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**DIVINE COMMUNICATION:
THE LOVE STORY OF GOD’S SELF-GIVING**

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INTRODUCTION

How good it is to communicate!

In this age of information, the access to one another has become much easier. Various communications gadgets are available. Social Digital Communications and the Internet have crossed the barriers of time and space. The snail mail is now replaced by the email, while the stationary telephone is outmoded by the mobile smartphones. Networking has become the trend and the regime. Business establishments have gone online meeting shoppers and potential buyers. The communications industry has soared and together with it are the elaborations of the different theories of communications. Various social networking sites have registered most of our friends, classmates, workmates, relatives and acquaintances. Through Google and search functions we can easily find who and what we are looking for. Indeed, we are in the midst of an information revolution.

Yet, how difficult it is to communicate!

Despite the advancement of technological communications, many obstacles are still present. And the most basic problem originates from the communicator itself: how one creates a façade; how one does not really know how to send his message across; and how one does not really have something to say. Often miscommunications lead to undesirable strife. In families, communication blocks would even tragically lead to the collapse of conjugal and family life. Even if conflict is suppressed, disturbances reach into high volumes manifested by a rejecting indifference of a co-worker or the stubborn silence between parents and their teenage adolescents. In society, the few controllers of the mainstream media are seriously wounding the clueless masses by their manipulation and distortions of truth. This would eventually create an environment of political and economic instability, and conflicts with another. Social communications and networking sites have become an arena of gossips and showbiz culture. Bullying even happens online such that one cannot be heard in defence of himself against the swarms of biased and influenced attacks of internet users. It is difficult to communicate because we still relive the Babel experience where people are confused with diverse languages, diverse subcultures, diverse social classes, in diverse greed and self-entitlement, and in diverse individual needs and preferences.

But still, how unquenchable is the desire to communicate!

We see this in every mother who holds in her arms her first born. We see it in the glaring eyes of those children begging alms in the streets. We see this thirst even to those who are speech impaired, to the most introvert person in the world. Human persons cannot survive without constant communication with one another. We need someone to listen to our joys and disappointments. We at least need a person whom we can pour our hearts into, whom we can reveal who we really are and speak to that person as we really are. It is our propensity for relationship that makes up this desire to communicate. Relationships arise from reaching out, from communicating. When questions are answered, when dialogue is

engaged, something much deeper comes up. In communicating, people do not just impart words, they share a part of who they are. It is through this exchange of persons where relationships are formed. Communication then becomes the building block of relationships. If we get closer to the very essence of the human nature, one may realize that communication is the basic phenomenon of human existence.

Only that it is by our false idea of human communication that reinforces many of our failed attempts to enter into communication with one another even though at first glance it appears to be something good and beautiful. And this is manifested in: that instead of dialogue, domination takes place; that against respect for personal rhythms to speak, we want the conversation to hurry up; and that instead of sharing relationships, it is the will to possess, to use, to identify all things to one self that pervades. It is thus important to correct this error by going back to the source, to the one who has given us this gift, this ability to communicate and capacity for relationship, so that we can learn from Him, the one true Master.

We realize therefore that communication is theological right from the beginning. As the German theologian Gisbert Greshake maintains that “Communication is from its origin a decisively theological idea based especially in Christian revelation and expresses the center of the Christian understanding of God and world.”¹

Thus, with communication as the pervading theme, and as Eilers puts it, as a “theological principle,”² we begin with the source and origin of it all: the Trinitarian God in self-communication. In this first chapter, we delve into the intimate life of God as an ongoing communication of love, and then realize how this communication of love is shared in Creation, and thus endowing upon his masterpiece, the human beings, that capacity for communication as well. Then we shall see how this communication gets distorted due to man’s sin. But then we shall see how God continues to reach out to man in history to restore the communication which man has broken by his dialogical communication and historical interventions of salvation.

In chapter 2, we center our attention on Jesus Christ who is the fullness of God’s self-communication to man. By his incarnation, he has fully expressed God’s self-communication man, leading to the cross and the resurrection as the peak-point of His will to reach us, to save us and to bring us back to Himself. Then we shall take Jesus, his person, his words and deeds, as the model of communication, for all human beings to imitate or follow.

¹ Gisbert Greshake, Der Ursprung der Kommunikationsidee. In: *Communicatio Socialis, Internationale Zeitschrift fuer Kommunikation in Religion, Kirche und Gesellschaft*. Vol. 35. (Mainz: Gruenewald, 2002) 6. Also Cfr. Ed. Franz-Josef Eilers, *Church and Social Communication in Asia: Documents, Analysis, Experiences*. Second Edition. Vol. 1. (Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, Inc., 2008), 171-172.

² Franz-Josef Eilers, *Communicating Church: Social Communication Documents. An Introduction*. (Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, Inc., 2011), 11.

In chapter 3, we shall discuss how the Trinitarian self-communication of God continues now and until the end of time through the Church. As mandated by Jesus, the Church is sent to proclaim this on-going self-communication of God to all men, and then gather them all back to God. In fact this communication is to be further unfolded under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to the Church.³ And in her celebration of the sacramental liturgy, we realize the communication of the fruits of Christ's Paschal Mystery.

May this theme and theological principle of communication lead us to appreciate the generous sharing of God's love to us all, so that we may imitate him in communicating and sharing this love to others.

³ Cfr. Eilers, *Church and Social Communication in Asia*, Second Edition. (Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications Inc, 2008), 181-182.

CHAPTER 1 GOD COMMUNICATES HIS INTIMATE LIFE TO THE WORLD

He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, according to his good pleasure which he determined beforehand in Christ.

- Ephesians 1:9

It is the purpose of St. Paul, in writing to the Church of Ephesus, that this letter may become an instrument for making God's plan of salvation be known throughout the universe. And this "mystery of his purpose" is communicated to us fully by Jesus Christ. It is by the initiative of God that we are able to theologize. We are able to come to know God primarily because He introduced Himself, revealed Himself and gave Himself to us. This "mystery of his purpose" is anchored in God's saving love, shown in Jesus Christ:

God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6)

We have known all this because Jesus Christ communicated this to us. All that we know of God, His love and His plan of salvation, we have learned from Christ. "By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation."⁴

Within the Intimate Life of God is an Ongoing Communication of Love

In the Scriptures, we find a glimpse of God as He is in Himself. In the Gospel of John, Jesus reveals three times of the Father's love for him even before the foundation of the world (John 17:23, 24, 26). From all eternity the Trinity has existed in love, for love is the very essence of God. Benedict XVI affirms this in his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* as he quotes the Scripture: "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). His love had not begun with his love towards the created world and human beings, but belongs to the inner life of the eternal One-God who is a communion of three persons in an eternal self-giving.

In eternity, this self-giving "begins" with the Father, He is the origin without origin. The Son receives from the Father. The Father gives himself totally as gift to his Son: they are of one essence, so that the Son returns himself as gift to the Father in thanksgiving. The "outcome" of this infinite communication of love is the Person of the Holy Spirit, who links the two divine Lovers. This has been the fruit of reflection of St. Augustine who regarded God as not only communion but also as *relatio* of love:

⁴ Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, 2.

And if the love by which the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father, ineffably demonstrates the communion of both, what is more suitable than that He should be specially called love, who is the Spirit common to both?⁵

We realize therefore that in the inner life of God the communication among the Divine Persons appears to us as continuous, profound and inexhaustible:

The Father “speaks” the Son and, speaking him, generates and communicates to him all that he is and all that he has. The Son names the Father and give himself to him totally in perfect obedience. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, the living bond between them, the perfect and personal fruit of the loving dialogue between the Father and the Son.⁶

Even Karl Rahner supports this in claiming that “He [God] who is *agape* [love] in person, and who is by himself the absolutely blessed and fulfilled subject, can precisely for this reason communicate himself to the other.”⁷ Moreover, Rahner affirms this self-giving “as the nature of divine life the very thing which encounters us in the Trinitarian nature of his coming to us.”⁸ It is at this point that we establish that the essence of God’s self-communication is His self-giving in love. According to Vatican II, divine self-communication is not simply information about the eternal will of God but a communication of love. “Communication is more than the expression of ideas and the indication of emotion. At its most profound level, it is the giving of self in love.”⁹

It is precisely because “God is love” that the perfect communion of the three divine persons are in perfect communication of love.

But the self-communication of the Triune God does not end up in the Intra-Trinitarian communion of divine love. For stopping here would mean a not-so-helpful theologizing as Karl Rahner puts it when he cautions us on the problem with the “psychological theory of the Trinity.” He says thus:

With regard to the imposing speculations in which, since the time of Augustine, Christian theology has tried to conceive of the inner life of God in self-consciousness and love in such a way that acquire presumably a certain understanding of the threefold personhood of God, an understanding which portrays, as it were, an inner life of God completely unrelated to us and to our Christian existence, perhaps we can say that ultimately they are not really all that helpful. A “psychological theory of the Trinity,” however ingenious the speculations from the time of Augustine down to our time, in the end does not explain precisely what it is supposed to explain, namely, why the Father expresses himself in the Word, and with the Logos breathes a Spirit which is different from

⁵ St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*. Book XV. Chapter 18, 37.

⁶ Carlo Maria Martini, *Communicating Christ to the World*. Trans. Thomas Lucas. (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1994). 30.

⁷ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 122.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁹ Vatican II, *Communio et Progressio*, 11.

him. For such an explanation must already presuppose the Father as knowing and loving himself, and cannot allow him to be constituted as knowing and loving in the first place by the expression of the Logos and the spiration of the Spirit.¹⁰

Rahner does not mean that we dismiss the “psychological theory of the Trinity.” What he is saying is that God communicates Himself to humanity (“economic” Trinity) inasmuch as He really is in the divine Life (“immanent” Trinity). It is from this context we may understand his axiom “the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity”:

By the fact that God reveals himself for us in the modes we indicated as Trinitarian, we have already experience the immanent Trinity of the holy mystery as it is in itself, because its free and supernatural manifestation to us in grace manifests its innermost self.¹¹

From the Communication within the Trinity, God reaches out to his Creatures

The identification of the “immanent” Trinity with the “economic” Trinity can also be traced back from St. Bonaventure’s understanding of the Trinity as the “Self-Diffusive Good.” He says thus:

Unless, then, there be eternally in the highest good a production which is actual and consubstantial, and an hypostasis as noble as the producer and through generation and spiration, so that it would be from the eternal principle eternally co-producing and would be beloved (“dilectus”) in itself and co-loved (“condilectus”), generated and spirated as are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and in no way would it be the highest good, for it would not diffuse itself most highly.¹²

This point is a key to understand that the good’s self-diffusion is the medium of creation:

For temporal diffusion in creation is nothing else than central and punctiform with respect to the immensity of the eternal goodness. Whence also can some diffusion be conceived as greater than that – to wit, that in which the diffusive power communicates its whole substance and nature to another.¹³

We are saying therefore that in the Trinitarian communion, the communication between the persons is an ongoing self-giving of love. This love is also self-diffusive. God desires freely to give Himself, this time outside of Himself, to someone. Thus from communication within Himself, God reaches out in Creation.

¹⁰ Rahner, 135.

¹¹ Ibid., 137.

¹² St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*, Ch. 6, 2.

¹³ Ibid.

By appropriation, we attribute the work of Creation to the Father, but realizing the “self-diffusive love” of God within Himself, this will lead us to the affirmation that Creation is in fact the work of the Trinity. The prologue of the Gospel of John reveals that God created everything through the Incarnate Word, the Son “who is present to God in the beginning and apart from Him nothing came to be.”(John 1:3). Likewise, the Holy Spirit takes part in the creation as expressed in the Church’s hymn of *Veni Creator Spiritus* and as affirmed in our Nicean Creed “the giver of life.”¹⁴ St. Irenaeus strengthens this claim who from ancient times asserts that:

It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor anyone else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to accomplish what He had Himself determined beforehand with Himself should be done, as if He does not possess His own hands. For with him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also speaks, saying, ‘Let Us make man after Our image and likeness (Gen. 1:26).’¹⁵

Even St. Basil, expressed this idea that the world was created in relation, in constant communication by the Triune God as he wrote:

As regards the creation... , think about a primordial cause of what has been made, which is the Father; think about a producing cause, which is the Son; think about a cause that communicates the perfection, which is the Spirit. But no one should think that I am affirming the existence of three creating beings. There is only one principle.¹⁶

St. Bonaventure clarifies however that God created all things “not to increase his glory, but to show it forth and to communicate it,”¹⁷ for God has no other reason for creating than his love and goodness: “Creatures came into existence when the key of love opened his hand.”¹⁸

John Paul II in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* links the Gospel, the “Good News,” with the “Joy of Creation.” As an invitation to joy, the Gospel is a grand affirmation of the world and man, because it is the revelation of the truth about God. John Paul II held that “God , who in creating saw that His Creation was Good (cfr. Gen 1:1-25), is the source of joy for all creatures and above all for humankind. God the Creator seems to say of all creation: ‘It is good that you exist.’”¹⁹ Similarly, in the Decree of the Missionary Activity of the Church, we will find the ultimate purpose of Creation that “He [God] who created all things may at last be ‘all in all’ (cfr. 1 Cor. 15.28), bringing about at one and the same

¹⁴ Cfr. Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, henceforth), 290-292.

¹⁵ St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 4, Chapter 20, 1.

¹⁶ St. Basil, *Spiritu Sancto*, Chapter 16, 38.

¹⁷ St. Bonaventure, *In Liber Secundus Sententiarum*, I., 2, 2, 1;

¹⁸ Cfr. CCC 293.

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994), 20.

time His own glory and our happiness.”²⁰ Thus, communication is at play here. Because God communicates his intimate life to the world, the world responds as it stands in awe to the glory of God: “The ends of the earth stand in awe at the sight of your wonders.” (Psalm 65:6)

In Creating Human Beings, God endowed in them the Capacity for Communication

The psalmist in awe and wonder asks: “What are humans that you are mindful of them, mere mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them little less than a god, crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them rule over the works of your hands, put all things at their feet.” (Psalm 8:5-7). Indeed, among all creatures, it is the human person that is given by God the privilege to share His Trinitarian Divine life. Because of this, man is regarded as the “summit” and the “crown” of Creation. St. John Chrysostom affirms this in saying that:

What is it that is about to be created, that enjoys such honor? It is man – that great and wonderful living creature, more precious in the eyes of God than all other creatures! For him the heavens and the earth, the sea and all the rest of creation exist.²¹

No other than John Paul II who exalts the acting human person could better express this privileged designation on man in Creation in at least three of his writings with the emphasis on man as the summit of creation patterned after the image and likeness of God:

That fatherhood of God that from the beginning found expression in creating the world, **giving man all the riches of creation, and making him “little less than God,”** in that he was created “*in the image and after the likeness of God.*”²²

“God created man *in his own image, in the image of God* he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). This concise passage contains the fundamental anthropological truths: **man is the high point of the whole order of creation** in the visible world; the human race, which takes its origin from the calling into existence of man and woman, crowns the whole work of creation.²³

The concept of nature acquires a particular meaning when applied to **the person, the summit of creation**. The only being on earth that God willed for one’s own sake has a dignity stemming from one’s spiritual nature which bears the mark of the Creator, for each person was *created in the image and likeness* endowed with the highest faculties a creature can possess: reason and will.²⁴

²⁰ Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 2.

²¹ St. John Chrysostom, *In Gen. Sermo* II, 1.

²² John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 9; emphasis is mine.

²³ John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 6; emphasis is mine.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences* (October 27, 1998), 5; emphasis is mine.

Of all the many creatures that God has created, it is to man whom God chose to give Himself; it is to man God chose to share his love; it is to man God chose to offer Himself as a gift. For Rahner, this is important for us to understand that God's self-communication is "to grasp that the giver in his own being is the gift, that in and through his own being the giver gives himself to creatures as their own fulfilment."²⁵

What is beautiful in this sharing of God's being of Himself to man, in creating him, God fashioned him according to his image and likeness. God has not only shared his being as a communion of love, he also fashioned man to be a being of communion of love just as He is.

He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.²⁶

Because man is created in God's image and likeness ordained towards communion of love, this explains his propensity and capacity for relationship. Man's capacity for reaching out to others is a vestige of God's capacity for reaching out. Man has inherited from God this self-giving of love. And since man has inherited all these from God, since man has this capacity for reaching out and propensity to build relationships, God has endowed on him the capacity for communication. Man is able to communicate because he is created in the image and likeness of the communicating Triune God. All this appears in the very first pages of the Scriptures: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1:26); "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen 2:18). These distinct allusions speak of the mysterious affinity that makes us different from all other creatures, uniting us to God and to other human beings.²⁷

This capacity for communication, endowed on man, singles him out from all other creatures, for only man is "capable of knowing and loving his Creator."²⁸ This desire for God is etched in the core of the human person, since man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.²⁹

The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator.³⁰

²⁵ Rahner, 121.

²⁶ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 23, § 3.

²⁷ Martini, 21.

²⁸ Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 23, § 3 and CCC 356.

²⁹ Cfr. CCC 27.

³⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, 19, § 1.

Similarly, Rahner takes this stance when he speaks of man's knowledge of God. For him, it is a reflection of man's "transcendental orientation towards mystery:"

The knowledge of God is, nevertheless, a transcendental knowledge because man's basic and original orientation towards absolute mystery, which constitutes his fundamental experience of God, is a permanent existential of man as a spiritual subject.³¹

Although there is this in man the desire for God and his orientation towards Him, the absolute mystery, this capacity is conditioned by man's will. Since God shared his whole being in freedom to man, in creating him in His image and likeness, he likewise endowed this freedom to man:

I find, then, that man by God was constituted free, master of his own will and power, indicating the presence of God's image and likeness in him by nothing so well as by this constitution of his nature. For it was not by his face, and by the lineaments of his body, though they were so varied in his human nature, that he expressed his likeness to the form of God.³²

Having been created in the image and likeness of God affords man this possibility and freedom of conversing with God and communicating with other human persons. Unfortunately, a moment of crisis and breakdown happened to the communication between man and God. The gift of communication which is also the gift of the being of God, in freedom, has been refused by man. The first sin at the Garden of Eden is the factor: "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" (Gen 3:1). The tempter's phrase has a malignant undertone. It sows suspicion, mistrust and deceit. It moves one to secure oneself, to defend oneself against somebody in order to survive. It undermines the "word" being offered to the one spoken to. This subverts communication at its very foundations: It says the other is really looking out for himself, and can and frequently does deceive.³³ This sin that destroys communication that man committed is the "lack of trust in the goodness of God;" In that sin "man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him,"³⁴ or refused to talk to Him, or refused to accept at one point His offer of His continuous self-giving love. As a consequence, this sin affected *the human nature* that they would then transmit *in a fallen state*.³⁵ Thus, communication became distorted or ended into a non-communication. This affected not only man's relationship with God, but also with his fellow human beings. Communication has become pathological. "Many pathologies can be understood only as response or reaction to bad relationships. This 'sin of the world' becomes visible in unhealthy and misleading communications. Along with the sense of self has gone a loss of our language for communicating deeply personal meaning to each other."³⁶

³¹ Rahner, 52.

³² Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Book 2, Chapter 5

³³ Cfr. Martini, 25-26.

³⁴ Cfr. CCC 397-398.

³⁵ Cfr. CCC 397-398.

Events in the Human History is the Unfolding of God's Dialogical Communication with Man

Despite man's refusal of God, God continues to reach out. "When, by his own fault, man turned away from his Creator, chaos succeeded crime and man became embroiled in discord and deadly fraternal strife. He was no longer able to communicate with his fellow men. But for all that, God's love for man persisted, despite its rejection by man. It was He who made the first move to make contact with mankind at the start of the history of salvation."³⁷

The history of revelation in the Old Testament is the history of divine-human communication. God continues to reveal Himself to man in love in order to draw man in loving communion with Him. For that reason he makes a Covenant with him. "By divine Revelation, God chose to show forth and communicate Himself and the eternal decisions of His will regarding the salvation of men. That is to say, He chose to share with them those divine treasures which totally transcend the understanding of the human mind."³⁸

In this regard, Cardinal Martini expressed how this Covenant is the fundamental event of communication between God and humanity:

This is how it is introduced in Exodus: "I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself. Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine." (Ex. 19:4-5). There are many Biblical formulations akin to this one: "The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah." (Jer. 31:33); "My love is mine, and I am his." (Song 2:16; cfr. 6:3). Such diverse formulae express a fundamental reality: God wants to enter into communion with his people, wants to communicate with them in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual belonging. He promises to be faithful, and demands fidelity. Every page of the Scriptures echoes this divine will: God wants to give and give himself.³⁹

The communicative event that directs all history is a free and freely given event: God decides to communicate himself to human beings who enter into covenant with him. Such a free and gratuitous initiative of the living God calls for a free and grateful response: the response of faith.⁴⁰

Although speaking of the same thing, Rahner however profoundly reflects on this response to God's communication in the plane of the history of man's salvation in another slant or expression:

³⁶ Bernard Häring, *Free and Faithful in Christ*. Volume 2. (Great Britain: St. Paul Publication, 1979), 157.

³⁷ *Communio et Progressio*, 10.

³⁸ *Dei Verbum*, 6.

³⁹ Martini, 22-23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

According to the common Christian teaching about the revelation which is usually designated simply as *the* revelation, that is, the revelation of the Old and New Testaments, such a revelation is really heard both with regard to its content and to the mode only if it is heard in faith, that is through the grace of God, and hence only if it is heard in the power of God's self-communication and in the grace's "light of faith."⁴¹

God wishes to lead all men to a life of communion with Him. The covenant expresses as a theme for His plan of salvation, for His way of reaching out to man, for His way of communicating to man, and thus establishes once more the relationship that was broken due to man's sin.

Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship you did not abandon him to the power of death. . . . Again and again you offered a covenant to man.⁴²

Events in the human history showed how much God has continuously been reaching out to man from the covenant with the patriarchs to forming Israel as His people; from the covenant of Mount Sinai through Moses to the use of prophets as His mouthpiece. But man's infidelity (Israel's infidelity) keeps on breaking the bond which God tries to establish. Despite all this, the plan of the covenant revealed by God remains unchanged (cfr. Jer. 33, 20-26). Through the prophets, the Lord decrees that "the plan of the covenant which dominates all human history will find its culmination at the end of time. Revealed in an imperfect way in the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants, it will finally materialize in perfect form, at once interior and universal by the mediation of the Servant of Yahweh.... But this history will in fact be turned toward the future, toward the New Covenant, toward the New Testament."⁴³

⁴¹ Rahner, 150.

⁴² *New Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV, 118.

⁴³ *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Ed. Xavier Leon-Dufour. "Covenant." Second Edition. (Pasay City: St. Paul Publications, 1990). 96.

As a summary, we have established so far and looked at the whole of theology under the perspective of communication with God as the source and model.

Communication is constitutive in the mystery of God. Each of the three Divine Persons possesses all that is good, all that is true, all that is beautiful, but in the modality of communion and communication. Creation, redemption, and communication arise from this mystery and have as their final purpose to draw us, by this very communication, into communion with God. Creating us in His image and likeness, God makes us sharers of his creative and liberating communication in communion, through communion, and in view of communion.⁴⁴

As human beings, we are able to communicate because we are created in the image and likeness of such a communicating Trinitarian God. The failures of human communication however are brought about man's refusal to communicate, his refusal to listen to God, his refusal to receive God in his life. But God never gave up in reaching out to man. God's communication with and dialogue to man continues in the unfolding of the human history as He keeps on establishing this bond through Covenant with man. While there may be moments of crises and breakdown in the dialogue, God remains to be faithful; and "the dialogue has positive parallel moments: continuous restorations, sustained by God's inexhaustible communicative love."⁴⁵ God's communication wishes to heal our failed communications so that we may be united with Him once more. And this will be realized fully in Jesus Christ which we are about to deal for the next chapter.

⁴⁴ Häring, 155.

⁴⁵ Martini, 32.

CHAPTER 2
GOD COMMUNICATES HIMSELF FULLY IN JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE MAN

In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe.

- Hebrews 1:1-2

The opening statement of the letter to the Hebrews expresses not only the pre-existence of the Son, who through him the world was created and redeemed, it also expresses how God did formerly communicate to the human race, through the ancestors of Israel and through the prophets. They gave us some information about God, without clearly telling us that God had a Son. They foretold that the Messiah would come when at last a ruler had failed from the tribe of Judah (cfr. Gen 49:10). But in the new age, in the new regime, God has spoken no longer through the prophets, for He has now spoken through His own Son.

The Fullness of God's Self-Communication to Man is Realized in Jesus Christ

The message is now immeasurably greater and clearer. God's self-communication, His self-giving in love is continued and completed through His Son. Through Jesus, God revealed himself to man fully. Through his Word, he has said everything:

In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word – and he has no more to say... because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son.⁴⁶

With Jesus Christ who has communicated everything what God has to reveal about Himself, “the Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will not pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴⁷ *No further public revelation* here means that everything what God wants to reveal about Himself has been made complete in Jesus Christ.

⁴⁶ St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Ch. 2, 22. Cfr. CCC 65.

⁴⁷ *Dei Verbum* 2.

The Incarnation is the Fullest Expression of God's Self-Communication to Man

When, by his own fault, man turned away from his Creator, chaos succeeded crime and man became embroiled in discord and deadly fraternal strife. He was no longer able to communicate with his fellow men. But for all that, God's love for man persisted, despite its rejection by man. It was He who made the first move to make contact with mankind at the start of the history of salvation. In the fullness of time, he communicated His very self to man and "the Word was made flesh."⁴⁸

“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). In Jesus, the self-communicating Triune God became fully revealed, dwelling in a particular dimension of creation – in humanity. In Jesus, the divine Word who was first spoken in the womb of the Trinity soon dwelt in the womb of the Virgin, into the womb of humankind, taking flesh, expressing itself humanly.

This is the expression of God's self-giving in love in its fullness. And it happened when the fullness of time coincides with the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word as expressed in the words of St. Paul: “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman” (Gal 4:4). It was thus fulfilled at the Annunciation when the Angel Gabriel spoke to the Virgin Mary, who responded her “*Fiat*” to the will of God, upon which the Holy Spirit overshadowed her. Even in this Incarnation event of the Annunciation, the Trinitarian God's self-communication is manifested.

The prologue of St. John expresses a deeper tone on the mystery of the Incarnation in the words of John Paul II:

For John, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, of one being with the Father, took place in the conception and birth of Jesus. The Evangelist speaks of the Word who in the beginning was with God, and through whom everything which exists was made; the Word in whom was life, the life which was the light of men (cf. Jn 1:1-4). Of the Only-Begotten Son, God from God, the Apostle Paul writes that he is "the first-born of all creation" (Col 1:15). God created the world through the Word. The Word is Eternal Wisdom; the Thought and Substantial Image of God; "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Eternally begotten and eternally loved by the Father, as God from God and Light from Light, he is the principle and archetype of everything created by God in time.⁴⁹

The Incarnation as the fullness of expression of God's self-communication to man is not just limited to taking flesh and assuming human form. It is precisely by assuming humanity that God's self-communication is expressed that is understandable to us.

For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted

⁴⁸ *Communio et Progressio*, 10 § 1.

⁴⁹ John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, 3.

by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin.⁵⁰

The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man... nor a confused mixture of divine and human.⁵¹ Because “human nature was assumed, not absorbed...”⁵² the Son of God therefore communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of existence in the Trinity.⁵³

Through the Incarnation, God, through his Son, was able to speak to man face-to-face, using their human language, relating to them in love that is familiar to human experience. He “emptied himself... and took the human form” (cfr. Phil 2:7) to be with man, to give himself in love, and so that man might know God’s love.

Through the Incarnation, God’s reaching out to man achieved its fullness. Jesus was born so that the promise made to Abraham as echoed by the prophets might be fulfilled. God reached out to man through the many Covenants God made with man, and He has remained ever faithful. Through the Incarnation, the Covenant is not only definitely fulfilled, God’s self-communication, his self-giving of love is all the more made manifest:

In Christ this pedagogy achieves its purpose: Jesus does not in fact merely speak “in the name of God” like the Prophets, but he is God himself speaking in his Eternal Word made flesh. Here we touch upon the essential point by which Christianity differs from all the other religions, by which man’s search for God has been expressed from earliest times. Christianity has its starting-point in the Incarnation of the Word. Here, it is not simply a case of man seeking God, but of God who comes in Person to speak to man of himself and to show him the path by which he may be reached. This is what is proclaimed in the Prologue of John’s Gospel: “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (Jn 1:18).⁵⁴

Mary Participates in God’s Self-Communication

It is worthy to note how Mary appears several times in the pages of the Gospel of Luke (cfr. Luke 1:26-55). She is that person who responds in a particular way the need for religious and human communication.⁵⁵ The role of Mary is important because she takes part in God’s self-giving of Himself through the Incarnation.

⁵⁰ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22 § 2.

⁵¹ Cfr. CCC 464.

⁵² *Gaudium et Spes*, 22 § 2.

⁵³ Cfr. CCC 470.

⁵⁴ *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, 6.

⁵⁵ Cfr. Martini, 44.

The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates “the fullness of time,” the time of the fulfilment of God's promises and preparations. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom the “whole fullness of deity” would dwell “bodily.”⁵⁶

The Father of mercies willed that the incarnation should be preceded by the acceptance of her who was predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life. That is true in outstanding fashion of the mother of Jesus, who gave to the world Him who is Life itself and who renews all things, and who was enriched by God with the gifts which befit such a role.⁵⁷

When Mary consented to God’s word and thus becoming the mother of Jesus, she espoused the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly. She gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God’s grace.⁵⁸ Mary did not only participate in God’s self-giving of love. She herself has joined in this giving as she gave herself in love of God.

When the angel’s greeting reached Mary, she was in deep, contemplative silence. From her mouth came forth few, but essential words that expressed her firm decision for virginity, her profound respect for the mystery of God, and a willingness to be a “handmaid” in God’s presence. In her contemplative listening, she allows the mystery of the Father to reach her through the word of the Son, in order to celebrate the Encounter in the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit. In Mary, Virgin of the Annunciation, the Trinitarian structure of God’s self-communication is evident: from Silence, through the Word, toward Encounter. The virginal welcome of God’s self-communication points to the contemplative dimension at the very roots of communication.⁵⁹ Mary’s participation is not only through Incarnation. She participates in Jesus’ lifetime. She is there from the beginning of his ministry at Cana, up to the foot of the cross. Mary journeys with Jesus and with God’s self-giving love from the Incarnation to the Paschal Mystery.

The Paschal Mystery is the High Point of God’s Self-Communication

The Incarnation fully expresses God’s self-communication, inasmuch as the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II conveys:

For He sent His Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all men, so that He might dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God.... Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself: through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ CCC 484.

⁵⁷ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 56.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*; Cfr. CCC 494.

⁵⁹ Cfr. Martini, 45.

Through the Incarnation, God has given himself in love not only to be like us, but more so to be with us. It is for this reason that the Son of God is called “Emmanuel” (cfr. Mt 1:23) and even alluded to at the end of the Gospel of Matthew where the risen Jesus assures his disciples of his continued presence “I am with you always...” (cfr. Mt 28:20). Yet, there is a greater purpose of the Incarnation, which in essence is all about God’s self-giving of love. And it is connected with how the Son of God will be called as announced by the angel Gabriel (cfr. Mt 1:21; Lk 1:31). The Son of God is named Jesus which means “God saves.” The Incarnation points to the very purpose of God to save humankind and to bring them back to Him.

For whereas the Word of God was without flesh, He took upon Himself the holy flesh by the holy Virgin, and prepared a robe which He wove for Himself, like a bridegroom, in the sufferings of the cross, in order that by uniting His own power with our mortal body, and by mixing the incorruptible with the corruptible, and the strong with the weak, He might save perishing men.... And the Word passing through these, like the combs (or rods), completes through them that which the Father wills.⁶¹

By coming into this world, God communicates fully His self-giving in love, reaching to the point of giving up His own life to save the humankind. God reaches out to man, despite man’s refusal to be in relationship with Him, despite the many times he has cut-off the lines of communication to God. It is sin that chains man to suffer. It is sin that causes man to refuse communication. It is sin that hinders one to give oneself to love the other. Where one fails to communicate, one fails to establish relationships, one fails to fully give oneself in love. “The failure of human communication have at their roots the distortion of an impulse that is fundamental in us,”⁶² that is marred by sin and prompted by the Devil (“the one who divides us”) who tries to sow division, lies and confusion in communicative relationships. But God desires to save mankind from these chains that bind him brought about by sin; as He also desires “to heal our failed communications and to fill us again with the grace of a healthy and constructive give and take in relationships.”⁶³ The Paschal Mystery, therefore, is the pinnacle of God’s self-communication to save mankind and heal their communicative relationships.

God’s self-communication through the Paschal Mystery is essentially His self-giving in love on three accounts: (1) his self-giving is ordained towards redeeming love and reconciliation for mankind; (2) his self-giving is sacrificial love; (3) his self-giving opens up for mankind to a new life with God.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (John 3:16). The evangelist capitalizes the very reason of the Jesus’ Incarnation and Passion, that is, God’s love to the

⁶⁰ *Dei Verbum*, 4.

⁶¹ St. Hippolytus, *On Christ and AntiChrist*, Ch. 3, MG 10, 732.

⁶² Martini, 27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

world. In sending his Son, He brings life to the world. Some exegetes have suggested an Old Testament typology in this passage. They have connected this with Isaac, the “only son” whom Abraham loved (cfr. Gen 22:2). Yet Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only Son. God, in the fourth Gospel, out of his self-giving love, has willed to sacrifice his only begotten Son, Jesus, for the salvation of the world. His love is redemptive.

But the point of this redeeming love that the Son of God took upon Himself is not only an atonement for the sins that mankind has committed, but also for reconciliation. As Benedict XVI puts it:

The “Lamb of God” took upon himself the sins of the world and wiped them away. God’s relationship to the world, formerly distorted by sin, was now renewed. Reconciliation has been accomplished.⁶⁴

He based this from St. Paul whose message is thus: “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19). Benedict XVI expresses that “God himself becomes the locus of reconciliation, and in the person of his Son takes the suffering upon himself.”⁶⁵

God’s self-giving in love is poured out completely upon his passion and death. This self-giving in this regard is self-emptying as St. Paul wrote: “though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:6-8). His self-emptying did not end in the Incarnation, it went further as he willed to accept and embrace death through the cross. It is necessary for the Son of God to endure sufferings and to make the ultimate sacrifice to communicate to mankind the reality of God as He is, as self-giving love. St. Cyril of Jerusalem asserts thus:

These things the Saviour endured, and made peace through the Blood of his Cross, for things in heaven, and things in earth (Col 1:20). For we were enemies of God through sin, and God had appointed one of two things: either that God in his truth should destroy all men, or that in His loving kindness He should cancel the sentence. But behold the wisdom of God; He preserved both the truth of His sentence, and the exercise of his loving-kindness. Christ took His body on the tree, that we by His death might die to sin, and live into righteousness.⁶⁶

It is love “to the end” that confers on Christ’s sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and reconciliation. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life.... The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice for all.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part Two: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection, (San Francisco, California: St. Ignatius Press, 2011), 230.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁶⁶ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses*, No, 13:33.

All this discourse on God's self-communication would be empty if it would end on the passion and death of Jesus. St. Paul explains thus,

And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins (1 Cor 15:14-15).

It is clear from this passage that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith to realize God's self-communication in love. Through the Resurrection, Jesus is conclusively revealed as the "Son of God." By his resurrection, Jesus remains as the living witness and testimony of God's self-communication, His self-giving in love. "The Resurrection above all constitutes the confirmation of all Christ's works and teachings. All truths, even those most inaccessible to human reason, find their justification if Christ by his Resurrection has given the definitive proof of his divine authority, which he had promised."⁶⁸

By his Resurrection, Christ opens us for us the way to new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."⁶⁹ The object of God's self-giving in love is on the way to fruition, when man begins to live in this newness of life with God, in communion with Him.

For even Pope Benedict expressed the vital significance of the Resurrection in God's self-communication:

Only if Jesus is risen has anything really new occurred that changes the world and the situation of mankind. Then he becomes the criterion on which we can rely. For then God has truly revealed himself.⁷⁰

Jesus Christ is the Perfect Communicator of the Kingdom

The papal instruction on communication, *Communio et Progressio*, points to Christ as the Perfect Communicator:

While He was on earth Christ revealed Himself as the Perfect Communicator. Through His incarnation, He utterly identified Himself with those who were to receive His communication and He gave His message not only in words but in the whole manner of His life.⁷¹

⁶⁷ CCC 616.

⁶⁸ CCC 651.

⁶⁹ Cfr. CCC 654.

⁷⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, 242.

From this, not only Christ is identified as communicator, but we realize as well that He is the Word of the Father, in whom all things were made. Christ is “the supreme gift and message to man,” for in him the Father communicates his design, his wisdom, his love.⁷² Thus, Christ is both communicator and communication.

Since Christ is the message of the Father, he reveals who God is, through his person. “All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him” (Luke 10:22). God reveals Himself through His Word. The communicator becomes the message. And the message is about the communicator. No other than Christ can be regarded as the perfect communicator of who God really is.

He spoke from within, that is to say, from out of the press of His people. He preached the divine message without fear or compromise. He adjusted to His people's way of talking and to their patterns of thought. And He spoke out of the predicament of their time.⁷³

The Gospels present sketches on how Jesus Christ is being regarded as “Perfect Communicator,” and how Jesus did communicate “out of the press of his people.” Eilers synthesized and categorized scriptural events that point to how Jesus communicates through the following examples:⁷⁴

1. The *circumstances* of the life of Jesus Christ as such must be considered as communication, like the simple way of His birth, His hidden years in Nazareth as preparation for His apostolate, His social status as the carpenter's son, the 40 days in the desert but also His death on the Cross.
2. In his *apostolate* and periods of direct proclamation, Jesus shares His message of the Kingdom and the call for conversion wherever He goes as an itinerant preacher; He is thus found at the synagogues and temple as well as at the marketplaces, on the streets, in the homes but also at the lake and the mountains. Wherever He goes, He is the expression of God's self-communication in word and deed.
3. The means used by Jesus for His communication cover the whole range of non-verbal and verbal communications of His time and culture. He non-verbally communicates through actions like miracles, healing, touching, writing in the sand, expelling the sellers from the temple, etc. His actions thus, can be communicating directly or symbolically, expressing a deeper meaning. He verbally communicates in preaching, teaching, dialogue, group sharings like with His disciples and personal contact like with Nicodemus. His preaching uses parables, metaphors,

⁷¹ *Communio et Progressio*, 11.

⁷² Cfr. Häring, 153.

⁷³ *Communio et Progressio*, 11.

⁷⁴ Franz-Josef Eilers, *Communicating in Community: An Introduction to Social Communication*. Fourth Edition (Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, Inc., 2011), 55-57.

proverbs, storytelling and references to daily life experiences but also plain language.

For John Paul II, Jesus Christ exercised his being communicator in his entire life particularly in the area of preaching and teaching:

the whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: His silences, His miracles, His gestures, His prayer, His love for people, His special affection for the little and the poor, His acceptance of the total sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of the world, and His resurrection are the actualization of His word and the fulfillment of revelation. Hence for Christians the crucifix is one of the most sublime and popular images of Christ the Teacher.⁷⁵

And the content of his teaching is all about the Kingdom of God. The beginning of Jesus' public ministry specifies this essential content of his preaching: "The Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). He went on communicating this message, first to the children of Israel, and then to all peoples of all nations.⁷⁶ He communicated the invitation to enter the Kingdom through his sermons, miracles and parables. He even chose certain men to participate in this mission of preaching the Kingdom. And the disciples even had foretastes of it while He is with them.⁷⁷

But what really is the Kingdom of God all about? There are several interpretations as to how the Kingdom of God can be understood. Yet, Benedict XVI puts it simply:

When Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God, he is quite simply proclaiming God and proclaiming him to be the living God, who is able to act concretely in the world and in history and is even now so acting. He is telling us "God exists" and "God is really God," which means that he holds in his hands the threads of the world.⁷⁸

When Jesus preaches about the Kingdom of God, he reveals the reality of God as who He really is – His self-giving in love, manifested by the very fact that "God exists" for man, that "God is really God" as He initiated by revealing Himself to man, and that "he holds in his hands the threads of the world."

Man follows Jesus Christ as His Ultimate Norm in Communication

The Kingdom of God manifested in Jesus Christ is for the whole world. The power and authority given to Jesus Christ, the Lord, obliges his disciples to preach the Gospel, to

⁷⁵ John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 9.

⁷⁶ Cfr. Mt 8:11; 10:5-7; 28:19

⁷⁷ The "foretaste" being referred to here is mainly the Transfiguration event. But events like Jesus' entry to Jerusalem, the journey to Calvary, and the Resurrection and Ascension are also foretaste events of the Kingdom of God.

⁷⁸ Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (New York: Doubleday Publishing, 2007), 55-56.

be communicators everywhere, even to the ends of the earth.⁷⁹ With Christ regarded as the “perfect communicator,” the disciples are called to follow Christ to be such. “As Jesus incarnated the love of the Father, His followers are called to continue communicating this redemption....”⁸⁰ Jesus is thus regarded as the ultimate norm for human communication and action:

Jesus Christ is the concrete categorical imperative, in the sense that he is not only a formal, universal norm of moral life, which can be applied to everyone, but also a concrete and personal norm. By virtue of his suffering for us and the Eucharistic giving up of his life for us as well as his handing it on to us (*per ipsum et cum ipso*), he has given us the interior strength to the will of the Father *with him (cum ipso)*.⁸¹

To regard Jesus as the ultimate norm of communication and action is asking Jesus, “Teacher, what good must I do...?” (cf. Mt 19:16). To have Jesus Christ as the ultimate norm does not really entail parroting or imitation. John Paul II explains that in following Christ, “moral life presents itself as the response due to the many gratuitous initiatives taken by God out of love for man. It is a response of love.”⁸² He adds further that “(Man) becomes capable of this love only by virtue of a gift received.”⁸³ As man receives the love of God, so he in turn freely communicates that love to others. It is because man responds in love that makes following Jesus NOT a burden.

After realizing that Christ is not only the communicator of love but also the message of love of the Father, man should accept this message of love. He is to accept Christ, who is God’s self-giving in love. In response, following Christ becomes easy and light.

But what norm in Christ is man expected to follow, or to respond into? Like Christ, man becomes a communicator of love. Like Christ, man can also exercise a self-giving love. And just like Christ, man can also become a communicator of truth, for truth is always in Christ’s communication as He is Truth Himself (cf. Jn 14:6).

When we say that Christ himself is the law or the norm of Christian life, we leave behind the narrow concepts of normative ethics, but we find a true criterion or ultimate norm for searching and sharing truth. Is all our knowledge grounded in the basic freedom of love, and does it strengthen the bond of love, in the image and likeness of him who is the truth and breathes love? All who have made their fundamental option for true love will love the truth and thus experience its liberating power.... Only the Father’s beloved Son, who breathes love and has taken flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, who is anointed by the Holy Spirit, can set us free.

⁷⁹ Häring, 156.

⁸⁰ Eilers, *Communicating in Community*, 58.

⁸¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Nine Theses in Christian Ethics*, from the International Theological Commission: Volume I Texts and Documents 1969-1985 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 110.

⁸² John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 10 § 3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 22 § 3.

There can be no freedom where truth are divorced from love and where love does not seek the fullness of truth.⁸⁴

Since man acquired this communicative ability, which God shared to us after creating us in His image and likeness, he is called to respond in love and in truth, so that after receiving God's self-giving love, he, in turn, may share this "self-diffusive" love to others.

For Jesus Christ has done this as he passed this on to his apostles, and then the apostles shared and spread this out to all the nations, through the Church. So that even if Christ is no longer physically present here on earth, the Church continues God's communication of His self-giving in love until the present time. And we shall see how this is being done in the next chapter as we grasp God's self-communication through the Church.

⁸⁴ Häring, 10-11.

CHAPTER 3 GOD COMMUNICATES CONTINUOUSLY THROUGH THE CHURCH

What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

- 1 John 1:3

The author of the epistle, assumed to be coming from the Johannine community expresses a handing over of the message to others that has been communicated to them. The subject “we” may pertain to the guardians of the tradition, who may have been the eyewitnesses of Jesus. The task of proclaiming the message coming directly from Jesus Christ must be passed on and must continue to be preached. So that in doing so, those who have been preached may join them in their fellowship. This fellowship refers originally to the communion of the Father and the Son that is shared with the people who have received Christ’s message. This earthly fellowship or communion being referred to points out to the early Church.

Thus, it is through the Church that the Trinitarian self-communication of God in Revelation and Incarnation is continued till the end of time. She is and must be a living and expression and continuation of God’s communication into any culture and time. Through the Church, God’s Revelation and Jesus’ Incarnation are to further unfold under the guidance of the Holy Spirit into the “communion” and “service” of the faithful as a living experience and witness of God’s communication today.⁸⁵

The Holy Spirit Sustains God’s Self-Communication in the Church

The origin of the Church is not the decision of men; she is not the product of human willing but a creature of the Spirit of God.⁸⁶ The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Vatican II expresses the vital role of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church:

When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He *might continually sanctify the Church*, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. He is the *Spirit of Life*, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal. To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through Him, until, in Christ, He brings to life their mortal bodies. The Spirit dwells in the Church and *in the hearts of the faithful*, as in a temple. In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. The Church, which the Spirit *guides in way of all truth* and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both *equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic*

⁸⁵ Cfr. Eilers, *Communicating in Community*, 58.

⁸⁶ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 43.

gifts and adorns with His fruits. By the power of the Gospel He makes the Church *keep the freshness of youth*. Uninterruptedly He renews it and *leads it to perfect union with its Spouse*. The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord, "Come!" Thus, the Church has been seen as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."⁸⁷

The Second Vatican Council through this document indicates the birth of the Church on day of the Pentecost that is to say with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, together with Mary, the mother of Jesus.

These passages quoted from the Conciliar Constitution *Lumen Gentium* tell us that the era of the Church began with the coming of the Holy Spirit. They also tell us that this era, the era of the Church, continues. It continues down the centuries and generations. In our own century, when humanity is already close to the end of the second Millennium after Christ, this era of the Church expressed itself in a special way through the Second Vatican Council, as the Council of our century. For we know that it was in a special way an "ecclesiological" Council: a Council on the theme of the Church. At the same time, the teaching of this Council is essentially "pneumatological": it is permeated by the truth about the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church.⁸⁸

Yet, the Holy Spirit is already at work even before Pentecost, even before Christ's Paschal Mystery and earthly life, even before Creation. Another document in Vatican II affirms this: "Doubtless, the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before Christ was glorified."⁸⁹ From the life and love of the Trinity, the salvific self-giving of God began in creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . . , and the Spirit of God (ruah Elohim) was moving over the face of the waters." (Gen 1:1). From this passage we encounter the presence of the Spirit of God in creation. The presence of the Holy Spirit, although not specifically explicated in the Old Testament, journeys in human history with the unfolding of God's plan of salvation until His salvific self-giving in the person of His Son, Jesus. Even in the earthly ministry of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is with him, from his baptism in the Jordan to breathing the Spirit out to his apostles in Resurrection.

Before his departure, Jesus Christ says in the Upper Room "It is to your advantage I go away; . . . if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

The Holy Spirit comes at the price of Christ's "departure." While this "departure" caused the Apostles to be sorrowful, and this sorrow was to reach its culmination in the Passion and Death on Good Friday, "this sorrow will turn into joy." For Christ will add to this redemptive "departure" the glory of his Resurrection and Ascension to the Father. Thus the sorrow with its underlying joy is, for the Apostles in the context of their Master's "departure," an "advantageous" departure, for thanks to it another "Counselor" will come. At the price of the Cross which brings about the Redemption, in the power of the whole Paschal Mystery of Jesus

⁸⁷ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 4; emphasis is mine.

⁸⁸ John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 26.

⁸⁹ Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 4.

Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in order to remain from the day of Pentecost onwards with the Apostles, to remain with the Church and in the Church, and through her in the world.⁹⁰

It is in this way that God's self-communication of the Trinity in the Holy Spirit begins in the Church to continue and sustain the work of Jesus into the world. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit transforms people as He gathers them into one body of Christ to be configured in the image of Christ, as Pius XII explains:

But after Christ's glorification on the Cross, His Spirit is communicated to the Church in an abundant outpouring, so that she, and her individual members, may become daily more and more like to our Savior. It is the Spirit of Christ that has made us adopted sons of God in order that one day "we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face may be transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

The Church is the Living Expression of God's Self-Communication

Jesus Christ, who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), continues his salvific activity in his body the Church. "The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race." It is "the universal sacrament of salvation".⁹¹ Christ and his church cannot be separated. Jesus is the real symbol of God's self-communication to the world. The church has the function of making historically present and tangible with the world this symbolisation of God's self-communication. Only if the symbolisation of God's self-communication in Jesus continues historically can Christ continue to be a real symbol of God's presence for humanity.

But the Church's foundation traces its origin back to the Holy Trinity and her progressive realization in history. The eternal Father, by a free and hidden plan of His own wisdom and goodness, created the whole world. His plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life.... He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. Already from the beginning of the world the foreshadowing of the Church took place. It was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant. In the present era of time the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the Spirit, was made manifest. At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion, when, all the just, from Adam and to the last of the elect will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church.

Christians of the first centuries said, "The world was created for the sake of the Church."⁹² God created the world for the sake of communion brought about by the "convocation" of men in Christ, and this "convocation" is the Church. The goal of God's

⁹⁰ *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 14 § 2.

⁹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, 32.

⁹² *Pastor Hermae*, Vision 2, 4, 1: PG 2,899; cf. Aristides, *Apol.* 16, 6; St. Justin, *Apol.* 2, 7: PG 6, 456; Tertullian, *Apol.* 31, 3; 32, 1: PL 1, 508-509; Cfr. CCC 760.

self-communication to man is communion. This is the point of his gradual plan of salvation. In the salvation history of mankind, the Church is being prepared.

The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. "The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus."⁹³ "For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'"⁹⁴

The Church as the Body of Christ, and on the account of the Holy Spirit, makes visible the presence of Christ. Even when Christ has physically departed from this world, he promised to remain with his disciples so as not leave them as orphans. He sent them his spirit, and as a result their communion with Jesus has become more intense: "By communicating His Spirit, Christ made His brothers, called together from all nations, mystically the components of His own Body."⁹⁵ By the Church's origin of its name, *ek-kaleo, convocatio*, the assembly of the people is ordained towards communion. For when we are gathered in communion, we live out God's self-communication – His self-giving love.

The Celebration of the Church's Sacramental Liturgy is the Communication of the Fruits of Christ's Paschal Mystery

In his eighteenth catechesis (23-25), St. Cyril of Jerusalem makes an interesting point about the word *convocation* (*synagogē-ekklēsia*, the assembly of the people called together and made his own by God). He rightly points out that in the Pentateuch, when the word first makes its appearance with the appointment of Aaron, it is ordered toward worship. Cyril shows that this applies to all the later passages in the Torah, and even in the transition to the New Testament, this ordering is not forgotten. The calling together, the assembly, has a purpose, and that purpose is worship. The call come from worship and leads back to worship. It is worship that unites the people called together and gives their being together its meaning and worth: they are united in that "peace" which the world cannot give.⁹⁶

At the center of the Church's worship is the notion "sacrament." This means that it is not primarily we who act, but God comes first to meet us through his action, he looks upon us and he leads us to himself.⁹⁷ Even in the celebration of the sacramental liturgy,

⁹³ *Lumen Gentium*, 3; Cfr. Jn 19:34.

⁹⁴ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5.

⁹⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, 7.

⁹⁶ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 63.

⁹⁷ Benedict XVI, *I Believe in One God: The Creed Explained*. (Makati City: St. Pauls Philippines, 2012), 119.

there is communication. God, in fact, continues His self-communication with man through worship of the Church in the liturgy.

In the Church's liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and the end of all the blessings of creation and salvation. The dual dimension of the Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and “in the Holy Spirit,” blesses the Father “for his inexpressible gift” in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God's plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ the Priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life “to the praise of his glorious grace.”⁹⁸

Seated at the right hand of the Father and pouring out the Holy Spirit on his Body which is the Church, Christ, who is the Head, now acts through the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace. In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present,⁹⁹ so that God's work of salvation in history may continue and may be communicated in the present. That is why in Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, it is stated:

To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,” but especially under the eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).¹⁰⁰

Here we speak of Christ communicating the fruits of his Paschal Mystery, inasmuch as he himself is present. In liturgy, the whole of Christ, who is the head, acts together with his body the Church.

Through the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus draws the faithful into his “hour”.... Since the Eucharist makes present Christ's redeeming sacrifice, we must start by acknowledging that “there is a causal influence of the Eucharist at the Church's very origins.”¹⁰¹ The Eucharist is Christ who gives himself to us and continually builds up as his body. Hence, in the striking interplay between the Eucharist which builds up the Church, and the Church herself which “makes: the Eucharist, the primary causality is expressed in the first formula: the Church is able to celebrate and adore the mystery of

⁹⁸ CCC 1083.

⁹⁹ CCC 1085.

¹⁰⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

¹⁰¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1.

Christ present in the Eucharist precisely because Christ first gave himself to her in the sacrifice of the Cross. The Church's ability to "make" the Eucharist is completely rooted in Christ's self-gift to her.¹⁰² Thus, it is through the celebration of the Church's sacramental liturgy, particularly of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that fruits of Christ's Paschal Mystery is communicated.

The Church is Sent to Proclaim the Ongoing Self-Communication of God to All Men

Jesus gave the mandate to all his disciples: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). It is the design of God that the salvation of all human race be carried out. Thus the Church is sent by Christ to reveal and to communicate the love of God to all men and nations.

The Second Vatican Council describes the communication obligation of the Church in the following words:

Divinely sent to the nations of the world to be unto them "a universal sacrament of salvation," the Church, driven by the inner necessity of her own catholicity, and obeying the mandate of her Founder (cf. Mk 16.16), strives ever to proclaim the Gospel to all men. The Apostles themselves, on whom the Church was founded, following in the footsteps of Christ, "preached the word of truth and begot churches." It is the duty of their successors to make this task endure "so that the word of God may run and be glorified (2 Thess 3:1) and the kingdom of God be proclaimed and established throughout the world."¹⁰³

The Church is aware that she as the body of Christ has "to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God" (cf. Lk 4:43) and she follows St. Paul in saying: "Not that I boast of preaching the Gospel since it is a duty that has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it" (1 Cor. 9, 16). Along these lines, the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* states that:

"Evangelizing – Communicating – is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the mass which is the memorial of his death and glorious resurrection"¹⁰⁴

In this document, Pope Paul VI links evangelization to the most intimate being of the Church: Born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the apostles, she is to be a sign of a new presence of Jesus, of his departure and of his permanent presence. She prolongs and continues Him. And it is above all his mission and his condition of being an evangelizer that she is called upon to continue. The intimate life of the Church only acquires its full

¹⁰² Benedict XVI, *I Believe in One God*, 87-88.

¹⁰³ *Ad Gentes*, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14.

meaning when it becomes witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News, and when it goes forth communicating this truth to all.

The communication of truth so that it may be accepted by others is also in harmony with the natural human desire to have others share in one's own goods, which for Catholics includes the gift of faith in Jesus Christ. Members of the Church naturally desire to share with others the faith that has been freely given to them. Through evangelization, cultures are positively affected by the truth of the Gospel. Likewise, through evangelization, members of the Catholic Church open themselves to receiving the gifts of other traditions and cultures.

Evangelization proceeds through dialogue, not only of truth but also of charity and joy. That is why in the proclamation of the Catholic Church, it is not only the truth of the words that matters, but also the witness of life. For is not only the truth about God in the words of Christ that we communicate, but the very being of God, who gives Himself fully in love.

The Church is moving towards Final Communion with the Communicative Triune God.

The seventh chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church discusses the eschatological character of the pilgrim Church on earth. The opening passage goes thus:

The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God, will attain its full perfection only in the glory of heaven, when there will come the time of the restoration of all things. At that time the human race as well as the entire world, which is intimately related to man and attains to its end through him, will be perfectly reestablished in Christ.... the promised restoration which we are awaiting has already begun in Christ, is carried forward in the mission of the Holy Spirit and through Him continues in the Church in which we learn the meaning of our terrestrial life through our faith, while we perform with hope in the future the work committed to us in this world by the Father, and thus work out our salvation.¹⁰⁵

The pilgrim Church does not only journey in time, she grows towards perfection, making herself ready in maturity towards communion with God. She prepares herself for the union through the heavenly wedding banquet when she can finally say "I do" to Jesus who proposes to her the love of God since the beginning. For God's self-communication is essentially communion as manifested in the Trinity. Its end point, as He desires, will also be communion. This is what the above passage is all about. In Christ, God revealed to the world that He desires "everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4).

¹⁰⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, 48.

The truth which the Gospel teaches about God requires *a certain change in focus with regard to eschatology*. First of all, eschatology is not what will take place in the future, something happening only after earthly life is finished. *The eschatology has already begun with the coming of Christ*. The ultimate eschatological event was His redemptive Death and His Resurrection. This is the beginning of “a new heaven and a new earth” (cf. Rev. 21:1). For everyone, life beyond death is connected with the affirmation: “I believe in the resurrection of the body,” and then “I believe in the forgiveness of sins and in life everlasting.” This is *Christocentric eschatology*.¹⁰⁶

When the Council speaks of the eschatological character of the pilgrim Church, it does so on the basis of this awareness: God is the just Judge. And the Judge who rewards good and punishes evil, is none other than the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Moses, and also of Christ, who is His Son. This God is, *above all, Love*. Not just Mercy, but Love. Not only the Father of the prodigal son, but the Father who “gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but might have eternal life” (cf. John 3:16).¹⁰⁷

Therefore that each person renders an account reminds us of the “universal call to holiness in the Church.”¹⁰⁸ For those who have heeded this call will be able to see God face-to-face and be with Him with a perfect life with the Trinity. This communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary and the angels and all the blessed is called “heaven.”¹⁰⁹

We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: “He who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn 3:14-15). To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called “hell.”

As regards “purgatory,” St. John of the Cross offers a very strong explanation. The “living flame of love,” of which St. John speaks, is above all a purifying fire. The mystical nights described by this great Doctor of the Church on the basis of his own experience correspond, in a certain sense, to purgatory. God makes man pass through such an interior purgatory of his sensual and spiritual nature in order to bring him into union with Himself. Here we do not find ourselves before a mere tribunal. We present ourselves before the power of Love itself.¹¹⁰

This is a beautiful image on how we encounter God, on how we face God before at the end of time. For even at the end of time, a communication with God takes place, a communication of love. For before all else, it is Love that judges. Because God is Love,

¹⁰⁶ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 184-185.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁰⁸ Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, Ch. 5, 39-42.

¹⁰⁹ Cfr. CCC 1023-1024.

¹¹⁰ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 186-187.

He judges through love. It is love that demands purification, before man can be made ready for that union with God which is his ultimate vocation and destination.

The Church still has this eschatological awareness, inasmuch as she prepares man for this momentous event. The Church leads man and ushers him to eternal life. She works to gather all men back to God. For in the Church, God's self-communication, that is, His self-giving love, continues, moving all towards in communion with Him.

CONCLUSION

Man desires to communicate, because, fundamentally He is a relating being. When He communicates to others, he gives something, if not everything, about himself to others. Man has acquired this because he is fashioned in the image and likeness of the communicating God. For God is essentially Love, who gives Himself fully in love. This is a foundation for theologizing: Divine Communication is Self-Giving in Love.

These considerations, as Eilers puts it,¹¹¹ show how theology considers the whole of Salvation and Theology under the perspective of Communication. The communicating Trinitarian God ‘speaks’ through creation, his creatures, and he lovingly communicates with them in grace. In His ‘Word’ becoming Flesh, He even becomes part of humans in sharing Himself through Jesus Christ. It is the mission of the Church to continue this sending and Incarnation into the here and now of every time. In consequence, this means for the practice and development of communication of the Church and every Christian to be first and foremost communicating persons with an open mind and not being afraid to accept new technological developments, of not being afraid of a contradicting world and not being afraid of our own limitations. A real Christian reflects the lovingly communicating God wherever s/he goes. Communication is at the root and essence of Christianity and therefore not just one activity besides others.

Thus, this theological synthesis on Divine Communication has taught us so many things giving implications to pastoral ministry and personal witnessing. First, we have realized that God’s self-communication is personal. By His immense love inasmuch as He is love Himself, God communicates his very self, to the point that He offers Himself as the supreme gift. This teaches us to be a gift to others as well. Inasmuch as Divine Communication is personal, there is a call for pastors in the Church to deal with the members of the Church both in a more personal way, to meet them, to know their concerns, to reach out to those who are in the margins of the faith and in the society. To realize the Divine Communication as personal, every person must feel that He is loved, that He is a recipient of God immense love. Secondly, Divine Communication as we have seen in the salvation history is gradual and progressive. God journeys with us according to our pace. He speaks to us according to our level of communicating. He speaks the language of the child when we are children. He speaks the language of the teenager when we became teenagers. He waits until we are mature enough to communicate to Him in a deeper way and in a more personal way. As a pastoral implication, it is important for the Church, for its pastors and members to be “relevant,” to know how to speak the language of the times, so that the message of Christ may be understood and be well-received. God has patiently dialogued with man in the course of the salvation history. As pastors, we are encouraged to have a patient dialogue with the diverse cultures of the people, responding to their concerns. Third, The Divine Communication, although it has its culmination in the Paschal Mystery, is still on the way to its final completion. On earth, Divine Communication anticipates what will be given to us, that is, God who is fully Himself. It is a challenge for

¹¹¹ Eilers, *Church and Social Communication in Asia*, 185-186

every Christian to know and encounter God through Christ in the Spirit while here on earth towards a complete encounter with Him at the end of time. Fourth, the Divine Communication shines in the splendour of truth. The existence of God cannot be hidden by the facts of nature and the created realities. The love of God cannot be denied through the unfolding of good in time and in the lives of people. The communicated Truth cannot be denied. It is the task of the Church, its pastors and members to uphold truth at all time, and to give witness to it amidst its elusiveness in today's world. Lastly, the Divine Communication is meant to be shared for all. It is the natural desire of man to share something to others. Inasmuch as we have receive God, we are called to share God to others and to all men. It is in this way that the Divine Communication can be fruitful. Thus, it is the task of the pastors to make sure that the vocation to holiness be fruitful.

Because we are rapidly growing into a total communication society where everybody can be reached everywhere at any time we must all the more reflect God who is not only the exemplar, but the very communication Himself. In doing this, we may come to understand that we are not just imitating and responding to the communicating God, but realize in fact that in the Divine Communication, there we are.

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