

The Twofold Movement of Love

The Saint in the Whole of Christ

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I am a daughter of the Church, Chapter 1X

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I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. John 15:16

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This declaration of Jesus in His parting words to the apostles after the last Supper, followed what He had said about the close bonds that were to unite Him with them going forward:

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. John 15:15

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... The work of sanctification done by Jesus in His apostles, mysterious bonds of grace He created between them and Himself and the powers He gave them, all in view of their mission in the world. The fullness of grace and power were given to assure Jesus of apostles who would continue Christ's mission in the world.

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The apostles were chosen by Jesus; they would be transformed by His Spirit to become other Christ's on earth, and bear fruit in the world. Saint Teresa grasped this perfectly:

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It will be a good thing, sisters, if I tell you why the Lord grants so many favors in the world... I will speak about it further here so that none of you thinks that He does it simply to give these souls pleasure. That would be to make a great error. His Majesty can do nothing greater for us than to grant us a life which is an imitation of the one lived by His Beloved Son. I feel certain that these favors are given us to strengthen our weakness...so that we may be able to imitate Him in His great sufferings...

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For if the soul (who has arrived at transforming union) is with Him, ... it will very seldom think of itself; its whole thought will be on finding ways to please Him and on showing Him how much it loves Him. This, my daughters, is the aim of prayer: this is the purpose of Spiritual Marriage, of which are born works and good works alone...You may think that I am speaking of beginners, and that later on one may rest:

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...the only repose these souls enjoy is of an interior kind; of outward repose they get less and less... the soul did not understand what great gain can be derived from trials...nor did it realize how the companionship it now enjoys would give it much greater strength strength through the most sovereign union of spirit with Spirit. VII Mansions

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These texts sum up Saint Teresa's teaching in the last chapter of the seventh Mansions... a commentary on the last words of our Lord: **"I have appointed you that you should go and bear fruit."**

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... Both Teresa and John of the Cross arrived at transforming union... Many times in the course of the journey ... they compared their experiences and recognized their unity of thought. Now, on the summit, their aspirations seem divergent.

Each one has a school. Among their disciples, there are some for whom transforming union is a haven of peace where God is loved in solitude, counting the love it gives him preferable to all, especially to external works....

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Others consider the possession of God in transforming union as a means to serve Him more effectively. The latter adopt the definition given by Saint Teresa of the truly spiritual person:

Do you know when people really become spiritual? It is when they become slaves of God and are branded with His sign, which is the sign of the Cross, in token that they have given Him their freedom. Then he can sell them as slaves to the whole world, as He himself was sold. VII Mansions

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How to solve the problem posed by the divergence of these two tendencies on the heights of transforming union? ... The problem lies deeper; it has to do with the finality of transforming union here on earth and of the love that brings it to pass. Let us try to solve it.

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A-The Twofold Movement of Love (or Charity-God's way of loving)

1-Filial Movement towards God

Charity that is poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit at Baptism makes us children of God...It finds, in this filial character, its essential movement. The spirit that is given us cries: Abba, father! It makes us co-heirs with Christ. ... We come from God, and we return to Him. This is the law of the whole of creation;

...

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2-Movement towards Souls

Although essential to it, this yearning to possess God in the perfect vision of Him---the beatific vision—is not the only movement coming from the depths of our supernatural charity...Christian charity longs for something else in God than the possession of God Himself...When it comes to perfect union with God, our supernatural charity finds in Him Persons; its urge is to follow them ...Such is the happy destiny of our supernatural charity; it causes us to enter into the rhythm of the Triune Life, uniting us to each one of the three divine Persons.

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2-Movement towards Souls

...Such is the happy destiny of our supernatural charity; it causes us to enter into the rhythm of the Triune Life, uniting us to each one of the three divine Persons.

Divine charity is poured out upon us by the Holy Spirit ...who takes possession of our soul. Charity works a transformation of love in us and when complete, all of our movements and aspirations are ordered by love. Having become the soul's Master...the Holy Spirit associates us with His works.

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It is the Spirit of Love who carries out the eternal design of God... He pours into our souls a filial charity ...that identifies us with Christ. This grace then makes us one with Christ that we may form with Him the whole Christ.

Such is the destiny of our grace: it makes us into Christ, subjecting us to the same Spirit of Love who guided Christ Himself...

... Transforming union, by introducing the soul into God, does not isolate it from the world. Such union associates the soul with the intense life of the Church.

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The more the saints are held captive by love, the nearer they are to us; for in divinizing them, charity causes them to enter into the depths of sin, the great suffering of humanity, for otherwise they would not be identified with Christ. Their charity would not be Christian. Jesus said:

By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35

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In the evening of this life, we will be judged on love, the degree of our love may be taken as the degree of our glory and of our capacity for the beatific vision. Describing this judgment, Jesus states what will be asked for;

Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom...for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. John 15:12

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...The love on which we will be judged is the love that we have given to God in our brothers.

Of the two movements of supernatural charity in us, the first (movement towards God) is essential to it, the second (movement towards souls) is imposed by the Spirit of Love and by Christ Jesus, with whom it unifies the soul. Jesus said:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.”

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This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it,

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matt. 22:37-40

... Of these two similar commandments that sum up the whole law, the first is greater; but it is the accomplishment of the second that guarantees the value of and quality of charity...

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3-These Two Movements are united in Love for Christ

...Filial love for God seems to mount upward and lift us up; love for neighbor seems to descend and draw us downward. The first divinizes; the second renders carnal...

The saint that has arrived at transforming union is no longer on the edge where the mind considers and disputes. He is plunged in the work of love; and in his experience he meets with a light that blinds the understanding ...

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...Explaining the favor of spiritual marriage, Saint Teresa clarifies these apparent oppositions:

Then he revealed Himself to me, in an imaginary vision, most interiorly, as on other occasions, and He gave me His right hand, saying to me; “Behold this nail. It is a sign that from today onward you will be My bride. Until now, you did not deserve it; but going forward you shall watch over my honor not only as that of your Creator and King and God but as that of My very bride. My honor is your and yours, Mine.” Spiritual Relations XXXV

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The union is perfectly confirmed. Teresa belongs to Christ and Christ to Teresa... The wedding ring is replaced by a nail that attaches her to the cross... Teresa is not surprised. She knows the privileges and the duties of love. The Christ who unites her perfectly to Himself is Christ Jesus, triumphant in Heaven and militant and suffering on earth. It is the latter Christ that she is to live... while on earth...

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The divergences that were pointed out between Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa are resolved in this light. Having arrived at transforming union, they both bear within them the fullness of Christ with His opposing riches and the twofold movement of His love for God and for souls. To explain how ...one of the movements of love is more explicit in one Saint or the other, it is enough to recall that God's gifts are displayed in the saints with diverse tonalities corresponding to the particular grace, the mission and the temperament of each one...

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...Saint Teresa, a contemplative who only dreamed of being alone with God, undertook the foundation of many convents... She procured solitude for her daughters so that in profound inner contact with God, their love would be enkindled and put at the service of the Church. The external works that she could not do, would be accomplished by extending her Reform to the Friars animated with her spirit and desires.

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So, Teresa sacrificed her tranquility and her soul for a work for the Church. And when she had sacrificed all, even her work in the Reform by accepting to be prioress at the Incarnation that she experienced the perfect union of spiritual marriage. So, it would appear that the two movements of love diverge only apparently and only on the external plane and that in reality they mutually sustain one another ...

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...This movement of love descending to conquer by loving and then carrying its prey to the heights is the synthesis of the two-fold movement of love; it is the action of the perfect apostolate because in accord with the movement and action of Jesus Himself...

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...But is it only on the summits that harmony is achieved in the spiritual life, between these two aspirations or movements of love? Must one await perfect identification with Christ Jesus before working effectively to build up His mystical body? In other words, is the apostolate the exclusive privilege of love, and of love in its overflowing fullness? ...

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...The answers to these questions will be explored in the next segment: The Saint in the Whole of Christ: The Apostolate and the Growth of Love (or the Spiritual Journey through the 7 Mansions). Amen