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Theological Synthesis: *The Glory of God Revealed*
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INTRODUCTION

It might seem difficult to describe what God's glory *per se* is if it is not really part of one's own religious experience. Though we still have to enjoy the glory to come, there are good moments in life of epiphany, revealing the divine glory. Indeed, the divine glory is a reality—it is not to be described but to be seen. It is the result of a personal encounter with the Lord. The Lord wants us to see His glory, His mighty power, His goodness! Our daily experience of the Eucharist where His glorious presence of love and mercy is felt, and the radical life of evangelical counsels are revelations of this glory. Encountering Christ in and with the young, our daily care and concern for the earth are also tremendous experiences by which God's glory is felt. In this way, we acknowledge that He has created marvelously the universe to proclaim His glory. However, God has given us Jesus Christ to fully and freely communicate the divine glory to humanity. He does not withdraw Himself, cover Himself, and hide Himself from us. His glorious presence is seen in all His creation, in our religious and human experience of daily life. God is present, loving, and “*we saw His glory, the glory that He has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (Jn 1:14).

What, then, is the glory of God? Moses asked God to show him His glory, and God said that His glory is His goodness (see Ex 33:17–19). In Greek, glory as a noun comes from *Doxa*, and primarily signifies an opinion, esteem, and, hence, the honor resulting from a good opinion. It is sometimes translated as honor, praise, worship. The word denotes the manifested perfection of God's character (*Kabod* in the Old Testament) and Jesus Christ (in the New Testament).

The primary reason why I chose this theme is that it captures my understanding of theology as a locus where the Lord has shown his goodness to me in many ways. I see theology as a moment of learning and doing, through which God reveals Himself to me, and in response I give praise for His glory, for His gratuitous goodness, love, and life-giving. I have seen His glory enfolded in acts of love, mercy, and even in the challenges of life. In return, by living Christ's Life, walking His Way and telling His Truth, I will spare no effort to give recognition to God and praise Him by a life of virtue and sacrifice, and at the end claim: *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (“for the greater glory of God”). Although this Synthesis may not capture the whole understanding of God's glory, it will be one of the reasons to glorify Him through my ministry life. It is my conviction that where flourish love, truth, unity, joy, and peace there divine glory shines.

This Synthesis is composed of three chapters:

- In *Chapter One*, I aim to present God's glory shared in the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). This is the Trinitarian glory as revealed in the beauty of creation. Here man is presented in the image and likeness of God, being the favored creature to glorify God, but who by sin has broken that communion. But in His goodness, God made His glory felt amidst His People. This part is inscribed in the dogmatic study of the Trinity and of Theological Anthropology.
- *Chapter Two* is a Christological synthesis of how the Glory of God has been communicated through Jesus Christ. His birth (i.e., Incarnation), miracles and the

Paschal Mystery are the epiphany of His glory. Mary is honored to be a sharer in the redemption of humanity, thus she shares in the glory of Jesus Christ her Son.

- *Chapter Three* presents the Church as the locus of the epiphany of God's glory. The Holy Spirit is present as the soul of the Church in her life and mission and in every member's life of sacraments.

CONCLUSION

After presenting the main aspects of God's revealed glory, it is good to look at its pastoral implications as way of conclusion. If the *Kabod Adonai* or *DóxatouTheoú* cannot be thoroughly defined, it is to be experienced personally or in community. We discovered in this paper that even for Israel, God's glory was running through the rhythm of the day. It is the same for the Church and for us today as we experience the presence of Christ in our midst. In fact, the loving "invasion" of God's reality into the human sphere has its deep meaning and calls us for a response as He lets us freely share in His majestic nature. He has shown his glorious presence in creation; and dwelt among the Israelites, his elected people, in the *Shekinah*, in the experience of the divine holiness expressed by the prophets. In the fullness of time, God decided to let us see His glory without harm: the loving presence of Jesus Christ among men. All the four Gospels associate God's glory with Jesus' birth, transfiguration, miracles, but mostly with His death on the Cross, resurrection, and ascension. Thus John claimed: "We saw His glory..." (1:14) in His words and deeds.

However, very often we are caught up in the darkness of life and unable to see God's glory. While this glory is identified with His intense, tangible presence beyond the everyday experience, many things nowadays hinder us from seeing it. We are reminded that whenever we look at Jesus in the sacraments, God's glory is revealed to us. It is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness. And He has shone in our hearts the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist. When we contemplate the Cross, we behold His glory that gives meaning to our daily suffering. It is in the moment of death that Jesus Himself proclaimed His Father's glory and assured that His death on the Cross is the fulfillment of the work of God. The same glory unifies the Church and sanctifies us in the Spirit to be God's holy habitation.

So it is in God's glory that we are strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in our heart, and we become joined to the source of true love. Certainly, God's glory is revealed to us Christians in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, especially when we share His Word and break the Bread. And as we glory in Him, we make Him present and allow Him to change us so we become like Him: Word of life and broken Bread to others, especially the poor. Thus, as Christianity consists in being lifted up on the Cross and being resurrected with Him, so our lives get their full meaning in serving others. It is truly possible by living an authentic life of faith, of sacrifice, and by giving hope to the hopeless. I think of the broken families and those in difficulty. It is in profound humiliation that we share in His glory. The needs of people are an opportunity to reveal God's glory and compassion. If we stay focused on Jesus' commands and move with His compassion, we mirror the glory of God on earth. Hence, as ministers of Christ in the Church, we are to reveal God's glory, His compassion and powerful love to a world in need.

We may acknowledge that the whole earth is filled with the glory of the Lord, but most people do not know or see it yet. However, the time is coming when the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth. It should start with us now: *“We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit”* (2Cor 3:18). So, by living His Life, walking His Way, and telling His Truth we will help others to see the glory of God present in us and in His creation. Something has to happen in them when they see that we behold God's glory: their transformation.