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To What End Are We Made?

The Archbishop of Canterbury

The old catechisms tell us that we are made by God to know him, to love him, to serve him and to be happy with him for ever. 'In thy presence is the fullness of life', says the Psalmist. We are made so that we shall reflect back to God the glory that belongs to God. We are made to hold up to God a mirror to who he is and what he is. We are most truly our created selves when we are thus living in the imaging of God, in relating to God. As God is truly himself, truly who and what he is, in being freely and gladly for us, so we are fully ourselves when we freely relate in love to him. That is what we are for. And it is a point that has been laboured often enough, but is perhaps worth making again, that in a world where we are not very sure, corporately, what we are for, it is all the more important for the Church to know precisely what we are for, why we are made. It is important for the Church to say that we have a destiny, and that destiny is the enjoyment of God: the enjoyment of God is the fullness of our life and our identity. Our destiny is that adoration of God which holds up before him who he is and what he is, as the image that he has implanted in us grows to its fulfilment and fruition.

We are ourselves when we reflect God to God. And, of course, that reflection is partly in action towards one another in the life of charity, of selflessness, which God requires of us in our relations one with another. But, crucially, it is also about reflecting God directly. Moses spoke with God as a man speaks with his
friend', face to face. So we may be fully human in God's purpose, in our love for the world, in the charity drawn out of us by God's grace, in our relations with one another especially in the body of Christ; but we shall not be fully human if our love for the world is all there is to it. We are fully human in the contemplation of God's eternal mystery and the joy that comes with that.

So, what we are made for is worship. And central to the Christian gospel is that proclamation. Worship is our destiny. Worship is our joy and our fruition. As I reflected on the question of the priesthood of Christ, it came to me that one could construct a meditation on the subject almost entirely out of the Psalms. And so I want to punctuate my own meditations with some of the words of the Psalms. And you might like to think for a moment of this opening notion of our destiny being worship in and through the words of Psalm 63:

O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee.
My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh also longeth after thee: in a barren and dry land where no water is.
Thus have I looked for thee in holiness: that I might behold thy power and glory.
For thy loving-kindness is better than the life itself: my lips shall praise thee.
As long as I live will I magnify thee on this manner: and lift up my hands in thy Name. (Ps. 63:1–5)

If our end is worship, and if our charity towards one another springs from and is inseparably bound up with that worship, we begin to understand, perhaps, that sin is not simply the refusal or failure of charity between us sin is also the refusal of worship. Sin is what leads to an incapacity for worship. And if it leads to an incapacity for worship, it leads to an incapacity for love. Where does sin begin? In scripture it begins with somebody listening all too sympathetically to the seductive suggestion that you can be ‘as gods’. In other words, you need have no one to worship. Sin begins in the lie that worship is an unwelcome obligation, and that to be freely ourselves is to be liberated from worship. But this then means that making peace with God, the overcoming of
sin, is the restoration of the capacity for worship: the full acknowledgement that God is God. Within that acknowledgement is a recognition, not that we owe God some immense debt of worship, although that language is sometimes understandably used, but much more importantly that it is in worship that we live. If we refuse to worship, we choose death. To refuse to worship is not to become like gods; it is to become less than human. So it is that, if we turn yet again to the Psalms, the hope of the penitent is not only for absolution, it is for integration into the community of worship.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord: and my mouth shall shew thy praise.
For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee: but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.
The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.
O be favourable and gracious unto Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations: then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar. (Ps. 51.15–19)

And in Psalm 43 we hear:

O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me: and bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling.
And that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness: and upon the harp will I give thanks unto thee, O God, my God. (Ps. 43.3–4)

The overcoming of alienation is in the same moment, at one and the same time, an entry into the fullness of worship. And so in scripture the Law of Moses does not simply prescribe our behaviour towards one another, the Law gathers human beings into a people: a coherent community capable of acting as one. In the process of making peace with the God whose worship has been refused, one figure acts for them in the process of peace-making. The cost of leaving behind self-interest and returning
to God, the paradoxical cost involved in re-acquainting ourselves with the joy for which we were made, is symbolized by a costly gift, a token of surrender or letting go. That is to say, in the Law priests offer sacrifices on behalf of the people, a costly gift is made, whose effect is peace. Not only does the priest offer on behalf of the people, the priest’s task is also to offer the people God’s gift in consequence of the peace that has been made. The sacrifice is offered, received and then shared. Here is St Thomas Aquinas on the subject:

The proper job of the priest is to be a mediator between God and the people. In that he gives divine things to the people, and again in that he offers the people’s prayers to God and in some sense makes reparation to God for the people’s sins.¹

He gives divine things to the people. Not only does he offer, make peace through sacrifice, he distributes and realizes the consequences of that peace. Sin is addressed, then, not by a word of absolution alone, not by human acts of reparation directed individually towards a distant God; sin is overcome and dealt with by the restoration of the capacity to worship: to acknowledge God, to give to God that gift which makes us most fully free, most fully human. This of course is where in the New Testament era the great transition, the great recognition, happens. All that has been said so far remains at the level of symbol or of figure. It is human action taken to repair a bond that is always broken, temporarily restored and broken again. As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews insists, these are sacrifices that never get to the root of our refusal of worship. As the New Testament suggests, this is a process which can even intensify our fear, or our anxiety. Have we done enough? Have we given enough? Have we satisfied?

Peace itself is the giving of self to God. Who among us is free to give ourselves to God? Because all of us are affected by the refusal to give and to worship, that in ingrained habit of refusal frustrates, distorts, derails the peacemaking process again and again. Who is free from that ingrained refusal of worship? Ultimately the answer can only be the same one who first gives life to all. God is free and God alone is free to image God perfectly to God.
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God alone – what a strange thing this is to say – God alone is free to worship. That is to say, God is free to reflect a perfect gift in perfect love and gratitude. God alone is free to rejoice in perfect selflessness at a perfect bestowal of life. Whether we are looking at Hebrews or at Colossians the New Testament is clear: only the first-born of God is free in this way, free with God’s own freedom, therefore free with God’s own love, therefore the paradigm, the heart of all worship.

It is a paradox. It sounds very odd to our ears to say God alone can worship. Yet what worship means is a joyful reflection of a gift without defensiveness or fear. That is a liberty that belongs to the Creator alone in its fullness. ‘I am ascending’, says Jesus to Mary Magdalene, ‘to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’ (John 20.17) Many of the commentators of the early Church make the point that in some sense when Jesus uses those words, speaking of his Father not only as his Father but as God, he stands as the perfect worshipper of God, the one who does not snatch at equality with God, but reflects and responds in full perfection to the gift that has been given: that is how the argument of the Letter to the Hebrews unfolds in all its complexity and tormented intellectual majesty. It is not an easy letter to read, but the essence of the argument in Hebrews lies there. Who but the first-born is able to make peace by renewing in us the liberty of worship? If Christ has cut to the very root of our refusal of worship, then the work of Christ is about equipping us for worship. Christ, in restoring the image of God in us, precisely restores the capacity for worship. That is why the very heart of the gift of Christ’s spirit to the Church lies in our being set free to address God as Father. We need to read Galatians 4 and Romans 8 alongside the Letter to the Hebrews:

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba, Father’. (Gal. 4.6)

If Christ has done this, if Christ has transformed our capacity for worship, carved out a place for us to stand, of which before we knew nothing, it must be because his is a freedom beyond ours. The very first recognition of the full implications of the
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divine lordship of Christ, in the New Testament era, is bound to
him inseparably with the priority of finding a new way of prayer
in him. It is because Jesus teaches us and equips us to say 'Our
Father' that we begin to know who Jesus is. We are able to be
for God, as we were made to be because God has been fully for
us in Jesus. And God's very being for us in Jesus is the outwork-
ing of his purpose that we should be for him in his own love and
contemplation: not just by the setting of an example but by the
creating of something new in us.

I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined unto me, and
heard my calling.
He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and
clay: and set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings.
And he hath put a new song in my mouth: even a thanksgiving
unto our God.

Sacrifice, and meat-offering, thou wouldst not: but mine ears
hast thou opened.
Burnt-offerings, and sacrifice for sin, hast thou not required: then
said I, Lo, I come,
In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil
thy will, O my God: I am content to do it; yea, thy law is within
my heart.
I have declared thy righteousness in the great congregation.

(Ps. 40:1–3, 8–11a)

Psalm 40 echoes through the pages of the Letter to the Hebrews,
and is perhaps at its most poignant and meaningful when recited
during the Triduum. Mercy and truth are not withheld, they are
communicated to the great assembly of God's people. Through
the obedience of Christ we are all set free. So the perfect offering
of peace is made. What is offered to God is our human nature, but
who it is offered by is God. It is the central mystery of our faith,
the essential balance of the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon.
I am very impatient with those who think that the Council of
Chalcedon and its definition are remote technicalities. They are
our lifeblood because the words that were there agreed by the
Spirit's guidance, so we trust, are words that express precisely this
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mystery. It is God who offers worship to God, and yet for that to be something transformative of our human nature, it must be human nature that is offered by God to God. It is a humanity absolutely like ours, offered by a purpose and an energy absolutely unlike ours.

It works at two levels at least. Christ in his offering of obedience, and the culmination of that offering on the Cross, breaks through the historic impossibility of human self-offering to God, breaks through, is free from, the entail of sin. That inherited impossibility in human life of worshipping fully and freely is overcome once and for all. Where Adam refused worship because he wanted to be like a god, Christ does not consider equality with God as a thing to be snatched or hoarded and, therefore, restores the possibility of worship and of joy to human creatures. Christ in his dying makes something possible. But that possibility is made actual, made real, because his humanity is not simply that of a distant individual, it is a humanity inclusive of our very nature as a whole. It becomes more than an individual life. In baptism it is Christ’s breath that we breathe. By his life we live, when we are baptized. In the Eucharist the gift of his Body and Blood means that we are associated with, drawn into the agency, the energy of, his humanity, penetrated as it is by the action of God.

When we say that the life and death of Jesus Christ restores a possibility to the human world we do not stop there. We go on to say that that possibility is made real when the humanity of Christ takes in our own, when his Spirit is communicated to us so our life becomes his, when his Body and Blood take root in us and we live more deeply into his life. When at every Mass we return into the baptismal identity that we all share, and that of course is part of what the Eucharist is, it is reclaiming our identity as baptized people, as people in Christ; when that happens, to paraphrase a turn of phrase of a modern Romanian Orthodox writer, ‘the prayers of Christians become the prayer of the Church’ and our particular aspirations and hopes, our particular intercessions and petitions, are drawn into Christ’s eternal self-giving to the Father, that self-giving which is always there on our behalf in the Christ who lives for ever to make intercession for
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us. That is the sense of the great words of St Augustine: you are on the altar; you are in the cup, in the Eucharist.²

When we understand what it is that we are affirming when we confess Jesus Christ to be truly God and truly human we understand something about the nature of our worship that we could not otherwise see. The priesthood of Christ is completely bound up with our acknowledgement of the person of Christ; the divinity of Christ as a person; the reality of the humanity that he offers.

I am well pleased: that the Lord hath heard the voice of my prayer;
That he hath inclined his ear unto me: therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. . . .
What reward shall I give unto the Lord: for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?
I will receive the cup of salvation: and call upon the Name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows now in the presence of all his people: right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.
Behold, O Lord, how that I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast broken my bonds in sunder.
I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving: and will call upon the Name of the Lord. (Ps. 116.1–2, 11–16)

One of the most significant points we need to recover in our teaching and our witness is precisely what we do and do not say about our worship. If we are not clear in what we say about worship we should not be surprised if our perception of Christ goes badly wrong. In a magnificent essay on the vicarious humanity of Christ by the Scottish Reformed theologian James Torrance written in 1981 as part of the commemorative celebrations of the Council of Constantinople in 381, he begins by identifying two different views of worship in the Church today:

As I see it there are broadly two different views of worship in the Church today. The first view, probably the most common and widespread, is that worship is something which we do mainly in church
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on Sunday. We go to church, we sing our psalms to God, we inter-
cede for Northern Ireland or the Middle East, we listen to the
sermon, too often simply exhortation. We offer our money, time and
talents to God. No doubt we need God's grace to help us do it. We
do it because Jesus taught us to do it and left us an example of how
to do it, but worship is what we do. In theological language this
means that the only priesthood is our priesthood, the only offering
our offering, the only intercessions our intercessions. Indeed this
view of worship is in practice Unitarian, has no doctrine of the
mediator, of the sole priesthood of Christ; is man-centred with no
proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit and is basically non-sacramental
and can engender weariness. We sit in the pew watching the minis-
ter doing his thing exhorting us to do our thing, until we go home
thinking we have done our duty for another week.3

The second view of worship is that worship is rather the gift
of participating through the Spirit in the incarnate Son's com-
munion with the Father; of participating in union with Christ
in what he has done for us once and for all in his life and death
on the Cross and in what he is continuing to do for us in the
presence of the Father and in his mission to the world. 'The cup
of blessing which we bless, is it not our sharing in the blood of
Christ? The bread which we break, is it not our sharing in the
body of Christ?' (1 Cor. 10.16) Our sonship and communion
with the Father, are they not our sharing by the spirit of adop-
tion in Christ's sonship and communion with the Father? Our
intercessions for Northern Ireland and the Middle East, are they
not our participation in Christ's intercession for Northern
Ireland and the Middle East? Our mission to the world and min-
istry to the needs of men, are they not the gift of participating
in Christ's mission to the world and his ministry to the needs of
men? Is this not the meaning of life in the Spirit?

If we are not clear about this, very funny things happen to
our doctrine of Christ. Historically of course, funny things have
happened. There has been at times a distancing of Christ in God,
a pushing-away of Christ towards God so that we need to work
hard for access to that distant God. We become tied up with
the whole system of supplementary mediation. That is what the Reformers rightly discerned as one of the things wrong with medieval Catholicism. Equally though, we can absorb Christ into our humanity so that we fail to see that there is any gift in Christ, any newness, anything in the Church that is actually truly supernatural. It is probably still that second area that is the bigger problem for us at the moment. In many of our current debates in the Church the underlying issue is often whether or not we believe the Church is a supernatural reality. That is a truth which is forgotten almost as much by would-be traditionalists as by self-styled liberals. If we believe that in Christ a new creation, a new humanity is given and if we believe that that is what the Church exists to embody and witness to, it does not answer our specific questions about the debates of the day but it gives us a highly significant framework in which to think them through because it reminds us of two things that we readily lose sight of. One is that the Church is not simply a body that exists to determine its own priorities and its own truth, because it exists by God's gift and, therefore, by the objectivity of what God is actually like and what God has actually done. Equally, it reminds us of the risks of supposing that the unity of the Church is a construct laboriously built up by consensus and like-mindedness among human beings. That is a problem which can afflict traditionalists and liberals alike.

Catholic Christian orthodoxy has held always that our worship is our participation in Christ—not an extra, not an outward expression of some inner conversion. It is being in Christ. When we stand as the community of the baptized praying the Church's prayer in Christ, we are not encouraging ourselves to do something else, or expressing a reality that exists somewhere else; we are where we should be. 'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free, 'tis a gift to come down where you ought to be', says the old Shaker song, and the gift to come down where we ought to be is what is happening in our worship, and, above all, in our Eucharistic worship. We have come down where we ought to be. Where we ought to be is before the throne of God, clothed with Christ, breathing the life of the Spirit. The Eastern
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Orthodox are quite right to say, in a sense, that there is nothing else to do, there is nothing else to say. When you are in the midst of the liturgy you are in heaven. The fact that this is probably not the first reaction of many routine Anglican worshippers, or indeed worshippers in many traditions and possibly not even all Orthodox, is something which ought to give us pause for thought and prayer and penitence. Unless we have that straight we have no right to be surprised if people run off into strange and pinched and narrow doctrines of Christ. The two things, perhaps, which are the deepest motors of true belief about Christ are worship and mission. And that should not surprise us in the least. When those motors dry up, we atrophy, are paralyzed; people stop seeing why it is important to confess one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and one Lord complete in two natures. Which is why this is not an academic extra, not an unnecessary complication; it is, or it ought to be, an exhilarating truth: in the most literal sense possible, the truth that makes us happy.

To speak of orthodoxy as a truth that makes us happy is not always the first phrase that might come to mind because we have, sadly, come to think of orthodox belief as a set of obligations to sign up to, rather than as a landscape to inhabit with constant amazement and delight at the discovery opened up. If we understand what the priesthood of Christ means, means for our worship, for our own priesthood too, then we shall have some sense of why orthodox belief is truth that makes us happy.

God's truth is a truth designed to make us happy. You must think God's truth can in many circumstances, for many of us, be something with which we struggle, something which demands of us what we thought we could not give, which keeps our noses to the most uncomfortable grindstones day after day, which leads us to risk, sometimes to humiliation. God's truth is like that, and is it a truth which makes us happy? Yes, because God is bliss. God's nature is bliss. God enjoys God, and that unimaginable interchange of love, gift and delight that is the life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit simply is the way God is. When God makes a world God makes that world so that it may have some share in
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some degree in that bliss. The truth of how God is is a truth that makes us happy.

If we can proclaim that worship is God's act first then we shall know how to think of Jesus and how to think of ourselves and our eternal destiny. We shall know that in our ministry and all our witness what we have to contend with in God's name is, in various ways and under various disguises, a refusal and an incapacity to worship. How very different some of our mission would look if we said that the main problem with the fallen human race is its incapacity for joy. Yet, if we look at our contemporary world we may understand some of the ways in which that is true. Where but in this eternal relationship of worship is there joy, lasting joy?

Preserve me, O God: for in thee have I put my trust.
O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord: Thou art my God, my goods are nothing unto thee.
All my delight is upon the saints, that are in the earth: and upon such as excel in virtue.
But they that run after another god: shall have great trouble.
Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer: neither make mention of their names within my lips.
The Lord himself is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou shalt maintain my lot.
The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground: yea, I have a goodly heritage.
I will thank the Lord for giving me warning: my reins also chasten me in the night-season.
I have set God always before me: for he is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.
Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
For why? thou shalt not leave my soul in hell: neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.
Thou shalt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy: and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.
(Psalms 16)
Discussion

The Revd Dr Jeremy Sheehy:
I am fascinated by the way in which what you have said to us today picks up themes you have developed elsewhere. Indeed, I think you have given a sort of introduction to the theology of Archbishop Rowan Williams. For instance, we asked you to say something about the priesthood of Christ. You mentioned the Council of Chalcedon, and you have contributed much to the study of that council: a contribution which will be of continuing value is your book on Arius, in which you show the bold, even audacious nature of the theology of Athanasius, whilst Arius is to be seen as a conservative scholar but enabled to rethink the categories of divinity and humanity in the light of the mighty acts of salvation.

I hope you have not fallen into the trap named by Professor Stuart Hall when he says that modern theologians have read into Arianism whatever views they themselves particularly abominate. I do not think you have. First, I know that you are not the sort of theologian who abominates views anyway, because you listen and draw things from them. Secondly, because another major point in your book is that Arianism is not a category that the Church of the fourth century would have recognized, but is a subsequent construct. The relevance of this for our consideration of the priesthood of Christ is that Arius, and the theology on which he built, was prone to make the sonship of Jesus Christ, the ground of his mediation and, therefore, of his priesthood. That is the great error, that is precisely why Arius was so wrong. It is because Jesus Christ, who is of one substance with the Father, is incarnate of one substance also with us, that he is our mediator. The Nicene theology will insist, when developed, that it is the Incarnation that is the ground of his mediation and, therefore, of his priesthood. And the priestly role of Christ emphasizes his incarnation, as you made clear. Perhaps it is the only term of the threefold work of prophet, priest and king that does so strongly and emphatically depend upon the Incarnation. The conflicts around Arius teach us that you cannot satisfactorily guard the transcendence of the
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Father by limiting the divinity of the Son and you cannot locate the priesthood of the Son in his sonship rather than in the Incarnation. This leads into some of the themes you illuminate in your study of Teresa of Avila in the series 'Outstanding Christian Thinkers'. You emphasize there the importance of the Incarnation to Teresa, commenting on a theology that lays special stress upon God's desire to be present with the creation. And again on Teresa's account that there is no detached divine absolute with which to take refuge. We meet God wearing the human face of Jesus Christ.

You said that worship is our destiny, our joy and fruition. Worship, of course, equals worth-ship, which might be why refusal truly to worship has the nature of sin. When you preached at Evensong in St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh, at the time of the meeting of primates in February (2005), you preached on the priesthood of Christ. Your text there was, 'you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exod. 19.6). These words are spoken to the people of Israel, and again, of course, to the Church in the New Testament (1 Pet. 2.9). As you suggested to us, you also suggested there that the priest gives God on behalf of the world to make peace a token of that letting go. Human beings alone could not make lasting peace and so the calling of God's priestly people is summarized and fulfilled in the sending and calling of the one who is our priest, Jesus Christ, the priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek. Here symbol becomes flesh. You went on to say that the Church is above all a place where prayer and supplication and thanksgiving happen. If the Church fails to be such a place, it is no real Church. No one who knows you can fail to realize how important that centrality of prayer and worship is for you.

When I was reading the obituary in The Times for Pope John Paul II, with this conference already in my mind and with the transferred celebration of the Annunciation also in my mind, I noticed the comment that the Pope's concept of, and commitment to, what the obituary writer called Catholic humanism depended on the dignity of human beings made in the image of God. I thought, as I read it - and listening to you today has
reinforced my reaction – that is true and good as far as it goes but it is desperately incomplete as an account if you stop as *The Times* obituary did there. You must surely add that this dignity of human beings depends on our being made in the image of God, and also on the coming of God imaged in our likeness, come among us in our humanity so that we can say with Bishop Michael Ramsey, ‘God is Christlike and in him is no un-Christlikeness’. Or with Bishop David Jenkins in one of his early books, ‘God is and is as he is in Jesus, and therefore there is room for hope.’ What we are for relates to our bearing the image of God and God’s taking our human nature.

The priesthood of Christ depends on his humanity; it also depends, for the New Testament writers, on his sinless humanity. Granted that the ministerial priesthood is not simply about the imitation of Christ, nonetheless, the high priestly prayer in John 17 establishes continuity between Jesus’ mission and the mission of the apostles. I find myself wondering what the need for his sinlessness as the ground of the priesthood of Christ has to say to me.

**The Archbishop:**
That helped me understand what I am saying. I was very delighted that you picked up both the patristic resonances of what I have been saying, but also the way in which for Teresa of Avila the humanity of Christ is not something which we have got to get beyond if we really want to be first-class mystics. Teresa challenges any notion of spiritual maturation that takes us beyond the reality of that divine and human life which is Christ’s – for the simple reason that, of course, our prayer is brought into the life of the Trinity by, and only by, that incarnate life and its continuation in the heavenly places.

In response to the last point that was made: the point is exactly right. The notion of Christ’s priesthood depends not only on a belief in Christ’s humanity, in Christ’s solidarity with us; it does depend on Christ’s sinlessness. It depends on the idea that here is someone who is free from that crippling taint that makes us incapable of giving ourselves as we are made to do. What that says to us
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- who in a very particular and public way not only participate in Christ's priesthood, which is in the Church, but also actualize the priesthood of the Church in a certain mode and in certain contexts - is that one of our constant priestly obligations is to examine our own freedom for, and capacity for, worship, which also means examining those ways in which we occasionally get ourselves and God mixed up together. It means, therefore, that the strange paradoxical truth about priesthood is that we often most effectively let the priesthood of Christ come through in our ministry when we are most clearly and courageously penitent about the ways we do not let it come through. If, in von Hügel's great words, 'the greatest good for unfallen humanity is innocence, the greatest good for fallen humanity is forgiveness', then the greatest good for fallen and sinful priests, that is us, is a habit of repentance. That is the way in which the sinlessness of Christ, paradoxically, plays into our own ministry.

The Revd Dr Robin Ward:
I would like to return briefly to the theme of Christ as the perfect worshipper and to talk a little bit about the Western tradition, in particular the post-Reformation French tradition, and your emphasis on the humanity of Christ as the perfect adorer, the perfect worshipper of the Father, because in the sacrifice of the Cross there is not only offering but destruction: the destruction of the humanity. The offering, as in the Old Testament, is one of destruction as well as a gift to God. In the Eucharist the risen Christ continues that sacrifice by choosing to be present in his glorified humanity, under signs of separation, the bread broken, the wine poured out. We as Christians are called participators, as it were, in that sacrificial adoration, through what St Paul says in Galatians 2.20: 'it is not I but Christ living in me'. How does that theme of destruction, that theme of annihilation, as the French writers put it, combine with a theology of the glorified resurrection of the humanity of Christ? Is that a profitable way of looking at sacrifice and in particular Eucharistic sacrifice and, therefore, at the way in which Christ exercises his priesthood in the Church today?
The Archbishop:
That is a matter which was the subject of a great deal of discussion in the twentieth-century Catholic theology of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and I suppose that some theologians would put a large question mark against giving quite so much stress to the destruction, the annihilation side of it.

That sacrifice in the conditions of a sinful world involves separation, cost and death is a fact about the sinful world. You might say that in an unfallen world there would only be the sacrifice of thanksgiving, so to speak. There would only be the lifting up of a grateful gift to God and the cost and the joy would be inseparable. In a world where rebellious human wills have constantly frustrated that purpose, the one who gives himself to God is one who risks precisely what we see in the Cross and, whatever you make of this language, precisely paying the price of sin is what has to be talked about there. So certainly in the Eucharist we commemorate and bring ourselves into the presence of, or make present, however you want exactly to phrase that, a reality which is a death and a breaking.

The truth of that very deep-rooted French devotional habit of thought is that there is no Mass without breakage and I have often reflected on the immense significance of the words in the Western liturgy and the Book of Common Prayer introducing the institution narrative, 'in the [same] night in which he was betrayed,' which I find again and again, as I say it at the altar, remind me that this is the night in which he was betrayed. The moment in which I am now celebrating is the night in which he was betrayed, and I am the Judas at the table too. And that has to be there in the Eucharist: the sense of a brokenness which is involved in precisely the sin that is being mended in the offering. Somehow it is a double vision, a shot-silk kind of vision, that we have in the Eucharist, which no one devotional habit or set of images can finally get right. What is happening in the Eucharist is the breaking, the tearing apart of the incarnate one by sin; because it is the sovereign divine will and perfect human will in perfect combination which is making that happen then the reality which is there in the Eucharist is not
simply the death, it is the whole self-offering of the Son to the
Father. That comes across wonderfully in Gregory Dix in some
of the most central and memorable pages of *The Shape of the
Liturgy*. What we are saying about the Eucharist is exactly what
we would have to say about the Fourth Gospel. There is no way
of speaking about the breaking and the bloodstream that is not
talking about the glory. There is no talking about the
オリジナルです。それは、破壊と血を流すことは、不滅論と
血を流すことを意味します。それらは、第4の福音書について
言及するものです。それは、破壊と血を流すことを意味します。

The Revd Dr Martin Warner:
I was struck by what you said about worship and mission and also
in the earlier part of your talk about Moses gathering human
division into a people. Reflecting on the whole business of what
we are in the Church and how we offer worship, and mindful of
how Nicholas Lash has written about that recently, about the
united action of the Church to be the gathering of the
whole human race before God - I wonder whether you could
tell us something about how we might map out our relations to
people of other faiths in this universality.

The Archbishop:
God makes worship possible: that is axiomatic. True worship is
identity and truth; God's action is at the root of worship.
We have been given the gift and the grace, we believe, as
Christians to enter consciously, freely and fully into that. We have
certainly experienced this reality, we have the means of commu-
nicating the system of the effective sacramental signs. I would not
want to relativize the notion that while, at the same time, feeling per-
fectly free to recognise that by God's gift and grace worship does
happen in other environments.

One of the challenges of the interfaith encounter is always
to look and listen as carefully as we can for what in the worship
TO WHAT END ARE WE MADE?

of another religious tradition carries the marks of the Christlike action that we live in the Church. I do not much like the textbook polarities of pluralism and inclusivism and exclusivism. I do not think it is as neat as that; they all have their problems. But if I had to locate myself on that map, I would go for some sort of inclusiveness theory that allowed me to say Christ is supremely freely active in the Church but the very fact that Christ is supremely freely active in the Church does not confine his freedom to act, even unrecognized, in many other situations. I am not at all an advocate of what is usually called interfaith worship. I will happily sit in silence with a Buddhist or a Muslim; but I will not know quite what I am doing if I try to phrase a prayer with them, because I know I have to say, at some point, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'. It is not just as a sort of gesture, or a nodding of the head, but because I cannot begin to think about prayer without that. I do not see what we are doing if we are not doing that. And if that is what we are doing, in the immortal words of Gilbert and Sullivan, 'why not say so?'

We need discrimination and common sense, patience, listening and charity, a ready assumption that if Christ truly is free then Christ's freedom may pop up all over the place, then that is wonderful. We have this wonderful theological core of all our belief that what is real, distinctive and essential about Christ is that Christ is the centre, the animating centre of the whole of the new humanity. That means where new humanity begins to come to life in ways that are manifestly Christlike, we can say Christ is at work. We know that and we can affirm that because of where we stand in Christ. In my limited experience of interfaith encounter, the odd thing is that people in other traditions do not mind you saying that. On the whole people prefer to know where they are with Christians. The rather strange idea that it is somehow discriminatory or elitist or arrogant to affirm where you stand - in the realities on the ground of interfaith encounter, it is not so.

I have been involved, in the last couple of years particularly, in dialogue with Muslims, and that has been very instructive.
WHO IS THIS MAN?

The whole notion that that is a dialogue which ought to be conducted with mutual respect means precisely to me that in respecting my dialogue partner I also respect my own commitment and expect them to do the same. I do not assume that I can only express respect or win respect by saying, 'Well, I am not really sure about where I am coming from'; I think that is nonsense. The real learning experience, the real expansion of mind and spirit that comes in dialogue, is when we do know where we are coming from and at times there is this rather wonderful, miraculous sense of 'Goodness, that really rings a bell. Yes, I see what you mean, yes. And what we would say is . . . .' and then the discussion unfolds and can be very, very exciting.

Likewise, in the less formal but regular contacts I have had over the years with Buddhists, I come back again and again to thinking, 'Yes, that is so illuminating', and the Buddhist knows many things that I do not know. But I know some things the Buddhist does not know and I am not going to pretend about that. I love sitting in quiet with Buddhist friends on certain occasions; the quiet is a gift, a reality shared between us for which I am deeply grateful. And I understand it as my being in Christ and being offered by Christ to the Father. The Buddhist will say something different. But unless we share something of the discipline of sitting together we are not going to be able to talk at all.

So, it is a varied picture, but I do not think we ought either to be bullied into relativism on this, (and there is plenty in and out of the Church which does bully us into relativism) or for that matter be bullied into a kind of exclusivism which closes its eyes deliberately and unimaginatively to the gifts that can be received when there is really respectful dialogue.

An image that I have sometimes used for this is, if you like nineteenth-century English fiction, it is possible to read and enjoy both Dickens and Trollope, let us say. You might want to say, as I would want to say, that Dickens is the greater author. Dickens's world is a bigger, truer one than Trollope's. If I were asked which reveals depths that I need to encounter that are transforming, it is Dickens. On the other hand, there are some things that Trollope knows a lot more about than Dickens and
perhaps, in a fully responsive, flexible, truthful conducting of my life in the world, Dickens may be the shaping force of it all, but I need to know what Trollope knows, I need to learn a bit there as well. And that is often what I feel when I am talking to Buddhists. I know what I believe about the objectivity of God, the creation of the world, the nature of prayer. Buddhists know some things about the disciplines of silence, some things about the understanding and education of selfish desire, that ring enough bells in my Christian world for me to say, 'I need to learn, I need to listen. I need to hear what they know as well.'

**The Revd Jonathan Baker:**
As a conference largely of ordained priests, and bearing in mind that the Eucharist re-presents the self-offering of the Son to the Father, what is it that we offer as priests of the New Covenant, and, specifically, what is it that we bring to the celebration of the Mass?

**The Archbishop:**
The ordained priest in the Church is there so that the community becomes actively and self-consciously the Church Catholic, the Body. Without a ministry in the Church continuous and recognizable, the way we believe the ordained priesthood is, there would always be the risk of communities defining themselves and turning in on themselves. Part of the ministry of the ordained priesthood is, therefore, maintaining what I am tempted sometimes to call the flow of Christ's blood in the body. That is the real recognizability and connectedness of community to community, so that the prayers of Christians become the prayer of the Church.

The ordained priesthood is there not only to tell the Church that it is the community of the baptized, but to activate the reality of the Church as the community of the baptized. Therefore, the priest's relationship with the quality, the character of what it is to be baptized is central. It is not to say simply the priest is just a special case of a baptized person – it would have to say a bit more than that – but that the priest's role is closely bound up with that
recognition of the essence of what it is to be baptized. It is to do
with making Christ and the community contemporary, and the
night in which he was betrayed is now Maundy Thursday, Good
Friday, Easter Sunday and the end of all things is now in the
Eucharist. The most significant thing we can, in our self-
understanding as ordained priests, glean from this is that sense of
the liberation of being rooted in the eternal priestly activity of
Christ, of being endowed with the freedom to summon, activate
and articulate the prayer of the baptized; not to speak our own
words here but the words of the Body.

I do not think that we can really grow up as priests unless and
until we have some sense of how, in that context, justification by
faith works. Like Luther throwing his inkwell at the devil, we like-
wise are in a good position to throw inkwells, or modern equiva-
\lents, at the devil. I do not have to ‘make it up’ as a priest and in
one utterly bizarre way we have it so easy as priests. We are in the
one place where the words of Christ’s body are given to us to
speak, and the acts of Christ’s body are given to us to perform. At
the end of the day that is all we have to do. The rather odd thing
is, of course, that wonderful doing-nothing—but-Christ which is
the essence of priesthood is so very difficult because we would
love to justify ourselves in all sorts of other ways: by being charis-
matic leaders, brilliant teachers, successful archbishops. That is not
it. But if we can hear that Good News, which is the heart of our
own priesthood and spirituality, there is much to be grateful for.

Notes

1 Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, 22.
2 See Augustine, Sermons 227, 229, 229a and esp. 272.
3 J. B. Torrance, Worship, Community and the Triune God of Love