普遍。人藉其工作發現自己有能力改變世界，甚至在某方面來說，有能力創造世界，但人忘記這總是基於天主的原初恩賜而實現的。」（《百年》37）

74. 基督信仰的創世神學對解決生態危機作出直接的貢獻。這神學肯定了一個基本真理：有形受造界本身就是天主的恩賜，即「原初的恩賜」，形成位格共融的「空間」。我們其實可以說：真正符合基督信仰的生態神學正是創世神學的實踐。我們觀察到「生態」一詞結合了兩個希臘文單詞，分別是oikos（家）和logos（言）：人類生存的實體環境可被理解為人類生活的某種「居所」。鑑於聖三的內在生命是共融的生命，天主的創世行動正是無條件地創造分享這種共融的夥伴。就此而言，可以說天主的共融已在受造宇宙找到「居所」。因此，我們可以說宇宙是位格共融的場所。

75. 基督論和末世論可以一起更深入闡明這個真理。天主降生人間，攝取祂親自創造的肉身性；天主子的位格藉此與人性結合，使天主性與人性結為一體。在道成肉

身的奧蹟中，三位一體的天主藉著因聖神的德能由童貞女誕生的獨生子，得以與人類建立親密的位格共融。天主出於慈愛，願意舉揚受造的位格，讓他們以對話的方式，分受祂的生命，因此天主可以說必須將自己降低至受造物的水平。有些神學家稱天主這樣的屈尊就卑為一種「人化」，藉此慷慨施恩，使我們得以神化。天主不僅以行動顯示自己，在宇宙中彰顯祂的光榮，而且攝取了肉身性。從這個基督論的角度，天主的「人化」是一種連結的行動，不僅與受造的位格連結起來，亦與整個受造宇宙及其歷史終向連結起來。不僅如此，從末世論的角度，基督的第二次降臨可以看作是天主親臨已臻完美的宇宙，圓滿實現原初的創世計畫。

76. 天主肖像神學絕不鼓吹以毫不節制和以人類為中心的態度開發自然環境，而是確認人的重要角色，指出人怎樣有分促成天主永遠臨在於已臻完美的宇宙。根據天主的計畫，人類是管家，促成這種萬有所期待的轉化。不只人類蒙召分受天主的生命，整個有形受造界亦然。「我們知道，直到如今，一切受造之物都一同歎息，同受產痛；不但是萬物，就是連我們這已蒙受聖神初果的，也在自己心中歎息，等待着義子期望的實現，即我們肉身的救贖」（羅八22~23）。因此，從基督信仰的角度，我們對自然環境——「我們生活的居所」——負有的道德責任，是基於對有形受造界及我們在其中的地位的深入神學認識。

77. 教宗若望保祿二世在《生命的福音》的重要段落中提到這個責任。他寫道：「當人受召叫，耕種和看守世

上的樂園（參閱：創二15）時，人就有了一項特殊責任，要對他生活的環境負責，就是對天主所造為人的尊嚴及生命服務的萬物負責。（……）有關生態的問題——從保護不同種類的動物和各種形式的生命的自然『生活地』，到真正的『人類生態』——都可以在這段聖經中找到明確而有力的倫理指導，以尊重此一大善——生命，即所有生命（……）。對於自然界，我們不僅要服從生物法則，也要服從道德律，那是不得任意冒犯的。」（《生命的福音》42）

78. 歸根結柢，我們必須明白神學無法為環境危機提供技術性的解決方案。然而，如我們所見，神學可以幫助我們以天主的目光看待我們的自然環境，將之看作位格共融的空間；在這空間中，按**天主肖像**受造的人類必須尋求彼此的共融，並致力使有形的宇宙臻於完美。

79. 這種責任涵蓋動物界。動物是天主的受造物；聖經說天主也眷顧牠們（參閱：瑪六26）。人類應以感恩的態度對待牠們，為牠們的存在感謝天主，甚至為各種受造物心懷感恩。動物以其存在頌揚和光榮天主：「天空所有飛鳥，請讚美上主，歌頌稱揚他，直到永遠！野獸家畜，請讚美上主，歌頌稱揚他，直到永遠」（達三80~81）。此外，人必須建立或恢復整個受造界的和諧，其中也包括人與動物的和諧關係。當基督在光榮中重臨時，祂會將萬物「總歸」於末世和終極的和諧時刻。

80. 儘管如此，人類與動物有本體上的分別，因為只有

人是按天主的肖像受造，而且天主已賦予人治理動物界的權柄（創一26~28；創二19~20）。《天主教教理》遵循基督信仰關於如何正義地運用動物的傳統指出：「天主把動物託給了按照自己的肖像而受造的人來管理。因此人使用動物為食物並製成衣服，是合理的，可以馴服牠們，使能在人的工作及休閒上有所幫助」（《天主教教理》2417）。這一段也提及合理地將動物用於醫學和科學實驗，並指出：「使動物無故地受罪，或糟蹋牠們的生命，是不合乎人性尊嚴的」（《天主教教理》2418）。因此，無論以何種方式使用動物，都必須時刻遵循已經闡明的原則：人對動物界的權柄在本質上是一種管家職分，而且人類必須向天主交代他的工作，因為天主才是受造界真正的主。

3. 對人類生物完整性的責任

81. 現代技術以及生物化學和分子生物學的最新發展，繼續為當代醫學帶來新的診斷和治療方法。可是，這些技術不僅帶來更有效的新療法，也能夠改造人。這些技術可用可行，因此人們更迫切地探求：人對改造自身的行動應怎樣設限。如要在生物倫理學領域履行負責任的管家職分，必須對可能影響人類生物完整性的各種技術作出深入的倫理反思。

82. 要是人有權任意處置自己的身體，這意味著人可以將身體當作達到他所選目的之手段：這就是說，他可以替換某些部分，改造或除掉某些部分。換句話說，人可以決定身體的目的或目的價值。處置某物的權利只適用

於僅具有工具價值的事物，而不適用於本身就是善的事物，即本身就是目的之事物。按**天主肖像**受造的人正是屬於後者。問題在於這個推論是否也適用於人類生命可識別的不同層面，亦即生理與身體層面、情感層面和精神層面；在生物倫理學中，這個問題尤其重要。

83. 臨床實踐的公認事實是：為了保存生命，可以有限度地處置身體和若干精神機能，例如截肢或摘除器官。這類介入是保持完整和整全的原則（也稱為治療原則）所允許的。這原則是指：人在發展、保護和保存他所有的身體和精神功能時，應注意以下各項：1) 除非為提升整個人的功能，否則絕不得犧牲較次的功能，而且即使要這樣犧牲，也要致力補償所犧牲的功能；2) 除非為挽救生命而有此必要，否則絕不得犧牲屬於人性本質的基本機能。

84. 組成身體整體的各個器官和肢體都是不可缺少的部分，完全併入身體之中和從屬於身體。可是，不能僅是為了較高的價值而犧牲較低的價值：所有這些價值共同構成一個不可分割的整體，而且互相依存。身體是人固有的組成部分，本身就是一種善，因此只有為了保存生命才能犧牲基本的人性機能。畢竟，生命是涵蓋整個人的基本善。要是沒有生命這基本善，本質上較生命卓越的價值——例如自由——便不復存在。人的肉身性也是按**天主肖像**受造的，因此人沒有權利任意處置自身的生物特性。天主本身和按祂肖像受造的存有並非可供人肆意妄為的對象。

85. 為應用完整和整全的原則，必須滿足以下條件：1) 所作的介入必須針對受影響或直接威脅生命的身體部分；2) 沒有其他挽救生命的方法；3) 所作介入的成功機會必須相稱於所須承擔的風險和後遺症；4) 必須徵得患者的同意。基於雙重效果原則，所作介入產生的負面影響是可接受的。

86. 有人在解讀這種價值等次時，試圖將犧牲次等功能看作合理的事，認為這樣可保護較高層次的價值；例如是犧牲生育能力，以維護心理健康或與他人建立更良好的關係。這樣犧牲生殖機能是為保存位格的一些元素；可是，這些元素對於作為一個運作整體的位格，可能是本質性的，但對於作為一個生活整體的位格，則並非本質性的。事實上，位格作為一個運作的整體，要是他的心理健康所面對的威脅並非迫在眉睫，並且可用其他方法解決，那麼若要他失去生殖機能，他就是受到侵犯。此外，如此解讀的整全原則認為，可犧牲身體的部分以維護社會利益。根據這種推論，若是為了國家的好處，基於優生原因進行絕育是可接受的事。

87. 人的生命是夫妻之愛的結果，即男人和女人之間的互相、完全、終生和專一的奉獻。夫妻之愛反映了聖三位格之間的愛的交付，而聖三之愛是藉創世工程結出果實。夫妻之愛也反映了基督對教會的交付，而這交付是藉人的重生結出果實。人所作的徹底交付既關乎他的精神，也關乎他的身體，是夫婦房事不可分割的雙重意義的基礎。夫婦房事既是夫妻之愛在身體層面真實的體現，也在女性的可孕期藉生兒育女達至圓滿。（《人類

的生命》12；《家庭團體》32）

88. 阻孕或絕育使男女之間在性親密關係中的彼此交付淪為不完整的。此外，要是所使用的技術不能協助夫婦房事達到其目標，而是替代了房事，從而通過第三方的介入來受孕，那麼這樣生育的孩子就不是出自真實體現父母彼此交付的夫婦房事。

89. 複製人是藉著胚胎分裂或核移植產生基因上相同的個體。在這情況下，孩子不是來自性行為，無論如何也不能被視為是彼此相愛的結果。複製人侵犯位格的身分；要是過程涉及從一個人製造大量的人，則情況更是嚴重。如我們所述，人類團體也必須被視為三位一體的天主的肖像。天主三位格即使具有同一的性體，也顯示彼此的差異，故人類團體應以多元的方式，表達天主三位格獨特的身分和彼此的關係。

90. 為治療目的對生殖細胞系進行的基因工程本身是不能接受的，因為我們不難想像這類介入須面對不成比例的風險，尤其是初期實驗階段的風險，例如失去大量胚胎和不良影響等，而且必須運用生殖技術。一個可能的替代方法是對產生男人精子的幹細胞進行基因治療，使男人可以在房事中以自己的精子交合，孕育健康的後代。

91. 有一類基因工程傾向提升某些指定特質。有人可能嘗試提出人是天主的「共同創造者」的觀念，而將這類管理人類進化的介入合理化。可是，這意味著人有權任

意處置其生物特性。製造相似人類的生物來改變人類的基因身分是完全不道德的。運用基因改造技術來製造超人或在本質上擁有全新精神機能的生物，是不可能的事。這是因為人類身體的質料是由人的精神生命始元所形成，但這始元並非人手所造，也無法受到基因工程所改造。每一個人的獨特性部分是由其生物基因特徵構成，並藉著教育和成長發展。這獨特性是每一個人固有的，不能被利用來提升其中某些特徵。人只有藉著更圓滿地體現在他身上的**天主肖像**，與基督結合，並效法基督，才能真正提升自己。無論如何，這類改造其實是侵犯了未來的人的自由，因為他們對那些以重大而不可逆轉的方式釐定其特徵和身體結構的決定，根本沒有機會表達意見。旨在緩解先天性疾病（如唐氏綜合症）的基因療法必定會影響患者的外觀和智力，但是這樣的改造有助人更充分體現其真正身分，而不再受到有缺陷的基因妨礙。

92. 治療性的介入是為恢復身體、心理和精神功能，並以位格為本，完全尊重人在不同層面的目的。藥物具有治療作用，而為人及其身體服務的藥物會將兩者本身看作目的，並尊重兩者內的**天主肖像**。根據比例原則，當預期的正面結果與可能對患者造成的傷害之間比例合理，目的為延長壽命的非常規療法則必須使用。要是欠缺這種比例，即使會縮短病人的壽命，也可以中止治療。在舒緩治療中，使用鎮痛劑後致死是一種間接效果；如所用劑量只是為抑制疼痛而非結束生命，則像所有的藥物副作用一樣，可基於雙重效果原則視為合理。

93. 處理死亡其實是處理生命最極端的方法。在輔助自殺、直接施行安樂死和直接墮胎的情況中，不管所涉的個人情況有多悲慘和複雜，都是為自行決定的目的犧牲了生命。胚胎的利用也屬於這類行為，包括胚胎實驗和胚胎著床前的診斷。

94. 作為按**天主肖像**受造的生物，我們的本體狀況對我們處置自身的能力施加了一定的限制。我們獲賦予的權柄並非無限的：我們在受造世界行使若干分受的權柄，最後我們必須向宇宙之主交代我們所行的服事。人是按天主的肖像受造，但人不是天主。

總結

95. 從這些反思可見，**天主肖像**的主題能夠有系統地闡明基督信仰的許多真理。這個主題有助我們闡述關係性——甚至位格性——的人觀。這種與天主的關係定義了人類，也是人類與其他受造物的關係的基礎。儘管如此，如我們所見，只有在基督光照下，才能充分闡明人的奧祕，因為基督是聖父完美的肖像，並藉著聖神引領人投入三位一體的天主的奧祕。正是在這種愛的共融中，每一個存有——天主所擁抱的每一個存有——的奧祕才體現其圓滿的意義。將人看作**天主肖像**的人觀既偉大又謙卑，也導引人類與受造世界的關係，而且對直接影響人類生命和環境的技術和科學發展，是評估其合理性的基礎。在這些領域，正如人蒙召實踐他們從天主分受的創造力，他們也必須承認自己是受造物，從天主領受管理實體宇宙的寶貴責任。

（台灣地區主教團 恭譯）

INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION

COMMUNION AND STEWARDSHIP:

*Human Persons Created in the Image of God**

* *Preliminary Note*

The theme of “man created in the image of God” was submitted for study to the International Theological Commission. The preparation of this study was entrusted to a subcommission whose members included: Very Rev. J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P., Most Reverend Jean-Louis Bruguès, Msgr. Anton Strukelj, Rev. Tanios Bou Mansour, O.L.M., Rev. Adolpe Gesché, Most Reverend Willem Jacobus Eijk, Rev. Fadel Sidarouss, S.J., and Rev. Shun ichi Takayanagi, S.J.

As the text developed, it was discussed at numerous meetings of the subcommission and several plenary sessions of the International Theological Commission held at Rome during the period 2000-2002. The present text was approved in forma specifica, by the written ballots of the International Theological Commission. It was then submitted to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the President of the Commission, who has give his permission for its publication.

INTRODUCTION

1. The explosion of scientific understanding and technological capability in modern times has brought many advantages to the human race, but it also poses serious challenges. Our knowledge of the immensity and age of the universe has made human beings seem smaller and less secure in their position and significance within it. Technological advances have greatly increased our ability to control and direct the forces of nature, but they have also turned out to have an unexpected and possibly uncontrollable impact on our environment and even on ourselves.

2. The International Theological Commission offers the following theological meditation on the doctrine of the imago Dei to orient our reflection on the meaning of human existence in the face of these challenges. At the same time, we want to present the positive vision of the human person within the universe which is afforded by this newly retrieved doctrinal theme.

3. Especially since Vatican Council II, the doctrine of the imago Dei has begun to enjoy a greater prominence in magisterial teaching and theological research. Previously, various factors had led to the neglect of the theology of the imago Dei among some modern western philosophers and theologians. In philosophy, the very notion of the “image” was subjected to a powerful critique by theories of knowledge which either privileged the role of the “idea” at the expense of the image (rationalism) or made experience the ultimate criterion of truth without reference

to the role of the image (empiricism). In addition, cultural factors, such as the influence of secular humanism and, more recently, the very profusion of images by the mass media, have made it difficult to affirm the human orientation to the divine, on the one hand, and, on the other, the ontological reference of the image which are essential to any theology of the imago Dei. Contributing to the neglect of the theme within western theology itself were biblical interpretations that stressed the permanent validity of the injunction against images (cf. Exodus 20:3-4) or posited a Hellenistic influence on the emergence of the theme in the Bible.

4. It was not until the eve of Vatican Council II that theologians began to rediscover the fertility of this theme for understanding and articulating the mysteries of the Christian faith. Indeed, the documents of this council both express and confirm this significant development in twentieth century theology. In continuity with the deepening recovery of the theme of the imago Dei since Vatican Council II, the International Theological Commission seeks in the following pages to reaffirm the truth that human persons are created in the image of God in order to enjoy personal communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with one another in them, and in order to exercise, in God's name, responsible stewardship of the created world. In the light of this truth, the world appears not as something merely vast and possibly meaningless, but as a place created for the sake of personal communion.

5. As we seek to demonstrate in the following chapters, these profound truths have lost neither their relevance nor their power.

After a summary review of the scriptural and traditional basis of the imago Dei in Chapter I, we move on to an exploration of the two great themes of the theology of the imago Dei: in Chapter II, the imago Dei as the basis of communion with the triune God and among human persons and then, in Chapter III, the imago Dei as the basis of a share in God's governance of visible creation. These reflections gather together the main elements of Christian anthropology and certain elements of moral theology and ethics as they are illumined by the theology of the imago Dei. We are well aware of the breadth of the issues we have sought to address here, but we offer these reflections to recall for ourselves and for our readers the immense explanatory power of the theology of the imago Dei precisely in order to reaffirm the divine truth about the universe and about the meaning of human life.

CHAPTER ONE

HUMAN PERSONS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

6. As the witness of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium makes clear, the truth that human beings are created in the image of God is at the heart of Christian revelation. This truth was recognized and its broad implications expounded by the Fathers of the Church and by the great scholastic theologians. Although, as we shall note below, this truth was challenged by some influential modern thinkers, today biblical scholars and theologians join with the Magisterium in reclaiming and reaffirming the doctrine of the *imago Dei*.

1. The *imago Dei* in Scripture and Tradition

7. With few exceptions, most exegetes today acknowledge that the theme of the *imago Dei* is central to biblical revelation (cf. Gen. 1:26f; 5:1-3; 9:6). The theme is seen as the key to the biblical understanding of human nature and to all the affirmations of biblical anthropology in both the Old and New Testaments. For the Bible, the *imago Dei* constitutes almost a definition of man: the mystery of man cannot be grasped apart from the mystery of God.

8. The Old Testament understanding of man as created in the *imago Dei* in part reflects the ancient Near Eastern idea that the king is the image of God on earth. The biblical

understanding, however, is distinctive in extending the notion of the image of God to include all men. An additional contrast with ancient Near Eastern thought is that the Bible sees man as directed, not first of all to the worship of the gods, but rather to the cultivation of the earth (cf. Gen 2:15). Connecting cult more directly with cultivation, as it were, the Bible understands that human activity in the six days of the week is ordered to the Sabbath, a day of blessing and sanctification.

9. Two themes converge to shape the biblical perspective. In the first place, the whole of man is seen as created in the image of God. This perspective excludes interpretations which locate the *imago Dei* in one or another aspect of human nature (for example, his upright stature or his intellect) or in one of his qualities or functions (for example, his sexual nature or his domination of the earth). Avoiding both monism and dualism, the Bible presents a vision of the human being in which the spiritual is understood to be a dimension together with the physical, social and historical dimensions of man.

10. Secondly, the creation accounts in Genesis make it clear that man is not created as an isolated individual: “God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27). God placed the first human beings in relation to one another, each with a partner of the other sex. The Bible affirms that man exists in relation with other persons, with God, with the world, and with himself. According to this conception, man is not an isolated individual but a person -- an essentially relational being. Far from entailing a pure actualism that would deny its permanent ontological

status, the fundamentally relational character of the *imago Dei* itself constitutes its ontological structure and the basis for its exercise of freedom and responsibility.

11. The created image affirmed by the Old Testament is, according to the New Testament, to be completed in the *imago Christi*. In the New Testament development of this theme, two distinctive elements emerge: the christological and Trinitarian character of the *imago Dei*, and the role of sacramental mediation in the formation of the *imago Christi*.

12. Since it is Christ himself who is the perfect image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3), man must be conformed to him (Rom 8:29) in order to become the son of the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:23). Indeed, to “become” the image of God requires an active participation on man’s part in his transformation according to the pattern of the image of the Son (Col 3:10) who manifests his identity by the historical movement from his incarnation to his glory. According to the pattern first traced out by the Son, the image of God in each man is constituted by his own historical passage from creation, through conversion from sin, to salvation and consummation. Just as Christ manifested his lordship over sin and death through his passion and resurrection, so each man attains his lordship through Christ in the Holy Spirit -- not only over the earth and the animal kingdom (as the Old Testament affirms) – but principally over sin and death.

13. According to the New Testament, this transformation into the image of Christ is accomplished through the sacraments,

in the first place as an effect of the illumination of the message of Christ (2 Cor 3:18-4:6) and of Baptism (1 Cor 12:13). Communion with Christ is a result of faith in him, and Baptism through which one dies to the old man through Christ (Gal 3:26-28) and puts on the new man (Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14). Penance, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments confirm and strengthen us in this radical transformation according to the pattern of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. Created in the image of God and perfected in the image of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments, we are embraced in love by the Father.

14. The biblical vision of the image of God continued to occupy a prominent place in Christian anthropology in the Fathers of the Church and in later theology, right up to the beginning of modern times. An indication of the centrality of this theme can be found in the endeavor of early Christians to interpret the biblical prohibition against artistic representations of God (cf. Ex 20:2f; Dt 27:15) in the light of the incarnation. For the mystery of the incarnation demonstrated the possibility of representing the God-made-man in his human and historical reality. Defense of artistic representation of the Incarnate Word and of the events of salvation during the iconoclastic controversies of the seventh and eighth centuries rested on a profound understanding of the hypostatic union which refused to separate the divine and the human in the “image.”

15. Patristic and medieval theology diverged at certain points from biblical anthropology, and developed it at other points. The majority of the representatives of the tradition, for example,

did not fully embrace the biblical vision which identified the image with the totality of man. A significant development of the biblical account was the distinction between image and likeness, introduced by St. Irenaeus, according to which “image” denotes an ontological participation (*methexis*) and “likeness” (*mimêsis*) a moral transformation (*Adv. Haer.* V,6,1; V,8,1; V,16,2). According to Tertullian, God created man in his image and gave him the breath of life as his likeness. While the image can never be destroyed, the likeness can be lost by sin (*Bapt.* 5, 6.7). St. Augustine did not take up this distinction, but presented a more personalistic, psychological and existential account of the *imago Dei*. For him, the image of God in man has a Trinitarian structure, reflecting either the tripartite structure of the human soul (spirit, self-consciousness, and love) or the threefold aspects of the psyche (memory, intelligence, and will). According to Augustine, the image of God in man orients him to God in invocation, knowledge and love (*Confessions* I, 1,1).

16. In Thomas Aquinas, the *imago Dei* possesses an historical character, since it passes through three stages: the *imago creationis (naturae)*, the *imago recreationis (gratiae)*, and the *similitudinis (gloriae)* (*S.Th.* I q.93 a.4). For Aquinas, the *imago Dei* is the basis for participation in the divine life. The image of God is realized principally in an act of contemplation in the intellect (*S.Th.* I q.93 a.4 and 7). This conception can be distinguished from that of Bonaventure, for whom the image is realized chiefly through the will in the religious act of man (*Sent.* II d.16 a.2 q.3). Within a similar mystical vision, but with a greater boldness, Meister Eckhart tends to spiritualize the *imago*

Dei by placing it at the summit of the soul and detaching it from the body (*Quint.* I,5,5-7; V, 6.9s).

17. Reformation controversies demonstrated that the theology of the *imago Dei* remained important for both Protestant and Catholic theologians. The Reformers accused the Catholics of reducing the image of God to an “*imago naturae*” which presented a static conception of human nature and encouraged the sinner to constitute himself before God. On the other side, the Catholics accused the Reformers of denying the ontological reality of the image of God and reducing it to a pure relation. In addition, the Reformers insisted that the image of God was corrupted by sin, whereas Catholic theologians viewed sin as a wounding of the image of God in man.

2. The modern critique of the theology of the *imago Dei*

18. Until the dawn of the modern period, the theology of the *imago Dei* retained its central position in theological anthropology. Throughout the history of Christian thought, such was the power and fascination of this theme that it could withstand those isolated critiques (as, for example, in iconoclasm) which charged that its anthropomorphism fostered idolatry. But, in the modern period, the theology of the *imago Dei* came under a more sustained and systematic critique.

19. The view of the universe advanced by modern science displaced the classical notion of a cosmos made in the divine image and thus dislodged an important part of the conceptual

framework supporting the theology of the imago Dei. The theme was regarded as ill-adapted to experience by empiricists, and as ambiguous by rationalists. But more significant among the factors undermining the theology of the imago Dei was the conception of man as a self-constituting autonomous subject, apart from any relationship to God. With this development, the notion of the imago Dei could not be sustained. It was but a short step from these ideas to the reversal of biblical anthropology which took various forms in the thought of Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud: it is not man who is made in the image of God, but God who is nothing else than an image projected by man. In the end, atheism appeared to be required if man was to be self-constituting.

20. At first, the climate of twentieth century western theology was unfavorable to the theme of the imago Dei. Given the nineteenth century developments just mentioned, it was perhaps inevitable that some forms of dialectical theology regarded the theme as an expression of human arrogance by which man compares or equates himself to God. Existential theology, with its stress on the event of the encounter with God, undermined the notion of a stable or permanent relationship with God which is entailed by the doctrine of the imago Dei. Secularization theology rejected the notion of an objective reference in the world locating man with respect to God. The “God without properties,” - in effect, an impersonal God - espoused by some versions of negative theology could not serve as the model for man made in his image. In political theology, with its overriding concern for orthopraxis, the theme of the imago Dei receded

from view. Finally, secular and theological critics alike blamed the theology of the imago Dei for promoting a disregard of the natural environment and animal welfare.

3. The imago Dei at Vatican Council II and in current theology

21. Despite these unfavorable trends, interest in the recovery of the theology of the imago Dei rose steadily throughout the mid-twentieth century. Intense study of the Scriptures, of the Fathers of the Church, and of the great scholastic theologians produced a renewed awareness of the ubiquity and importance of the theme of the imago Dei. This recovery was well underway among Catholic theologians before the Second Vatican Council. The council gave new impetus to the theology of the imago Dei, most especially in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*.

22. Invoking the theme of the image of God, the Council affirmed in *Gaudium et Spes* the dignity of man as it is taught in Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8:6 (GS 12). Within the conciliar vision, the imago Dei consists in man’s fundamental orientation to God, which is the basis of human dignity and of the inalienable rights of the human person. Because every human being is an image of God, he cannot be made subservient to any this-worldly system or finality. His sovereignty within the cosmos, his capacity for social existence, and his knowledge and love of the Creator - all are rooted in man’s being made in the image of God. Basic to the conciliar teaching is the christological determination of the image: it is Christ who is the image of the invisible God

(Col 1:15) (GS 10). The Son is the perfect Man who restores the divine likeness to the sons and daughters of Adam which was wounded by the sin of the first parents (GS 22). Revealed by God who created man in his image, it is the Son who gives to man the answers to his questions about the meaning of life and death (GS 41). The Council also underscores the trinitarian structure of the image: by conformity to Christ (Rm 8:29) and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Rm 8:23), a new man is created, capable of fulfilling the new commandment (GS 22). It is the saints who are fully transformed in the image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18); in them, God manifests his presence and grace as a sign of his kingdom (GS 24). On the basis of the doctrine of the image of God, the Council teaches that human activity reflects the divine creativity which is its model (GS 34) and must be directed to justice and human fellowship in order to foster the establishment of one family in which all are brothers and sisters (GS 24).

24. The renewed interest in the theology of the *imago dei* which emerged at the Second Vatican Council is reflected in contemporary theology, where it is possible to note developments in several areas. In the first place, theologians are working to show how the theology of the *imago Dei* illumines the connections between anthropology and Christology. Without denying the unique grace which comes to the human race through the incarnation, theologians want to recognize the intrinsic value of the creation of man in God's image. The possibilities that Christ opens up for man do not involve the

suppression of the human reality in its creatureliness but its transformation and realization according to the perfect image of the Son. In addition, with this renewed understanding of the link between Christology and anthropology comes a deeper understanding of the dynamic character of the *imago Dei*. Without denying the gift of man's original creation in the image of God, theologians want to acknowledge the truth that, in the light of human history and the evolution of human culture, the *imago Dei* can in a real sense be said to be still in the process of becoming. What is more, the theology of the *imago Dei* also links anthropology with moral theology by showing that, in his very being, man possesses a participation in the divine law. This natural law orients human persons to the pursuit of the good in their actions. It follows, finally, that the *imago Dei* has a teleological and eschatological dimension which defines man as *homo viator*, oriented to the *parousia* and to the consummation of the divine plan for the universe as it is realized in the history of grace in the life of each individual human being and in the history of the whole human race.

CHAPTER TWO

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD: PERSONS IN COMMUNION

25. Communion and stewardship are the two great strands out of which the fabric of the doctrine of the imago Dei is woven. The first strand, which we take up in this chapter, can be summarized in the following way: The triune God has revealed his plan to share the communion of Trinitarian life with persons created in his image. Indeed, it is for the sake of this Trinitarian communion that human persons are created in the divine image. It is precisely this radical likeness to the triune God that is the basis for the possibility of the communion of creaturely beings with the uncreated persons of the Blessed Trinity. Created in the image of God, human beings are by nature bodily and spiritual, men and women made for one another, persons oriented towards communion with God and with one another, wounded by sin and in need of salvation, and destined to be conformed to Christ, the perfect image of the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Body and soul

26. Human beings, created in the image of God, are persons called to enjoy communion and to exercise stewardship in a physical universe. The activities entailed by interpersonal communion and responsible stewardship engage the spiritual - intellectual and affective - capacities of human persons, but

they do not leave the body behind. Human beings are physical beings sharing a world with other physical beings. Implicit in the Catholic theology of the imago Dei is the profound truth that the material world creates the conditions for the engagement of human persons with one another.

27. This truth has not always received the attention it deserves. Present-day theology is striving to overcome the influence of dualistic anthropologies that locate the imago Dei exclusively with reference to the spiritual aspect of human nature. Partly under the influence first of Platonic and later of Cartesian dualistic anthropologies, Christian theology itself tended to identify the imago Dei in human beings with what is the most specific characteristic of human nature, viz., mind or spirit. The recovery both of elements of biblical anthropology and of aspects of the Thomistic synthesis has contributed to the effort in important ways.

28. The view that bodiliness is essential to personal identity is fundamental, even if not explicitly thematized, in the witness of Christian revelation. Biblical anthropology excludes mind-body dualism. It speaks of man as a whole. Among the basic Hebrew terms for man used in the Old Testament, *nēfēš* means the life of a concrete person who is alive (Gen 9:4; Lev. 24:17-18, Proverbs 8:35). But man does not have a *nēfēš*; he is a *nēfēš* (Gen 2:7; Lev 17:10). *Basar* refers to the flesh of animals and of men, and sometimes the body as a whole (Lev 4:11; 26:29). Again, one does not have a *basar*, but is a *basar*. The New Testament term *sarx* (flesh) can denote the material corporality of man (2 Cor 12:7), but on the other hand also the whole person (Rom.

8:6). Another Greek term, soma (body) refers to the whole man with emphasis on his outward manifestation. Here too man does not have his body, but is his body. Biblical anthropology clearly presupposes the unity of man, and understands bodiliness to be essential to personal identity.

29. The central dogmas of the Christian faith imply that the body is an intrinsic part of the human person and thus participates in his being created in the image of God. The Christian doctrine of creation utterly excludes a metaphysical or cosmic dualism since it teaches that everything in the universe, spiritual and material, was created by God and thus stems from the perfect Good. Within the framework of the doctrine of the incarnation, the body also appears as an intrinsic part of the person. The Gospel of John affirms that “the Word became flesh (sarx),” in order to stress, against Docetism, that Jesus had a real physical body and not a phantom-body. Furthermore, Jesus redeems us through every act he performs in his body. His Body which is given up for us and His Blood which is poured out for us mean the gift of his Person for our salvation. Christ’s work of redemption is carried on in the Church, his mystical body, and is made visible and tangible through the sacraments. The effects of the sacraments, though in themselves primarily spiritual, are accomplished by means of perceptible material signs, which can only be received in and through the body. This shows that not only man’s mind but also his body is redeemed. The body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. Finally, that the body belongs essentially to the human person is inherent to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the end of time, which

implies that man exists in eternity as a complete physical and spiritual person.

30. In order to maintain the unity of body and soul clearly taught in revelation, the Magisterium adopted the definition of the human soul as *forma substantialis* (cf. Council of Vienne and the Fifth Lateran Council). Here the Magisterium relied on Thomistic anthropology which, drawing upon the philosophy of Aristotle, understands body and soul as the material and spiritual principles of a single human being. It may be noted that this account is not incompatible with present-day scientific insights. Modern physics has demonstrated that matter in its most elementary particles is purely potential and possesses no tendency toward organization. But the level of organization in the universe, which contains highly organized forms of living and non-living entities, implies the presence of some “information.” This line of reasoning suggests a partial analogy between the Aristotelian concept of substantial form and the modern scientific notion of “information.” Thus, for example, the DNA of the chromosomes contains the information necessary for matter to be organized according to what is typical of a certain species or individual. Analogically, the substantial form provides to prime matter the information it needs to be organized in a particular way. This analogy should be taken with due caution because metaphysical and spiritual concepts cannot be simply compared with material, biological data.

31. These biblical, doctrinal and philosophical indications converge in the affirmation that human bodiliness participates in the *imago Dei*. If the soul, created in God’s image, forms

matter to constitute the human body, then the human person as a whole is the bearer of the divine image in a spiritual as well as a bodily dimension. This conclusion is strengthened when the christological implications of the image of God are taken fully into account. “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear...Christ fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling” (Gaudium et Spes 22). Spiritually and physically united to the incarnate and glorified Word, especially in the sacrament of the Eucharist, man arrives at his destination: the resurrection of his own body and the eternal glory in which he participates as a complete human person, body and soul, in the Trinitarian communion shared by all the blessed in the company of heaven.

2. Man and woman

32. In *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul II affirmed: “As an incarnate spirit, that is a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love” (11). Created in the image of God, human beings are called to love and communion. Because this vocation is realized in a distinctive way in the procreative union of husband and wife, the difference between man and woman is an essential element in the constitution of human beings made in the image of God.

33. “God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them” (Gen. 1:27; cf.

Gen. 5:1-2). According to the Scripture, therefore, the *imago Dei* manifests itself, at the outset, in the difference between the sexes. It could be said that human being exist only as masculine or feminine, since the reality of the human condition appears in the difference and plurality of the sexes. Hence, far from being an accidental or secondary aspect of personality, it is constitutive of person identity. Each of us possesses a way of being in the world, to see, to think, to feel, to engage in mutual exchange with other persons who are also defined by their sexual identity. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others” (2332). The roles attributed to one or the other sex may vary across time and space, but the sexual identity of the person is not a cultural or social construction. It belongs to the specific manner in which the *imago Dei* exists.

34. The incarnation of the Word reinforces this specificity. He assumed the human condition in its totality, taking up one sex, but he became man in both senses of the term: as a member of the human community, and as a male. The relation of each one to Christ is determined in two ways: it depends on one’s own proper sexual identity and that of Christ.

35. In addition, the incarnation and resurrection extend the original sexual identity of the *imago Dei* into eternity. The risen Lord remains a man when he sits now at the right hand of the Father. We may also note that the sanctified and glorified

person of the Mother of God, now assumed bodily into heaven, continues to be a woman. When in Galatians 3:28, St. Paul announces that in Christ all differences – including that between man and woman – would be erased, he is affirming that no human differences can impede our participation in the mystery of Christ. The Church has not followed St. Gregory of Nyssa and some other Fathers of the Church who held that sexual differences as such would be annulled by the resurrection. The sexual differences between man and woman, while certainly manifesting physical attributes, in fact transcend the purely physical and touch the very mystery of the person.

36. The Bible lends no support to the notion of a natural superiority of the masculine over the feminine sex. Their differences notwithstanding, the two sexes enjoy an inherent equality. As Pope John Paul II wrote in *Familiaris Consortio*: “Above all it is important to underline the equal dignity and responsibility of women with men. This equality is realized in a unique manner in that reciprocal self-giving by each one to the other and by both to the children which is proper to marriage and the family....In creating the human race ‘male and female,’ God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with the inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person” (22). Man and woman are equally created in God’s image. Both are persons, endowed with intelligence and will, capable of orienting their lives through the exercise of freedom. But each does so in a manner proper and distinctive to their sexual identity, in such wise that the Christian tradition can speak of a reciprocity and complementarity. These terms, which

have lately become somewhat controversial, are nonetheless useful in affirming that man and woman each needs the other in order to achieve fullness of life.

37. To be sure, the original friendship between man and woman was deeply impaired by sin. Through his miracle at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:1 ff), our Lord shows that he has come to restore the harmony that God intended in the creation of man and woman.

38. The image of God, which is to be found in the nature of the human person as such, can be realized in a special way in the union between human beings. Since this union is directed to the perfection of divine love, Christian tradition has always affirmed the value of virginity and celibacy which foster chaste friendship among human persons at the same time that they point to the eschatological fulfillment of all created love in the uncreated love of the Blessed Trinity. In this very connection, the Second Vatican Council drew an analogy between the communion of the divine persons among themselves, and that which human beings are invited to establish on earth (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 24). While it is certainly true that union between human beings can be realized in a variety of ways, Catholic theology today affirms that marriage constitutes an elevated form of the communion between human persons and one of the best analogies of the Trinitarian life. When a man and a woman unite their bodies and spirits in an attitude of total openness and self-giving, they form a new image of God. Their union as one flesh does not correspond simply to a biological necessity, but to the intention of the Creator in leading them to

share the happiness of being made in his image. The Christian tradition speaks of marriage as an eminent way of sanctity. “God is love, and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating man and woman in his image..., God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility of love and communion” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2331). The Second Vatican Council also underlined the profound significance of marriage: “Christian spouses, in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, signify and partake of the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and His Church (cf. Eph. 5:32). The spouses thereby help each other to attain to holiness in their married life and by the rearing of their children” (Lumen Gentium 11; cf. Gaudium et Spes 48).

3. Person and community

40. Persons created in the image of God are bodily beings whose identity as male or female orders them to a special kind of communion with one another. As Pope John Paul II has taught, the nuptial meaning of the body finds its realization in the human intimacy and love that mirror the communion of the Blessed Trinity whose mutual love is poured out in creation and redemption. This truth is at the center of Christian anthropology. Human beings are created in the *imago Dei* precisely as persons capable of a knowledge and love that are personal and interpersonal. It is of the essence of the *imago Dei* in them that these personal beings are relational and social beings, embraced in a human family whose unity is at once realized and prefigured

in the Church.

41. When one speaks of the person, one refers both to the irreducible identity and interiority that constitutes the particular individual being, and to the fundamental relationship to other persons that is the basis for human community. In the Christian perspective, this personal identity that is at once an orientation to the other is founded essentially on the Trinity of divine Persons. God is not a solitary being, but a communion of three Persons. Constituted by the one divine nature, the identity of the Father is his paternity, his relation to the Son and the Spirit; the identity of the Son is his relation to the Father and the Spirit; the identity of the Spirit is his relation to the Father and the Son. Christian revelation led to the articulation of the concept of person, and gave it a divine, christological, and Trinitarian meaning. In effect, no person is as such alone in the universe, but is always constituted with others and is summoned to form a community with them.

42. It follows that personal beings are social beings as well. The human being is truly human to the extent that he actualizes the essentially social element in his constitution as a person within familial, religious, civil, professional, and other groups that together form the surrounding society to which he belongs. While affirming the fundamentally social character of human existence, Christian civilization has nonetheless recognized the absolute value of the human person as well as the importance of individual rights and cultural diversity. In the created order, there will always be a certain tension between the individual person and the demands of social existence. In the Blessed

Trinity there is a perfect harmony between the Persons who share the communion of a single divine life.

43. Every individual human being as well as the whole human community are created in the image of God. In its original unity – of which Adam is the symbol – the human race is made in the image of the divine Trinity. Willed by God, it makes its way through the vicissitudes of human history towards a perfect communion, also willed by God, but yet to be fully realized. In this sense, human beings share the solidarity of a unity that both already exists and is still to be attained. Sharing in a created human nature and confessing the triune God who dwells among us, we are nonetheless divided by sin and await the victorious coming of Christ who will restore and recreate the unity God wills in a final redemption of creation (cf. Rom 8:18-19). This unity of the human family is yet to be realized eschatologically. The Church is the sacrament of salvation and of the kingdom of God: catholic, in bringing together man of every race and culture; one, in being the vanguard of the unity of the human community willed by God; holy, sanctified herself by the power of the Holy Spirit, and sanctifying all men through the Sacraments; and, apostolic, in continuing the mission of the men chosen by Christ to accomplish progressively the divinely willed unity of the human race and the consummation of creation and redemption.

4. Sin and salvation

44. Created in the image of God to share in the communion of

Trinitarian life, human beings are persons who are so constituted as to be able freely to embrace this communion. Freedom is the divine gift that enables human persons to choose the communion which the triune God offers to them as their ultimate good. But with freedom comes the possibility of the failure of freedom. Instead of embracing the ultimate good of participation in the divine life, human persons can and do turn away from it in order to enjoy transitory or even only imaginary goods. Sin is precisely this failure of freedom, this turning away from the divine invitation to communion.

45. Within the perspective of the *imago Dei*, which is essentially dialogical or relational in its ontological structure, sin, as a rupture of the relationship with God, causes a disfigurement of the *imago Dei*. The dimensions of sin can be grasped in the light of those dimensions of the *imago Dei* which are affected by sin. This fundamental alienation from God also upsets man's relationship with others (cf. 1 John 3:17) and, in a real sense, produces a division within himself between body and spirit, knowing and willing, reason and emotions (Rom. 7:14 f). It also affects his physical existence, bringing suffering, illness and death. In addition, just as the *imago Dei* has an historical dimension, so too does sin. The witness of Scripture (cf. Rom. 5:12ff) presents us with a vision of the history of sin, caused by a rejection of the divine invitation to communion which occurred at the beginning of the history of the human race. Finally, sin affects the social dimension of the *imago Dei*; it is possible to discern ideologies and structures which are the objective manifestation of sin and which obstruct the realization

of the image of God on the part of human beings.

46. Catholic and Protestant exegetes today agree that the *imago Dei* cannot be totally destroyed by sin since it defines the whole structure of human nature. For its part, Catholic tradition has always insisted that, while the *imago Dei* is impaired or disfigured, it cannot be destroyed by sin. The dialogical or relational structure of the image of God cannot be lost but, under the reign of sin, it is disrupted in its orientation towards its christological realization. Furthermore, the ontological structure of the image, while affected in its historicity by sin, remains despite the reality of sinful actions. In this connection – as many Fathers of the Church argued in their response to Gnosticism and Manicheanism and -- the freedom which as such defines what it is to be human and is fundamental to the ontological structure of the *imago Dei*, cannot be suppressed, even if the situation in which freedom is exercised is in part determined by the consequences of sinfulness. Finally, against the notion of the total corruption of the *imago Dei* by sin, the Catholic tradition has insisted that grace and salvation would be illusory if they did not in fact transform the existing, albeit sinful, reality of human nature.

47. Understood in the perspective of the theology of the *imago Dei*, salvation entails the restoration of the image of God by Christ who is the perfect image of the Father. Winning our salvation through his passion, death and resurrection, Christ conforms us to himself through our participation in the paschal mystery and thus reconfigures the *imago Dei* in its proper orientation to the blessed communion of Trinitarian life. In

this perspective, salvation is nothing less than a transformation and fulfillment of the personal life of the human being, created in the image of God and now newly directed to a real participation in the life of the divine persons, through the grace of the incarnation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Catholic tradition rightly speaks here of a realization of the person. Suffering from a deficiency of charity because of sin, the person cannot achieve self-realization apart from the absolute and gracious love of God in Christ Jesus. Through this saving transformation of the person through Christ and the Holy Spirit, everything in the universe is also transformed and comes to share in the glory of God (Rom. 8:21).

48. For the theological tradition, man affected by sin is always in need of salvation, yet having a natural desire to see God - a *capax Dei* - which, as an image of the divine, constitutes a dynamic orientation to the divine. While this orientation is not destroyed by sin, neither can it be realized apart from God's saving grace. God the savior addresses an image of himself, disturbed in its orientation to him, but nonetheless capable of receiving the saving divine activity. These traditional formulations affirm both the indestructibility of man's orientation to God and the necessity of salvation. The human person, created in the image of God, is ordered by nature to the enjoyment of divine love, but only divine grace makes the free embrace of this love possible and effective. In this perspective, grace is not merely a remedy for sin, but a qualitative transformation of human liberty, made possible by Christ, as a freedom freed for the Good.

49. The reality of personal sin shows that the image of God is not unambiguously open to God but can close in upon itself. Salvation entails a liberation from this self-glorification through the cross. The paschal mystery, which is originally constituted by the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, makes it possible for each person to participate in the death to sin that leads to life in Christ. The cross entails, not the destruction of the human, but the passage that leads to new life.

50. The effects of salvation for man created in the image of God are obtained through the grace of Christ who, as the second Adam, is the head of a new humanity and who creates for man a new salvific situation through his death for sinners and through his resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 15:47-49; 2 Cor 5:2; Rom 5:6ff). In this way, man becomes a new creature (2 Cor 5:17) who is capable of a new life of freedom, a life “freed from” and “freed for.”

51. Man is freed from sin, from the law, and from suffering and death. In the first place, salvation is a liberation from sin which reconciles man with God, even in the midst of a continuing struggle against sin conducted in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 6:10-20). In addition, salvation is not a liberation from the law as such but from any legalism that is opposed to the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:6) and to the realization of love (Rom 13:10). Salvation brings a liberation from suffering and death which acquire new meaning as a saving participation through the suffering, death and resurrection of the Son. In addition, according to the Christian faith, “freed from” means “freed for”: freedom from sin signifies a freedom for God in Christ

and the Holy Spirit; freedom from the law means a freedom for authentic love; freedom from death means a freedom for new life in God. This “freedom for” is made possible by Jesus Christ, the perfect icon of the Father, who restores the image of God in man.

5. Imago Dei and imago Christi

52. “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man 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 man to himself and brings to light his most high calling. No wonder, then, that all the truths mentioned so far should find in him their source and their most perfect embodiment” (Gaudium et Spes, 22). This famous passage from the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Church in the Modern World serves well to conclude this summary of the main elements of the theology of the imago Dei. For it is Jesus Christ who reveals to man the fullness of his being, in its original nature, in its final consummation, and in its present reality.

53. The origins of man are to be found in Christ: for he is created “through him and in him” (Col 1:16), “the Word [who is] the life...and the light of every man who is coming into the world” (John 1:3-4, 9). While it is true that man is created ex nihilo, it can also be said that he is created from the fullness (ex plenitudine) of Christ himself who is at once the creator,

the mediator and the end of man. The Father destined us to be his sons and daughters, and “to be conformed to the image of his Son, who is the firstborn of many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). Thus, what it means to be created in the *imago Dei* is only fully revealed to us in the *imago Christi*. In him, we find the total receptivity to the Father which should characterize our own existence, the openness to the other in an attitude of service which should characterize our relations with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and the mercy and love for others which Christ, as the image of the Father, displays for us.

54. Just as man’s beginnings are to be found in Christ, so is his finality. Human beings are oriented to the kingdom of Christ as to an absolute future, the consummation of human existence. Since “all things have been created through him and for him” (Col 1:16), they find their direction and destiny in him. The will of God that Christ should be the fullness of man is to find an eschatological realization. While the Holy Spirit will accomplish the ultimate configuration of human persons to Christ in the resurrection of the dead, human beings already participate in this eschatological likeness to Christ here below, in the midst of time and history. Through the Incarnation, Resurrection and Pentecost, the eschaton is already here; they inaugurate it and introduce it into the world of men, and anticipate its final realization. The Holy Spirit works mysteriously in all human beings of good will, in societies and in the cosmos to transfigure and divinize human beings. Moreover, the Holy Spirit works through all the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist which is the anticipation of the heavenly banquet, the fullness of

communion in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

55. Between the origins of man and his absolute future lies the present existential situation of the human race whose full meaning is likewise to be found only in Christ. We have seen that it is Christ - in his incarnation, death and resurrection - who restores the image of God in man to its proper form. “Through him, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross”(Col 1:20). At the core of his sinful existence, man is pardoned and, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, he knows that he is saved and justified through Christ. Human beings grow in their resemblance to Christ and collaborate with the Holy Spirit who, especially through the sacraments, fashions them in the image of Christ. In this way, man’s everyday existence is defined as an endeavor to be conformed ever more fully to the image of Christ and to dedicate his life to the struggle to bring about the final victory of Christ in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD: STEWARDS OF VISIBLE CREATION

56. The first great theme within the theology of the *imago Dei* concerns participation in the life of divine communion. Created in the image of God, as we have seen, human beings are beings who share the world with other bodily beings but who are distinguished by their intellect, love and freedom and are thus ordered by their very nature to interpersonal communion. The prime instance of this communion is the procreative union of man and woman which mirrors the creative communion of Trinitarian love. The disfigurement of the *imago Dei* by sin, with its inevitably disruptive consequences for personal and interpersonal life, is overcome by the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. The saving grace of participation in the paschal mystery reconfigures the *imago Dei* according to the pattern of the *imago Christi*.

57. In the present chapter, we consider the second of the main themes of the theology of the *imago Dei*. Created in the image of God to share in the communion of Trinitarian love, human beings occupy a unique place in the universe according to the divine plan: they enjoy the privilege of sharing in the divine governance of visible creation. This privilege is granted to them by the Creator who allows the creature made in his image to participate in his work, in his project of love and salvation, indeed in his own lordship over the universe. Since man's place as ruler is in fact a participation in the divine governance of

creation, we speak of it here as a form of stewardship.

58. According to *Gaudium et Spes*: "Man was created in God's image and was commanded to conquer the earth and to rule the world in justice and holiness: he was to acknowledge God as maker of all things and relate himself and the totality of creation to him, so that through the dominion of all things by man the name of God would be majestic in all the earth" (34). This concept of man's rule or sovereignty plays an important role in Christian theology. God appoints man as his steward in the manner of the master in the Gospel parables (cf. Luke 19:12). The only creature willed expressly by God for his own sake occupies a unique place at the summit of visible creation (Gen. 1:26; 2:20; Ps 8:6-7, Wisdom 9:2-3).

59. Christian theology uses both domestic and royal imagery to describe this special role. Employing royal imagery, it is said that human beings are called to rule in the sense of holding an ascendancy over the whole of visible creation, in the manner of a king. But the inner meaning of this kingship is, as Jesus reminds his disciples, one of service: only by willingly suffering as a sacrificial victim does Christ become the king of the universe, with the Cross as his throne. Employing domestic imagery, Christian theology speaks of man as the master of a household to whom God has confided care of all his goods (cf. Mt 24:45). Man can deploy all the resources of visible creation according to his ingenuity, and exercises this participated sovereignty over visible creation in through science, technology and art.

60. Above himself and yet in the intimacy of his own conscience, man discovers the existence of a law which the tradition calls the "natural law." This law is of divine origin,

and man's awareness of it is itself a participation in the divine law. It refers man to the true origins of the universe as well as to his own (Veritatis Splendor, 20). This natural law drives the rational creature to search for the truth and the good in his sovereignty of the universe. Created in the image of God, man exercises this sovereignty over visible creation only in virtue of the privilege conferred upon him by God. He imitates the divine rule, but he cannot displace it. The Bible warns against the sin of this usurpation of the divine role. It is a grave moral failure for human beings to act as rulers of visible creation who separate themselves from the higher, divine law. They act in place of the master as stewards (cf. Mt 25:14 ff) who have the freedom they need to develop the gifts which have been confided to them and to do so with a certain bold inventiveness.

61. The steward must render an account of his stewardship, and the divine Master will judge his actions. The moral legitimacy and efficacy of the means employed by the steward provide the criteria for this judgment. Neither science nor technology are ends in themselves; what is technically possible is not necessarily also reasonable or ethical. Science and technology must be put in the service of the divine design for the whole of creation and for all creatures. This design gives meaning to the universe and to human enterprise as well. Human stewardship of the created world is precisely a stewardship exercised by way of participation in the divine rule and is always subject to it. Human beings exercise this stewardship by gaining scientific understanding of the universe, by caring responsibly for the natural world (including animals and the environment), and by guarding their own biological integrity.

1. Science and the stewardship of knowledge

62. The endeavor to understand the universe has marked human culture in every period and in nearly every society. In the perspective of the Christian faith, this endeavor is precisely an instance of the stewardship which human beings exercise in accordance with God's plan. Without embracing a discredited concordism, Christians have the responsibility to locate the modern scientific understanding of the universe within the context of the theology of creation. The place of human beings in the history of this evolving universe, as it has been charted by modern sciences, can only be seen in its complete reality in the light of faith, as a personal history of the engagement of the triune God with creaturely persons.

63. According to the widely accepted scientific account, the universe erupted 15 billion years ago in an explosion called the "Big Bang" and has been expanding and cooling ever since. Later there gradually emerged the conditions necessary for the formation of atoms, still later the condensation of galaxies and stars, and about 10 billion years later the formation of planets. In our own solar system and on earth (formed about 4.5 billion years ago), the conditions have been favorable to the emergence of life. While there is little consensus among scientists about how the origin of this first microscopic life is to be explained, there is general agreement among them that the first organism dwelt on this planet about 3.5-4 billion years ago. Since it has been demonstrated that all living organisms on earth are genetically related, it is virtually certain that all living organisms have descended from this first organism. Converging evidence from many studies in the physical and biological sciences

furnishes mounting support for some theory of evolution to account for the development and diversification of life on earth, while controversy continues over the pace and mechanisms of evolution. While the story of human origins is complex and subject to revision, physical anthropology and molecular biology combine to make a convincing case for the origin of the human species in Africa about 150,000 years ago in a humanoid population of common genetic lineage. However it is to be explained, the decisive factor in human origins was a continually increasing brain size, culminating in that of homo sapiens. With the development of the human brain, the nature and rate of evolution were permanently altered: with the introduction of the uniquely human factors of consciousness, intentionality, freedom and creativity, biological evolution was recast as social and cultural evolution.

64. Pope John Paul II stated some years ago that “new knowledge leads to the recognition of the theory of evolution as more than a hypothesis. It is indeed remarkable that this theory has been progressively accepted by researchers following a series of discoveries in various fields of knowledge”(“Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on Evolution”1996). In continuity with previous twentieth century papal teaching on evolution (especially Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Humani Generis*), the Holy Father’s message acknowledges that there are “several theories of evolution” that are “materialist, reductionist and spiritualist” and thus incompatible with the Catholic faith. It follows that the message of Pope John Paul II cannot be read as a blanket approbation of all theories of evolution, including those of a neo-Darwinian provenance which explicitly deny to divine providence any truly causal role

in the development of life in the universe. Mainly concerned with evolution as it “involves the question of man,” however, Pope John Paul’s message is specifically critical of materialistic theories of human origins and insists on the relevance of philosophy and theology for an adequate understanding of the “ontological leap” to the human which cannot be explained in purely scientific terms. The Church’s interest in evolution thus focuses particularly on “the conception of man” who, as created in the image of God, “cannot be subordinated as a pure means or instrument either to the species or to society.” As a person created in the image of God, he is capable of forming relationships of communion with other persons and with the triune God, as well as of exercising sovereignty and stewardship in the created universe. The implication of these remarks is that theories of evolution and of the origin of the universe possess particular theological interest when they touch on the doctrines of the creation *ex nihilo* and the creation of man in the image of God.

65. We have seen human persons are created in the image of God in order to become partakers of the divine nature (cf. 2 Pet 1:3-4) and thus to share in the communion of trinitarian life and in the divine dominion over visible creation. At the heart of the divine act of creation is the divine desire to make room for created persons in the communion of the uncreated Persons of the Blessed Trinity through adoptive participation in Christ. What is more, the common ancestry and natural unity of the human race are the basis for a unity in grace of redeemed human persons under the headship of the New Adam in the ecclesial communion of human persons united with one another and with the uncreated Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The gift of natural

life is the basis for the gift of the life of grace. It follows that, where the central truth concerns a person acting freely, it is impossible to speak of a necessity or an imperative to create, and it is, in the end, inappropriate to speak of the Creator as a force, or energy, or ground. Creation *ex nihilo* is the action of a transcendent personal agent, acting freely and intentionally, with a view toward the all-encompassing purposes of personal engagement. In Catholic tradition, the doctrine of the origin of human beings articulates the revealed truth of this fundamentally relational or personalist understanding of God and of human nature. The exclusion of pantheism and emanationism in the doctrine of creation can be interpreted at root as a way of protecting this revealed truth. The doctrine of the immediate or special creation of each human soul not only addresses the ontological discontinuity between matter and spirit, but also establishes the basis for a divine intimacy which embraces every single human person from the first moment of his or her existence.

66. The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is thus a singular affirmation of the truly personal character of creation and its order toward a personal creature who is fashioned as the *imago Dei* and who responds not to a ground, force or energy, but to a personal creator. The doctrines of the *imago Dei* and the *creatio ex nihilo* teach us that the existing universe is the setting for a radically personal drama, in which the triune Creator calls out of nothingness those to whom He then calls out in love. Here lies the profound meaning of the words of *Gaudium et Spes*: “Man is the only creature on earth that God willed for his own sake” (24). Created in God’s image, human beings assume a place of responsible stewardship in the physical universe.

Under the guidance of divine providence and acknowledging the sacred character of visible creation, the human race reshapes the natural order, and becomes an agent in the evolution of the universe itself. In exercising their stewardship of knowledge, theologians have the responsibility to locate modern scientific understandings within a Christian vision of the created universe.

67. With respect to the *creatio ex nihilo*, theologians can note that the Big Bang theory does not contradict this doctrine insofar as it can be said that the supposition of an absolute beginning is not scientifically inadmissible. Since the Big Bang theory does not in fact exclude the possibility of an antecedent stage of matter, it can be noted that the theory appears to provide merely indirect support for the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* which as such can only be known by faith.

68. With respect to the evolution of conditions favorable to the emergence of life, Catholic tradition affirms that, as universal transcendent cause, God is the cause not only of existence but also the cause of causes. God’s action does not displace or supplant the activity of creaturely causes, but enables them to act according to their natures and, nonetheless, to bring about the ends he intends. In freely willing to create and conserve the universe, God wills to activate and to sustain in act all those secondary causes whose activity contributes to the unfolding of the natural order which he intends to produce. Through the activity of natural causes, God causes to arise those conditions required for the emergence and support of living organisms, and, furthermore, for their reproduction and differentiation. Although there is scientific debate about the degree of purposiveness or design operative and empirically observable in these developments, they have *de facto* favored the emergence

and flourishing of life. Catholic theologians can see in such reasoning support for the affirmation entailed by faith in divine creation and divine providence. In the providential design of creation, the triune God intended not only to make a place for human beings in the universe but also, and ultimately, to make room for them in his own trinitarian life. Furthermore, operating as real, though secondary causes, human beings contribute to the reshaping and transformation of the universe.

69. The current scientific debate about the mechanisms at work in evolution requires theological comment insofar as it sometimes implies a misunderstanding of the nature of divine causality. Many neo-Darwinian scientists, as well as some of their critics, have concluded that, if evolution is a radically contingent materialistic process driven by natural selection and random genetic variation, then there can be no place in it for divine providential causality. A growing body of scientific critics of neo-Darwinism point to evidence of design (e.g., biological structures that exhibit specified complexity) that, in their view, cannot be explained in terms of a purely contingent process and that neo-Darwinians have ignored or misinterpreted. The nub of this currently lively disagreement involves scientific observation and generalization concerning whether the available data support inferences of design or chance, and cannot be settled by theology. But it is important to note that, according to the Catholic understanding of divine causality, true contingency in the created order is not incompatible with a purposeful divine providence. Divine causality and created causality radically differ in kind and not only in degree. Thus, even the outcome of a truly contingent natural process can nonetheless fall within God's providential plan for creation. According to St. Thomas

Aquinas: "The effect of divine providence is not only that things should happen somehow, but that they should happen either by necessity or by contingency. Therefore, whatsoever divine providence ordains to happen infallibly and of necessity happens infallibly and of necessity; and that happens from contingency, which the divine providence conceives to happen from contingency" (*Summa theologiae*, I, 22,4 ad 1). In the Catholic perspective, neo-Darwinians who adduce random genetic variation and natural selection as evidence that the process of evolution is absolutely unguided are straying beyond what can be demonstrated by science. Divine causality can be active in a process that is both contingent and guided. Any evolutionary mechanism that is contingent can only be contingent because God made it so. An unguided evolutionary process – one that falls outside the bounds of divine providence – simply cannot exist because "the causality of God, Who is the first agent, extends to all being, not only as to constituent principles of species, but also as to the individualizing principles....It necessarily follows that all things, inasmuch as they participate in existence, must likewise be subject to divine providence" (*Summa theologiae* I, 22, 2).

70. With respect to the immediate creation of the human soul, Catholic theology affirms that particular actions of God bring about effects that transcend the capacity of created causes acting according to their natures. The appeal to divine causality to account for genuinely causal as distinct from merely explanatory gaps does not insert divine agency to fill in the "gaps" in human scientific understanding (thus giving rise to the so-called "God of the gaps"). The structures of the world can be seen as open to non-disruptive divine action in directly

causing events in the world. Catholic theology affirms that that the emergence of the first members of the human species (whether as individuals or in populations) represents an event that is not susceptible of a purely natural explanation and which can appropriately be attributed to divine intervention. Acting indirectly through causal chains operating from the beginning of cosmic history, God prepared the way for what Pope John Paul II has called “an ontological leap...the moment of transition to the spiritual.” While science can study these causal chains, it falls to theology to locate this account of the special creation of the human soul within the overarching plan of the triune God to share the communion of trinitarian life with human persons who are created out of nothing in the image and likeness of God, and who, in his name and according to his plan, exercise a creative stewardship and sovereignty over the physical universe.

2. Responsibility for the created world

71. Accelerated scientific and technological advances over the past one hundred and fifty years have produced a radically new situation for all living things on our planet. Along with the material abundance, higher living standards, better health and longer life spans have come air and water pollution, toxic industrial wastage, exploitation and sometimes destruction of delicate habitats. In this situation, human beings have developed a heightened awareness that they are organically linked with other living beings. Nature has come to be seen as a biosphere in which all living things form a complex yet carefully organized network of life. Moreover, it has now been recognized that there are limits both to nature’s resourcefulness and to its capacity to recover from the harms produced by relentless exploitation of its

resources.

72. An unfortunate aspect of this new ecological awareness is that Christianity has been accused by some as in part responsible for the environmental crisis, for the very reason that it has maximized the place of human beings created in the image of God to rule of visible creation. Some critics go so far as to claim that the Christian tradition lacks the resources to field a sound ecological ethics because it regards man as essentially superior to the rest of the natural world, and that it will be necessary to turn to Asian and traditional religions to develop the needed ecological ethics.

73. But this criticism arises from a profound misunderstanding of the Christian theology of creation and of the *imago Dei*. Speaking of the need for an “ecological conversion,” Pope John Paul II remarked: “Man’s lordship is not absolute, but ministerial,...not the mission of an absolute and unquestionable master, but of a steward of God’s kingdom” (Discourse, January 17, 2001). A misunderstanding of this teaching may have led some to act in reckless disregard of the natural environment, but it is no part of the Christian teaching about creation and the *imago Dei* to encourage unrestrained development and possible depletion of the earth’s resources. Pope John Paul II’s remarks reflect a growing concern with the ecological crisis on the part of the Magisterium which is rooted in a long history of teaching found in the social encyclicals of the modern papacy. In the perspective of this teaching, the ecological crisis is a human and a social problem, connected with the infringement of human rights and unequal access to the earth’s resources. Pope John Paul II summarized this tradition of social teaching when he wrote in *Centesimus Annus*: “Equally worrying is the ecological

question which accompanies the problem of consumerism and which is closely connected to it. In their desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and grow, people consume the resources of the earth and their own lives in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of senseless destruction of the natural environment lies an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day. Humankind, which discovers its capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through its own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are" (37).

74. The Christian theology of creation contributes directly to the resolution of the ecological crisis by affirming the fundamental truth that visible creation is itself a divine gift, the "original gift," that establishes a "space" of personal communion. Indeed, we could say that a properly Christian theology of ecology is an application of the theology of creation. Noting that the term "ecology" combines the two Greek words *oikos* (house) and *logos* (word), the physical environment of human existence can be conceived as a kind of "house" for human life. Given that the inner life of the Blessed Trinity is one of communion, the divine act of creation is the gratuitous production of partners to share in this communion. In this sense, one can say that the divine communion now finds itself "housed" in the created cosmos. For this reason, we can speak of the cosmos as a place of personal communion.

75. Christology and eschatology together serve to make this truth even more profoundly clear. In the hypostatic union of the Person of the Son with a human nature, God comes into the world and assumes the bodiliness which he himself created. In the incarnation, through the only begotten Son

who was born of a Virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit, the triune God establishes the possibility of an intimate personal communion with human beings. Since God graciously intends to elevate creaturely persons to dialogical participation in his life, he has, so to speak, come down to the creaturely level. Some theologians speak of this divine condescension as a kind of "hominization" by which God freely makes possible our divinization. God not only manifests his glory in the cosmos through theophanic acts, but also by assuming its bodiliness. In this christological perspective, God's "hominization" is his act of solidarity, not only with creaturely persons, but with the entire created universe and its historical destiny. What is more, in the perspective of eschatology, the second coming of Christ may be seen as the event of God's physical indwelling in the perfected universe which consummates the original plan of creation.

76. Far from encouraging a recklessly homocentric disregard of the natural environment, the theology of the *imago Dei* affirms man's crucial role in sharing in the realization of this eternal divine indwelling in the perfect universe. Human beings, by God's design, are the stewards of this transformation for which all creation longs. Not only human beings, but the whole of visible creation, are called to participate in the divine life. "We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan with ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Rm 8:23). In the Christian perspective, our ethical responsibility for the natural environment – our "housed existence" – is thus rooted in a profound theological understanding of visible creation and our place within it.

77. Referring to this responsibility in an important passage in *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul II wrote: “As one called to till and look after the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15), man has a specific responsibility towards the environment in which he lives, towards the creation which God has put at the service of his personal dignity. It is the ecological question – ranging from the preservation of the natural habitats of the different species of animals and other forms to “human ecology” properly speaking – which one finds in the Bible a clear and strong ethical direction leading to a solution which respects the great good of life, of every life....When it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity” (42).

78. In the end, we must note that theology will not be able to provide us with a technical recipe for the resolution of the ecological crisis, but, as we have seen, it can help us to see our natural environment as God sees it, as the space of personal communion in which human beings, created in the image of God, must seek communion with one another and the final perfection of the visible universe.

79. This responsibility extends to the animal world. Animals are the creatures of God, and, according to the Scriptures, he surrounds them with his providential care (Mt 6:26). Human beings should accept them with gratitude and, even adopting a eucharistic attitude with regard to every element of creation, to give thanks to God for them. By their very existence the animals bless God and give him glory: “Bless the Lord, all you birds of the air. All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord” (Dn 3:80-81). In addition, the harmony which man must establish, or restore, in the whole of creation includes his relationship to the

animals. When Christ comes in his glory, he will “recapitulate” the whole of creation in an eschatological and definitive moment of harmony.

80. Nonetheless, there is an ontological difference between human beings and animals because only man is created in the image of God and God has given him sovereignty over the animal world (Gen. 1:26,28; Gen. 2: 19-20). Reflecting the Christian tradition about a just use of the animals, the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms: “God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image. Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure” (2417). This passage also recalls the legitimate use of animals for medical and scientific experimentation, but always recognizing that it is “contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer needlessly” (2418). Thus, any use of animals must always be guided by the principles already articulated: human sovereignty over the animal world is essentially a stewardship for which human beings must give an account to God who is the lord of creation in the truest sense.

3. Responsibility for the biological integrity of human beings

81. Modern technology, along with the latest developments in biochemistry and molecular biology, continues to provide contemporary medicine with new diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities. These techniques not only offer new and more effective treatments for disease, however, but also the potential to alter man himself. The availability and feasibility of these

technologies lend new urgency to the question, how far is man allowed to remake himself? The exercise of a responsible stewardship in the area of bioethics requires profound moral reflection on a range of technologies that can affect the biological integrity of human beings. Here, we can offer only some brief indications of the specific moral challenges posed by the new technologies and some of the principles which must be applied if we are to exercise a responsible stewardship over the biological integrity of human beings created in the image of God.

82. The right fully to dispose of the body would imply that the person may use the body as a means to an end he himself has chosen: i.e., that he may replace its parts, modify or terminate it. In other words, a person could determine the finality or teleological value of the body. A right to dispose of something extends only to objects with a merely instrumental value, but not to objects which are good in themselves, i.e., ends in themselves. The human person, being created in the image of God, is himself such a good. The question, especially as it arises in bioethics, is whether this also applies to the various levels that can be distinguished in the human person: the biological-somatic, the emotional and the spiritual levels.

83. Everyday clinical practice generally accepts a limited form of disposing of the body and certain mental functions in order to preserve life, as for example in the case of the amputation of limbs or the removal of organs. Such practice is permitted by the principle of totality and integrity (also known as the therapeutic principle). The meaning of this principle is that the human person develops, cares for, and preserves all his physical and mental functions in such a way that (1) lower functions are

never sacrificed except for the better functioning of the total person, and even then with an effort to compensate for what is being sacrificed; and (2) the fundamental faculties which essentially belong to being human are never sacrificed, except when necessary to save life.

84. The various organs and limbs together constituting a physical unity are, as integral parts, completely absorbed in the body and subordinate to it. But lower values cannot simply be sacrificed for the sake of higher ones: these values together constitute an organic unity and are mutually dependent. Because the body, as an intrinsic part of the human person, is good in itself, fundamental human faculties can only be sacrificed to preserve life. After all, life is a fundamental good that involves the whole of the human person. Without the fundamental good of life, the values – like freedom—that are in themselves higher than life itself also expire. Given that man was also created in God's image in his bodiliness, he has no right of full disposal of his own biological nature. God himself and the being created in his image cannot be the object of arbitrary human action.

85. For the application of the principle of totality and integrity, the following conditions must be met: (1) there must be a question of an intervention in the part of the body that is either affected or is the direct cause of the life-threatening situation; (2) there can be no other alternatives for preserving life; (3) there is a proportionate chance of success in comparison with drawbacks; and (4) the patient must give assent to the intervention. The unintended drawbacks and side-effects of the intervention can be justified on the basis of the principle of double effect.

86. Some have attempted to interpret this hierarchy of values to permit the sacrifice of lower functions, like the procreative capacity, for the sake of higher values, like preserving mental health and improving relationships with others. However, the reproductive faculty is here sacrificed in order to preserve elements that may be essential to the person as a functioning totality but are not essential to the person as a living totality. In fact, the person as a functioning totality is actually violated by the loss of the reproductive faculty, and at a moment when the threat to his mental health is not imminent and could be averted in another way. Furthermore, this interpretation of the principle of totality suggests the possibility of sacrificing a part of the body for the sake of social interests. On the basis of the same reasoning, sterilization for eugenic reasons could be justified on the basis of the interest of the state.

87. Human life is the fruit of conjugal love – the mutual, total, definitive, and exclusive gift of man and woman to one another – reflecting the mutual gift in love between the three Divine Persons which becomes fruitful in creation, and the gift of Christ to his Church which becomes fruitful in the rebirth of man. The fact that a total gift of man concerns both his spirit and his body is the basis for the inseparability of the two meanings of the conjugal act which is (1) the authentic expression of conjugal love on the physical level and (2) comes to completion through procreation during the woman's fertile phase (*Humanae vitae*, 12; *Familiaris consortio*, 32).

88. The mutual gift of man and woman to one another on the level of sexual intimacy is rendered incomplete through contraception or sterilization. Furthermore, if a technique is used that does not assist the conjugal act in attaining its goal,

but replaces it, and the conception is then effected through the intervention of a third party, then the child does not originate from the conjugal act which is the authentic expression of the mutual gift of the parents.

89. In the case of cloning – the production of genetically identical individuals by means of cleaving of embryos or nuclear transplantation – the child is produced asexually and is in no way to be regarded as the fruit of a mutual gift of love. Cloning, certainly if it involves the production of a large number of people from one person, entails an infringement of the identity of the person. Human community, which as we have seen is also to be conceived as an image of the triune God, expresses in its variety something of the relations of the three divine Persons in their uniqueness which, through being of the same nature, marks their mutual differences.

90. Germ line genetic engineering with a therapeutic goal in man would in itself be acceptable were it not for the fact that it is hard to imagine how this could be achieved without disproportionate risks especially in the first experimental stage, such as the huge loss of embryos and the incidence of mishaps, and without the use of reproductive techniques. A possible alternative would be the use of gene therapy in the stem cells that produce a man's sperm, whereby he can beget healthy offspring with his own seed by means of the conjugal act.

91. Enhancement genetic engineering aims at improving certain specific characteristics. The idea of man as “co-creator” with God could be used to try to justify the management of human evolution by means of such genetic engineering. But this would imply that man has full right of disposal over his own biological

nature. Changing the genetic identity of man as a human person through the production of an infrahuman being is radically immoral. The use of genetic modification to yield a superhuman or being with essentially new spiritual faculties is unthinkable, given that the spiritual life principle of man – forming the matter into the body of the human person – is not a product of human hands and is not subject to genetic engineering. The uniqueness of each human person, in part constituted by his biogenetic characteristics and developed through nurture and growth, belongs intrinsically to him and cannot be instrumentalized in order to improve some of these characteristics. A man can only truly improve by realizing more fully the image of God in him by uniting himself to Christ and in imitation of him. Such modifications would in any case violate the freedom of future persons who had no part in decisions that determine his bodily structure and characteristics in a significant and possibly irreversible way. Gene therapy, directed to the alleviation of congenital conditions like Down's syndrome, would certainly affect the identity of the person involved with regard to his appearance and mental gifts, but this modification would help the individual to give full expression to his real identity which is blocked by a defective gene.

92. Therapeutic interventions serve to restore the physical, mental and spiritual functions, placing the person at the center and fully respecting the finality of the various levels in man in relation to those of the person. Possessing a therapeutic character, medicine that serves man and his body as ends in themselves respects the image of God in both. According to the principle of proportionality, extraordinary life-prolonging therapies must be used when there is a just proportion between

the positive results that attend these therapies and possible damage to the patient himself. Therapy may be abandoned, even if death is thereby hastened, when this proportion is absent. A hastening of death in palliative therapy by the administration of analgesics is an indirect effect which, like all side-effects in medicine, can come under the principle of double effect, provided that the dosage is geared to the suppression of painful symptoms and not to the active termination of life.

93. Disposing of death is in reality the most radical way of disposing of life. In assisted suicide, direct euthanasia, and direct abortion - however tragic and complex personal situations may be - physical life is sacrificed for a self-selected finality. In the same category is the instrumentalization of the embryo through non-therapeutic experimentation on embryos, as well as by pre-implantation diagnostics.

94. Our ontological status as creatures made in the image of God imposes certain limits on our ability to dispose of ourselves. The sovereignty we enjoy is not an unlimited one: we exercise a certain participated sovereignty over the created world and, in the end, we must render an account of our stewardship to the Lord of the Universe. Man is created in the image of God, but he is not God himself.

CONCLUSION

95. Throughout these reflections, the theme of the imago Dei has demonstrated its systematic power in clarifying many truths of the Christian faith. It helps us to present a relational - and indeed personal - conception of human beings. It is precisely this relationship with God which defines human beings and founds their relationships with other creatures. Nonetheless, as we have seen, the mystery of the human is made fully clear only in the light of Christ who is the perfect image of the Father and who introduces us, through the Holy Spirit, to a participation in the mystery of the triune God. It is within this communion of love that the mystery of all being, as embraced by God, finds its fullest meaning. At one and the same time grand and humble, this conception of human being as the image of God constitutes a charter for human relations with the created world and a basis upon which to assess the legitimacy of scientific and technical progress that has a direct impact on human life and the environment. In these areas, just as human persons are called to give witness to their participation in the divine creativity, they are also required to acknowledge their position as creatures to whom God has confided a precious responsibility for the stewardship of the physical universe.

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