

God made Jesus to be sin but he knew no sin (2 COR 5:21)

– A Theological Essay On Jesus' Humanity and Its Soteriological Significance

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. An Initial Reflection On The Humanity Of Jesus

Taking up Saint John's expression, "The Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14), the Church calls "Incarnation" the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature.¹ Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh is of God." (1 John 4:2).² In the Incarnation, the eternal Son of God assumes not some ideal humanity, but our sinful humanity. Paul states in the Second Letter to the Corinthians that "For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin but knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (5:21). These lines express the mystery of the Incarnation that the Son of God Jesus takes on the sinful nature of human existence for our salvation sake.

2. The Purpose And The Scope Of This Research

This essay intends to discuss the humanity of Jesus, to be more specific, the sinful humanity of Jesus. This is a study which aims at demonstrating Jesus, the Son of God, **by assuming a humanity of the fallen race of Adam, enters into solidarity with us sinners, redeems us and make us new.** In A.D. 325 the Council of Nicaea solemnly defined the divinity of Jesus and in 451 the Council of Chalcedon solemnly defined Jesus' full humanity in everything except sin. Since that time the Church has reaffirmed against all opponents her faith that Jesus is true God and true man. However, contemporary theologians tend to overemphasize the divinity of Jesus to the detriment of his humanity.

Manual Christology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in defending the faith against the Enlightenment and Modernism, concentrated on apologetics, endeavoring to prove Jesus' divinity principally through his miracles and Johannine theology. The inherited scholastic tradition, in light of this emphasis on the divine, portrayed Jesus as exhibiting little, if any, ignorance.³ Many contemporary theologians argue that such stress on Jesus' divine personhood and his human perfection casts a docetic or monophysite hue upon Christology, at least on the popular, devotional level.⁴ Moreover, since the nineteenth century, the Christological focus has turned to Jesus' inner subjectivity and psychology. Issues like knowledge of Jesus and his human consciousness are discussed. At the same time, a defensive emphasis on the man Jesus' union with God also prospers so not to be accused of some heresy, such as adoptionism⁵. Such a tactical manoeuvre has shifted the Christological focus to a demonstration of how the man Jesus significantly differed from us, and this was in some manner uniquely divine. In view of all the above, most Christians today fail to appreciate the significance of the Incarnation and its soteriological meanings. But we must not forget that some early Greek Church Fathers virtually equated the Incarnation as such with the redemption. Their conviction is preserved in the creedal statement we now profess in every Sunday mass: Jesus "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven".

As mentioned, the prime concern of this essay is Jesus' humanity specifically his sinful humanity and its soteriological significance. Before we proceed further, I would like to make two points clear regarding the scope of this essay. First, by limiting the scope of this essay to Jesus' humanity, there is absolutely no intention to undermine the importance of Jesus' divinity. In fact, we will come to see later that only when the humanity of Jesus is most fully evident, the divinity of Jesus is most fully revealed. Just as it is precisely the moment of death by crucifixion which allows a Roman centurion to see through the divine incognito and become the first man in the Gospel of Mark to recognize the full identity of Jesus "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (15:29). Secondly, "he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin but knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21) has its soteriological significance which we will discuss in more details later. This, however, does *not* imply that redemption is brought about *only* by Jesus' assuming our sinful humanity. As the International Theological Commission declared in its 1980 statement 'Select Questions on

Christology': "The person of Jesus Christ cannot be separated from the deed of redemption. The benefits of salvation are inseparable from the divinity of Jesus Christ" (IV. A. 1).⁶ It is therefore the whole person of Jesus, in both his divinity and humanity, who brings us redemption and salvation. For the sake of this essay, I would focus only on the soteriological aspects of Jesus' humanity.

3. Method Employed in This Essay

Since the first centuries, there has been a great deal of efforts to understand who and what Jesus was. It is not my purpose to give an account of the development of Christology and the ontology of Christ for the last two millenniums. However, gestation of the study of Jesus in the twentieth century can give a better context of the method employed in this essay. In the 1930s-1940s, in the books about Jesus, he was portrayed based on the Gospels. The theologians presented Jesus as a man living on earth who, fully human though at the same time brought God to men, the God with whom as Son he is one. But the situation started to change in the 1950s. As historical-critical scholarship advanced, the gap between the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of faith" grew wider and the two eventually fell apart. The *man* Jesus was so completely different from the picture that the Evangelists painted of him and that the Church, on the evidence of the Gospels, takes as the basis of her preaching. At the same time, there were efforts on reconstructing Jesus but they only became increasingly incompatible with each others: at one end of the spectrum, Jesus is the anti-Roman revolutionary working – though finally failing – to overthrow the ruling powers; and at the other end, he is the meek moral teacher who approves everything and unaccountably comes to grief. As a result, the real historical Jesus is lost in a cloud of manifold layers of traditions and theological speculations. The real figure of Jesus – the object of the Christian faith – has receded further into the distance.⁷ Rudolf Schnackenburg, one of the most prominent Catholic exegetes during the second half of the twentieth century, once made a comment that the Gospels "want, as it were, to clothe with flesh the mysterious Son of God who appeared on earth".⁸ Joseph Ratzinger Pope Benedict XVI in the Foreword of his book *Jesus of Nazareth* responded by saying that the Gospels do not need to clothe Jesus with flesh because "Jesus had already truly taken flesh".⁹ The problem remains whether this flesh can be accessed through the dense jungle of traditions and

theological speculations?

Therefore in this essay, I will go back to the sources -- the biblical testimony especially the New Testament proclamation, the tradition such as the views of the Church Fathers and scholastic theologians, the liturgy and the Magisterium -- in our discussion of Jesus' humanity and soteriology.

PART TWO: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Doctrinal Development On Jesus' Divinity And Humanity

Let us first examine the Church's proclamation on Jesus' divinity and humanity and its brief development. As early as the first few centuries, there had been controversies on who and what Jesus is. Is Jesus truly man, endowed with a real body? If he is truly God, and in what way? From apostolic times the Christian faith has insisted on the true incarnation of God's Son "come in the flesh"¹⁰. But in face of the rising controversies and even heresies on the ontology of Christ, in the third century the Church in a council at Antioch had to affirm against Paul of Samosata that Jesus Christ is Son of God by nature and not by adoption. The first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 confessed in its Creed that the Son of God is "begotten, not made, of the same substance (homoousios) as the Father".¹¹ The Nestorian heresy regarded Christ as a human person joined to the divine person of God's Son. Opposing this heresy, St. Cyril of Alexandria and the third ecumenical council, at Ephesus in 431, confessed "that the Word, uniting to himself in his person the flesh animated by a rational soul, became man."¹² Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception.

The Monophysites affirmed that the human nature had ceased to exist as such in Christ when the divine person of God's Son assumed it. Faced with this heresy, the Council of Chalcedon in 451, confessed:

"Following the holy Fathers, we unanimously teach and confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, composed of rational soul and

body; consubstantial with the Father as to his divinity and consubstantial with us as to his humanity; "like us in all things but sin". He was begotten from the Father before all ages as to his divinity and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, was born as to his humanity of the virgin Mary, the Mother of God.¹³

We confess that one and the same Christ, Lord, and only begotten Son, is to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change, division or separation. The distinction between the natures was never abolished by their union, but rather the character proper to each of the two natures was preserved as they came together in one person (prosopon) and one hypostasis."¹⁴

The elements of the above definition root from earlier documents. First, the Council adopted the earlier elaboration of Christological doctrine in its entirety: the Son is one "selfsame"; the Son is truly God and truly man as opposed to the heresy of the Gnostics¹⁵ and the Docetists¹⁶; as man, the Son is composed of a rational soul and a body, in refutation of the Christological error of Arians¹⁷ and the Apollinarians¹⁸; the Son is consubstantial with the Father, a reminder of the *homoousios* of Nicaea; the Son is consubstantial with us men, an affirmation opposed to the views of Apollinarius and Eutyches¹⁹; the Son was born of the Virgin Mary Theotokos, a reminder of the Council of Ephesus²⁰. Secondly, Chalcedon affirmed the *duality of the natures* in Christ, a duality that has been maintained ever since. The Council used the formula "in (*eni*) two natures." to condemn Monophysitism²¹ and also eliminated ambiguity of "from (*ek*) two natures". Thirdly, Chalcedon insisted on a permanent duality in Christ. His two natures are "without any commingling or change and the distinction between the two natures is not removed by the union. " Although emphasized on the duality of the natures in Christ, the Council affirmed that the two natures are "without division or separation" in accordance with the views of Alexandrian theology. It declared that there is "*one selfsame person and one selfsame hypostasis*" in Christ.

In short, as stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "the unique and singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not

mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God."²²

2. Essential Versus Existential Nature Of The Incarnation

The Chalcedonian profession of Jesus as true man and true God seems paradoxical. Divinity and humanity constitute and disclose seemingly incompatible ranges of characteristics, for example, eternal and temporal, omniscience and limited knowledge, omnipotent and limited power. This seemingly paradox is led by the interpretation of the Incarnation in an essentialist fashion. Incarnation is perceived as the bringing together and uniting of two contrary and incompatible natures or essences (divine and human) containing within themselves contradictory attributes (for example: omniscience and limited knowledge; omnipotence and limited power). However, the Council of Chalcedon and theologians such as St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Thomas Aquinas interpreted the Incarnation as, not essential, but personal/ existential.²³ The Incarnation is not the fusing together of two incompatible natures (divine and human), but the person of the Son coming to exist as man or coming to be man. The union (the incarnating act) is personal (*hypostatic*) in that it is the bringing into existence a humanity and uniting it to the person of the Son, thus establishing the manner or mode of the Son's existence as man²⁴. Having said that, the Incarnation remains religious mystery, something which we are justified in believing, but we can never expect to fully comprehend.

3. The Meaning And Limitation Of The Chalcedonian Definition

The faith statements professed by the Council of Chalcedon are meant to offer more than sheer information about the divine self-communication of God through his incarnate Son. These statements, according to Gerald O'Collins, enjoy both a descriptive function as they seek to make sense of the world and prescriptive functions as they encourage certain polices of behaviour. The council fathers at Chalcedon wanted to do something more than only describing the person of Jesus of Nazareth. They wished to direct their audience to understand religiously the mystery of the God-man so that their faith in Christ might be renewed and they might be brought into a closer union with him. However, the statements of faith have proved to be more successful in prescribing

things than at really describing ways in which human beings have experienced and continue to experience the divine self-communication. The faith statements have been informative but vague and ambiguous. For examples, the four negatives of the Chalcedon Definition “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation” affirmed certain realities, but they were not described in details, let alone completely. As we have discussed above, the Council drafted their faith statements in face of various heresies, the Chalcedonian Definition was therefore directed towards what the council fathers wished to rule out than those they wished to affirm. As a result, the Council professed certain terms for describing Christ's reality but did not present fifth-century Christians with vital pieces of information about Christ and their experience of him which had hitherto remained unavailable.²⁵ Thus, in the following parts we will have an overview of the Patristical views, medieval and contemporary theologians and the Scriptural sources which have been expressed from the lived experience of the Fathers, scholars and the apostles.

PART THREE: THE REALITY OF JESUS' HUMANITY – AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Views Of The Fathers Of The Church²⁶

Let us now turn to an historical overview of the discussion on reality of Jesus' humanity. The Church has consistently upheld and defended the full humanity of Christ, the Council of Chalcedon proclaimed he is “perfect in humanity” and is “truly man”. As early as the first few centuries after Jesus' death, the Church faced the challenge of Docetism which accorded to Jesus only the appearance and not the reality of humanness; and later with Apollinarianism which denied that Jesus possessed a human soul.

Before the Council of Chalcedon, the Fathers of the Church had already made efforts to assert the true and full humanity of Jesus²⁷. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107) was one of the first Fathers to defend Jesus' humanity: “Turn a deaf ear to any speaker who avoided mention of Jesus Christ was of David's line, born of Mary, who was truly born, ate and drank; was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, truly crucified and died.”²⁸ However, Ignatius did not address the question of whether Jesus assumed a humanity contaminated by sin. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386)

also emphasized the reality of Jesus' humanity by stating that the Son of God assumes “a manhood subject to the same feelings as ours, and being born of a holy virgin and the Holy Spirit: and this not in appearance or in imagination, but in reality” and Jesus “took flesh and was truly fed and milk” from the Virgin²⁹. For Cyril, the Son of God truly had to become as we are. Origen (185-254) also stressed the reality of Jesus' human nature: “When he took upon him the nature of human flesh, he fully accepted all the characteristic properties of humanity, so that it can be realized that he had a body of flesh in reality and not in mere appearance.”³⁰

PART FOUR: GOD MADE JESUS TO BE SIN BUT KNEW NO SIN

In Part Three, we have discussed that the Council of Chalcedon and the Church Fathers uphold the doctrine that Jesus assumes a full and true humanity. But what does this really mean? The Council of Chalcedon in 451 officially professed that Jesus is “like us in every way except sin” but it did not specifically address the question of whether or not Jesus possessed a humanity of Adam's sinful lineage. Nevertheless, by affirming that the person of the one eternal Son was not only *homoousios* with the Father, but also *homoousios* with us in his humanity, Chalcedon condemned Eutyches' Monophysitism who advocated an uncontaminated humanity because Jesus' divinity sanctified it. The *homoousios* doctrine drives Christology in the direction to the focus of this essay, for to be *homoousios* with us requires more than a generic sameness of species but a communion with us as we are in reality – human beings who are corrupted by the sin of Adam. As mentioned previously, the faith statements of the ecumenical councils on one hand provide great clarity, but on the other hand limit the expression of the fuller meaning they had originally intended. We should note that a shared experience of and commitment to Christ always preceded any solemn clarification of what the Church believed and wished to say about her reality in relationship to the Father.³¹ To understand the fuller meaning of Jesus' humanity, we will discuss in the following sections how the Church Fathers, theologians and the New Testament authors view and explain the sinful humanity of Jesus.

In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Saint Paul stated: “For our sake he [God] made him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin” (5:21), in the

Incarnation the Son took upon himself not some generic humanity, but our sinful humanity³². While Jesus never sinned personally, nor had any inner propensity to sin (concupiscence), nevertheless his humanity was of the race of Adam and he experienced, of necessity, many of the effects of sin which entered the world and plague human beings, such as hunger, thirst, tiredness, sorrow, loneliness, temptation by Satan, fear, even death and separation from God. Unless the Son of God assumes the same humanity like us who is under the confines of human nature distorted by sin and the Fall, the Incarnation means nothing to us. If the Son of God only clothes himself in a human flesh and lives *like* a human, he cannot answer the ultimate concerns of humanity. Therefore, understanding Jesus' humanity from such a perspective can help us truly appreciate the Incarnation and its soteriological significance.

1. God Made Jesus To Be Sin

1.1 “What Is Not Assumed Is Not Saved”

The Fathers of the Church had upheld the principle of “What is not assumed is not saved” as a common argument against the heresy of the early centuries. By upholding this principle, **the Fathers suggested that the weakness of Jesus' flesh was evidence for not possessing only a generic humanity but humanity inherited from and contaminated by sinful Adam.** Church Fathers Irenaeus and Origen both acknowledged that Jesus was truly tempted.³³ Origen affirmed that Jesus took our flesh and so was tempted in every way as we so that he might obtain victory for us.³⁴ Irenaeus stated that we could become the adopted son of God, only if:

“the Word of God made flesh had entered into communion with us...For he was to destroy sin and redeem man from guilt had to enter into the very condition of man, who had been dragged into slavery and was held by death, in order that death might be slain by man, and man should go forth from the bondage of death.”³⁵

Irenaeus affirmed that Christ is true God, because only God can efficaciously obtain salvation and restore union with men³⁶. Christ is also true because it is man's duty to make reparation for his misdeeds. To

reconcile God and man, a mediator is needed who is akin to both³⁷. To Irenaeus, Jesus in his humanity “summed up” and embodied all the sinful generations since Adam so that he might redeem every generation.³⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem believed that Jesus “took on our likeness” so that our “sinful nature might become partaker of God.”³⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus officially gave the principle of “What is not assumed is not saved” a definitive form.⁴⁰ The salvific purpose of the Incarnation was explicitly stressed. The salvific finality was fundamental, but it served to demonstrate what Christ is, what the Word has personally assumed. Tertullian (160-220) also touched on this subject and argued that Jesus does not despise humiliation, birth, suffering, death, but rather out of love, he sanctified the whole of human life for if he does not do so, then man is not redeemed.⁴¹ Augustine (354-430) wrote “Never would you have been free from sinful flesh, had he [Jesus] had not taken on himself human nature, and in it he endured all that belongs to the human condition.”⁴² Ambrosiaster clearly affirmed that the Son takes on our sin within the Incarnation itself, in the assuming of our flesh, and thus that his flesh, too, “is under sin”.^{43 44} The principal argument is that only if Jesus assumes a humanity at one with the fallen race of Adam could his death and resurrection heal and save that humanity.

In summation, the Church Fathers affirmed the view that Jesus takes on the sinful humanity so to save us from it.

1.2. Jesus' Sinful Humanity: Medieval views

During the medieval period, Jesus' sinful humanity was also discussed by the theologians and scholars of the time. Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) first touched on Jesus' “sinful” humanity in his *Cur Deus Homo* and then more specifically in *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato*. In *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm argued that God's becoming man, instead of unfitting, the almighty God assumed “the littleness and weakness of human nature for the sake of its renewal.”⁴⁴ Thus Anselm's soteriology was built upon the premise that not only does the Incarnation not dishonour God, but it is also indispensable for our salvation.⁴⁵ For Anselm, once man has sinned, he is not able to restore himself to a condition before sinned in which he could properly give God the honour and the love he deserves. Nevertheless, since it is man who sins, the obligation for restoring God's honour falls directly upon man's

shoulders. However, man in his sinful condition could not fulfil that obligation. Man's sin violates the honour of God so much that only God himself could restore and make satisfaction for the loss. Sin has created a situation in which "None but God can make satisfaction...but none but a man ought to do this."⁴⁶ Therefore, only a person who is both God and man could overcome this dilemma. So what type of man must the Son of God have to become if he were to render satisfaction on our behalf? Anselm stated that since Adam was and his children were responsible for dishonouring God, so they were accountable for making satisfaction. As such, Jesus has to possess a humanity sprung from the sinful root of Adam.⁴⁷

One of the greatest scholars in the medieval period, Saint Thomas Aquinas, also consistently affirmed that the Son of God assumes a humanity of the stock of sinful Adam, and therefore his humanity bears the likeness of sinful flesh. Thomas Aquinas listed three reasons for the Son's assumption of the sinful humanity of Adam. First, it would be just that he who sinned should make amends; and hence that from the nature which he had corrupted should be assumed that whereby satisfaction was to be made for the whole nature. Secondly, the conqueror of the devil should spring from the stock conquered by the devil. And thirdly, as God's power was made more manifest from a corrupt and weakened nature, he assumed that which was raised to demonstrate might and glory.⁴⁸

Following the tradition of the Church Fathers, medieval scholars/theologians also held the same view on Jesus' sinful humanity.

1.3 Views Of Contemporary Theologians

Contemporary Catholic theologians John Henry Cardinal Newman, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Protestant theologians like Edward Irving and Karl Barth also supported the view that Jesus assumes a sinful humanity. Irving in his *The collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes* stated that "That Christ took our fallen nature is most manifest, because there is no other in existence to take."⁴⁹ When Jesus became man, he "submitted himself to the very condition of a sinner."⁵⁰ He took on the "substance of fallen Adam".⁵¹ Irving, supported the Fathers' views that only if Jesus takes upon himself sinful flesh could sinful flesh be saved.⁵²

It is in and also through our fallen nature that the Son of God conquers and defeats sin and all of the temptations of Satan.⁵³ Barth viewed that God's love is so great that in becoming flesh he "puts himself on the side of his own adversary".⁵⁴ For Barth, "fresh is the concrete form of human nature marked by Adam's fall" so when the Son of God assumes the flesh, he also lives his life within the confines of a humanity marked by Adam's fall.⁵⁵ Catholic theologians Cardinal Newman (1801-1890) through his study of the patristic tradition, came to esteem the humanity of Jesus. Newman thought that while it is the perfect humanity of Jesus that has prevailed within academic theology and within Catholic devotion and piety; it is the humble and lowly Jesus who became sin for us still moves the hearts and minds of the faithful.⁵⁶ Renowned Catholic theologians von Balthasar (1905-1988) supported the view of Jesus' sinful humanity. He affirmed that for Jesus to "take on manhood" means to assume its concrete destiny with all that entails – suffering, death, hell – in solidarity with every human being.⁵⁷ The reason is simple: the Son assumes a humanity afflicted by sin and thus must have inherited the penalty of that condition – death and judgment: "The Son of God took a human nature in its fallen condition, and with it, therefore, the worm in its entails – mortality, fallenness, self-estrangement, death – which sin introduced into the world."⁵⁸

1.4. Biblical Evidence

Let us now turn to the biblical evidence which supports the proposition that Jesus was born from the fallen race of Adam and that such a condition is indispensable for our salvation. The New Testament authors did not use any philosophical terms such as "person" and "nature" when describing who Jesus is. It was the Fathers of the Church, the early Councils, and the Scholastic theologians who started to use such philosophical language. The language and concepts used by the New Testament authors, on the other hand, were more descriptive, functional and relational⁵⁹. Nevertheless, the New Testament does attribute to Jesus all those aspects which are in accord with authentic humanness. Paul affirmed Jesus' conformity to and solidarity with our sinful flesh (*sarx*). In the Letters to the Galatians, he wrote "when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (4:4-5). Paul highlighted that the Son was "born of woman",

therefore sharing a common humanity with all who are born of women. However, within biblical tradition, there is also negative connotation when referring one as to be “born of woman”. For example “How then can man be righteous before God? How can he who is born of woman be clear?” (Jb 25:4; cf. 14:1’ 15:14-16; Eccl 5:15-17). To speak of Jesus to be born of woman therefore suggests that he too shared in our uncleanness. This implication is also supported by what Paul said that Jesus was born “under the law” as in the Old Testament God promulgated the law as a constraint to and a guardian of men’s sinful drives. However, the law eventually became a curse for men as it incessantly exposed our sinfulness and moral impotency. The law became our condemnation. In Paul’s view, even though Jesus is always obedient to the law, yet he too as a Jew and as a human person, was also born under the curse of law, condemnation, guardianship, and enslavement (cf. Gal 3:13, 23-26)⁶⁰.

Another example is that Paul stated in 2 Cor 5:21 that “For our sake he [God] made him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin”. As the Son of God, Christ is sinless⁶¹; yet through God’s choice⁶² “he came to stand in that relation to God which normally is the result of sin”⁶³. So Jesus Christ becomes part of the sinful humanity, he comes in a humanity like that of us sinners, except his being innocent of sin. We can also interpret the Christ-hymn in Phil 2:6-11 analogously. The one who is in the form of God emptied himself, not in the giving up of his divinity or in the arresting of some divine attributes as classical kenotic Christology suggests, but in assuming the condition of a servant or slave. Thus he who is powerful in the likeness of God is now powerless in the “likeness of men”. In the Christ-hymn, “the likeness of human beings” is the “condition of a slave”, that is, humanity is in bondage to sin, fear and death (cf. Gal 4:1-22; 4:21-5:1; Rom 8:15)⁶⁴.

Apart from the writings of Paul, the Letter to the Hebrews also acknowledges that Jesus is the Son who took on a humanity from our common, sinful stock and that, like us, he was tempted in every way though without sin.⁶⁵ Jesus’ sinlessness will be examined in the next part of this essay. The author of the Letter saw Jesus’ death as the place where his identity with our sinful condition is most clearly experienced, and as the definitive justification for his glorification and our salvation.⁶⁶

The Gospel’s account of the life of Jesus also shows his identification

with our sinful condition. One of these accounts is the baptism of Jesus. The baptism at River Jordan by John the Baptist is different from the usual religious ablutions. It is meant to be the concrete enactment of conversion that gives the whole of life a new direction forever. People from all the country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem came to John and were baptized by him in river Jordan “confessing their sins” (Mk 1:5). It is clearly stated that John’s baptism includes the confession of sins. But the real novelty is Jesus wants to be baptized. Why did he want to be baptized? Why did the sinless Son of God have to confess his sins? These are the embarrassing questions for the early Christians as well, even John the Baptist asked Jesus: “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” (Mt 3:14). Matthew went on to report in the following verse that “Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented.” (Mt 3:15). In Jesus’ world, righteousness is man’s answer to Torah, that is the acceptance of the whole of God’s will. Jesus’ reply is his way of acknowledging it as an expression of an unrestricted Yes to God’s will. In a world marked by sin, this Yes to the entire will of God is an expression of solidarity with men, who have incurred guilt but yearn for righteousness. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, blends into the gray mass of sinners waiting on the banks of the River Jordan to be baptized. Here, we can understand the deeper meaning of the Baptism of Jesus: Jesus loaded the burden of all mankind’s guilt upon his shoulder and bore it down into the depths of Jordan. Of course, the whole significance of Jesus’ Baptism which needs to be understood in the light of the Cross and the Resurrection is not the focus of this essay. By placing the Baptism account before Jesus’ public ministry, it symbolizes that Jesus inaugurated his public activity by stepping into the place of sinners.⁶⁷ Thus we can see the Baptism of Jesus signifies an identification with our sinfulness and the need for repentance. He has assumed our sinful nature; and thus as a man, he, too as truly one of us, is obliged to respond to John’s call to repentance and baptism.

Another example from the Gospels is the temptations of Jesus, such accounts verify that Jesus genuinely assumes our human condition. Otherwise, he could not sympathise with our weakness, which is due to sin, just as it is stated by the author of Hebrews in 4:15.⁶⁸ Since Jesus assumes a true and full humanity, just like us, he is not immune from the attack of Satan. Jesus though has never personally sinned, he could be

tempted like every one of us. And because he is filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore a clarity and holiness far exceeding our own, temptation confronted him with a sharp force we do not experience.⁶⁹ Our human minds and hearts are anesthetised by our concupiscence and personal sin, so we never feel the full impact of temptation like Jesus did.⁷⁰ But he conquers temptations as one of us, as a man who freely lives by indwelling Spirit.⁷¹

The above examples of the Fathers' views and Scriptures affirm that Jesus assumes our sinful humanity so that he could be in solidarity of our condition and saves us.

2. But He Knew No Sin

In previous sections, we have discussed that Jesus assumes the sinful humanity from the race of Adam so that he could save us from the fallen human nature. The above passages, however, represent only half of the argument. After saying that God had made Jesus to be sin Paul stated in the following line that Jesus also “knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21). The author of The Letter to the Hebrews also affirmed that Jesus is merciful and understanding but remains sinless: “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (4:15-16; cf. 2:18). In fact, in its testimony to the sinlessness of Jesus, the New Testament is uniform.⁷² In our earlier discussion of Jesus' sinful humanity, we have already come across briefly the affirmation on Jesus' sinlessness. Here we cover in more details the sinlessness of Christ from the works of the Fathers and also narrations of the Scriptures. An understanding of Jesus' sinlessness is important because only Jesus never personally sins within the confines of our sinful condition does he bring us salvation from our fallen condition.

Since the Fathers of the Church, the sinlessness of Jesus had been upheld. Tertullian affirmed that Jesus possesses a real humanity like our own that bore the “birthmark of sin”, however sin does not interiorly touch (in “substance”) him and he does not sin personally.⁷³ Basil the Great (330-379) also emphasized that Jesus suffers the weakness of the flesh, but does not experience that which “arises from wickedness.” He assumed the likeness of the sinful flesh “with its natural experiences, but

“he did not sin”.⁷⁴ Ambrose (339-397) also stated that “He took flesh like ours, of the same substance as our flesh. He was indeed a perfect man, but without any stain of sin.”⁷⁵ Augustine also affirmed the two-fold truth that while Jesus was born of Adam, he was not born with concupiscence.⁷⁶ Cyril of Alexandria also stressed that “If the Word had not been begotten, according to the flesh, in the same way as we are, if he had not shared in our condition in this way, he would not have freed human nature from the guilt we inherit from Adam, nor have driven away the corruption from our bodies.”⁷⁷ In his commentaries on Heb 12:24 and Rom 8:3, Cyril affirmed that it is “obvious” that the eternal Son becomes “identical with us, in respect of the conditions of life.”⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Cyril was very clear in the view that though the Word has become like us, yet as man, Jesus does not personally know transgression.⁷⁹

3. A Two-fold Conclusion

When concluding this part of discussion of Jesus' sinful humanity yet sinlessness, the soteriological nature of the Church Fathers' arguments has to be emphasized. Within the Incarnation, the Son of God must have been a man like us, since he is to heal and save our fallen human nature; and yet, as one of us, he must not have experienced the moral corruption of sin either within his nature or in his personal choices: he has never personally sinned. The Fathers who based on this two-fold soteriological truth, had affirmed either one or the other. On one hand, when arguing that it was only through Jesus' holy and innocent life, Jesus' dissimilarity to us as man was emphasized. It was through his obedience and the free ordering of himself to the Father on the cross that we are saved. On the other hand, when they professed that Jesus redeems and saves our fallen nature, they accentuated the likeness of Jesus' humanity to our own – a son of Adam as to his flesh. This two-fold soteriological thrust is itself seemingly paradoxical and brought ambiguity and tension with patristic Christology. Yet the Fathers recognized that both must be maintained.⁸⁰ We have seen efforts over the last twenty centuries trying to figure out the “what” and “how” of the Incarnation, the agency of God-man remains a mystery which is beyond human comprehension. Nevertheless, the above Scriptural sources, doctrinal development of tradition and affirmation of the Fathers and theologians all reinforce the soteriological values brought about by the sinless Son who has inherited an enfeebled humanity.

PART FIVE: THE SOTERIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. The Human Condition

Before we turn to present the soteriological significance of the incarnate Son of God, I would like to point out it is the human condition which calls for salvation. In this part, I am going to quote the views by Gerald O'Collins as stated in his book *Interpreting Jesus*. We employ here some workable typology to help us both to classify the data from the Scripture, tradition and experience and to elaborate some kind of understanding. Basic and pervasive needs of human existence are met by the historical intervention of Christ. He is the ultimate reply to the issues of human history.

First, one of the reasons why redemption is an issue for human is the "oppression from without". Thus sin, death, and various evil forces have often been experienced and represented as outside powers which come to enslave and destroy human beings. Just as Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah at the beginning of his public ministry: "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives...to set a liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk 4:18). Moreover, healing the sick means liberating them from Satan's power (Lk 13:16). These passages imply that there are evil forces holding human beings in bondage. Paul described these evil forces in vaguer terms instead of direct attack from Satan, for example: sin invades the world and through sin death comes to afflict all human beings (Rom 5:12); sin and death dominate them and hold them enslaved (Rom 5:14, 17, 21; 6:6ff.). In Galatians, Paul reminded his troublesome community of their former state when they were "slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe" (4:3; see 4:9). Even after the apostolic age, Christian teaching, liturgy, theology, spirituality and art continued to portray human beings as needing to be saved from various kinds of oppression. In the Second Vatican Council's *Guadium et Spes* (4ff.), the Puebla document (87-92) and John Paul II's *Redemptor Hominis* (15f.), men and women have been seen as threatened and destroyed by forces beyond their control or at least beyond the control of suffering individuals.

⁸¹

Secondly, long before the Christians era the psalmists and others recognized the impure state of sinful human beings. The sense of

human contamination which needs to be expiated turns up repeatedly in the Old Testament, for example Ps 51:2 states "Wash me from my guilt, cleanse me from my sin". And this view is also endorsed by the New Testament: the Letter to the Ephesians compares the whole community of the redeemed to a bride who was ceremonially cleansed and purified for her husband (5:52f.). The sense that sin and evil soil that stain both individuals and even entire nations seems to be a universal conviction.⁸² In general, human beings believe themselves to need cleansing from the contamination of sin and guilt.⁸³

Thirdly, the inner wounds, sickness and hard-heartedness that call for the healing and divine love is another way of describing the human condition. Thus Ezekiel assures the people that God will not only cleanse them but also will put within them a new heart and a new spirit (Ez 36:25f.).⁸⁴

However, we must note the fact that the sinful and contaminated human nature should not be exaggerated to the point of alleging a complete lack of freedom and total corruption. Evil could spoil and damage but never totally destroy that divine image in human (GS, 13; cf. Gen 1:27, 31) as Genesis states in 1:27. 31 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good". The above sketch of the human condition suggests the Christian conviction that the goodness in the divine creation could be never wiped out completely even though human nature is oppressed, contaminated and inwardly wounded. However, there is no self-redemption by us, only the divine initiative can deliver us.⁸⁵

2. Soteriological Significance Of The Incarnation

The law of prayer is the law of faith (lex orandi, lex credendi): the Church believes as she prays. When the Church prays, she confesses the faith from the apostles. Liturgy is a constitutive element of the holy and living Tradition.⁸⁶ In her liturgical and devotional life, the worshipping and praying Church dwells on Christ's redemptive benefits. For instances, at the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday the priest sings three times "This is the wood of the cross, on which hung the Saviour of the world". The people reply "Come, let us worship". Salvation through

Jesus is the emphasis of the worship. We find the same concern for the theme of redemption in a refrain used during the Stations of the Cross: "We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world".⁸⁷

How should we describe and present the salvation effected by the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ? Paul usually had in mind Jesus' death and resurrection as the means through which redemption occurs. Paul's view of corporate solidarity, through which one is related to all in and under God, gives some light to the question of how. But the precise nature of the how remains obscure. As discussed in previous sections, the connection between Jesus' taking on our sin and redemption has been much pondered in tradition. In what way was this effective for our redemption?⁸⁸ While Cardinal Newman's "for wise reasons unrevealed"⁸⁹ was an answer to the mysterious depths of the confrontation with sin by Redeemer, we will attempt to explore how Jesus, by assuming the sinful condition of humanity, redeems us from our sin.

First, we do not need to dig deep in the Scriptures to find out that **God's initiative of love** clarifies the story of salvation – the main message of the Scriptures. The divine love has revealed itself progressively and has been at work with different degrees of intensity and engagement. The absolute and unique high-point comes with Jesus Christ who is God himself who goes in search of the "stray sheep", a suffering and lost humanity. Just as it is stated by the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "the Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's love".⁹⁰ John put it plainly and explicitly: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). First John also indicates that the initiative of the divine love expiates sins and brings life to believers: "In this love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (4:9f.). It is not that "we loved God *but* that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins." In Romans 5:6-8, 10, Paul also told the way Jesus accepted death not only for those who were already his friends but also for those who were still God's enemies. This self-giving love prevails over the worst of human malice and rehabilitated sinful humanity.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the love of God is not only revealed through Jesus' sacrifice for his enemies. Jesus' death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him.

This is love in its most radical form. By contemplating the pierced side of Christ (cf. 19:37), we can truly understand what John means when he says "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8).⁹²

Secondly, the incarnate Son's **absolute obedience** brings us back to the Father. Paul in 2 Cor 5:21 stated "For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Jesus freely and willingly offers his holy and sinless life to the Father. However, the merit in Jesus' sacrifice is not that he died when he was not required to do so, but instead from within a humanity scarred by sin and subjected to temptation and death, he persistently obeyed God.⁹³ Just as what we have mentioned in our discussion of Jesus' Baptism, Jesus' answer to the Father is always an unrestricted Yes – to fulfil all righteousness. Disobedience, a free human action, has severed us from the Father and turned us into sinners. Disobedience is an act of rebellion and thus of separation. Therefore, sin is an act of absolute unrighteousness making us unrighteous and so ensuring our condemnation. Jesus as the Son of God, impoverished by our sinful condition, through his free human obedience to the Father, even to death on the cross, makes us righteous (cf. 5:21), nailing our condemnation to the cross (cf. Col 2:14). Jesus' obedient death on the cross is an act of supreme love to the Father, thus making just reparation for our spiteful and rebellious affront to God: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous (Rom 5:18-19). We can also find other biblical evidence which affirm that the Incarnate Son of God Jesus made reparation for us: through the blood of Jesus, we have peace with God (Rom 3:25; 5:9; Col 1:20; Eph 1:7).⁹⁴

It is not the atrocious suffering which Jesus underwent that has value in and of itself. Being tortured to death as Jesus was redeems no one. Rather, it is the loving and obedient self-giving of Jesus who willingly offers himself in the hands of the killer. His total innocence and his divine identity gives unique value to his self-sacrifice.⁹⁵

Jesus' experience in the garden of Gethsemane fully illustrates Jesus' true human condition and his filial obedience to the Father. In the garden, Jesus encountered the ultimate trial (cf. Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46; Jn 12:27). When confronted the prospect of his imminent

passion and death, Jesus as a man whose soul became “very sorrowful, even to death” (Mt 26:38; Mk 14:34; Ps 42:6). Despite of all these, Jesus remained absolutely obedient to the Father by saying “Abba, Father all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will” (Mk 14:36).

Jesus' absolute obedience implies space of our genuine human participation in and response to the gift of salvation, “that we might achieve, by face, the freedom from the curse.”⁹⁶ Rahner supported this view of human participation in redemption: grace and freedom do not cancel each other out in a sort of antagonism; rather, grace enables freedom, which is a gift of grace. To Rahner, freedom increases in proportion to its dependence on God.⁹⁷ Therefore, we are not puppets which are asked to fully obey God like Jesus so that we can be saved; and we are not condemned for something (absolute obedience to the divine will) we have no ability to do in any case. Redemption is *not* something “credited” to the sinner that nothing really changes in the sinner.⁹⁸ Jesus while assuming our sinful humanity demonstrates absolute obedience to God, He respects and even appeals to our human freedom and responsibility. More radically, He even grounds the latter and heals it of sin.⁹⁹ Redemption occurs through the real taking of the human predicament by God through His Son; through this Son it then reaches out in solidarity with others. This makes it possible that we by the power of God's self-communication, am really able to aspire to God, to have faith and hope in him and to love him, so that there is a space for our genuine human participation in redemption.¹⁰⁰

Thirdly, Jesus has emerged victoriously from the battle with Satan. Instead of Satan having control over him, when facing the temptations **Jesus demonstrates his authority over Satan.** Jesus' temptations do not only take place when the Holy Spirit leads Jesus to the desert “to be tempted by the devil.” (Mt 4:1) but accompany him along his entire journey. The story of Jesus' temptations is an anticipation that condenses into a single expression the struggle he endured at every step of his mission. The Apostle's Creed speaks of Jesus' descent into the perils besetting mankind, for there is no other way to lift up fallen humanity. Jesus has to enter into the drama of human existence, for that belongs to the core of his mission; he has to penetrate it completely, down to its uttermost depths, in order to find the “lost sheep”, to bear it on his shoulders and to bring it

home. The Letter to the Hebrews has stressed Jesus' solidarity with us all and that includes his exposure to the risks and perils of human existence: “Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted” (Heb 2:17-18). The Letter also states “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).¹⁰¹

By fending off temptation, Jesus is reversing, in his own human mind, will, and emotions, the condition in which we, in our human psyche, have been bound by Satan since the Fall. In both Matthew and Luke's accounts, the three temptations of Jesus all reflect the inner struggle over Jesus' mission and also address the question as to what truly matters in human life. At the heart of all temptations is the act of pushing God aside because we perceive him as secondary in comparison with all the apparent far more urgent matters that fill our lives. Temptation does not invite us to do evil directly, but often pretends to show us a better way where we finally abandon our illusions and throw ourselves into the work of actually making the world a better place. But Jesus has emerged victorious from his battle with Satan. To the tempters' lying divinization of power and prosperity, to his lying promise of a future that offers all things to all men through power and through wealth – Jesus responds with the fact that God is God, that God is man's true Good. When tempted with the worship power, Jesus quotes a passage from Deuteronomy: “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve” (Mt 4:10; cf. Deut 6:13). The fundamental commandment of Israel is also the fundamental commandment for all Christians: God alone is to be worshiped.¹⁰²

Fourthly, Jesus in offering his human life on the cross as a holy and loving sacrifice to the Father, **reconciles us to the Father**¹⁰³. Jesus has radically altered our relationship with God. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, our relationship with God does not just improve by degrees, but substantially changes in kind. We are transformed by the indwelling Spirit of the Son into children of the Father, we now share in the same intimacy with the Father as Jesus the Son by calling out “Abba, Father” (cf. Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15). John the Evangelist also stated in the Prologue of his Gospel: “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he

gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12). This new relationship with God can only be achieved through our living in Christ, sharing in his resurrected humanity in all its glory.

At the same time through Jesus' self-sacrificing love, we put out sinful flesh to death. This is important both for understanding how our humanity is impaired by sin and for appreciating what Jesus does in assuming our fallen nature and putting it to death on the cross. We could be salvaged only through the actual putting of the humanity inherited from Adam. Sin had so thoroughly penetrated and contaminated our human nature that it has to die and be re-created. The cross, the putting to death of the flesh (*sarx*), is therefore the hermeneutical principle for understanding the radical sinfulness of our humanity. If Jesus has not crucified our sinful flesh, we would never have understood the full impact of sin had upon us, or have we known the greatness of God's love. Just as Paul stated: “While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:6-8).¹⁰⁴ By putting our flesh to death, we now live in a new kind of life in the risen Christ. The risen Jesus is still a man¹⁰⁵, though now a glorious man freed from sin and all its effect.¹⁰⁶ If Jesus had not been raised as a man, there would be no new humanity into which we could be baptized. Just as Jesus assumes the condition of our fallen ancestor Adam and put it to death, so now, as risen, he is the new Adam, the author of a new humanity (cf. 1 Cor 15:22, 45). Therefore, we no longer need to live by the flesh, but we can live by the Spirit, that is, by the new life we now live in Christ (cf. Rom 8).

The confrontation with Satan and the full range of the real conflict, deceit, and dimensions of evil and sin; the experience of abandonment at the cross (Mt 27:26), and also the experience of the mysterious descent into hell (1 Pet 3:18-21; 4:6; Mt 27:51-53)¹⁰⁷; all these to some extent resemble the experiences of us Christians in our abandonments, dark nights, and sufferings. A paraphrase of Balthasar by John Saward indicates that God's love is ultimately at work:

“The Son's obedient embracing of Godforsakenness is a work of substitution. He endures desolation for us, as our Head and in our place. He enters into solidarity with all who feel abandoned and forgotten by

God....He suffers an abandonment infinitely more wounding than that of sinners, one that somehow embraces theirs, bringing light into the midnight of their anguish, placing pierced hands of love beneath their fall. There are no uncharted territories. Even in the most hellist deserts of this life, no man need despair. Godforsakenness, too, can be a holy place, for it has been hallowed and made hopeful by the person and presence of God incarnate Himself. His substitutive Passion effects a ‘transplantation,’ an ontological change of position for mankind.”¹⁰⁸

PART SIX: CONCLUSION

In this essay, I attempt to go back to the Scriptural sources, the tradition and the Magisterium to demonstrate that Jesus assumes the sinful humanity of man and enters into solidarity with us in our fallen human condition. Within this humanity, he lives an obedient life under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, fending off all temptations, so to fulfil all righteousness. Through offering his holy and innocent life willingly on the cross, Jesus both reconciles us with the Father and put our sinful nature to death. Through his resurrection, Jesus' humanity is transcended and glorified. When we are baptized, it is like we go to the place of Jesus' Baptism. It is to go where Jesus identified himself with us and to receive there our identification with him. The point where Jesus anticipates his death now become the point where we anticipate rising again with him. It is through the humble, self-sacrificing love of Jesus that our humanity can be renewed.

*O marvelous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of a virgin.
We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself
to share in our humanity.*

-- Evening Prayer Antiphon,
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God¹⁰⁹

NOTES

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church #461

² Catechism of the Catholic Church #463

³ See, e.g., J.M. Herve, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, Vol 2 (Paris: Apud Berche et Pagis, 1959), 456-67. [Quoted from Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh – an essay on the humanity of Christ*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 3].

⁴ While granting the legitimate concern over docetic Christology on the popular level in the past, we suggest that this fear should not be exaggerated. Within the Church, there was also an authentic devotion to the humanity of Jesus. The popular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus testifies to this. This devotion kept alive an appropriate understanding of the Incarnation and of the humanity of Jesus. Cf. Pope John Pius VII, *Haurietus Aquas (On Devotion to the Sacred Heart)*, 1956; Karl Rahner, "Devotion to the Sacred Heart," *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 3, Part Five (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1967), 321-52. See also, Annice Callahan, *Karl Rahner's Spirituality of the Pierced Heart: A Reinterpretation of Devotion to the Sacred Heart* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1990). (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 4.)

⁵ Cf. John, Hick, ed., *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM, 1977); John, Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967); John, Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1990); Gerarld, O'Collins, *What Are They Saying About Jesus?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); Norman, Pittenger, *Christology Reconsidered* (London: SCM Press, 1970); J.A.T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God* (London: SCM, 1973); Karl Rahner, "Current Problems in Christology", *Theological Investigations*, Vol. I (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), 149-200; Thompson, 45-49.

⁶ See G. O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 133.

⁷ This brief account of the gestation of the study of Jesus is extracted from J. Ratzinger Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus Of Nazareth – From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, (DoubleDay, 2006), xi-xii.

⁸ See R. Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology*, Trans O.C. Dean Jr. Westminster, (John Knox Press, Louisville, 1995), 322.

⁹ See Ratzinger, *Jesus Of Nazareth*, xiv.

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¹⁰ Cf. 1 Jn 4:2-3; 2 Jn 7

¹¹ Council of Nicaea I (325): DS 130.

¹² Council of Ephesus (431): DS 250.

¹³ Council of Chalcedon (451): DS 301; cf. Heb 4:15.

¹⁴ Council of Chalcedon (451): DS 302.

¹⁵ There are diverse forms of Gnostic views on Jesus' humanity, for example Basilides viewed Christ's Passion was only apparent for Christ did not really die. Another form of Christian Gnosticism tended to appear at a more intellectual level and reduce Christ to a myth., for instance Valentinian Gnosticism believed Christ descended upon Jesus at the time of his baptism so Christ is not a true man but only possess the body of a man Jesus.

¹⁶ Docetism reduces Jesus' body to the level of an apparition. For the Docetists, the one who is God is so far superior to the material world that he could not have lived in a real body.

¹⁷ According to the Arian, the Son is not eternal but is merely created and therefore not consubstantial with the Father.

¹⁸ In the Apollinarian view, Christ could not have a human soul because if the Word has assumed a human soul, Christ's humanity could not have been perfect. And it implies that Christ would have introduced into his being a principle sin.

¹⁹ Eutyches, an archimandrite of Constantinople, refused to admit in Christ a nature consubstantial with that of men.

²⁰ The Council of Ephesus affirmed that "*The eternal Son of the Father is he who, according to carnal generation, was born of the Virgin Mary; for this reason Mary is legitimately called Theotokos, Mother of God.*" That is because in Christ, there is a unity of the subject of attribution: the divinity and the humanity form "*one single Lord, Christ and Son.*"

²¹ The Monophysite controversy was spread by Eutyches (see footnote 18) who supports the one single nature of divinity of the Lord and refused the human nature of Christ.

²² Council of Constantinople II (553): DS 464.

²³ For the personal/ existential understanding of the Incarnation in Cyril of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas, see Weinandy, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 46-66, 82-100. Within these

pages, Weinandy develops further the ideas concerning the whole personal/ existential understanding of the Incarnation.

²⁴ See Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 10-11.

²⁵ Gerald O'Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1981), 164-167.

²⁶ All translations from the Fathers are taken from either of Henry Bettenson's editions: *The Early Christian Fathers* (Oxford: University Press, 1956); *The Later Christian Fathers* (Oxford: University Press, 1970), unless otherwise stated.

²⁷ There are some Church Fathers who did not support the full humanity of Jesus. For example, Clement of Alexandria (150-215) wished to uphold true humanity of Jesus but his argument put his defense into question, as he stated in *Stromateis* 6.9 (7): "For he [Jesus] ate, not because of bodily needs, since his body was supported by holy power, but so that his companions might not entertain a false notion about him, as in fact certain men did later, namely that he had been manifested only in appearance. He himself was, and remained, 'untroubled by passion'; no movement of the passions, either pleasure or pain, found its way into him." Hilary of Poitiers (315-367) also held similar reservation about attributing to Jesus the full weight of human weakness by saying that Jesus' humanity though real was heavenly in origin. Hilary agreed that Jesus truly wept, thirsted, and hungered in flesh, but Hilary would not allow actual sufferings as stated in *De Trinitate*, 10.23. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 23-24.)

²⁸ *Letter to the Trallians*, 9. See also, *The Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 1-4.

²⁹ *Catecheses*, 4.9.

³⁰ *In Matthaem Commentariorum Series*, 92.

³¹ Gerald O'Collins, *Fundamental Theology*, 167.

³² Thomas V. Morris argues for a generic understanding of the humanity of Christ. He believes that such an understanding will make the humanity of Christ more compatible with his divinity. See his *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). For a critique, see Thomas Weinandy's book review, *The Thomist* 51:2 (1987) 367-372.

³³ See *Adversus Haereses*, III, 19.3. Irenaeus wrote: "As he was man that he might be tempted, so he was the Word that he might be glorified." While Irenaeus attributed this weakness not only to his humanity, but also to the "quietness" of being the Word, nonetheless,

Jesus was capable of temptation, dishonour, crucifixion, and even death. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 26.)

³⁴ See *Homiliae: In Lucam*, 29.

³⁵ *Adversus Haereses*, III, 18.7. See II, 12.4; III, 18.1.

³⁶ *Her.* 4,33,4, SC 100.,811: "How could men be saved if God were not one who wrought their salvation on earth? Or how can man go to God, if God has not come to man?" [Quoted from Jean, Gallot, S.J., *Who Is Christ? A Theology of the Incarnation*, (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1980), 220.]

³⁷ *Her.* 3,18,7, SC 34,325ff. (SC 211,365-367): "If a man has not conquered the enemy of man, the defeat of this enemy would not have been just; if on the other hand a God had not given us salvation we would not be sure of having it; finally, if man had not been constituted in closest unity with God he could not have had a share in incorruptibility. It was therefore necessary that the Mediator between God and men, by his kinship with each of the parties, restore friendship and harmony between them and thereby obtain that on the one hand God should assume responsibility for man, and that on the other man should surrender himself to God." (Quoted from Gallot, *Who Is Christ?*, 220-221.)

³⁸ See *Adversus Haereses*, III, 21,10; III, 12,3.

³⁹ *Catechese*, 12.15.

⁴⁰ "If anyone has put his trust in him (Christ) as man without a human mind, he is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For what which he has not assumed, he has not healed (*to gar aproslepton, atherapeuton*); but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole" *Epistolae*, 101; see Or. 1.13;30.21 [Quoted from *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. E. Hardy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 218-19.]

⁴¹ See *De Carne Christi*, 4-6. See also Athanasius, *Contra Arianos*, 3.33,57.

⁴² See *De Agone Christiano*, 12.

⁴³ Ambrosiaster wrote: "Him who did not know sin, he made sin on our behalf." It says that God the Father made his Son, Christ, sin; because having been made flesh he was not altered but became incarnate and so was made sin...On account of this his entire flesh is under sin, therefore since it has been made flesh, it has also been made sin. And since he has been

offered for sin, not undeservedly is he said to have been made sin; since also a victim which was offered for sins under the law was named sin.” See *In ad Corinthios Secunda*, 5,21. Translated from the *Enchiridion Patristicum*, 1342.

⁴⁴ T.F. Torrance, in his book, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1988), also finds support among many of the Fathers for holding that Jesus assumed a humanity from the sinful race of Adam. For further quotations from the Fathers and commentary see Torrance, 161-168. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 30.)

⁴⁵ *Cur Des Homo*, I,2. Translation from *St. Anselm: Basic Writings, S.N. Deane*, (La Salle: Open Court Press, 1968). (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 39.)

⁴⁶ J. Hopkins is correct: “In a sense, the entire *Cur Deus Homo* is directed towards proving this thesis [that the Son had to become man for our salvation]. Anselm thinks that if he can show the impossibility of human redemption’s occurring other than through the agency of a God-man, he will have removed the stigma which seems to accompany the notice of incarnation.” *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 187. See also J. McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics* (London, 1954), 127. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 40.)

⁴⁷ *Cur Deus Homo*, II,6. See also, *ibid.* I,11; I,23.

⁴⁸ See Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 40-41.

⁴⁹ *Summa Theologica*, III,4,6. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV,30,28. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 47-48.)

⁵⁰ Edward, Irving, *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving in Five Volumes*, Vol. 5, ed. G. Carlyle (London: Alexander Strachan, 1865), 115. For an excellent article on Irving’s Christology, see Colin, Gunton, “Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving’s Christology,” *The Scottish Journal of Theology* 41 (1988): 36ff. We are greatly indebted to Grunton’s work. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 57.)

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 148. Irving wrote “If Christ took upon himself our fallen and corruptible nature, and brought it through death into eternal glory, then is the act of the will of Christ not to lay down, but to assume or take up humanity into himself.” Cf. 213. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 58.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 161. Irving wrote “His flesh is the fit field of contention because it is the same on which Satan had triumphed since the fall. Here, then, in the flesh of Christ, is the great controversy waged.” (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 58.)

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁵⁶ Barth also quotes other Protestant theologians who have argued for a similar position. For example: Gottfried, Menken (1812) wrote: “The Son of God when he came into the world did not then assume a human nature such as this nature was when it came forth from God’s hand, before the Fall...On the contrary, it was human nature such as was in Adam after the Fall and is in all his successors” (*Homile ub Hebr. 9:13*, Works, Vol. 3, 332.). Or J.C.K. von Hofmann stated: Jesus “desired his human nature to be the means of manifesting his personal communion with God, but manifesting it within human nature as limited and conditioned by sin” (*Der Schriftbeweis*, I, 1852, 45). Edward, Bohl wrote: “The Logos entered our condition thus alienated from God, or the nature which sinned. But our condition is that through Adam we have passed into guiltiness and become liable to death, in consequence of which we are enemies of God and hated by him...Either the Son of God brings salvation to pass under conditions of life like ours or else everyone has to start all over again and to fulfil independently God’s claim upon us” (*Dogmatik*, 1887, 209, 302.)

⁵⁷ John Henry Newman, “Sermon 3: The Incarnation,” *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, II (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 244-245.

⁵⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, tr. A Nichols, O.P. (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1990), 20. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 66.)

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* See also *The Von Balthasar Reader*, eds. M. Kehl and W. Loser, trs. R Daly and F. Lawrence (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 144-145, 148, 150. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 66.)

⁶⁰ Cf. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959) and R.H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, (London: Collins), 243-259.). (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 18.)

⁶¹ See Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 78-79.

⁶² See *Heb 5:15; Pet 2:22; John 8:46; 1 John 3:5.*

⁶³ See *Rom 8:3.*

⁶⁴ Paul, Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 180.

⁶⁵ See Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 81.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Heb* 1:2; 2:11, 14, 17-18; 4:15 (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 121.

⁶⁷ Joseph, Ratzinger Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth – from the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, (New York: Doubleday), 2007, 14-18.

⁶⁸ *Heb* 4:15” “For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

⁶⁹ See Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 99.

⁷⁰ The quickest and easiest way to alleviate the painful struggle of temptation is to give into in.

⁷¹ According to our principle, the holier one becomes, the more intense it will be one's temptation. The lives of the saints seem to bear this out. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 99-100).

⁷² *John* 7:18; 8:46; *Acts* 3:14; *Heb* 4:15; 7:26; 1 *Pet.* 1:19; 2:22; 3:18; 1 *John* 3:5.

⁷³ *De Carne Christi*, 16, 10-25. Translation from Ernest Evans, Tertullian's *Treatise on the Incarnation* (London: SPCK, 1956), 57. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 31-32.)

⁷⁴ *Epistolae*, 261.3. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 32.)

⁷⁵ *De Incarnationis Dominicae Sacramento*, 76. See also *Expositio In Psalmum*, 118.6.22. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 32.)

⁷⁶ See *Homiliae In Joannis Evangelium*, 3.12. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 32.)

⁷⁷ *Adversus Nestori Blasphemias*, 1.1. See also, *ibid.*, 3.2; *Epistolae Ad Nestorius*, 2. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 34.)

⁷⁸ *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti*, 2. See also *Quod Unus Sit Christus*, tr., *St. Cyril of Alexandria: On the Incarnation Against Nestorius*, Library of the Fathers (Oxford: James Parker, 1881), 293, 300-301. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 34.)

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⁷⁹ See *Quod Unus Sit Christus*, *itr.*, 276. (Quoted from Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 34.)

⁸⁰ Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 37.

⁸¹ Gerald, O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, 135-136.

⁸² P. Ricoeur, “Defilement”, *The Symbolism of Evil* (ET: London and New York, 1967), 25-46.

⁸³ Gerald, O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, 138.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸⁶ *Ep.* 8 (Quoted from CCC #1124).

⁸⁷ Gerald, O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus*, 158.

⁸⁸ William M., Thompson, *The Struggle For Theology's Soul*, (New York: The Cross Road Publishing Company, 1996), 193-194.

⁸⁹ John Henry Newman, *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations* (Westminster, Md.: New man Press, 1966), 307, italics added by Roderick Strange, *Newman and the Gospel of Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 104; cf. chapter 5, “The Atoning Christ.”

⁹⁰ CCC, #458.

⁹¹ See G. O'Collins, *Incarnation*, (London: Continuum, 2002), 119.

⁹² Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 12.

⁹³ Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh.*, 45.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

⁹⁵ Gerald, O'Collins, *Incarnation*, 118-119.

⁹⁶ Denys Edward Hugh, Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972), 137; cf. xiii, 131, 147 - quoted by Thompson, *The Struggle For Theology's Soul*, 188 as a comment with respect to *Gal* 3:13.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Karl, Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, (London: Darton Longman & Todd Ltd., 1984, 1978), 79.

⁹⁸ Quoted by Thompson, *The Struggle For Theology's Soul*, 188. Rahner also considers such views “to be wrong or at least a misleading formulation of the dogmatic truth that my redemption is dependent on Jesus and His cross.”

⁹⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 7:18: “sanans tumorem et nutriens amorem” (James, J. O'Donnell, ed, vol. 1 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992], 85). A possible translation might be “healing the swollen pride and nourishing the love.”

¹⁰⁰ Karl, Rahner, “*The Christian Understanding of Redemption*”, in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 21, 248.

¹⁰¹ Joseph, Ratzinger, *Jesus Of Nazareth*, 26-28.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰³ CCC #457 “The Word became flesh for us in order to save us by reconciling us with God”

¹⁰⁴ Weinandy, *In The Likeness of Sinful Flesh*, 82-83.

¹⁰⁵ See Gerald, O'Collins, *Incarnation*, 44 for further elaboration on permanence of the Incarnation: “Without assuming a human nature, the Son of God could not have lived and realized a human history. Likewise, unless he maintained, albeit in a glorified state, his bodily humanity, we could not talk about his resurrection from the dead. But in fact the human condition he assumed at the Incarnation persists eternally in his new, exalted state, and does so for the eternal salvation of all human beings. Both in his earthly lifetime and in his risen life, what occurred at the Incarnation persists – for the salvation of human beings who are already touched by his power and will meet him in glory when he “comes to judge the living and the dead.”

¹⁰⁶ See 1 Cor 15:42ff. for Paul's distinction between the earthly and heavenly body. While Paul speaks of the heavenly body as being spiritual, it is nonetheless a true *body* of which he speaks.

¹⁰⁷ Hans Urs von Balthasar in, for example, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1990), 148-188, Catholic theology, even viewing it as a continuation of Christ's struggle with evil and sin among the sinful dead. This is not unlike Calvin (*Institutes*, 2:16:8-12 [ed. McNeill, 1:512-20]) and Karl Barth, who may have been influential over Balthasar here to some extent (*Church Dogmatics*, 4/1, 132, 299, 305,

310, 323-324, 329, 458). See John O' Donnell, *Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 79-98. See Oden, *The World of Life*, 437-450, for an overview of positions, and Rahner and Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. “Descent into Hell.”

¹⁰⁸ Saward, *The Mysteries of March*, 47-48. Recall William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 2.1.286-287 (Cambridge):

Mercy is not itself that oft looks so,

Pardon is still the burse of second woe....

(Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, Theological Dramatic Theory, vol. 1, *Prolegomena*, trans. Graham Harrison [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988], 465-478 [“Excursus: Shakespeare and Forgiveness”], esp. 466).

¹⁰⁹ *Christian Prayer*, 173 – quoted by Thompson, *The Struggle For Theology's Soul*, 198.

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