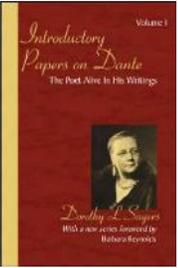


Thursday - Creation, cosmic priests

Monday, July 08, 2013
1:44 PM

I. "Seek the reason why God created, for this is true knowledge."

<p>Maximus the Confessor said:</p> 	<p>"Seek the reason why God created, for this is true knowledge."</p> <p>He seems to suggest that true knowledge would consist of the answer to the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is God up to? • Why is there something instead of nothing? • Why am I here? • Where am I going? • What is the point of the trip from the cradle to the grave?
	<p>Not to gain any good for Himself, which cannot be, but that His splendour, shining back, might say Subsisto - in His eternity, beyond time, beyond every other bound, as it pleased Him, the Eternal Love revealed Himself in new loves.</p> <p>Paradiso: Canto XXIX;</p>
	<p>Why are these different things? [Meaning, why do these different things exist?] In order that the divine splendour, shining back in innumerable facets from the face of the finite creation, should be able to stand up before its Creator and say, "look! this is me. I really exist. I am something. I am myself. Subsisto." It can add nothing to the source from which it derives - God gets nothing out of it; but it has pleased Him that every creature - angel, man, beast, beetle, or buttercup - should be able, in its small way, to enjoy itself, to enjoy being a self of some sort, dependent on God and yet distinct from Him.</p> <p>Dorothy Sayers, The Poetry of Search and The Poetry of Statement</p>

Being
is-ing
am-ing

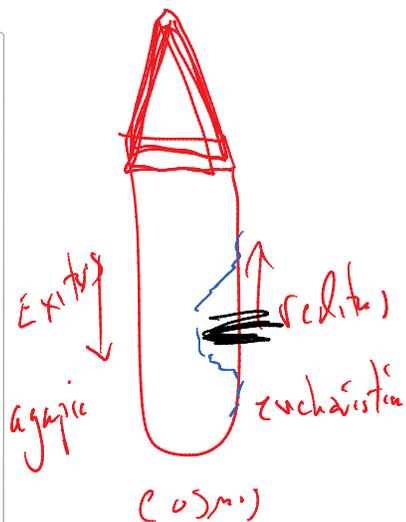
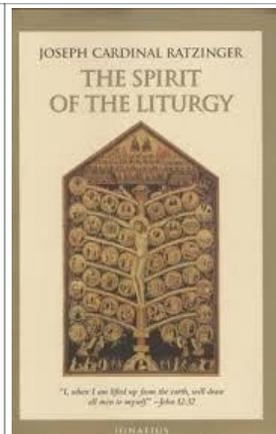
Exitus is first and foremost something thoroughly positive. It is the Creator's free act of creation.

It is his positive will that the created order should exist as something good in relation to himself, from which a response of freedom and love can be given back to him. ...

The *exitus*, or rather God's free act of creation, is indeed ordered toward the *reditus* ...

The creature, existing in its own right, comes home to itself, and this act is an answer in freedom to God's love.

It accepts creation from God as his offer of love, and thus ensues a dialogue of love, that wholly new kind of unity that love alone can create.



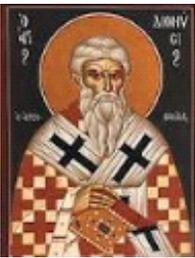
Picture of Creation as hierarchy



Louis Bouyer:

We should think therefore of the material universe as a mirror held up to the spiritual, as a garden in which these spirits are gathered and which is made over to them, since it is to their image that it has been made. It is, as it were, the fringe of their garment: the waves of its light are like the scintillating robe with which the Creator has been pleased to adorn his invisible creation.

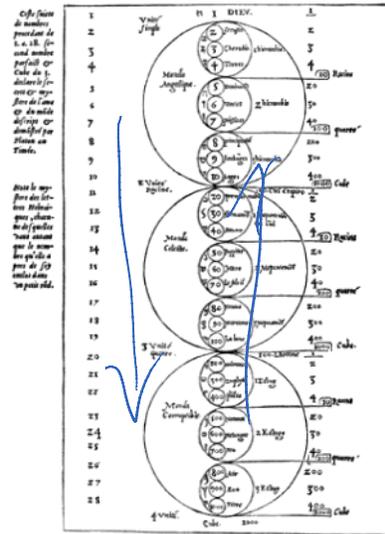
Across this continuous chain of creation, in which the triune fellowship of the divine persons has, as it were, extended and propagated itself, moves the ebb and flow of the creating *Agape* and of the created *eucharistia*. Descending further and further towards the final limits of the abyss of nothingness, the creating love of God reveals its full power in the response it evokes, in the joy of gratitude in which, from the very dawn of their existence creatures freely return to him who has given them all. Thus this immense choir of which we have spoken, basing ourselves on the Fathers, finally seems like an infinitely generous heart beating with an unceasing diastole and systole, first diffusing the divine glory in paternal love, then continually gathering it up again to its immutable source in filial love.



Dionysius

- "The goal of a hierarchy, then, is to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and to be at one with him."
- "A hierarchy has God as its leader of all understanding and action. It is forever looking directly at the comeliness of God."
- "Hierarchy causes its members to be images of God in all respects, to be clear and spotless mirrors reflecting the glow of primordial light and indeed of God himself."
- "The aim of every hierarchy is to imitate God so as to take on his form; the task of every hierarchy is to receive and pass on undiluted purification, the divine light, the understanding which brings perfection."
- The function of hierarchy in Christian understanding is not to posit a distance between the divine and the human, but to establish their connectedness.

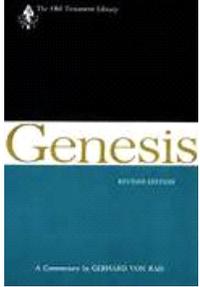
QUANT A CE QUE CHACUN DES TROIS mondes est pourvue de la racine, quarré & Cube, peut ainsi que l'Univers, comme il apparait par les nombres qui font hors les rondeaux, par là peut-on entre-dre l'Armonie & conuenance de tout, & comme peut estre voy le dire d'Anaxagore, qui mettoit omnia in omnibus & fingula in fingulis.



Phoresis
deification

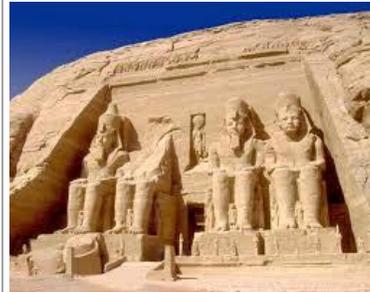
II. Man and Woman's place in this hierarchy

Gerhard von Rad's

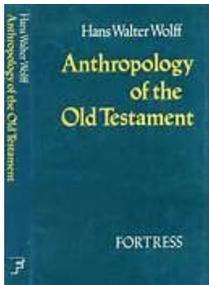


Selem means predominantly an actual plastic work, a duplicate, sometimes an idol ... We learn from a number of ancient Oriental myths that a god makes a man (or a god) in his image ... Just as powerful earthly kings, to indicate their claim to dominion, erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their empire where they don't personally appear, so man is placed upon earth in God's image as God's sovereign emblem. He is really only God's representative, summoned to maintain and enforce God's claim to dominion over the earth.

When the Pharaoh Ramses II wanted to indicate that he ruled a range of territory, he had his image hewn out of rock on the Mediterranean coast north of Beirut, and the image meant that he was the ruler of this area.



Hans Walter Wolff



"Accordingly, man is set in the midst of creation as God's statue."

Hebrew theology is always **liturgical** and **ethical**. The *imago Dei* exists at the center point of two relationships, stretching out in two directions. We are simultaneously

under
beside God
over our neighbor
 creation

1. Dominion over creation - kings and queens, royal authority

Wolff - "The purpose of the divine personal decision to create an 'image of God' is from the outset so ordained that man is set in a particular relationship to the living beings that have been created previously."

von Rad: "How strong are the expressions describing his lordship ('to trample on,' 'subdue'; 'to tread (grapes),' 'to rule over'). God set man in the world as the sign of his own sovereign authority, in order that man should uphold and enforce [God's] claims as lord."

"It is precisely in his function as ruler that he is God's image."

2. Under God - cosmic priests

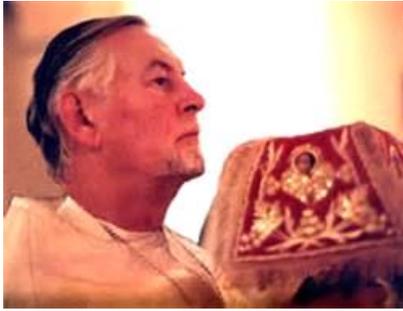
Any power we possess is conditioned by a liturgical duty. Otherwise our rulership becomes idolatrous.

2. Under God - cosmic priests

Any power we possess is conditioned by a liturgical duty. Otherwise our rulership becomes idolatrous.

Therefore these two are combined: royal priests

Schmemmann -

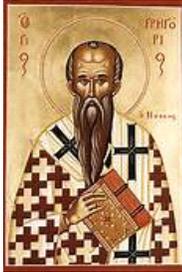


All rational, spiritual and other qualities of man, distinguishing him from other creatures, have their focus and ultimate fulfillment in this capacity to bless God, to know, so to speak, the meaning of the thirst and hunger that constitutes his life.

"Homo sapiens," "homo faber" . . . yes, but, first of all, "homo adorans." The first, the basic definition of man is that he is the priest. He stands in the center of the world and unifies it in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God ... The world was created as the "matter," the material of one all-embracing eucharist, and man was created as the priest of this cosmic sacrament.

God makes a being after his own image, and such a being can have dominion over matter in order to gather it up to serve the cosmic liturgy. Man and woman are the priestly tongue of mute creation.

Gregory of Nyssa:



"Remember how much more you are honored by the creator than the rest of creation. He did not make the heavens in his image, nor the moon, sun, the beauty of the stars, nor anything else you see in creation. You alone are made in the likeness of that nature which surpasses all understanding Nothing in creation can compare to your greatness."^[7]

Two Characteristics of anthropos:

#1. Microcosmic.

Micro (cosmic)
small house

Not "fraction" but "small house"

Anthropos is a microcosm because both matter and spirit.

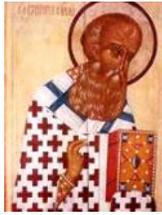


Gregory of Nazianzus



God produced a being "endowed with both natures, the visible and invisible. ... Thus, in some way a new universe was born, small and great at one and the same time. God set this hybrid worshipper on earth to

contemplate the visible world, and to be initiated into the invisible;



time. God set this **hybrid worshipper** on earth to

contemplate the visible world,	and to be initiated into the invisible;
to reign over earth's creatures,	and to obey orders from on high."
royal	priest

No other creature is enrolled as a simultaneous citizen in both the visible and invisible realms.

- An **animal** shares our corporeal nature, but it has no intellect to perceive the invisible and compose songs of praise;
- an **angel's** intellect exceeds ours, but it does not engage matter.

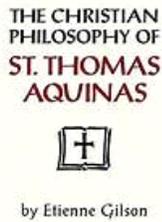
So C.S. Lewis



Bless the body But for our body one whole realm of God's glory – all that we receive through the senses – would go unpraised. For the beasts can't appreciate it and angels are, I suppose, pure intelligences. They *understand* colours and tastes better than our greatest scientists; but have they retinas or palates? I fancy the "beauties of nature" are a secret God has shared with us alone. That may be one of the reasons why we were made – and why the resurrection of the body is an important doctrine.^[1]

The scholastic theologians went to great lengths to speak always with a Hebrew sense of the interconnection between body and soul. The scholastic slogan was **anima forma corporis** (the soul is the life form of the body).

Etienne Gilson

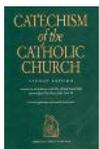


"For St. Thomas, following Aristotle, **the soul** does not first make a body move, it first **makes it a body**. A corpse is not a body. The soul makes it exist as a body."

The soul **in-forms** the body.

The soul is called *animus* in Greek, and as such the soul "**animates**" the body, and death is defined as the separation of body and soul.

And since the soul is the life form of the body, the Catechism of the Catholic Church can say



"**The human body shares in the dignity of 'the image of God'**: it is a human body precisely because it is **animated** by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit" [para 364].

Being microcosmic means that spiritual life concerns the body, and corporeal life concerns the spirit.

2. Homo Viator a being-on-the-way.

There is an unfinished quality to each person, an infinite potential.

a being-on-the-way.

There is an unfinished quality to each person, an infinite potential.

We are made in the image of God with the power to grow into the likeness of God.

Charcoal-paint metaphor.

Icon

Gregory of Nyssa -



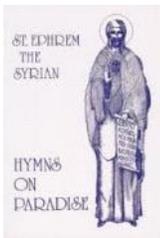
painters transferring "human forms to their pictures by the means of certain colors, laying on their copy the proper and corresponding tints, so that the beauty of the original may be accurately transferred to the likeness." Now, a person is said to be created in the image of God insofar as he is a charcoal sketch, but our Maker wants "the portrait to resemble His own beauty, by the addition of virtues, as it were with colours."

Aut-graph.
Aut-Icon-graphie



image = the potency to grow into the likeness of God: intellect, free will, the ability to create, etc.

Ephrem the Syrian -



For this is the Good One, who could have forced us to please Him, without any trouble to Himself; but instead He toiled by every means so that we might act pleasingly to Him of our free will, that we might depict our beauty with the colours that our own free will had gathered; whereas, if He had adorned us, then we would have resembled a portrait that someone else had painted, adorning it with his own colours. {Hymns on Paradise}

co-operative
synergy

Methodius



Man had indeed been brought forth 'after the image' of God, but he still had not yet achieved such 'likeness' itself. In order to complete this task, the Word was sent into the world.

First he assumed our human form, a form marred by the scars of many sins, so that we, for whom he took this form, would be enabled on our part to receive his divine form.

theosis

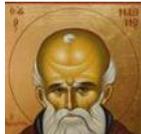
For it is possible to achieve a perfect likeness of God only if we, like talented and accomplished painters, depict in ourselves those traits that characterized his human existence, and if we preserve them in us uncorrupted, by becoming his disciples, walking the path he has revealed to us. He who was God chose to appear in our human flesh so that we could behold, as we do in a painting, a divine model of life, and thus we were made able to imitate the one who painted this picture.

Conclusion

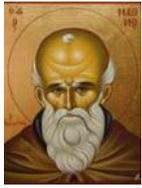
Back to our original question - "Seek the reason why God created, for this is true knowledge."

Answers given:

Maximus' answer

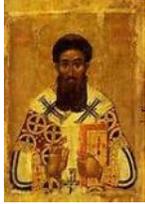


God made us so that we might become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1:4) and sharers in His eternity, and so that we might come to be like Him (cf. 1 John 3:2) through deification by grace. It is through deification that all things are reconstituted and achieve their permanence; and it is for its sake that what is not is brought into being and given existence.



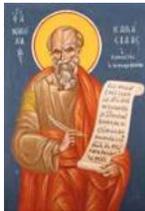
(2 Pet. 1:4) and sharers in His eternity, and so that we might come to be like Him (cf. 1 John 3:2) through **deification** by grace. It is through deification that all things are reconstituted and achieve their permanence; and **it is for its sake** that what is not is brought into being and given existence.

Gregory Palamas' answer



The world was founded with this in view from the beginning. The heavenly, pre-eternal Counsel of the Father, ... **was for this end** to enable man at some time to contain the greatness of God's kingdom, the blessedness of God's inheritance and the perfection of the heavenly Father's blessing, Even the indescribable divine self-emptying, the theandric way of life, the saving passion, all the sacraments were planned beforehand in God's providence and wisdom for this end, ...

Nicholas Cabasilas' answer



The reason for creation was so that one day God could have a mother.

(It's a habitat for divinity)

And by the sacraments "we are begotten and formed and wondrously united to the Savior."

Blessed Columba Marmion



Christ attaches a grace to each of His mysteries in order to help us to reproduce within ourselves His **divine features** in order to make us like unto Him.

**Identity of Man and Woman:
Cosmic Priests with the capacity for deification**

It would seem, then, that the **liturgy originates** in a place where scholars forget to look when they are investigating it. Liturgy's beginning is not ancient history, religious purity rituals, human need for fellowship; it is the Trinity.

- We join a liturgy already in progress.
- The liturgy is not the activity of the Jesus Club, it is coming to be connected into God's own perichoresis.
- What starts the liturgical ball rolling, the ignition switch in the liturgical engine, is not us, it is the Trinity.
- The bulb from which the liturgical tulip grows is not a human decision, but a divine decision that is intertwined with the reason why God created in the first place: (liturgy is protological & eschatological)

**Liturgy = the perichoresis of the Trinity kenotically
extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification.**