

PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE LIFE  
IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S *DE TRINITATE*  
AND SELECTED CONTEMPORARY HOMILETIC DISCOURSES

by

Mary Noreen Rita Marrocco

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## ABSTRACT

Mary Noreen Rita Marrocco  
University of St. Michael's College, Ph.D., 2000

### PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE LIFE IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S *DE TRINITATE* AND SELECTED CONTEMPORARY HOMILETIC DISCOURSES

The notion that humans are to become divine because God first became human has been a part of Christian theology throughout the centuries. Today the concept is more familiar to the Eastern than to the Western Christian world. Yet in the Latin patristic world, it is not unknown. Evident in the theology of St. Augustine is the notion that humans are destined to participate in divine life, and that this ultimate destiny deeply affects human life on earth. Recent scholarship has given serious attention to the concept in his thought; but not all agree that a real concept of deification is compatible with Augustine's theology in particular, or Western theology in general.

This dissertation contributes to that work by examining the concept of participation in divine life in Augustine's *De Trinitate*. The concept is thoroughly part of his exposition, in this work, of the trinitarian God, and the human relationship to the divine Trinity. Divine-human participation is the goal reached in eternal life, but already begun on earth for those who receive it; major components of the notion, and its particularly trinitarian dimension, are examined. The dissertation also examines this concept in some homiletic discourses contemporary to *De Trinitate*, to delineate the shape and contours of the notion in Augustine's work over this period. The homiletic discourses, unlike *De Trinitate*, show some explicit use of the term "deification."

Findings from all these texts show that participation in divine life is an important element of Augustine's thought during this time, of which the characteristics and dimensions can be determined. This work should help to identify and place the concept within Latin Christian theology, and therefore within the broader context of East-West relations.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	vii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER	
1 CRITICAL VIEWS OF PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE IN AUGUSTINE .....	7
2. PRE-AUGUSTINIAN BACKGROUND ON PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE .....	34
2.1 Philosophy of the Greco-Roman World .....	34
2.2 Western Theology Prior to Augustine .....	54
3. PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE IN AUGUSTINE'S <i>DE TRINITATE</i> .....	82
3.1 Introduction.....	82
3.1.1 Chronology, Structure and Purpose of <i>De Trinitate</i> .....	82
3.1.2 Detecting the Presence of Deification in <i>De Trinitate</i> .....	86
3.2 Meaning and Role of Deification in <i>De Trinitate</i> .....	87
3.2.1 Perfection of the Image and Participation in Divine Life.....	87
3.2.2 Deification in the Theological Agenda of <i>De Trinitate</i> as a Whole.....	98
3.2.3 Key Components of Deification.....	108
3.2.4 The Trinitarian Dimension of Deification in <i>De Trinitate</i> .....	135
3.3 Summary and Conclusion.....	165

4.	<b>PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE IN SELECTED CONTEMPORARY HOMILETIC DISCOURSES.....</b>	<b>170</b>
4.1	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>170</b>
4.2	<b>Analysis of Texts.....</b>	<b>180</b>
4.3	<b>Summary and Conclusion.....</b>	<b>233</b>
	<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>243</b>
	<b>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>253</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AM *Augustinus Magister: Congrès International Augustinien*, Paris, 21-24 septembre 1954. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1954.
- ANF *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1951-.
- Aug-Lex* *Augustinus-Lexikon*. Edited by Cornelius Mayer. Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1996-.
- BA *Bibliothèque Augustinienne: Oeuvres de saint Augustin*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949-.
- CCL *Corpus Christianorum, series Latina*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-.
- CSEL *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*. Vienna: Tempsky, 1865-.
- DS *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique: doctrine et histoire*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1937-.
- EEC *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Edited by Everett Ferguson. New York and London: Garland, 1997.
- Exp *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, by S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847.
- FOTC *The Fathers of the Church*. Edited by R. J. Deferrari. Washington, DC: Catholic University, 1947-.
- NPNF *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Oxford; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.
- MA *Miscellanea Agostiniana: Testi e Studi pubblicati a cura dell'Ordine Eremitano di S. Agostino nel XV centenario della morte*. Rome: Vatican, 1930-31.

- PL            *Patrologia cursus completus*, ed. J. P. Migne: *Ser. latina*
- SC            *Sources chrétiennes*. Paris: Cerf, 1942-.
- SPM          *Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia*. Edited by C. Mohrmann and J. Quasten.  
Utrecht: Spectrum, 1950-.
- SS            *Selected Sermons of St. Augustine*, translated and edited by Quincy Howe, Jr.  
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

To my parents, Dominic and Rita Marrocco

## INTRODUCTION

In Christian patristic theology, the notion that God became human in order that humans might become divine was elaborated as early as Irenaeus; hints of it reach as far back as Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr and Tatian.<sup>1</sup> Eastern Christian theologians of the early Church developed this concept, most commonly referred to as *theosis* (in English, deification or divinization), over against pagan, political and philosophical notions of the Greco-Roman world. The ubiquity of the concept in that world, and the ease with which Christians entered into such categories of thinking, were quite natural in an age and an intellectual environment which had long been imbued with the idea that a human, or humans in general, were destined to union with the deity.<sup>2</sup> Yet, though the Christian Fathers were aware of their own philosophical borrowing, they saw important distinctions between the Christian and philosophical versions of *theosis*. In Christian thought, the distinction between Creator and creature became a formative aspect of the concept, which ultimately rejected any notion of the human person as innately or naturally divine. Indeed, Christian *theosis* turns on the tension between the distinctness of divine and human natures on the one hand, and on the other, the promise that humanity will be united with divinity as the real content of salvation. The concept of *theosis* was shaped, in the early Church, by developments in

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<sup>1</sup> In these early authors, the notion is present but not yet the vocabulary (see Irénée-H. Dalmais, "Divinisation: Patristique Grecque," DS 3, cols. 1376-1377). Ignatius of Antioch calls his readers "bearers of God" (*theophoroi*), Ephesians 9:12; "filled with God" (*theou gemete*), Magnesians 14:1; "participants in God" (*theou matechete*), Ephesians 4:2; he promises them "a part in God" (Polycarp 6:1) and "incorruptibility of life eternal" (Polycarp 2:3). Justin Martyr says that the just are called to enjoy in the society of God incorruptibility and impassibility (*Apology* I, 10.2); and Ps. 82:6 shows that God wants humans to be like him, immortal and impassible (*Dialogue with Trypho* 124). For Tatian, humans were made "in the image of immortality ... so that participating in the lot of God, he will possess immortality" (*Oratio ad Graecos* 7). It is Irenaeus of Lyons who makes explicit what has been implicit, and who sets the path of the tradition, though he himself uses sparingly the vocabulary of deification; Irenaeus is also the first among ecclesiastical writers to distinguish between image and likeness.

<sup>2</sup> *Theosis* was present and influential in both the Greek and Roman cultures, political structures and religious milieus. The Greek and Roman concepts influenced one another, as well as being influenced by Eastern and Middle Eastern thought and practice. However, there are distinctions between the Greek and Roman concept and reception of *theosis*, as evidenced in their different adaptations of the mystery religions and of the practice of ruler worship.

christology and trinitarian theology; participation in the divine *trinitarian* life is its uniquely Christian meaning.

In its expression of the meaning of human salvation, *theosis* has been a constant presence in Eastern theology, though not uniform nor clearly defined. By contrast, deification and divinization are terms which may strike the Western ear as alien or even shocking in their way of expressing the meaning of salvation.<sup>3</sup> Whereas in the East the concept has taken root and become an integral part of the tradition, the tendency in the West has been distance from and discomfort with the notion. The latter situation, however, reflects not the absence of deification thought in the West, but only its dormancy. The history of Western theology does in fact involve deification, both explicitly and implicitly, much more than is commonly realized or studied.

The degree to which a Western view of deification could be accepted by the East is no clearer than the extent to which the Eastern concept of deification is in keeping with the Western notion of salvation. In East-West relations, one must seriously ask, from the Eastern side, whether a notion so inextricably intertwined with the whole Eastern ethos, spirituality, liturgy and theology can be retained in its integrity within a system and understanding distinct from itself, or whether “deification” in Western theology is intrinsically anomalous. From the Western side, some question whether deification is a valid Christian soteriology at all; others, who do see it as valid or even necessary, ask how it supplements or is supplemented by the Western understanding of redemption. Hence the concept itself can be seen either as a point of division between the two traditions (as has often been the case), or as a unique and fertile locus within which to explore more deeply what binds together and what differentiates these estranged sisters.

In order to pursue that exploration, this thesis focuses particularly upon the thought of Augustine of Hippo. The concept of deification appears in many places in Augustine’s writings, over the course of his whole career. He says variously that humans will become “partakers of

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<sup>3</sup> Use of the terms “Eastern” and “Western” can be somewhat misleading, since the realities they represent are not today distinguished on the basis of geography. Indeed, it is facile to refer to such a multivalent entity as Christianity as though it were bipartite. These terms will be used with caution, therefore, to designate broadly the traditions rooted in, respectively, the Eastern Roman Empire (associated with the Greek language and culture) and the Western Roman Empire (associated with the Latin).

divinity,” “partakers of immortality,” “partakers of eternity,” “sons of God” and “gods”; that they will “put on incorruption,” “see God,” “be adopted sons,” “be remade in” or “receive” his likeness, “be made equal to the angels”; that they are, in the eucharist, the body and blood of Christ; that they approach God by likeness and withdraw by unlikeness. Such expressions occur in diverse writings and literary genres of Augustine. They name the promise of salvation in terms of that which humans will become; and what they will become has to do with who God is. Augustine even uses, in a few instances, the Latin version “*deificare*” (and cognates) of the term so familiar to the Greek world, “*theopoiesis*,” as well as variants of “[*homines*] *dii facti sunt*” (Greek “*theoi genontai*”). Though he rarely uses the term itself, *deificatio* is an integral aspect of Augustine’s theology, illuminating his soteriology, anthropology, christology, eschatology, and ecclesiology. He sees human participation in divine life as the ultimate fulfillment for which humans are created. Sin, the barrier to this fulfillment, is broken by God in Christ, so that humans are able to enter into participation in divine life, which is their true destiny.<sup>4</sup>

The context in which I address Augustine’s concept of participation in divine life, or deification, is the relationship between Eastern and Western Christian theology, with its strange and painful mixture of familial bonds on the one hand, and mutual distrust, ignorance, suspicion, hatred and injury on the other.<sup>5</sup> Study of deification in Augustine’s theology has accelerated over the past decades, but closer analysis of particular texts in which the concept appears (explicitly and implicitly) will assist the East-West conversation about deification. As is all too often the case with Augustine, the tendency is to judge him on the basis of what has been said about him or derived from him, rather than on the evidence of his own work, despite his own concern that his teaching

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<sup>4</sup> The term “participation in divine life” is used to refer to the concept which takes expression in different ways in Augustine, including that of “deification.”

<sup>5</sup> Even the way in which contemporary Western theologians tend to approach the issue, versus the very different approach, presuppositions, and questions of current Eastern theology, shows the importance of finding ways to deal with the subject of deification. My analysis cannot hope to satisfy the queries of both traditions. The self-understanding of the theological endeavour, and the distinctiveness of approach, are critical issues in regard to East-West dialogue. Even in setting up the question, I have necessarily taken on certain limitations which will prejudice the outcome: my own background and understanding are Western. Such prejudice cannot perhaps be overcome, but surely can be mitigated, by being aware of it and open to critique in this regard.

be clear and clearly conveyed.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, a close reading and interpretation of selected texts of Augustine which bear on the concept of deification is the major object of this thesis. The method here employed is explicated in the terms and model provided by Bernard Lonergan.<sup>7</sup> The scope is restricted to the first of his two basic theological operations: *in oratione obliqua*, or harkening to the word, which is theology as listening rather than as speaking. Of his eight functional specialties, this thesis works particularly with the first two, Research and Interpretation, but also touches upon the third, History, and aims toward eliciting the Dialectic (the fourth functional specialty) towards which these lead.<sup>8</sup> Lonergan's division of the exegetical task has proven apt for the current study; it provides a framework which has been conducive to collecting the background data, identifying the questions to be asked of Augustine's texts, and reading and interpreting those texts with a view to clarifying and furthering the place of deification in Augustine, in the Christian tradition, and in the contemporary ecumenical endeavour.

This thesis proceeds in three steps. First, I lay out the data relevant to the examination of the question. Thus, in Chapters 1 and 2, I gather the data relating to deification. Second, my interpretation of the selected data comprises Chapters 3 and 4, the heart of this thesis. Third, this interpretation helps to illuminate both the history of the question, as I make my conclusions about deification in Augustine, and the dialectic which emerges from the study, as I consider the conflicts within the topic, look towards a "comprehensive viewpoint" (in Lonergan's expression), and indicate the elements of the obstacles involved in achieving such a viewpoint.

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<sup>6</sup> As John Rist observes, "he seems to have recognized himself as a transitional figure.... As one who realized, while the Vandals besieged Hippo in 430, that for coming generations he had largely replaced the past, or at least had become its conduit, Augustine wanted above all to make sure that what they had inherited through him was doctrinally sound, indeed that it was the clearest and most unambiguous presentation of Christian thinking and the 'Catholic faith' that could be achieved." John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: University, 1994), p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> These eight functional specialties are described in Lonergan, *Method*, Chapter 5, pp. 125-145.

I begin in Chapter 1 by describing the notion of deification in Christian thought, and examining scholarly thought on the concept in the theology of Augustine. This chapter highlights both the reservations some critics have toward attributing deification to Latin theology in general and to Augustine in particular, and also the ways in which other critics have understood deification to be present there, its characteristics, and its place within his theology. Chapter 2 looks at the background to Augustine's concept of deification; Section 2.1 considers philosophical notions, Section 2.2 the thought of Latin Christian theologians prior to Augustine. I conclude these two chapters by expressing the threefold question at the heart of deification.<sup>9</sup> Chapter 3 turns to the work of Augustine himself, examining his *De Trinitate* to determine the presence, nature and characteristics of his concept of participation in divine life. Examination of this single text allows me to isolate the concept and show its significance, its function and its defining elements, in a work which does not use the term deification at all. Chapter 4 extends this analysis to the larger context of Augustine's thought, by examining selected homiletic discourses which were composed over the same time period as *De Trinitate*. This chapter helps to show how Augustine expresses and employs the concept of deification in several contemporaneous texts, which are pastoral in nature; some of them employ the term *deificare* in one form or another. My Conclusion will consider the distinctiveness of Augustine's approach to deification, and the place of that concept in his theology. It will also round out this thesis by asking how Augustine's notion can speak to the Eastern concept of deification, and how these two horizons might meet at this notion. This query will yield further questions and so indicate the next steps that might be taken towards dialectic which, as Bernard Lonergan expresses it, "aim[s] ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceed[s] toward that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions."<sup>10</sup> In this way, potential avenues toward useful

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<sup>9</sup>Lonergan speaks of discovering and correcting the "interlocking of questions and answers" by which to enclose a topic as part of the task of Interpretation; "the key to success," he observes, "is to keep adverting to what has not yet been understood, for that is the source of further questions, and to hit upon the questions directs attention to the parts or aspects of the text where answers may be found." Lonergan, *Method*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 130.

discussion and exploration of this notion, not as an obstacle but as a vehicle to union between East and West, will have been indicated.

CHAPTER 1  
CRITICAL VIEWS OF  
PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE IN AUGUSTINE

The theological concept of deification is an intriguing path to trace within the Christian tradition, because it is so rarely the focus of direct attention, yet upon close inspection proves so integral an element of that tradition. This is a relatively well-acknowledged truth in Eastern theology, but a comparatively hidden one in the West, where, however, it is being brought steadily to light.

The concept of deification<sup>1</sup> is widely present in the Eastern Christian tradition through the fourth and fifth centuries, being more or less explicit from as far back as one cares to look. Though not treated explicitly, it is a central theme of patristic anthropology.<sup>2</sup> The availability of the terminology, and the ready accessibility of the concept, are traceable to the prevalence of thought about deification within religions and philosophies extant in the milieu of these Eastern Christian theologians. In Christianity, as George Schurr observes, the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Lampe's lexicon interprets the verb *theopoieo* as "make into a god; deify; divinize," the corresponding noun *theopoiesis* as "deification; making divine," and the noun *theosis* (also infrequently *apotheosis*) as "deification, divinization." The two nouns seem to be used in patristic literature interchangeably, or at least without consistency in choosing one over the other; *theosis* first appears later than *theopoiesis*. Clement of Alexandria, in the second century, introduced to Christian literature the verb form, *theopoiein*. G.W.H. Lampe, ed., "Theosis," *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), pp. 192, 630, 649.

<sup>2</sup> David L. Balas, "Divinization," EEC, Vol. 1, p. 338; though, as Martikainen notes, while *theosis* is in the East the central concept for expressing salvation, it is not the only one. Jouko Martikainen, "Man's Salvation: Deification or Justification? Observations on Key-Words in the Orthodox and the Lutheran Tradition," *Sobornost* 7 (1976): 181.

deification uses Hellenistic language without religious commitment to it.<sup>3</sup> The idea of union with the divine, of immortality as a real promise held out to humans, and of interpenetration of the human and divine worlds, was not new or startling. Yet the content and meaning of the concept as used by Christians is unique in certain aspects: the distinction between human and divine, complete dependence of humans upon God, need of God's invitation and grace, fulfillment in *theosis* of that which was given at creation but lost in the fall, and ecclesiological emphasis. The completely personal nature of deification in Christian thinking stands out from the other notions, for even where the latter envisage anthropomorphic or personal gods, nevertheless for them deification is more a statement of the potential in humanity than of divine grace. Most clearly, however, the distinctness of the trinitarian God shapes Christian deification thinking, for it is to this inherently relational God that the human person will be united and it is the divine relationship, not the divine substance, which is the offer held out to humanity.<sup>4</sup>

Christian anthropology, envisioning the human as not innately divine but innately bent towards the divine, contributes to the distinctness of the Christian view of deification.

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<sup>3</sup> George M. Schurr, "On the Logic of Ante-Nicene Affirmations of the Deification of the Christian," *Anglican Theological Review* 51 (1969): 103.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this thesis, use of masculine pronouns in reference to God will be adopted. This choice is made for the sake of clarity of expression, but with awareness of its limitations and difficulties. For humans, I prefer to use a gender-neutral translation, but awkward English constructs can sometimes result, and at times caution over such gender concerns can even inadvertently blunt or blur significant theological issues. The classic formulation of *theosis* uses, in Greek, *anthropos*, and in Latin *homo*, but the English language has as yet no easy equivalent to these terms. Edmund Hill (*Sermons III/5*, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle [New Rochelle, NY: New City, 1992], p. 210, n. 2), in regard to his translation of S. 166, acknowledges the particular difficulty of translating inclusively the word *homo* in Augustine. Hill concludes that, in this case, an inclusive translation would excessively obscure Augustine's use of the term *homo*, upon which much of the sermon's meaning turns. The *theosis* formula plays upon the relationship among the creation of humanity, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the consequent renewal of humanity; the question of the interrelationship between female and male—in creation in God's image, in relationship to Jesus, and in the eschaton—is present in the concept of *theosis*. Translating *homo/anthropos*, in this formulation, as "human" rather than "man" is linguistically and theologically appropriate; but it is with regret that I lay aside in this thesis the question, in the concept of *theosis*, of the relationship between male and female, which is ripe for discussion, particularly as it pertains to the thought of Augustine.

Despite acceptance of the *concept* of deification (*theosis*), many patristic writers seem less than comfortable with the *term* itself, or at least prefer not to over-use it. This is sometimes because the term is non-scriptural, sometimes because it is dangerous and subject to misinterpretation, if not mockery: “On one occasion, Gregory [of Nazianzus, in *Or.* 2.7] even said that there were some who ‘laughed at him’ when he described our divine origin and destiny in terms of ‘deification.’”<sup>5</sup> Georges Florovsky calls *theosis*, in patristic use, “a hard word, but ... the only adequate phrase to denote that intimacy of fellowship with God which is disclosed in Christ for the believers.”<sup>6</sup> Donald Winslow refers to it as a metaphor “to express something that could ultimately be expressed only by God”: namely, a dynamic relation between humanity and God, which tells us about God himself, dependent upon God’s initiative, analogous but not identical to the deification of Christ’s human nature.<sup>7</sup> George Schurr notes that, to express their idea of participation in God through Christ, the Fathers found that “only odd language would do.”<sup>8</sup> All of this reminds the Western theologian of the complexity and daring of the term, of which the patristic writers were well aware; and of its pregnancy, for it is a word charged with meaning and already bearing within itself an understanding of the process of salvation history, of anthropology, christology, and the relationship between God and humanity.

Though the Greek Fathers do not define deification, they do present a “well-defined set of images” to characterize it.<sup>9</sup> A.N. Williams provides a succinct guide to their “quasi-technical” vocabulary: participation, union with God, and adoptive sonship are virtually synonymous with

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<sup>5</sup> Donald F. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation: A Study in Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979), pp. 180-181.

<sup>6</sup> Georges Florovsky, “Lamb of God,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 4 (1951): 19.

<sup>7</sup> Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, pp. 188-189, 198.

<sup>8</sup> Schurr, “Logic,” p. 105.

deification; terms such as grace, virtue and knowledge show ways in which holiness grows. The mystical vocabulary of light, contemplation, glory and vision, Williams notes, is used in a less integrated way in medieval and modern theology, and in Western theology tends to be associated with mysticism and asceticism, and hence “largely ignored” by systematic theology. The characteristic elements of deification are: a close connection between theology and anthropology, meaning that the human person cannot be understood except in reference to God; a doctrine of God which balances two poles, namely, the distinctness between Creator and creature on the one hand, and God’s invitation to real communion with his creatures on the other; and a “seamlessness” between this life and the next which leaves, ultimately, no distinction between sanctification and eschatology.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the simple definition of *theosis* given by Winslow—“an abiding relation of intimacy between us and God”—is as apt a summary as any.<sup>11</sup>

The patristic notion, which draws on philosophical concepts (especially that of participation), developed over against mythical, religious and political concepts of deification; nevertheless, the Greek Fathers see the notion as firmly rooted in Scripture. Deification is the fulfillment of the Genesis text (1:26) describing humans as created in God’s image and likeness; other Old Testament passages were interpreted as promising deification (Ps. 82:6, “You are sons of the Most High God,” being an important text; likewise Jn. 10:34, in which Jesus quotes this text). In the New Testament, especially in Johannine and Pauline literature, the themes of adoptive sonship, imitation of God, transformation through union with Christ, and humanity as

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<sup>9</sup> A. N. Williams, “Deification in the *Summa Theologiae*: A Structural Interpretation of the *Prima Pars*,” *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 221.

<sup>10</sup> A. N. Williams, “Deification,” pp. 220-221.

<sup>11</sup> Winslow, *Dynamics of Salvation*, p. 199. Winslow goes on to add that the intimacy of this relation encourages Gregory of Nazianzus to speak anthropomorphically of God, but also “theomorphically” of humans.

destined to union with God and participation in immortality and incorruption, undergird the concept of deification.<sup>12</sup> The most explicit New Testament text (though in fact less important than John and Paul) is the reference in 2 Pt. 1:4 to humans becoming “partakers in the divine nature.” In Eastern patristic thought, the notion of deification is key to an integrated system of thought and understanding, not only theologically but also in terms of a whole way of life. It is picked up by subsequent Eastern tradition, most notably by Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century, whose interpretation of the patristic view has been critical in shaping Orthodox *theosis* theology. In the present century, the concept is significant in Eastern theology, liturgy, prayer and ecclesiology. It is partly for this reason that the attempt to understand deification in Western theology may strike the Eastern Christian as intrinsically anomalous, if not downright heretical and doomed to failure. Augustine, in particular, so firmly associated with the whole Western system of theology, is automatically suspect with regard to any notion of deification.

By its silence, the overwhelming theological verdict is that deification<sup>13</sup> is at best a minor concept in Augustine in particular, as in Western theology in general. Amid the vast quantity of words written about Augustine, and the significant quantity written about deification, very few indeed deal specifically with the intersection between the two. Bardy, in the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*,<sup>14</sup> makes the astute comment that one could not compose a Latin parallel to Jules Gross' work, *La divinisation du chrétien d'après les pères grecs*, although the

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<sup>12</sup> Key Pauline texts: Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 8:9. Jules Gross finds that Augustine and the Latin tradition tended more to exploit the Pauline concept, the Greeks the Johannine; therefore, the Latins tend towards “le terme plus sobre de grâce.” the Greeks toward a “concrète et vivante” expression of the mystery at the heart of reality. Jules Gross, *La divinisation du chrétien d'après les pères grecs: contributions historiques à la doctrine de la grâce* (Ph.D. diss., Paris, Gabalda, 1938), p. vi. Gross also sees deification as a link between Hellenism and Christianity, though the Fathers saw themselves as firmly Christian, and distinct from though influenced by extra-Christian sources.

<sup>13</sup> It should be remembered that the focus is on the *concept*, not the term, deification.

concept is not absent from the Latin tradition. He points out that Augustine only occasionally uses the terms *deificare* and its cognates, and conjectures that he simply considers them too technical for his people. A theology of deification, Bardy feels, would be difficult to reconcile with Augustine's awareness of human weakness; for if the human heart, without grace, can choose only evil, then how can humans participate in the divine nature? William Rusch observes that, though Augustine knows of *theosis*, attempts should not be made to fit the concept into an Augustinian framework.<sup>15</sup> Like the Eastern Fathers, Rusch notes, he is influenced by Ps. 82[LXX 81]:6 ("I once said, 'You too are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you'"); but unlike them, he links deification with justification, by which God makes humans his children, and hence gods by adoption. William Babcock, in his *Christ of the Exchange*, analyzes what he calls the "exchange" theme, which he finds prevalent in Augustine, indeed a "fundamental soteriological motif" in the commentaries on the Psalms. He is focusing here on Augustine's attachment to the theme of humans partaking in the divine life through Christ; in Babcock's words, "God has become a participant in our earthly situation so that we might finally become participants in his eternal being."<sup>16</sup> He does not, however, equate this theme with the Greek concept of deification, or what he calls the "realistic-mystic" doctrine of redemption.<sup>17</sup> Babcock's study, therefore, is avowedly not looking for a theology of deification in the Greek

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<sup>14</sup>Gustave Bardy, "Divinisation: Chez les pères latins," DS 3, cols. 1389-1398.

<sup>15</sup>William G. Rusch, "How the Eastern Fathers Understood what the Western Church Meant by Justification," *Justification by Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII*, ed. G. George Anderson et al. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), p. 142.

<sup>16</sup>William S. Babcock, *The Christ of the Exchange: A Study in the Christology of Augustine's Enarrationes in Psalmos* (Ph.D. diss., Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1971), p. 24.

<sup>17</sup>He draws on Johannes Gottschick, "Augustins Anschauung von den Erlöserwirkungen Christi" (*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, XI [1901] pp 97-213) and Otto Scheel, *Die Anschauung Augustins über Christi Person und Werk* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1901), and is in agreement with their conclusion that Augustine's exchange-theme is not to be identified with this Greek soteriology.

sense. Yet he does recognize that pre-conceptions about the theme, and about its relationship to both Eastern and Western soteriologies, have prevented systematic study of Augustine's distinctive viewpoint in this regard.

Where these scholars are cautious about looking for an Augustinian theology of deification, others are definitively negative. Certainly, Orthodox theology tends not to include "Blessed Augustine" in its study of deification. For the most part, this neglect stems not from a conscious decision about the presence or absence of such a theology in his thought, but simply from the presupposition that his authority either is less than that of the Greek Fathers, or is suspect or even heretical. From such a viewpoint, the question is virtually unaskable, since by definition Augustine is outside the Eastern theology which is requisite for a proper understanding of deification, and therefore the two are mutually exclusive.

Orthodox attitudes towards Augustine range from the extremely negative (considering him a heretic) to the more moderate view which holds him to be a blessed Father of the Church, lesser than those of the East and some of the West such as Ambrose. Seraphim Rose's explication<sup>18</sup> is helpful in outlining some of the barriers towards Eastern reception of Augustinian theology, and breaking down which may be valid and which rooted in misunderstanding or misinterpretation. His own view is that Augustine "is one with the simple Orthodox faithful, as well as with all the Holy Fathers of East and West who, whatever their various failings and differences in points of doctrine, had a single deeply Christian heart and soul,"<sup>19</sup> but that Augustine's theology is "overly-logical" and subject to exaggeration. In

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<sup>18</sup> Seraphim Rose, *The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church* (Platina, CA: Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1983); reprint of *The Orthodox Word*, 79 and 80 (1978): 67-86 and 126-141.

<sup>19</sup> Rose, *Blessed Augustine*, p. 40.

enumerating the exaggerations, Rose points particularly to Augustine's trinitarian theology (not so much in its details as in his use of the psychological analogy) leading to the "*filioque*," and to his over-emphasis of divine grace and concomitant under-emphasis of human freedom. On the other hand, he respects Augustine's mystical life, morality, life of repentance, and spirituality. This latter comment is relevant to the current question of deification, which involves the moral life of the human person as well as the mystical relationship (of contemplation, or vision) between God and the human being.

That much-debated element of mysticism in Augustine is touched upon also by Vladimir Lossky.<sup>20</sup> Lossky does not reach a firm conclusion in regard either to Augustine's mysticism or his apophaticism, but does find room for both. For Augustine, explains Lossky, the revealed name of God, "I Am Who Am," shows that Being-itself designates God. Yet the human approaches God by ignorance, in which "the knowledge of created reality serves to isolate our ignorance on the subject of God, while rejecting all that God is not"<sup>21</sup>; this is not quite saying that God is reached (or "touched") by ignorance, but at least that ignorance is part of the path towards vision of God. Questions to be explored in Augustine include: in just what such a vision consists, how it is attainable, by whom, whether before death or only after death, how the body is involved and what it means for the human being who so touches God—and whether God is ultimately unknowable, not merely because of human limitations but *in se*.

These questions about God's unknowability, the negative way, and the meaning of divine-human union both anthropologically and theologically, are central to any discussion of

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<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Lossky, "Elements of 'Negative Theology' in the Thought of St. Augustine," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 21 (1977): 67-75.

<sup>21</sup> Lossky, "Negative Theology," p. 69.

Western deification theology with regard to the Eastern perspective. This is reflected in Christos Yannaras' analysis of the barrier between Eastern and Western theologies.<sup>22</sup> Yannaras sees Western theology in general (especially through the effects of scholasticism) as creating a boundary between the transcendent and the worldly, separating God from the world and religion from life, because Western theology seeks to understand and "render manifest" revealed truths. Orthodox theology, he continues, is distinctive precisely by its insistence on a personal participation in revealed truth: the distinction between "energies" and "essence" is "the qualitative difference which distinguishes Orthodox theology from every other theology and spirituality."<sup>23</sup> This is exactly the point at which Myrrha Lot-Borodine and others discount the possibility of a proper deification theology in Western terms (and in Augustine in particular); for deification is precisely the participation of the *human* person in the divine life itself, without thereby robbing humanity of its distinctness or God of his transcendence. It is a key question ecclesologically as well as anthropologically and theologically, and represents the point at which an analysis of deification in Western theology is critically important to the conversation between East and West.

For Lot-Borodine, in her classic work on deification in the Greek Fathers, the concept is incompatible with Augustine's whole theological system. She opines that his trinitarian theology and his anthropology "forbid" any real notion of deification in him; he is directed, she says, "toward beatitude, not deification." Indeed, she sees here a focal point of the deep division between East and West, which is clear particularly in their anthropologies.<sup>24</sup> While always

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<sup>22</sup> Christos Yannaras, "Orthodoxy and the West," *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1970-71): 286-300.

<sup>23</sup> Yannaras, "Orthodoxy," p. 294.

<sup>24</sup> Myrrha Lot-Borodine, *La Déification de l'homme selon la doctrine des pères grecs* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), pp. 39-40.

proclaiming union with God as the human destiny, Eastern theology maintains also that this union cannot undo the fundamental distinction between Creator and creatures; this theology depends, she believes, upon the ultimate unknowability of God, the way of negative knowledge, and the distinction of God's essence from his energies. She sees Augustine as taking an apophatic approach which declares God's transcendence and unknowability, not in himself, but because of the imperfection of human nature: "Son mystère ne gît pas dans sa nature propre, mais dans l'imperfection de la nature humaine qui ne peut s'élever à l'intelligible pur."<sup>25</sup> Such a view, she feels, leaves no room for real consubstantiality or "*compénétration*" of divine and human natures, since the only kind of union it can envisage is for humans to come into God's very essence. Thus the distinction between Creator and creature would be abolished; in Eastern thought, the fundamental distinction is that between created and Uncreated, not that between spirit and matter. For her, the Greek distinction between God's energies and God's essence is the necessary context in which deification is to be understood; in its absence, Western thought simply cannot have a proper theology of deification.<sup>26</sup> In Augustine's case, that absence is clear and insuperable.

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<sup>25</sup> Lot-Borodine, *Déification*, p. 37, n. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1975), p. 210: one must distinguish God's unshareable essence from his energies, in order to grasp human participation in divine life. Such participation, which is essential to Eastern spirituality, implies both an openness in the divine being, and an open, dynamic and teleological concept of humanity (p. 211). Cf. also Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge and London: James Clarke, 1957), p. 70: we must recognize that God is both totally inaccessible (in his essence) and at the same time (in his energies) accessible, knowable and communicable, if we are to speak of humans as called to participate in the divine nature. Both Meyendorff and Lossky are in fundamental agreement with Lot-Borodine that deification theology can be orthodox only within the context of the Eastern distinction between essence and energies; or, at least, in the context of the view of humanity and divinity which is expressed in that distinction. Eastern understanding of essence and energies, the extent to which it is indebted to fourteenth-century Palamitic thought, and its relationship to Greek Patristic thought, are important issues from the Eastern point of view.

To Philip Sherrard, Augustine's whole anthropological system is based on a flawed perception of the independence of the rational soul from the body, further marred by his failure to distinguish between God's essence and energies; the combination forces Augustine to deny any possibility of the soul's direct participation in or intuition of God's essence. Hence one cannot speak of deification in Augustinian theology at all, since even the highest faculty which Augustine allows the soul (the intellect) is a created faculty, which therefore cannot participate in the divine (uncreated) essence but can only be illuminated from above in a light "which remains separate from it, and outside it, and in no way *becomes* its own nature."<sup>27</sup> Sherrard sees this alleged Augustinian error as a key moment in the general failure of Western theology to grasp "certain fundamental aspects of the full Christian doctrine,"<sup>28</sup> including that of the real nature of human communion with the divine.

Ben Drewery, a Western theologian reacting against such a view, would surely agree with both Lot-Borodine and Sherrard that Augustine has no deification theology, but from very different premises. Drewery, after giving his own review of the Greek doctrine of deification, concludes that the doctrine itself is not so much one of the riches of Orthodoxy as it is a misconception of biblical theology concocted out of "the old Greek errors" of philosophy<sup>29</sup> and the "medley of half-digested concepts and popular catch-words" of the early Christian centuries.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Philip Sherrard, *The Greek East and the Latin West* (London: Oxford University, 1959), p. 144.

<sup>28</sup>Sherrard, *Greek East*, p. 153.

<sup>29</sup>Ben Drewery, "Deification," *Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp*, Peter Brooks, ed. (London: SCM, 1975), p. 58.

<sup>30</sup>Drewery, "Deification," p. 54.

Yet deification is not so absent from Western thought as Drewery presumes.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to the above-mentioned scholars, others are quite ready to see in Augustine a capacity, implicit or explicit, for a theology of deification. Indeed, there has been over the past fifty years or so an increasing awareness of this theme in Augustine's works, both on its own terms and in reference to Augustine's theology of participation and of grace. The highlights of the discussion follow, showing some of this century's studies on Augustine's theology of deification, ways in which it is seen to be central and pervasive in him, and ways in which it has been found to be similar to and distinct from the Eastern concept.

Henri Rondet (1948)<sup>32</sup> remarks that all the Fathers begin with the doctrine of deification, and that this is clearly the case with Augustine; thus he presumes that deification, in a sense consistent with that of Eastern theology, is present in Augustine. He expresses the concept as meaning that by grace humans become children of God and partakers in divine nature, thus interrelating the three themes of participation, adoption, and deification. Deification occurs within and through the Church, beginning with baptism. Rondet sees a dual direction in it, God dwelling in humans but, even more so, humans coming to dwell in God. If deification is less emphasized in Augustine than in others, this is because his context, namely the Pelagian debate, led him to stress the theme of liberating grace. The latter also refers to human sharing in the divine nature, but stresses the dimension of cure, restoring the harmony which has been lost to the human soul. Rondet's discussion, then, sees deification as important in Augustine and

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<sup>31</sup> Bonner observes that deification, though overshadowed in the West by the doctrine of justification and sanctification, has influenced Latin mysticism as in Bernard of Clairvaux and John of the Cross. Gerald Bonner, "Augustine's Doctrine of Man: Image of God and Sinner," *Augustinianum* 24 (1984): 513.

<sup>32</sup> Henri Rondet, *The Grace of Christ: A Brief History of the Theology of Grace*, trans. Tad W. Guzie (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1948), pp. 91-95.

integrated with other central dimensions of his thought, especially that of grace, and also presumes its continuity with the Greek concept. He does not dwell on differences or distinctions in Augustine's understanding of deification, as opposed to that of the Greeks, but only mentions its relative hiddenness due to the needs to which he was responding.

J. A. A. Stoop published (1952, in Dutch) a doctoral thesis studying deification in Augustine's sermons and epistles.<sup>33</sup> Stoop concludes that deification is an important theme in Augustine, showing up frequently in his sermons and epistles, and in keeping both with the Greek tradition where it was common, and with the Latin tradition where it is present in the early Church, though it "sounds somewhat strange to a western mind nowadays."<sup>34</sup> He highlights the main points of Augustine's view: deification is equivalent to divine adoption, and is connected with illumination, justification, and participation in the divine life. It is an ecclesial reality, for it is in baptism and eucharist that this participation is achieved, and in the Church that humans become Christ. It is also eschatological, leading to immortality and incorruption. He enumerates these basic principles of the tenet of deification: the human is not divine by nature, but is created in God's image and likeness; the Fall obscured that image, but it is renovated by the Logos who unites humanity with God, and fully realized at the resurrection when full similarity to God and full vision of God will be achieved. He adds that deification is part of the whole Christian life. It is not a magical event, nor does it involve changing humans into the substance of God or becoming identical with God. Stoop also finds that deification is a spiritual

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<sup>33</sup>J. A. A. Stoop, *Die Deificatio Hominis in die Sermones en Epistulae van Augustinus* (Leiden: Drukkerij 'Luctor et emergo,' 1952). Stoop's thesis assesses Augustine's concept of deification, based on readings from various texts. Augustine's sermons are his most-quoted texts, followed by the letters; he refers much less frequently to commentaries on the Psalms. His methodology is not to provide a commentary on these texts, but to glean aspects

reality, culminating in a spiritual life which is the life of the angels. Thus Stoop concludes that the notion in Augustine is in harmony both with his own theology, and with that of the Eastern tradition. Later studies, however, were to draw out some distinctions between Augustine's deification and the Eastern view; the findings of these studies follow.

G.B. Ladner (1959) analyzes the concept of reform, and looks at Augustine in terms of "*reformatio*." In Augustine, he explains, creation already implies a conversion and reformation, since it involves the recalling to God of a creature which, drawn out of nothingness, found itself outside God.<sup>35</sup> Reform, or renewal, is a second turning to God from nothingness, this time from the nothingness of sin and evil to which humanity had turned; beginning with a new recall and conversion, this is renewal to "an even higher plane" than the creational.<sup>36</sup> As with creation, renewal is of both matter and spirit. The image of God in the human person resides in the rational soul, and as such can never be completely lost, despite original sin; however, it becomes increasingly dissimilar to God through sin, whereas growing similarity to God is the effect of the reformation of the image. This human reformation, or reassimilation to God, Ladner asserts to be deification, not through nature but through grace and adoption. He sees Augustine, however, as emphasizing deification less than the Greeks, and as having a fuller doctrine than they of divine grace, justification and sanctification; hence, he observes, the latter theology became dominant in western theological thought rather than that of *theosis-deificatio*.<sup>37</sup> He also feels

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of Augustine's notion of deification based on analysis of themes taken from the various texts, concisely summarized in his conclusion (translated into English).

<sup>34</sup>Stoop, *Deificatio Hominis*, p. 82.

<sup>35</sup>Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1959), p. 167.

<sup>36</sup>Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p. 170.

<sup>37</sup>Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p. 195.

that Augustine, much more than the Greeks, refers human renewal to the Passion and Crucifixion.<sup>38</sup>

Victor Capanaga (1962) asserts that, in Augustine's soteriology, deification is of considerable importance,<sup>39</sup> and that the difference between his deification theology and that of the Greek Fathers is not of substance, but only of accent. Capanaga sees Augustine as linking the three concepts of justification, deification, and adoptive sonship, all of which are fundamental to his doctrine of grace.<sup>40</sup> The deification promised and brought about by God is by grace and by gift, and by no means brings equality with God nor a pantheistic union with God, unlike the deification of greed, which seeks equality with God, and to which both Lucifer and Adam fell subject. God's work is clearly contrasted with that of his creatures; deification, justification and sonship are the work of God, in which human creatures participate, and in which the body as well as the soul is glorified. The result is a "relationship of intimacy" between Christ and Christians.<sup>41</sup> Capanaga also sees deification as related to participation, which is fundamental to Augustine's philosophy of deifying grace<sup>42</sup> and which maintains the distinction between God and creature; human participation in divinity is founded upon God's participation in humanity in Christ. The human person has a radical capacity for the divine (*capax Dei*), stemming from his creation as image of God. The "highest heritage" of deification in Augustine, according to Capanaga, is vision of God; being, seeing and knowing are three levels of participation, of which seeing is the highest. Full participation in these constitutes eternal life

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<sup>38</sup> Ladner, "St Augustine's Conception of the Reformation of Man to the Image of God," AM, Vol. 2, p. 868.

<sup>39</sup> Victor Capanaga, "*La deificación en la soteriología agustiniana*," AM, Vol 2, pp. 745-754.

<sup>40</sup> Capanaga, "*Deificación*," p. 748.

<sup>41</sup> Capanaga, "*Deificación*," p. 749.

<sup>42</sup> Capanaga, "*Deificación*," p. 751.

with God; it is by loving God that humans become divine.<sup>43</sup> Thus Capanaga, who affirms quite strongly the reality and importance of deification in Augustine, astutely highlights some of its main elements and its interrelationship with key notions in Augustine's soteriology.

The insightful study by Georges Folliet (1962) of Augustine's Ep. 10 looks at its provocative phrase "*deificari in otio*."<sup>44</sup> Folliet disagrees with earlier scholars who do not consider the expression particularly relevant to the theological theme of deification in Augustine.<sup>45</sup> Though he agrees that here it cannot have the later, full theological meaning of deification, "elevation to the supernatural order by grace,"<sup>46</sup> the letter does speak of human intimacy with God and how this is to be brought about. Folliet concludes that the expression as used in this early letter refers to a process of interior conversion, asceticism, and freedom from passions, which is preparation for death. Folliet finds here the double theme of retreat and purification, by which the soul is invited to ascent gradually to union with God; this is reminiscent of Neoplatonism and draws on Plato's appeal, in *Theaetetus*, to flee this world and assimilate oneself to the gods (*homoiosis theou*). He concludes that the expression in Ep. 10 refers to the human goal of becoming like God, in the Platonic sense of *homoiosis theou* which Augustine found in Porphyry; therefore, that he has a common source with and is strongly influenced by Porphyry. Folliet concludes, then, that "*deificari in otio*" is not simply the philosopher's peaceful repose in death, but rather bespeaks the whole process of virtues and

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<sup>43</sup> Capanaga, "*Deificación*," p. 753.

<sup>44</sup> Georges Folliet, "*Deificari in Otio: Augustin, Epistula 10,2*," *Recherches augustiniennes* 2 (1962): 225-236.

<sup>45</sup> Folliet refers to the following three critics: W. Thimme, *Augustins geistige Entwicklung in den ersten Jahren nach seiner "Bekehrung," 386-391* (Berlin, 1908), p. 29, n. 1 (reprint, Berlin: Scientia Aalen, 1973); Stoop, *Die Deificatio Hominis*, p. 48; and G. Bardy, "Divinisation," DS 3, cols. 1390-1391. Bardy's opinion is that "le sens du mot *deificari* paraît encore très général, on peut même dire philosophique, car il n'est pas mis en rapport avec les mystères chrétiens. Le fait s'explique si l'on pense à la date de la lettre," before Augustine's ordination in 391, and that it is addressed to a friend "aussi féru qui lui, sinon plus, des problèmes purement humains."

purification by which the philosopher becomes like God. Neither, however, does it give the primary role to Christ and to the grace of God, which Augustine will later find indispensable. At this point in his career, Folliet explains, Augustine did not yet have a full appreciation of Christ's grace, and still thought (in common with the philosophers) that the human sage could, on his own and without need of divine grace, become assimilated to God. This article is helpful in situating the notion of deification in the development of Augustine's thought, especially his christology and soteriology.

Roland Teske has reviewed three other critical references to this passage.<sup>47</sup> Of these, Fritz Van der Meer<sup>48</sup> reads Augustine as deciding, selfishly and presumptuously, to free himself from business in order to devote himself to becoming like God, and urging Nebridius to do the same. André Mandouze, comparing this letter with the Cassiciacum ideal, finds it a considerable advance, something of an interim stage between Augustine's early vision and his more mature sense of a monastic way of life.<sup>49</sup> The view of George Lawless is in substantial agreement with that of Mandouze. Lawless sees *deificari in otio* as involving the stillness of thought (not of inactivity), simplicity of heart, a willingness to carry the yoke of Christ, and acceptance of divine adoption. He considers it an advance over the philosophical ideal of leisure, and "the seeds of the future bishop's mature thoughts on contemplation."<sup>50</sup> For his part, Teske disputes Folliet's conclusion, judging the contemplative ideal to which Augustine points in the expression *deificari*

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<sup>46</sup> Folliet, "*Deificari*," p. 226.

<sup>47</sup> Roland J. Teske, "Augustine's *Epistula X*: Another Look at *Deificari in Otio*," *Augustinianum* 32 (1992): 289-299.

<sup>48</sup> Fritz van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: The Life and Work of a Father of the Church*, trans. Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 209.

<sup>49</sup> André Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1968), pp. 206-207.

<sup>50</sup> George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 51.

*in otio* to be a Christian, not a Neoplatonic, ideal. The intent of the term in this context is to indicate the elevation to which Christians aspire, and which can be attained, Augustine still believes, via the path of contemplation charted by the philosophers. Thus, this use of the expression *deificare* is in keeping with the whole direction of Augustine's thought in which the goal of Christian living is to become children of God through contemplation. It is far from Augustine's mature thought on the matter, and lacks distinctively Christian elements, but Teske feels the negative argument is not sufficient, given the context, to conclude that its meaning is purely philosophical (Porphyrian).

Vernon Bourke remarks that participation, though frequently referred to by Augustine, has been up to his time (1964) very little studied.<sup>51</sup> He observes that Augustine uses the notion in at least two ways: in regard to human participation in divine attributes, and as God's sharing in that which is human. The former is analogical: humans are not blessed in themselves, but receive beatitude by participating in God's blessedness; the same is true in regard to wisdom (*sapientia*), likeness (*similitudo*), and other divine perfections, and to participation in God himself. The latter sense is a special, particular instance, namely the Incarnation, in which God chooses to share the lower being of humanity. In both ways, Bourke finds, participation is a strong theme in Augustine; the dual direction, which is the essence of the exchange theme, is an important element of Augustine's deification theology.

Patricia Wilson-Kastner (1976) picks up this idea, among others, in her discussion of grace and participation in Augustine.<sup>52</sup> She provides a very clear overview of Greek Christian

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<sup>51</sup>Vernon J. Bourke, *Saint Augustine's View of Reality* (Villanova: Villanova University, 1964), pp. 117-123.

<sup>52</sup>Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Grace as Participation in the Divine Life in the Theology of Augustine of Hippo," *Augustinian Studies* 7 (1976): 135-152.

anthropology, based on the idea of participation, and its theology of deification which is rooted in the creation of humanity in God's image and likeness. She seeks to show that a theology of participation in the divine nature is just as basic to Augustine as to the Greeks, and highlights similarities and distinctions between the two approaches. Though her focus, like that of Bourke, is on participation, she sees that concept as amounting to deification.<sup>53</sup> She finds two basic similarities in the theology of Augustine and that of the Greek Fathers: grace seen as deification, partaking in the divine nature, and the restoration of the divine image and likeness given humans at creation; the key to all of this is the incarnate Christ, who deifies by taking on humanity. She adds three points of distinction between them. First, Augustine stresses the role of the Church in this deifying, sanctifying movement, whereas the Greeks emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit (not an absolute distinction, but a difference of emphasis). Second, the Greeks strongly emphasize human freedom of choice, so that the reality of sin and mortality do not prevent the human from freely choosing to accept or reject God. Augustine, on the other hand, increasingly sees grace as simply given by God, not chosen by humans, and as required even in order for humans to accept his grace. Only the elect, those predestined to salvation, are able to do so. Wilson-Kastner goes so far as to observe: "Only the Greek elements of deification separate Augustine's theology of grace from Luther's, and keep it from being an arbitrary will decreeing a forensic justification,"<sup>54</sup> thus highlighting the importance of understanding deification as an element of Augustine's theology. The third distinction she sees is that Augustine's notion of

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<sup>53</sup>She tends to speak of deification and participation as though they were interchangeable: "Deification, or participation in the divine life," is her way of referring to the concept in reference to Gregory of Nazianzus (Wilson-Kastner, "Grace," p. 137); and she finds "the notion of deification or participation in the divine nature" in Augustine (p. 144).

<sup>54</sup>Wilson-Kastner, "Grace," p. 152.

grace is much less personal than that of the Greek Fathers, less a relationship between God and humans than an instrument used by God to shape those he calls to himself. Her analysis helps to pinpoint the importance of the related concepts of participation and deification both in understanding Augustine's own theology, and in its relationship to Greek theology.

Rowan Williams includes Augustine in his article on "Deification" for the *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. He points to *De Trinitate* as containing the idea of deification by means of perfect relation with God; for the final restoration of the image occurs when, by Christ's grace, the soul in reflecting on itself learns to see God, that is, to have God as its object.<sup>55</sup> In his *Christian Spirituality* (1979) Williams observes that "Augustine is not particularly fond of the familiar Greek language of deification and prefers to use the scriptural terminology of adoptive sonship through baptism to make the point about participation in the divine life"; we are "made gods" by justification.<sup>56</sup> He cites Augustine's ultimate conviction about the helplessness of the human spirit, and his relative unconcern for human freedom which he "comes close to denying," as areas which must distinguish him from the Greek Fathers.

Though Andrew Louth (1981)<sup>57</sup> does not speak explicitly of deification in Augustine, he does, like Ladner, discuss the reform of God's image in humanity, which can be accomplished only by God and which is a long process beginning with baptism and not ending in this life. Again like Ladner, he sees Augustine as emphasizing more strongly than the Greeks that the fulfillment will be accomplished only after death; Augustine speaks of ecstasy as a true but not

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<sup>55</sup>Rowan Williams, "Deification," *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield (SCM: 1983), p. 107.

<sup>56</sup> Rowan Williams, *Christian Spirituality: A Theological History from the New Testament to Luther and St John of the Cross* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), p. 81.

full vision of God in this life and a fleeting foretaste of what we will receive only after death. The first step is made in this life, but even that step is entirely dependent upon God, whose grace is seen in self-emptying and humility. Christ is the model and mediator who is essential to our union with God; only that self-emptying love of God, experienced in the incarnation, can awaken us to God's love. Thus humanity is revealed, not discovered, as God's image, and the human can begin to return towards God so as to begin to reflect him truly. The soul's longing for God, so strongly emphasized in Plotinus, is the "guiding principle" for Augustine also, for whom this restless longing is transformed by the Holy Spirit into our response to God's love.<sup>58</sup> This return has two elements, continues Louth: both turning to God in love of him, and coming to true knowledge of the self revealed by God's grace. The human, once made aware of being image of God, can become once again true image by coming to oneself, as "a spiritual being that contains and transcends the material order."<sup>59</sup> To Augustine, the Greek tendency to see humanity as "image of the Image," with Christ alone as true Image, is subordinationist. He sees Christ, not as image of, but as equal to, the Father; the image must be something other than God, namely, the rational human soul.<sup>60</sup> *Scientia*--external, sensible knowledge--is limited and limiting, and to be transcended, but not to be discarded. It is by *sapientia*, however--knowledge and contemplation of eternal reality--that such reality is known. To move from *scientia* to *sapientia*, following upon God's initiative, never our own, is our progress towards eternity. Again, the Incarnation is

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<sup>57</sup> Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 133-158.

<sup>58</sup> Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 134.

<sup>59</sup> Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 143.

<sup>60</sup> Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 146.

the indispensable means of our awakening and returning towards God, for it is within the temporal that the eternal is given.

Gerald Bonner has written several articles (1980's and 1990's) which deal with the conclusion of his "Augustine's Doctrine of Man": that Augustine's doctrine of the glorification of the image by deification "deserves more consideration than it commonly receives as a means of understanding the eternal destiny of the redeemed in Christ."<sup>61</sup> This doctrine at one and the same time emphasizes the great dignity of the human soul in its creation, the depth of its fall, and its renewal to a greater glory, while maintaining the absolute gulf between Creator and creature. Again, Bonner presents Augustine as "the Doctor of Participation and Deification, rather than Predestination and Grace."<sup>62</sup> He sees deification not as "added to his system as an afterthought, but as integral to the whole," and as comprising what is implied in the New Testament term *huiiothesia*, or adoptive sonship.<sup>63</sup> Though the term is rare in Augustine, the idea is not;<sup>64</sup> hence, he adds, one must argue not from the terminology but from the content. Bonner describes the essence of the doctrine in Augustine as human participation in God through Christ; even the fallen soul has a capacity for God and ability to participate in him--which is its only real happiness--yet it cannot accomplish this on its own, but only through the incarnation.<sup>65</sup> The Platonic idea of participation is influential, but for Augustine such participation can occur only

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<sup>61</sup>Bonner, "Doctrine of Man," pp. 513-514.

<sup>62</sup>Gerald Bonner, "Christ, God and Man, in the Thought of St Augustine," *Augustinianum* 24 (1984; reprint, *God's Decree and Man's Destiny: Studies on the Thought of Augustine of Hippo* [London: Variorum, 1987]): 293.

<sup>63</sup>Bonner, "Christ, God and Man," p. 289.

<sup>64</sup>In his whole corpus, "*deificare*" (or cognates) is used 18 times in twelve different works (including S. Mainz 13). Of these references, Bonner concludes, nearly half have no theological relevance to the concept (Gerald Bonner, "Augustine's Conception of Deification," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s.2 [1986]: 369, n. 6; cf. Bonner, "*Deificare*," *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 2, cols. 265-267). Those studied in this thesis are: En. 49.2 (3 references); Ss. 126.10.14, Mainz 13, and 166.4.4. The references in other works are: *de Patientia* 17.14.11; *Contra Faustum* 32.7.18; 32.19.14; *Contra Felicem* 1.13,30; *de Baptismo* 6.15; 24.21; *Contra Cresconium* 3.70.80; and *Civ.Dei* 9.15; 19.23.132; and *Ep.* 10.23.

through the mediation of Christ.<sup>66</sup> Again, Bonner points out the necessity of membership in the Body of Christ, for deification is an ecclesial process beginning with baptism and nourished by the eucharist.<sup>67</sup> Though Bonner places Augustine's deification theology on a par with that of both Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa, he also points out that the completely Western theology of justification is crucial to Augustine's use of the concept; and he notes, like Williams, Augustine's pessimism about human nature. For Augustine, deification is the privilege of the elect, not of the majority who belong to the *massa damnata*<sup>68</sup>; Greek deification theology would seem to Augustine too optimistic and too close to implying "a kind of natural divinity" of the soul.<sup>69</sup> Like others, Bonner points to *De Trinitate* as a primary locus for analyzing this concept in Augustine, for he sees the theme of this work as "the re-creation and glorification of the image of God in fallen man by the grace of Christ, by which men are made sons of God"<sup>70</sup>; and this, he believes, is what is expressed by the notion of deification.

Bernard McGinn (1991) sees Augustine as placing a strong emphasis on humanity's divine sonship, and concomitantly on the concept of deification, which he feels is in keeping with the Greek tradition: "Like Irenaeus, Athanasius, and other fathers, Augustine characterizes the ultimate purpose of the Incarnation as the divinization of humanity."<sup>71</sup> He concludes that, though the terms *deificare* and *deificatus* are rare in Augustine, the reality of his doctrine is

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<sup>65</sup>Bonner, "Christ, God and Man," p. 273.

<sup>66</sup> Gerald Bonner, "Deification, Divinization," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 265.

<sup>67</sup>Bonner, "Conception of Deification," p. 383.

<sup>68</sup>Bonner, "Conception of Deification," p. 385.

<sup>69</sup>Gerald Bonner, "The Spirituality of St. Augustine and its Influence on Western Mysticism," *Sobornost*, n.s.4 (1982): 157.

<sup>70</sup>Bonner, "Augustine's Doctrine of Man," p. 499.

<sup>71</sup>Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: The Presence of God, A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, Vol. 1 (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p. 251.

beyond question. This deification is not created participation, but adoptive sonship grounded in the life of the Trinity, made possible only by Christ in whom we can become what we were meant to be, namely, fully realized images of the Trinity. The process, begun in this life by membership in the Church, is completed only in heaven. Participation in the inner life of Father, Son and Spirit, which is the purpose of the creation of the image of God in humanity, is made possible by the trinitarian nature of our own inner being, as developed in *De Trinitate*. Through love is restored the divine likeness that makes possible the vision of God; this likeness is possible even for sinful humanity, by the restoration of the inner person created in God's image through the progress of love, and (indispensably) through Christ and the Church.

José Oroz Reta<sup>72</sup> (1992) presumes a strong presence of deification thought in Augustine's work. Like Rondet, Oroz Reta concludes that Greek and Latin deification theology have the same foundation, though with differences between them. He agrees that the Greek emphasis is on deification (or elevation, or glorification) whereas Augustine stresses the healing, liberating and reconciling of humanity, because he has such a strong sense of human illness and need of salvation. He sees these two elements as forming two aspects or stages of justification in Augustine, the negative moment of freedom from sins, and the positive moment of glorification by God's grace. Justification is the Augustinian term which encompasses all that is comprised in both. Thus Augustine emphasizes elements which the Greeks do not, yet both work from the same foundation. Both see deification as an "analogical participation," not in a pantheistic sense as though humanity really took on the essence of God, nor in the sense in which the first humans

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<sup>72</sup>José Oroz Reta, "De l'illumination à la déification de l'âme selon saint Augustin," *Studia Patristica 27: Papers presented at the eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1991*, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), pp. 364-382.

were tempted to “be like gods,” but by participation in God’s nature. Oroz Reta also sees the concepts of adoptive sonship, participation, and deification as intertwined with each other; Augustine puts the concept of justification with these three. However, the “infinite distance” between the Son of God and the adoptive sons is always maintained. It is also trinitarian, communicating not just divine attributes, but the particular traits of the divine persons. Deification involves a progress of illumination, coming not first of all from within but from the light which must first penetrate both sense and reason; conversion comes in successive moments of turning towards the light. The process of illumination leads towards a double knowledge, knowledge of self and knowledge of God. It is a progress in grace which culminates in deification, through participating analogically in God’s own being. An eschatological reality, it is fulfilled only in eternity when the human person is made immortal and receives beatific vision; it is also an ecclesial reality, since it begins with baptism. Oroz Reta sees the similarities between Augustinian and Greek theologies of deification as more important than the differences, but he does see the differences as real. He also perceives paganism, Greek philosophy, and Greek theology as the background for Augustine’s concept of deification. He considers deification to be pervasive and central in Augustine, in its interplay with participation, adoptive sonship, and justification. He sees these themes as part of an integrated vision of creation, healing and glorification leading to eternal life in union with God, through the Church and the sacraments, by which the human is able to receive God and participate in God’s attributes and even in divinity.

David Meconi (1996)<sup>73</sup> recalls some of the work done on participation theology in Augustine, including the concepts of image, likeness and deification.<sup>74</sup> He finds that participation helps Augustine to explain, first, that the essence of things is goodness, which comes from God. All things have existence insofar as they participate in Being itself, which is God; there is nothing apart from God's goodness. To partake of the very life of God is the being of the human person; this is deification. Second, evil is a privation; choosing a lesser over a higher good is the poverty of evil. Third, the goodness of a thing is proportionate to its being. Thus, he sees the concepts of participation and deification as both significant in Augustine's theology, though not identical; and he links them especially with the concepts of being, good and evil.

### Summary

These critical assessments of deification in Augustine identify some of the issues involved in the question and its development, especially over the past few decades. Among Western theologians, there is increasing awareness of the concept, in the Latin tradition as a whole and in Augustine in particular. Some are ready to say that the concept is fundamentally similar in East and West; others see important ways in which Augustine's deification differs from that of the Greek tradition. The strong presence of such a concept, however, and the variety

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<sup>73</sup> David Meconi, "St. Augustine's Early Theory of Participation," *Augustinian Studies* 27 (1996): 81-98.

<sup>74</sup> He summarizes the following seven articles: Ianuarius Di Somma, "De naturali participatione divini luminis in mente humana secundum S. Augustinum et S. Thomas," *Gregorianum* 7 (1926): 321-338. M. Annice, "Historical Sketch of the Theory of Participation," *The New Scholasticism* 26 (1952): 49-79. Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Grace as Participation in the Divine Life in the Theology of Augustine of Hippo," *Augustinian Studies* 7 (1976): 135-152. Juan Pegueroles, "Participacion y conocimiento de Dios en la predicacion de San Agustin," *Espiritu* 27 (1979): 5-26. Gerald Bonner, "Augustine's Conception of Deification," *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986): 369-386. Roland Teske, "The Image and Likeness of God in St. Augustine's *De Genesi ad Litteram Liber Imperfectus*," *Augustinianum* 30 (1990): 441-451. Claudio Moreschini, "Neoplatonism e cristianesimo: 'Partecipare a Dio'

of forms in which it appears, as well as its relation to other significant concepts such as grace, participation, justification and sanctification, have been increasingly demonstrated by scholars. At the same time, the distinctions between Augustine and Greek patristic thought are real and need to be carefully considered.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRE-AUGUSTINIAN BACKGROUND ON PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE

Scholarly opinions about the concept of deification in Augustine's theology have been reviewed in the first chapter. Now, before analyzing Augustine's own texts, I turn to the background against which Augustine wrote. First, in Section 2.1, I consider philosophical ideas of participation in the divine, especially in Platonic and Plotinian thought. Second, in Section 2.2, I look at the theologies of several early Latin thinkers who preceded Augustine, to see how deification or participation in divinity might be part of their thought.

#### **2.1 Philosophy of the Greco-Roman World**

This section looks to how the notion of deification, or human participation in the divine, appears within the philosophical currents prevalent in the Greco-Roman milieu, with particular attention to the thought of Plotinus, due to the significant role of the Neoplatonism of Plotinus in the development of Augustine's understanding.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The question of whether Porphyry himself, or only Porphyry's presentation of Plotinus, or Plotinus without Porphyry, influenced Augustine, has not been unanimously answered. My study confines itself to pinpointing, as far as possible, the thought of Plotinus himself on human union with the divine. Given the complexity of the Plotinian schema, and the unsystematic method of its presentation, it will be helpful to outline, as clearly as may be, some basics of his thought on the matter. The important, but by no means easy, questions of Plotinus' uniqueness over against his predecessors, and Augustine's debt to Plotinus *per se*, or the Porphyrian presentation of Plotinus, must be kept in mind during the present research, but are not its explicit subject of study.

## Plato

Plato stands in the beginning stage of a tradition of desire for union with God, whether understood as the ineffable (Unknown) God or the God of the world (the cosmic God).<sup>2</sup> Worship of the Unknown God was the form of personal religion among most educated pagans from the third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D.: contemplation of the cosmos would lead to mystical union with God, either because of God's immanence in the world or because the world led beyond itself to the transcendent God. Both movements, of flight from the world and of passionate search for the divine, led to immersion in the divine order of things.<sup>3</sup> The themes of union with the divine, human fulfillment, becoming free of earthly things, ascending from the lower (sensible) to the higher (intelligible) order, and coming to know or participate in that which is ultimate, permeate the thought of Plato and his successors.

The classic Platonic statement that we are to flee as far as possible the evil of mortality, in order to reach likeness to God, appears in *Theaetetus* (176a-b):

Evils can never be done away with, for the good must always have its contrary; nor have they any place in the divine world, but they must needs haunt this region of our mortal nature. That is why we should make all speed to take flight from this world to the other, and that means becoming like the divine, so far as we can, and that again is to become righteous with the help of wisdom.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>André-Jean Festugière, *Personal Religion Among the Greeks* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1954), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Festugière, *Personal Religion*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>4</sup>Plato, *Theaetetus* 176a-b, tr. F. M. Cornford, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton University, 1963), p. 881. Cf. *Republic* 613a-b: "For by the gods assuredly that man will never be neglected who is willing and eager to be righteous, and by the practice of virtue to be likened unto God so far as that is possible for men." Plato, *Republic*, tr. Paul Shorey, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, p. 838. Plato's dialogues do not contain the verb *theoun*, which develops later; Edouard des Places, "*Divinisation: Pensées Religieuses des Grecs*," DS 3, cols. 1373. John Dillon describes Plato's description of the overall purpose of life as "the withdrawal of the soul from the things of the body"; in Middle Platonism, he adds, this became the "general description," using the expression "likeness of God" taken from the above-quoted passage of *Theaetetus*. John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977), p. 9.

Yet, although the aim of humanity is likeness to God, we can never reach God's level of perfection. The tension always remains between our goal of assimilation to God, and our ontological separation from him, for we are other than God, and in the divine can be no duality. We are image of the divine--God, not the ideal form of humanity, being our model--but for Plato "image" means something inferior to its archetype. Yet our quest for likeness brings us nearer the divine, for "likeness" denotes close resemblance. The human can "become god," in the sense of reaching happiness and fulfilling one's own potential; indeed, this union *is* one's true potential. There is in humanity a likeness yet an unlikeness to the divine, the former in our rational (noetic) nature, the latter in our mortality; our goal is to become free of the mortal so as to be made like God, beginning even on earth. Through our own moral and intellectual efforts, following upon spiritual awakening and proceeding through increasing illumination, we move from the material to a purely spiritual level of knowing and loving.<sup>5</sup> John Rist remarks that "Plato's theology is not so much anthropomorphic as his notion of mankind is theomorphic. His gods are men as they can be and ought to be"; at least from the *Republic* on, Plato believes that humans have the capacity of attaining likeness to God.<sup>7</sup>

The process upwards begins with an awakening, which impels the soul to detach itself from false reality, that is from bondage to the material, and become attached to true reality via pure reason; this is the soul's homecoming. It is both moral, achieved through one's manner of living, and also intellectual, via contemplation, which means participation in and union with the

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<sup>5</sup>McGinn, *Foundations*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>6</sup>John M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche: Studies in Plato, Plotinus, and Origen* (Toronto: University, 1964), p. 17.

<sup>7</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 155.

objects of true knowledge. The soul's ascent is into greater order and harmony, which characterize the divine realm. Nothing in the cosmos is absolutely unchanging, but the cosmic order, which is relatively unchanging, is the order by which things are governed. This order, with its regular movements, is given by the existence of an intelligent World-Soul, which is a god as the heavenly bodies are gods; to establish oneself within that order is to assimilate oneself to God.<sup>8</sup> The Platonic notion of an intelligent World-Soul dominated ancient thought.<sup>9</sup> The World-Soul mediates between the intelligible and the physical realms, reflecting both what is above and what is below it; the human soul, with a similarly dual involvement, is its microcosm.<sup>10</sup>

Contemplation leads the person ever higher, purifying love and knowledge, towards union of the *nous* with its source. This source, however, the supreme object of knowledge, and identical with the object of contemplation, cannot be defined or named. The Unknown God is subject not to rational but only to suprarational knowledge, attained only with the stilling of sensations, passions, reflections, and discursive thought.<sup>11</sup> Such union gives immortality: neither a personal union in the Christian sense (the Platonic God not being personal like the Christian God), but a mystical union leading to joy, the ultimate aim of human existence.<sup>12</sup> For Plato, it is the Forms, not the gods, which are proper objects of love or devotion; yet for humans, Rist observes, love responds to the personal, not to the abstract: "Plato was demanding an emotional

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<sup>8</sup>Festugière, *Personal Religion*, p. 105. Cf. the Greek idea, after Alexander, of the monarch as one who upholds a social order which mirrors the cosmic order, and by so doing proves himself worthy of divine honours.

<sup>9</sup>Festugière, *Personal Religion*, p. 47.

<sup>10</sup>Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>Festugière, *Personal Religion*, p. 44.

<sup>12</sup>McGinn, *Foundations*, p. 27.

response beyond the range of most of even the greatest of his admirers,"<sup>13</sup> for love needs to be between persons, and in that sense Plato's notion of the pathway to human perfection is noetic and contemplative, but impersonal.

To know, for the Platonist, is not just to have knowledge about, but to participate in and have identity with that which is known.<sup>14</sup> The One, the Absolute Principle, is ultimately unknowable, surpassing knowledge and even being; yet the height of contemplation and the goal of human being is not only to see, but to be aware of identity with, the Absolute Principle. This awareness is possible because the *nous* (the human soul) is itself of divine origin, and because the One can reveal itself to the *nous* via direct intuition (*noesis*). Hence the *nous* is both divine in origin, and capable of being deified. Deification, or assimilation to God, is the goal of philosophy and of human existence.<sup>15</sup> It is a striving towards likeness to God, but without jealousy (thus answering the traditional warning against *hubris*<sup>16</sup>), based upon the human's intrinsic link with the divine.

### Stoics

The Stoics took up the idea of the Life-Soul which permeates all things, and, whereas in Plato the question of God's immanence or transcendence in the world is not definitely answered, the Stoics saw God as immanent in the world. They took the mythical gods allegorically, seeing them as metaphysical concepts; thus Zeus becomes the "comprehensive law of the world," or *logos*. God and the cosmos become identical; Hellenistic Stoicism had a pantheistic, impersonal

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<sup>13</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 2.

and providential concept of God.<sup>17</sup> In Stoicism, whereas lesser beings inevitably incline towards God in fulfillment of their own natures, the human soul alone is free to understand and accept or reject the divine plan; human rejection of it would not affect the plan itself, but would make the human unhappy since she would then be at odds with her own nature. Wisdom is spontaneous submission to God's plan, accepting in oneself what must come to pass anyway, and going beyond oneself to see one's place in the order of the Whole. The aim is to recognize the perfection of divine wisdom, admiring, praising and adhering completely to it, and so becoming part of the static World-Order: this state constitutes union with God.<sup>18</sup> Purity of intention, along with pure contemplation, brings us to union with the divine. Likeness to God therefore means union with the cosmos; in our own nature, we already are like God, and "all we have to do is remember the fact."<sup>19</sup>

### Aristotle

Aristotle's view of human and divine emphasizes the human capacity for excellence, and the need for community in order to achieve this excellence; fully human life can be realized only in a political community.<sup>20</sup> Justice, the true principle of order in society, is the secret of power, which is related to a cosmic principle. That principle of order is immanent, diffused

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<sup>15</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> des Places, "Divinisation," DS 3, cols. 1374.

<sup>17</sup> Though later Stoicism became more personal and more ethical; Gerhard Kittel, "Theos," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965), p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> Festugière, *Personal Religion*, p. 109.

<sup>19</sup> Rist, *Eros*, p. 162.

<sup>20</sup> John Procopé, "Greek and Roman Political Theory," *The Cambridge History of Medieval and Political Thought c.350 – c.1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: University, 1988), p. 23. "Man is by nature a political animal.... The state is by nature clearly prior to the individual.... The individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore

throughout all objects in nature. The excellence of anything is determined by its end; insofar as it is moving towards its own true nature, it acquires meaning and value. Humans, like everything else, are propelled towards their own predetermined type, which in their case is a unique composite of body, soul and mind.<sup>21</sup> The *telos*, the aim towards which all is directed, is the god, who is the only pure form existing apart from matter. God is pure actuality, the end-point whose essential quality is life, the highest manifestation of which is the activity of *nous* (the mind); he himself is *nous*, or something beyond *nous*.<sup>22</sup> Reasoning, for Aristotle, is the process by which the human attains to God (who, being pure mind, goes through no processes at all). God's self-contemplation calls forth the various elements of nature, which then strive to fulfill themselves by carrying out their proper functions in imitation of God; God does not purposely call them to himself, but rather attracts them as a lover attracts the beloved, namely as supreme object of desire. The capacity for reason is unique to humanity, and must therefore be carried out in order for human nature to be realized to its full potential, and so become immortal insofar as it is capable.<sup>23</sup> As with Plato, Aristotle finds that the true philosopher is "he who attains to likeness to God as far as man can; who lives in accordance with what is divine in himself"<sup>24</sup>; he retains the *homoiosis* motif, but Rist asks: "With what kind of God does one wish to attain *homoiosis*?"

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he is like a part in relation to the whole"; *Politics*, 1253A, tr. B. Jowett, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: University, 1984), pp. 1987-1988.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University, 1967), p. 81.

<sup>22</sup> Kittel, "Theos," p. 74.

<sup>23</sup> W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (London: Methuen, 1950), p. 367.

<sup>24</sup> Rist, *Eros*, p. 157. "If intellect is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life.... [we] must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us.... The life according to the intellect is best and pleasantest." *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, 1177B, tr. W. D. Ross, revised by J. O. Urmson, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, pp. 1861-1862.

For Plato, with a God who is good; for Aristotle, with a God who is purely intellectual, with no moral role in the universe.<sup>25</sup>

### Neoplatonism of Plotinus

Immortality and rationality of the soul were part of the Greek inheritance.<sup>26</sup> Also basic was the notion of the human soul as centre of the cosmos, somehow joining together the material and spiritual, such that the soul participated in divinity but the body was aligned with the structure of the cosmos, humanity itself being a microcosm.<sup>27</sup> Neoplatonism, beginning with the thought of Plotinus (204-270), drew on this heritage of Greek, especially Platonic, philosophy, but was developed in the context of concerns and currents of its own time. In the "age of anxiety" of the third century, with its decline of science and literature and rise of the magical and mysterious, Neoplatonic thought reflected the "growing otherworldliness" of contemporary philosophical and religious movements.<sup>28</sup> It turned to the reality within as ultimately more real than that which is generally taken for reality; to look toward the true self was to look toward the divine. Humanity and divinity were not mutually exclusive, though distinct, and humanity's true being was to be found in union with the divine. Understanding the Plotinian concept of divine-human unity is pivotal to understanding his philosophy.

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<sup>25</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 157.

<sup>26</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 1 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1971), p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>Bernard McGinn, "The Human Person as Image of God: Western Christianity," in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedia History of the Religious Quest*, Vol. 16, ed. Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff (NY: Crossroad, 1985), p. 315.

<sup>28</sup>R. T. Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Duckworth, 1995), pp. 6-7.

For Plotinus,<sup>29</sup> the point of human existence is not first of all escape from the world, nor release from sin and suffering; the primary goal of human being is simply to become what it truly is, which means becoming assimilated to God.<sup>30</sup> It is essentially a positive, optimistic view of human nature, and of the possibility--indeed, the inevitability--that humanity will be joined to the divine, should the human person choose to do so and enter upon the path which leads "Yonder."

Plotinus works apophatically, beginning with the world of everyday experience and proceeding upward.<sup>31</sup> This process reflects his view that the material world is not by nature a barrier between us and God, though we can allow it to become one and so mire us that we never look upward. The spiritual life is a process of awakening, of perceiving the fragmentation and multiplicity of the life we lead and learning to look inward, and therefore upward. As with the earlier philosophical schools, it is not a matter of needing to be redeemed, but rather of learning to see clearly, to know fully, and to perceive the unity and immortality already inherent in one's own true being. Humanity is quite free to achieve these goals, needing only to be awakened in order to be able to wash off the mud which has accumulated and which prevents it from seeing its own nature.

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<sup>29</sup>I shall limit myself, in this discussion of Neoplatonism, to the thought of Plotinus himself, not pursuing the interesting idiosyncracies of his successors. Iamblichus' positive view of matter, for instance, and of the embodiment of soul, led him also to a positive view of theurgy, which Plotinus disdained. Iamblichus saw salvation not as escape from the world, but as a deeper penetration into the cosmos, to share in the work of the Demiurge. Assimilation to the divine, while remaining embodied, was the goal of humanity; this view was shared also by Proclus. Gregory Shaw notes that this later Neoplatonic view of the human as theandric entity awakening to its cosmic role emerged in the fourth and fifth centuries, when Christians were wrestling with the idea of divine and human natures present unmixed in one person. Gregory Shaw, "Apotheosis in Later Platonism: Salvation as Theurgic Embodiment," in *Society of Biblical Literature: 1987 Seminar Papers*, ed. Kent Harold Richards (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), pp. 113-117.

<sup>30</sup>E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: University, 1965), p. 75.

Reality is a hierarchy of degrees of unity, for unity is that without which there is no existence.<sup>32</sup> The farther inward and hence the farther upward one proceeds, the closer one comes to unity. This movement inwards (towards the real self) and upwards (towards the divine) is the process of return to the source from which the soul has come. It is the mirror image, the ascent which follows the soul's descent from its ultimate source down through levels of being into the multiplicity and negativity of the material world.

In the Plotinian view, everything that exists points upward; each level of being is drawn to the one above it from which it is derived. Matter, the most inert, is the lowest level of existence, and on its own completely subject to multiplicity and negativity. Not in itself opposed to being, matter is a poverty,<sup>33</sup> a tendency toward nothingness, the extreme limit of diffusion and dispersion from the divine.<sup>34</sup> Matter in itself is too weak and empty to be any kind of power in real existence; the world is not in itself evil, but is the best possible world that could exist based on sensible matter. Evil is evidenced in the human soul which allows itself to be bound and dragged down by its association with matter, and hence away from that which would bring it to deeper life. Constantly, however, the soul is being drawn, dragged, upward to the level of Soul (*Psyche*),<sup>35</sup> the next level above itself and the lowest level of real being. It is a movement of

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<sup>31</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 47.

<sup>32</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 48.

<sup>33</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>34</sup>Consciously and vehemently, Plotinus opposes Gnosticism's abhorrence of matter and association of it with an evil principle. Indeed, he thinks the body quite important, with the role of serving the soul; his own system of education included the principle of equal training of body and soul. Cornelia J. de Vogel, "Plotinus' Image of Man: Its Relationship to Plato as well as to Later Neoplatonism," in *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, ed. F. Bossier *et al.* (Louvain: University, 1976), p. 166.

<sup>35</sup>Finding appropriate English nomenclature for Plotinus' three hypostases is a challenge to which each translator responds idiosyncratically. Sacrificing linguistic consistency a little, I shall refer to the first hypostasis as "the One," the second as "*Nous*," and the third as "Soul," while differentiating the human soul from the third divine hypostasis by use of the lower-case. In this, I follow Armstrong with one exception; he chooses to render *Nous* as "Intellect,"

desire, for inherent in the soul is a longing, a yearning for the truth of its own existence. It is this yearning to which any human soul can and must be awakened if it is to move out of multiplicity into reality, that is, into the divine. In a sense, then, the capacity to move upward and hence closer to God lies completely with the soul itself; it has in itself all that it needs to free itself from bondage to matter and begin its ascent. Yet its capacity, and need, so to ascend derive from its association with and belonging to levels above itself.

There is nothing intrinsically "wrong" in the soul's association with matter *per se*; indeed, the soul is responsible for material reality, as every level of being is responsible for the level just below it. The problem occurs when the soul, forgetting its superiority to the material level, allows itself to live as though bodily reality were the master and itself the slave. The lower principle is always included in the higher; therefore the body is "in" the soul, not the reverse.<sup>36</sup> Those which we take to be the most substantial realities are in fact the least so; the apparent unity between matter and soul is a lie which we must learn to recognize.<sup>37</sup> The soul's necessary progress upward, then, is not a spurning of matter, but rather a recognition of and movement towards the internal harmony and order of things. By freeing itself from and moving beyond matter, the soul is actually allowing matter to take its proper place in the universe, while itself penetrating further into the divine ordering. Still, the higher the soul goes, the more it forgets

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with the following explanation: "[Intellect] should be understood in a sense like that of the Scholastic term *intellectus* as opposed to *ratio*--a distinction which derives from and corresponds exactly to the Greek distinction between *noesis* (the proper activity of *nous*) and *dianoia*. So understood, Intellect means the activity of direct mental sight or immediate grasp of the object of thought, or a mind which grasps its object in this direct way and not as the conclusion of a process of discursive reasoning (*ratio* or *dianoia*)"; A.H. Armstrong, "Preface," pp. Vii-xxxiii, *Plotinus*, in 7 vols., tr. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1966), Vol. I, p. xviii. I prefer, however, for the second hypostasis to retain the Greek term, so setting aside the question of the Greek and Latin usages.

<sup>36</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>37</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 49.

what is lower, as indeed it must if it is to move away from the relative non-being of matter; hence our knowledge is most perfect when, by ordinary standards, we seem to know least.<sup>38</sup>

Thus the nature of the human person is a "both-together," both body which is part of the physical world and soul which comes from and returns to divine being, but which also must rule and care for the body. The individual soul is both descended and undescended into the world. Its descent into a particular body is not a "fall" as such, though it may become so if the soul allows herself to become too attached to the body and so loses contact with what is above, thus rendering the body a prison.<sup>39</sup> The human person, having relationship with both what is below and what is above, can choose to live at different levels; living ontologically in a borderland between sensible and noetic being, ultimately she belongs to the latter.<sup>40</sup> The soul is a "bridge-being" with the dual function of ordering and caring for the material world below, while turning toward and contemplating that which is above her. That by which the soul creates and gives form to the world is the Logos, which allows the material world to turn back towards its source and so find its own true order in the universe.<sup>41</sup>

Once awakened, the soul begins the process of return towards that from which it emanated. The process occurs via virtue and contemplation. Virtue is moral living, the discipline that purifies the soul, turning its attention away from the sensible world toward the Intelligible order to which it really belongs.<sup>42</sup> Contemplation is the real life of the soul, both that

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<sup>38</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 81.

<sup>39</sup>de Vogel, "Plotinus' Image of Man," pp. 147-148.

<sup>40</sup>de Vogel, "Plotinus' Image of Man," p. 157.

<sup>41</sup>J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality* (Cambridge: University, 1967), pp. 94-96.

<sup>42</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 85.

which produces it and that which maintains it;<sup>43</sup> by contemplation, each level of being focuses its attention on the level above. At this point, it becomes clear why the soul's movement away from the body is not really a negative movement in itself, but actually the stuff of real life, for it is a turning-towards what is above, via contemplation. The fallen soul is "self-centred," but not really so, for it is centred on a self which is not true self.<sup>44</sup> In fact, it is ec-centric, out of centredness; this state produces self-consciousness, which is evidence of duality and thus of distance from the unity of being.<sup>45</sup> The soul which is really absorbed in contemplation, on the other hand, is no longer conscious of itself at all, but conscious only of the higher level of being. Plotinus draws the analogy of a reader who is so absorbed in the text as no longer to be aware of the act of reading.<sup>46</sup> Contemplation is superior to action, which is only a shadow of this the true "activity" of the soul.

The particular soul, then, moves towards its own higher level to participate in Soul, the next level above it and the lowest of the three principles of real being (the three *hypostases*). Although this movement upward is achieved by the soul herself, she is drawn by her source, and in so moving she moves into a unity with other souls and with the World-Soul, which is divine and immortal. By turning towards Soul, the individual soul begins to fulfill her own nature, to enter into true being, and to leave behind multiplicity in her ascent towards the divine from which she came.

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<sup>43</sup>McGinn, *Foundations*, p. 53.

<sup>44</sup>All souls are descended (though also undescended) into matter, but this descent does not in itself constitute "fallenness." The fallen soul is one which has allowed itself to become chained to matter.

<sup>45</sup>Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, pp. 42-43.

Now, each principle overflows into the level below it. The "task" of each level is to turn back to the level above in contemplation, as we have seen that the individual soul must turn back towards Soul. Soul, the third of the three *hypostases* and hence furthest of the three from unity, in turn contemplates the level above itself, namely that of Intelligible being (*Nous*); *Nous* turns toward and contemplates the first hypostasis, the highest and true level of being, the principle of unity, which is the One. The One produces *Nous*, not in a deliberate act of creation but as an overflowing or emanation of its own being, and *Nous* by a similar process produces Soul. The offspring or image is always inferior to that which produced it; hence Soul is connected with and dependent upon *Nous* as *Nous* is upon the One. Plotinus' One, which he equates with the Platonic Good, transcends the finite Beings (Forms). It is ultimately indescribable and unknowable; he calls it the One because it is indivisible unity, but the term is appropriate only so long as it is not associated with the unity of a finite Being.<sup>47</sup> The One is rather the cause and creator of all finite Beings, which are different in kind from itself; whereas for Plato Matter is not created but only given shape by the Forms, Plotinus sees the One as the maker of everything. The second *hypostasis*, the *Nous*, is an effect of the One's being as it is, an automatic by-product of the One's contemplation, a product of the will only in the sense that the One wills to be as it is.<sup>48</sup> The One differs from the *Nous* in being infinite of itself; in *Nous* are aspects both of finitude, insofar as it turns below itself, and of infinity, insofar as it participates in the One. The One remains wholly transcendent, completely other--or rather, that which it makes

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<sup>46</sup>“The reader is not necessarily aware that he is reading, least of all when he is really concentrating;” *Enneads*, I.4.10, *Plotinus*, in 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library, Vols. 440-445, 468, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1966), p. 200. “It is self-consciousness that is the real weakener of activity”; Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 41.

<sup>47</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 26.

is completely other than itself. In this sense, there is always a distance between the One and all creatures; there is a gulf between finite and infinite being, between the human and the divine, between creatures and creator. Yet the One is always present to finite beings, in whom Plotinus sees a "trace" of the One.<sup>49</sup> Though we cannot grasp the One in its essence, we can know something of it.<sup>50</sup>

Effects produced by the One are other than itself, yet not wholly separated from itself, for they are still illumined by it and turn towards it; it does not need to turn towards them, since it is already so turned. The One is not free to choose evil, which would mean choosing to be other than it is--and, since there is nothing other than itself, this would mean choosing nothingness.<sup>51</sup> It is simply that, for the One, it simultaneously is and wills to be as it is; emanation is necessary because of the nature of the One.<sup>52</sup>

For since the nature of the One is generative of all things it is not any one of them. It is not therefore something or qualified or quantitative or intellect or soul; it is not in movement or at rest, not in place, not in time, but itself by itself of single form; or rather formless, being before all movement and before rest; for these pertain to being and are what make it many.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 67. Creation is not so much a voluntary act of the One, as a necessary outflow of its being.

<sup>49</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 27.

<sup>50</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 32.

<sup>51</sup>Compare just above: "that which [the One] makes is completely other than itself." Yet here we observe that anything completely other than the One has no real existence. This tension in Plotinus is also that which is at the heart of the Christian claim to deification: how can human and divine both have their own proper, distinguishable natures, yet truly be united? One must either maintain the struggle with the tension, or risk collapsing one element into the other. If there is ultimately no distinction between divine and human, then "humans becoming divine" is denuded of meaning, implying at most an uncovering of the divine which is already present in humans--which in turn implies that humanity is simply unrecognized divinity, and so is completely absorbed into the divine. Deification depends upon the possibility of a real, not illusory or superficial or imaginary, union of these two distinct entities. The tension, clearly, will lead us in Christian context directly to the christological question, which is precisely the context in which Athanasius and other Eastern Fathers look to the principle of deification to bolster their argument for the full divinity and full humanity of Christ.

<sup>52</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 82.

<sup>53</sup>Plotinus, *The Enneads*, 6.9.3, pp. 313-315.

The One can be referred to only negatively, for it is beyond all attributes, utterly simple--unity devoid of all multiplicity.

Vladimir Lossky observes that Plotinus's God is not in himself incomprehensible; rather, our unknowing of God arises from our own weddedness to multiplicity and our reliance on discursive, rather than intuitive, reasoning. As we move away from multiplicity towards simplicity, towards the perfect unity which is beyond being, we will enter into a true knowing of the One precisely because we are entering into real union. It is a "simplification" or "reintegration" through contemplation, wherein the object of contemplation is no longer distinguished (separate) from the one contemplating. Divine unknowability derives from the weakness of human understanding; the philosopher who moves towards true knowledge moves also towards true knowledge of and union with the divine.<sup>54</sup> However, the question of the One's ultimate knowability is not so easily answered. If real union with the One is the realizable fulfillment of human existence, what does this union mean for the human soul? Does the soul then finally know itself and "know" the One? How can the otherness of creature from Creator, and their real union, both be maintained? Here is the same paradox confronted, in its own way, by Christian theology; how is it responded to in the Plotinian system? As with Christian theology, the response is not to "solve the problem" or negate the paradox; rather, the paradox is very much present, and indeed the struggle with it illuminates the issue. The movement, in Plotinus, from discursive to intuitive reasoning is the process of purification and simplification entered upon by the soul. Yet Plotinus seems aware of a movement which, ultimately, cannot be

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<sup>54</sup>Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, trans. Asheleigh Moorhouse (London: Faith, 1963), pp. 30-32.

made by the soul itself, but must come from above. This is the ultimate movement, described thus by Richard Sorabji: contact with the One is non-propositional, above either discursive or non-discursive thought, absolutely simple and without complexity. The final stage of Union with the One, therefore, cannot be achieved by the intellect; the soul, having ascended to the intelligible realm, and upward within that realm to its highest point, must wait "as for the sunrise" for the final stage of union with the One.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Louth describes Plotinus' process of purification: the soul passes beyond discursive knowledge to intuitive knowledge, in which "there is unity between the knower and the known"; yet even here, a duality remains. Finally, the One can be reached only by a leap, not made by the soul itself: not that the One is aware of the soul, but that the soul is swept up by it into ecstasy, "pass[ing] *out of itself* into the other"<sup>56</sup> to a presence (*parousia*) or touching (*synaphe*).<sup>57</sup>

There seems to be a tension in Plotinus over whether the One can be said to be comprehensible, not only to the soul, but to itself. Rist concludes that Plotinus "wishes to ascribe some manner of knowing to the One, but that he is at a loss to understand its manner of operation."<sup>58</sup> Both the One's knowledge of itself, and the knowledge of the One which the soul in union with the One has, are the knowledge of an infinite being, and so (at the least) not to be described in the manner of finite knowing. In some manner, the soul can know something about

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<sup>55</sup>Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1983), p. 156. Sorabji compares Plotinus' emphasis on the unknowable One with Gregory of Nyssa's insistence on the incomprehensibility of God's essence. Augustine, Sorabji continues, does not describe God as beyond being; he "does doubt that God is ultimately incomprehensible" (p. 171). Sorabji sees Plotinian influence on Augustine in the intellectual ascent, the necessity of looking inwards in order to journey upwards, the life of wisdom as the highest level, and also ultimately the need to await passively the final mystical experience, learning to listen in silence for one sound (pp. 164-165).

<sup>56</sup>Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, pp. 46-48.

<sup>57</sup>Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 50.

the One, though perhaps not knowing it in its essence.<sup>59</sup> It is wholly other than souls, or rather, the soul is wholly other than it. “Its whole nature is beyond our knowledge,” yet Plotinus likes to refer to the soul--though it is completely other than its creator, the One-- as a “trace” of the One.<sup>60</sup> This tension is between unity and distinction: the One is “not our inmost self, but our transcendent source, with which we are united through love.”<sup>61</sup>

In his discussion of *homoiosis theou*, Rist differentiates in this regard between Plato and Plotinus. Plato sees likeness to God “as far as possible” as the goal of the philosopher. Because of the natural immortality he attributes to it, Plato sees the soul as “a kind of god”<sup>62</sup>; for Plato, *homoiosis theou* is linked to the soul’s natural immortality,<sup>63</sup> and hence to kinship between the soul and god, for immortality is an essential attribute of the divine. Being innately kin to the souls of the gods, the philosopher’s soul can grasp the Forms, and thereby attain conduct like that of the gods.<sup>64</sup> Contemplation of the Forms, which is likeness to the gods “as far as possible,” is Plato’s aim. By contrast, continues Rist, Plotinus’ aim is real union with the divine, and he tends to drop the “as far as possible” because he has himself experienced such union.<sup>65</sup> For Plotinus, *homoiosis* begins with the soul itself which strives to raise itself upward until it achieves real union with the One. Rist finds in the Plotinian system an “essential unity” which he considers lacking in the Platonic world; therefore Plato’s *homoiosis theou*, though the real destiny of the

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<sup>58</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 51.

<sup>59</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, p. 32.

<sup>60</sup>Rist, *Plotinus*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>61</sup>Wallis, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 89.

<sup>62</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 156.

<sup>63</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 163.

<sup>64</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 155. “It is the close association between the soul and God by nature that many Christian writers came to regard as the most hostile element of Platonism,” adds Rist.

<sup>65</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 190.

soul, does not raise the soul to the highest level of existence.<sup>66</sup> “Plotinus, like Plato, believes that we must resemble God,” concludes Rist, but in Plotinus’ case, “we are not so much to resemble as to become gods.”<sup>67</sup>

In Plotinus, then, is a strong sense of the real union between human and divine as the goal of real human existence. For him, not just the destiny, but in fact the real truth, of being human is to be inseparably linked with the divine, by activity as well as by nature. Such union requires a return toward the divine from which the human soul has come; it is the fruit of a process to which each soul must awaken and which it must deliberately undertake. To the extent to which it does so, the soul will be joined with the One and so fulfill its own nature. The Plotinian union is not an impersonal absorption of the soul into the One, but a bringing-into-being of what the soul really is. The achievement of this goal depends upon the soul itself, which must turn towards its source, but also is inherent in the ordering of things which flows naturally from the nature of the One.

### Conclusion

Plotinus’ system does not use the vocabulary of sin, redemption, or grace; its vision of union is characterized by its understanding of human nature and the relationship of the human soul to the divine, a relationship which includes both otherness and likeness. The words *theosis* and *theopoiesis* are not part of the Plotinian vocabulary,<sup>68</sup> but these issues which are so much part of the concept of deification are also deeply important to, and embraced by, his philosophy. As

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<sup>66</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 183.

<sup>67</sup>Rist, *Eros*, p. 89.

Rist observes, Plotinus' position here—that the soul is capable of saving itself, by raising itself towards the One via purification—is both “unchristian and unplatonic.” This question of the human person's role in its own fulfillment is deeply significant in Christian theology (as exemplified in Augustine's own wrestling with the relationship between grace and freedom). It is also an important point of distinction between Christian theology and Greek philosophy, the former emphasizing salvation and, especially, the concept (unthinkable to both Platonism and Neoplatonism) of divine immersion in humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

Christian deification theology turns on this divine initiative towards humanity, and the consequent possibility for human ascension to the divine; this is one of the major distinctions between Christian and philosophical notions of divine-human union. Their similarity lies, first, in the insistence on such union in *some* form as the fulfillment of human existence; they differ as to how such union is to be achieved, and for whom among humans. Second, it lies in the association of divinity with immortality; for Christians, however, this is a primary but not exclusive distinction. Third, it lies in the emphasis on contemplation and virtuous living as the human path to attaining such union; but for Christian theology, the human's role is indispensable but not sufficient, God's movement into human life being primary and definitive. The distinctiveness of Christian deification lies, first, in its understanding of God: God who is personal, Trinitarian, consciously wills and brings about human elevation, and does so by entering into that which is human (and therefore mortal and corporeal) simply because he desires the good of humanity, and that good is union with himself. Second, it lies in its understanding of

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<sup>68</sup>Cf. J. H. Sleeman and Gilbert Pollet, *Lexicon Plotinianum* (Leiden: E.J. Brill / Leuven: University, 1980).

the human person: as creature of the Creator, intrinsically oriented toward but fundamentally other than the divine—which is closer to Neoplatonism than to Platonism, but sees itself as distinct from either in its anthropology. Third, it lies in its understanding of the relationship between spirit and matter, which is critical for its deification theology. The nature of evil and sin, need of redemption and grace, place of Christ and the Scriptures, and role of the Church, all are interlaced with Christian deification. Perhaps most of all, the degree of personal intimacy between divine and human—God’s entrance into humanity, human invitation into a divine life which is personal and relational—is characteristic of deification in its Christian meaning, as distinct from philosophical notions of participation.

## 2.2 Western Theology Prior to Augustine

### Introduction

Use of the term *deificare* and cognates is rare in Western theology, and the concept behind them has been relatively little studied up until now.<sup>69</sup> Gustave Bardy refers particularly to Tertullian as making some mention of deification, Cyprian but little, Hilary somewhat more,

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<sup>69</sup> Standard Western references have not included deification/divinization or *theosis* in their subjects treated, but there is some development here. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, for instance, has no entry at all for either. The *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* includes in its second edition (1997) an entry entitled “Divinization,” a change from the first edition (1990) which had “Participation” only. The *Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997) uses neither the term “*theosis*” nor “*deificare/deificatio*.” It does, however, refer several times to the concept of participation in divine life. These references occur in the context of the Paschal mystery, the nature of the reign of God, the Church, the sacraments of initiation, grace, justification, and adoptive sonship. Thus, the Catechism speaks of *participatio vitae divinae* (505, 541 and 759), *participatio gratiae* (654), *participatio divinae consortium naturae* (1212; quoting *Diivinae consortium naturae*, the 1971 Apostolic Constitution of Paul VI), *participatio divinae naturae* (1726), *participatio gratiae Christi* (1997), *divinae naturae participes et vitae aeternae* (1996). It discusses participation in divinity, in the life of the Father, in the life of the Son, and in the life of the Trinity; and it equates such participation with adoptive sonship and the reception of eternal life, through Christ and so through the Church, especially in its sacraments, given life by the Holy Spirit. Such participation is grace (1997), which brings justification (1996). All these references are well in keeping with what we will see of deification in Augustine’s theology.

and observes that Ambrose knew how to use both the Greek vocabulary of deification and the Latin vocabulary of redemption. Leo the Great, adds Bardy, makes no mention of the term deification, but does have the basic exchange idea of Irenaeus, namely, that Christ took on human nature so that we might participate in divine nature; and Gregory the Great focuses on redemption and the cross, rather than on deification and incarnation.<sup>70</sup> The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* also points to Tertullian and Cyprian, as well as Marius Victorinus<sup>71</sup>; Lampe, to Tertullian, Novatian and Ambrose<sup>72</sup>; and Stoop, to Tertullian, Cyprian and Ambrose, as well as an offertory collect of the Latin Mass.<sup>73</sup> A computer word search reveals one use of *deificum* in Tertullian and one in Cyprian.<sup>74</sup> Clearly, any study of the concept of deification in these Latin thinkers must go beyond the term itself to the theological notion behind it. Little has been done in this regard. There has been one full-scale work on deification in Hilary of Poitiers,<sup>75</sup> but nothing comparable regarding any of the other Western figures (aside from Augustine himself). In the post-patristic tradition, deification is present, and has begun to be studied, in thinkers as significant as Bernard of Clairvaux, John of the Cross and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>76</sup> In this Section, therefore, I look at indications and intimations of deification in the above-named patristic

<sup>70</sup> Bardy, "Divinisation," DS 3, cols. 1389-1398. Tertullian: *Adv. Marcionem* 2.27; Hilary: *De Trin* 2.24; 1.11; *In Ps.* 118.9; Ambrose: *De Mysteriis*, 7.37-42; *De Incarnationis dominicae sacramenti* 4:23.

<sup>71</sup> *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Vol. 5 (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1910), s.v. "Deificari," cols. 403-404. Tertullian: *Apol.* 11:10; Cyprian: *Sent. Episc.* 8; *Ep.* 22; *al.Corp.* 10.3980.6; Victorinus: *Adv.Ar.* 2.11.

<sup>72</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, "Christian Theology in the Patristic Period," *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. H. Cunliffe-Jones (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), pp. 21-180.

<sup>73</sup> Stoop. *Deificatio Hominis*. The Mass collect refers to the prayer over the gifts (see below in this Section).

<sup>74</sup> *Cetedoc Library of Christian Texts* (Universitas Catholica Lovaniensis, Brepols, 1994). The search was for references to *deific\**, *particip\** + *immortalit\**, *particip\** and *divinit\**. The search was conducted for Tertullian, Novatian, Cyprian, Hilary, Victorinus and Ambrose. Aside from the two mentioned, no occurrences at all were found.

<sup>75</sup> Philip T. Wild, *The Divinization of Man According to Saint Hilary of Poitiers* (Mundelein, Illinois: Saint Mary of the Lake, 1950).

<sup>76</sup> A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York: Oxford University, 1999).

Western thinkers, focusing especially upon Victorinus and Ambrose (because of their influence on Augustine) and upon Hilary who, among all these writers, makes the most explicit use of deification.

### Tertullian

Tertullian's<sup>77</sup> use of the term *deificum* occurs in a refutation of pagan ideas about their deities: they make humans gods, as opposed to the "god-making God" (*illum deum deificum*) who possesses divinity.<sup>78</sup> More to the point are two passages which, without using the term itself, intimate the concept. Against Praxeas, he associates divine sonship with becoming gods, through the one Son of God (with reference to Ps. 82 [LXX 81], an important deification text often quoted by Augustine).<sup>79</sup> Writing in defence of the resurrection of the flesh, Tertullian suggests that our earthly life, lived through Christ in holiness and truth, is destined to bring us to the "image of the heavenly in ourselves." Here we see the notion of renewal by which humans are brought, through Christ's own being, to a heavenly state which does not replace but rather transforms our earthly life.<sup>80</sup> Ladner calls Tertullian the first Latin to use the expression "*in*

<sup>77</sup> This formative Latin theologian flourished in Africa. Born ca. AD 155, he died after 220; his writings cover the period of about 195-220. He became Christian in 193, openly Montanist ca. 207.

<sup>78</sup> *Apologeticum* 11 (FOTC 10, pp. 39-40; CSEL 69, p. 32.47): "On this point you grant, I suppose, that the god who makes gods [deifying] possesses justice in a superior degree, since he has not recklessly nor undeservedly nor extravagantly bestowed such a great reward"; *Et hinc conceditis, opinor, illum deum deificum iustitia praecellere, qui non temere nec indigne nec prodige tantum praemium dispensarit.* Cf. Augustine's similar assessment of pagans trying to make humans gods, whereas only God truly makes gods; S. Mainz 13, Chapter 4 below.

<sup>79</sup> *Adversus Praxean* 13 (ANF 3, p. 608; CSEL 47, p. 248.7-9): "that, if Scripture was not afraid to call humans, through faith made sons of God, gods, still more properly is the name of God attributed to the one true Son of God"; *ut, si homines, per fidem filios dei factos, deos scriptura pronuntiare non timuit, scias illam multo magis uero et unico dei filio id dei nomen iure contulisse.* The parallel between deification and adoptive sonship is an important element of Augustine's deification theology.

<sup>80</sup> *Res. Carn.* 49 (ANF 5, p. 582; CSEL 47, p. 102.7-9): "in order that we may bear the image of the heavenly in ourselves—no longer indeed the image of God, and no longer the image of a Being whose state is in heaven; but after the lineaments of Christ, by our walking here in holiness, righteousness and truth"; *ut proinde et caelestis*

*melius reformare*,” by which he envisions return to a previous condition, but also at times the resurrection, or baptismal rebirth, which leads Christians through a process by which they can become better than that which humanity was first given.<sup>81</sup> Tertullian’s christology and soteriology reflect the “interchange of places” between God and humanity in Christ, which is the basis of the exchange theme, in keeping with Irenaeus’ sense of deification.<sup>82</sup>

### Cyprian of Carthage

Cyprian,<sup>83</sup> like Tertullian to whose theology he is strongly indebted, employs the term *deificum* once.<sup>84</sup> It is noteworthy that this reference comes in the context of his discussion of divine sonship, glorification, image and likeness, all of which are strong elements of deification theology. Like Tertullian, he intimates the transformation of the human person through the

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*imaginem gestemus in nobis, non iam dei nec iam in caelo constituti, sed secundum liniamenta Christi incedentes in sanctitatae et iustitia et ueritate.*

<sup>81</sup> Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 133-135.

<sup>82</sup> Lampe, “Christian Theology,” p. 59. Whereas Lampe sees Tertullian’s theology as similar, in this regard, to that of Irenaeus, Gerald Bray’s view is that Tertullian “had no room in his theology for Irenaeus’ latent concept of deification”; Gerald Lewis Bray, *Holiness and the Will of God: Perspectives on the Theology of Tertullian* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979), pp. 89-91. Bray draws a distinction between Irenaeus and Tertullian which, for him, typifies the distinction between Greek and Latin thought about holiness and salvation. He suggests that Irenaeus’ emphasis is on sin as the natural human condition, and the incarnation as the means by which this ontological tendency is overcome and humanity transformed so as to be brought into the divine life: the essence of deification. Tertullian, by contrast, attributes evil not to human creatureliness, but rather to the free human will which rebels against its Creator. Christ, in this latter view, becomes the model for humanity, not according to his essence, but according to his pattern of obedience and his perfect sacrifice in the flesh. Irenaeus and the later Eastern tradition emphasized not obedience but mystical participation and deification, says Bray. It is notable that he finds, at such an early point, the beginnings of a fundamental division between Greek and Latin thought, pinpointing that division in the very concept of deification with its ramifications for the divine-human relationship and the role of Christ in that relationship. His comments also show the necessity for a close textual reading of Latin authors such as Tertullian, so as to overcome preconceptions about this distinction and understand where are the real differences between East and West and where the accumulated layers of simple misunderstanding.

<sup>83</sup> Born in Africa between 200 and 210, Cyprian became bishop of Carthage in 248/249; he was beheaded in 258.

<sup>84</sup> *De zelo et livore* 15.270 (ANF 5, p. 495; CSEL 3.1, p. 429.15.14-18): “For this is to change what you had been, and to begin to be what you were not, that the divine birth might shine forth in you, that the godly [deifying] discipline might respond to God, the Father, that in the honour and praise of living, God may be glorified in man”: *Hoc est enim mutasse quod fueras et coepisse quod non eras, ut in te diuine natiuitas luceat, ut ad patrem Deum deifica disciplina respondeat, ut honore et laude uiuendi Deus in homine clarescat ipso exhortante et monente et eis qui se clarificant uicem mutuam pollicente.*

presence of God, by which humans are raised to glory; the dynamism of the process, and the interaction between divine and human—beginning with the divine presence, but worked out in human life—are in keeping with the divine-human relationship which is endemic to the notion of deification.

### Novatian

W. York Fausset has pointed out two passages in Novatian's<sup>85</sup> *De Trinitate* which, without using the term deification, reflect the concept. The first shows Christ as offering to humanity immortality, and thereby divinity; this is adduced in proof of Christ's divinity, for "if he were not God he could not give [it]."<sup>86</sup> Here immortality is presented as a constituent element of divinity; this gift is truly offered to humans through the person of Christ. The second passage portrays the Holy Spirit as sharing "divine eternity" and bringing about immortality, even of the body, at the resurrection.<sup>87</sup> Fausset sees here a "progressive scale" from obedience through immortality to deification; but the "real problem of the kinship of the human and Divine," which is at the heart of deification theology, is but "barely touched" by Novatian.<sup>88</sup> In other words, seeds are there but the concept is not worked out. Still, invoking deification as proof of the divinity of Son or Spirit is in keeping with Greek patristic precedent.

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<sup>85</sup> Novatian flourished in the mid-third century; he is alleged to have died a Montanist.

<sup>86</sup> *De Trinitate* 15 (PL 3:940.B-C; *Novatian's Treatise on the Trinity*, ed. W. Yorke Fausset [Cambridge: University, 1909], p. 51.10-11): "therefore the word of Christ offers immortality, and by immortality offers divinity.... If he were not God he could not offer it"; *uerbum Christi praestat immortalitatem, et per immortalitatem praestat diuinitatem.... Quam nisi deus esset, praestare non posset?*

<sup>87</sup> *De Trinitate* 29 (PL 3:973B; Fausset, p. 109.11 – p. 110.1): "Who, working in us for eternity, can also produce our bodies at the resurrection of immortality, accustoming them to be associated in himself with heavenly power, and to be allied with the divine eternity of the Holy Spirit"; *qui id agens in nobis ad aeternitatem, et ad resurrectionem immortalitatis corpora nostris producat, dum illa in se assuefacit cum caelesti uirtute misceri, et cum spiritus sancti diuina aeternitate sociari.*

## Marius Victorinus

Victorinus<sup>89</sup> does not use the expression “*deificatio*,” and I have found no study of how his understanding of the divine nature, human nature, and the interplay between the two might be in harmony with it. The obscurity of his writings, their scanty number, and the little time he had to develop his thought as a Christian, mean that such a study, if it should exist, must deal only with what is implicit in him on the subject of human participation in the divine. This is not, however, an insuperable stumbling-block, since (as has been observed) deification is in general a latent topic, not an explicit one. It would be useful and informative to address his writings with this question in the foreground, to push a little the limits of his thought in search of his underlying attitude. He has a strong sense of the relationship of humanity to the divine as involving a kinship or likeness, and of humanity’s fulfillment as fulfilling this likeness:

And here, and in many places, it has been sufficiently confirmed and defined and demonstrated and shown that, so that we might be wise and understand and understand the truth, a spirit is given us by God, the Spirit of Wisdom.... The Spirit of Wisdom is such that the Spirit makes us wise and is in us and *it is as though we are wise through ourselves*, since it is the Spirit who makes us wise.... But when we receive wisdom, so that, by our own natural power and (as I say truly and in the way in which it already has been put

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<sup>88</sup> W. Yorke Fausset, “Introduction,” *Novatian’s Treatise on the Trinity*, ed. W. Yorke Fausset (Cambridge: University, 1909), pp. lv-lxi.

<sup>89</sup> Rhetor and philosopher, converted in his old age to Christianity, Marius Victorinus wrote his Christian works in the mid-fourth century, probably beginning in 358; Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1971), p. 29. Cooper suggests his birth would be not much later than 280, his conversion around 356; by 386, he had been dead for some time: Stephen Andrew Cooper, *Metaphysics and Morals in Marius Victorinus’ Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians*, American University Studies Series V, Vol. 155 (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 3. As a pagan, he enjoyed a high status in Roman society: his statue was erected in Trajan’s forum. As a Christian, he resigned his post as teacher, and wrote several theological treatises. He was nearly as little known or understood in his own time as he is today; renowned mostly for his influence upon Boethius and Augustine, he himself remains obscure and not easily accessible. Augustine, in his own process of conversion, happened upon the figure of Victorinus, both through the latter’s translations of Neoplatonic writings (*Conf.* 7.9), by which means Augustine was introduced to this philosophy, and through his personal story as related to him by the priest Simplicianus (*Conf.* 8.2.1).

forward) *by the divine spirit, we grasp the things that are divine*, meaning that we discuss among ourselves and with ourselves, and as it is permitted to say, already exist as spirits.<sup>90</sup>

Victorinus' view of human/divine activity is, in Neoplatonic fashion, a vision of descent and re-ascent. Souls descend from the Life of the Spirit, into the sensible realm; salvation is an inversion of this movement, achieved through negation. The coming of the Logos into the sensible world makes the Spirit present among souls, who have descended into it. Victorinus does not see the Logos solely as an intellectual example, but rather takes seriously his activity in the world—the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ—as enabling the soul to come to salvation. Victorinus “unite[s] creation and redemption in a wonderful way as the two moments in which Christ communicates life to the world.”<sup>91</sup> Though fallen into the sensible realm, the human soul keeps within it the Logos; salvation means focusing on the Logos (Spirit) who is both within and above, by which means the soul learns both to lead a moral life in the world, and to return to the Spirit and so be freed and brought to the reality of its own being. Through Christ, the soul is freed of the sensible world so as to turn towards the intelligible world, re-union with which is the fulfillment of human existence.

For the meaning of the fuller mystery has often been treated by us in these books, and has been explained more fully elsewhere: that through Christ, that is through the Spirit, souls are recreated and liberated, so that they may return to their origin and the sins into which they had fallen be taken away. But since humans, through the weakness of the flesh, were not able to conquer sins, Christ was sent—that is, the Spirit who is both intelligence and

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<sup>90</sup> *Ad Eph.* 1.17-18 (CSEL 83.2, p. 21.14-17,34-39): *Et hic et plurimis in locis satis confirmatum satisque certum et demonstratur et ostenditur quod, ut sapiamus atque intellegamus et uerum intellegamus, spiritus nobis a deo datur, sed spiritus sapientiae.... Spiritus sapientiae est ut ipse spiritus nos faciat sapere et in nobis sit et quasi nos ipsi per nosmet ipsos sapiamus, cum spiritus nos faciat sapere.... Cum autem nos sapientiam accipimus, ut nostro ingenio et, ut uere dicam et quemadmodum etiam hic positum est, spiritu diuino quae sunt diuina capiamus, inter nos scilicet et nobiscum: tractatum iam habentes et, ut fas est dicere, iam quasi spiritus existentes.* My translation; emphasis added.

<sup>91</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, v. 4, ed. Angelo di Berardino, trans. Placid Solari (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1986), p. 77.

the Spirit of all divine revelations and of life eternal—so that through his mystery and through corporeal death, raised-up souls may return to celestial virtue; and at the same time Christ, having suffered the death of the cross and receiving raising-up from the Father, may offer to all souls, through that mystery, the image for the raising-up.<sup>92</sup>

Souls become free to re-ascend by becoming aware of the saving activity of the Logos, whose descent, negation and re-ascent are a paradigm of the process of salvation. This exterior activity of the Logos mirrors the interior activity of the Father. Similarly, Christian life, though calling for moral living, is immanent and interiorized.<sup>93</sup> Victorinus sees it as a life of philosophy, a life in the Spirit<sup>94</sup>; living according to the Spirit is for him the essence of Christianity. He insists on salvation through faith; by salvation he means knowledge of the Logos, i.e., Christ or the Spirit. Even as a Christian, he does not differentiate Christ and the Spirit, considering them identical; souls which fall into the material world nonetheless retain in them the Logos—Christ/Holy Spirit—by whom they return to the Father.<sup>95</sup> Though such knowledge is the natural destiny of human souls, leading them back to their original state of the Spirit, yet it cannot be reached by human moral effort, but is the gift of God's grace.<sup>96</sup>

The double movement—of descent from above by the Logos, who brings the Spirit into the sensible world, and, through this negation, of re-ascent of the human soul upward (hence to

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<sup>92</sup> *Ad Eph.* 1.23 (CSEL 83.2, p. 25.64-75): *Nam mysterii plenioris ratio et a nobis in his libris saepe tractata est et alibi plenius explicata, per Christum, id est per spiritum, recreatas animas et liberatas esse, ut in suam originem reuerterentur et peccata tollerentur in quae lapsae animae fuerant. Quoniam autem ea homines uincere non poterant per carnis inbecillitatem, missus est Christus, id est spiritus et intellegentia et reuelationum omnium diuinarum rerum et uitae aeternae spiritus, ut per eius mysterium et per corporalem mortem resuscitatae animae ad uirtutem caelestem redirent simulque passus mortem crucis Christus et resuscitationem a patre suscipiens, imaginem per mysterium praeberet animis omnibus ad resuscitationem. Uerum haec, ut dixit, et aliquo tempore.* My translation.

<sup>93</sup> Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, p. 297.

<sup>94</sup> Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, p. 247.

<sup>95</sup> Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, p. 246.

<sup>96</sup> Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, p. 295.

its true self, the Spirit having always been with it)—is recognizably Neoplatonic in flavour, as in the following excerpt from Victorinus' first treatise against the Arians:

For by a progressive force and, as it were, immobile pre-existence, and not moved inasmuch as it was a force, that motion resting nowhere, rising up by itself and hurrying to every kind of movement, truly life infinite, has itself appeared in vivification as though from without. It was necessary, therefore, that life be born.... It came to its Father-rooted existence, was made a man and, having been perfected into omnipotent virtue, was made perfect spirit, by command from above having been turned round, that is inward.

Yet it is also a familiar element of the Christian notion of deification, in which the self-emptying of Christ from the Father finds answer in the human person raised to God. The above passage, which would not be out of place in a Neoplatonic textbook, is immediately followed by an explicitly Christian rendering of this same movement:

The order that is to be must be according to this type; and when the Spirit was in the body, that is in the son Christ, it was necessary that he suffer a kind of diminishment and be born from a virgin, and, by that very diminishment, through the power shared with the Father, that is by its more divine and first existence, that he rise up again and be renewed and return to the Father, that is, to the power and existence shared with the Father.<sup>97</sup>

If divine being and power are the destiny of the human person raised by Christ's descent, can this process fittingly be spoken of as deification? At the least, this way of depicting creation and salvation is compatible with that underlying the Christian notion of deification.

For now, it is sufficient to observe that Victorinus' understanding of divinity has an intrinsic openness towards humanity (the exterior activity of the Logos expressing the interior

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<sup>97</sup> *Adv. Ar.* 1.51 (CSEL 83.1, p. 146.10-15, p. 147.35-p. 148.2): *potentia enim progrediente et ueluti immobili praeexistentia et non mota iuxta quod potentia fuit, ista motio nusquam requiescens et a semet ipsa exurgens et in omnigenus motus festinans, quippe uita quae sit infinita, et ipsa in uiuificatione ueluti foris apparuit. Necessario igitur uita nata est.... uenit in suam patricam existentiam, uir effecta et, perfecta in omnipotentem uirtutem, effectus est perfectus spiritus, mutu in superiora conuersio, hoc est intro—sic secundum typum oportuit ordinem esse et cum est in corpore spiritus, hoc est filio Christo, et quasi deminutionem pati et a uirgine nasci et in ipsa ueluti deminutione sua patrica uirtue, hoc est existentia diuiniore et prima, resurgere et renouari et reuerti in patrem, hoc est in existentiam et potentiam patricam.* My translation.

reality of the Father); that his understanding of humanity has not just an openness, but a necessity, towards recovery of union with the Spirit; and that human salvation means, in some way, a return or reunion of the human soul with God, by which means the soul is freed to become what it truly is. The parabolic movement of deification is also evident in him: the descent–giving–emptying of God (in creation, the incarnation, the cross) is mirrored, fulfilled and renewed by the ascent–return–fulfillment of humanity. Questions remain, such as the origin of the soul, the relation of body to soul, in what manner the human soul is already like the divine, the means by which divine-human union is achieved, and the nature and meaning of such union, as well as his tendency to collapse together the Logos and the Spirit. Yet it is evident that, both in his Neoplatonism and in his Christian understanding, Victorinus sees human salvation as involving return to an original state of union with and likeness to the divine.

### Hilary of Poitiers

Some attention has been given to the presence and meaning of deification in Hilary.<sup>98</sup> Grillmeier notes that Hilary tends “to stress the divinization of Christ’s human nature”<sup>99</sup> through the incarnation, culminating in Christ’s exaltation; as a result, human nature may participate in

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<sup>98</sup> Hilary (ca. 315 – ca. 367) occupies a significant position both in the development of Latin patristic theology, and in the connection between Greek and Latin thought. The effects of his exile to Phrygia, for his refusal in 356 to condemn Athanasius, included learning the Greek language, becoming acquainted with the writings of the Greek Fathers, and gaining understanding of the Arian and Sabellian controversies which were then little-known in the Western churches. At least the last nine of twelve books of his *de Trinitate* were written during his exile. In his pioneering work of exploring Eastern theological controversies as a Western theologian, Hilary was forced to find ways of translating Greek theological terms into Latin, both coining new terms and giving new meanings to existing words; Stephen McKenna, “Introduction,” *Saint Hilary of Poitiers, The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna (New York: FOTC, vol. 25, 1954), p. xiii, lists *abscissio*, *incarnatio*, *innascibilitas*, *ininitabilis*, *supercreo*, *consubsisto* as words created by Hilary, and *sacramentum*, *dispensatio*, *substitutio* as existent words given new meaning by him. Over the course of his writing, he was increasingly aware of and influenced by Eastern ways of thinking and understanding the nature of God, humanity, and the Church. The strong presence of deification in his theology is

God's glory. Indeed, he finds that Hilary comes close to Gregory of Nyssa in his "christology of divinization and union within the context of the 'Word-Man' framework," but with the mystical element "subordinate or even lacking."<sup>100</sup> Ettliger emphasizes the influence of Cappadocian thought upon him, and finds in his *De Trinitate* passages which "express a view of salvation as divinization that is not to be found in an Ambrose or an Augustine."<sup>101</sup> The *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* mentions Hilary as equating human glorification with deification, founded on human communion with the Incarnate Word and realized especially in the eucharist.<sup>102</sup> One extensive work devoted to the subject is a doctoral dissertation published in 1950 by Philip T. Wild.<sup>103</sup> Wild concludes that a theology of deification figures strongly in Hilary's writings, less developed than in the Greek theologians of his own time and closer to the Apologists; it shows development over Hilary's lifetime, traceable to his growing acquaintance with Greek theology.

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not surprising under the circumstances, but his own thought has nuances of difference from that of his Eastern colleagues.

<sup>99</sup> Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, Vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), p. 311.

<sup>100</sup> Grillmeier, *Christ*, p. 312.

<sup>101</sup> Gerard H. Ettliger, *Jesus, Christ and Savior*, Message of the Fathers of the Church, Vol. 2 (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987), p. 134.

<sup>102</sup> Balas, "Divinization," pp. 242-243. Ioanne F. McHugh's dissertation extract, *The Exaltation of Christ in the Arian Controversy* (Shrewsbury, 1959), expresses Hilary's theology of salvation in terms of deification (p. 25): "We, the redeemed, by being changed into the likeness of Christ's risen body, have brought about fulfillment of the text that God should be all in all. Christ's body was deified at his Resurrection; at the general resurrection all our bodies will come to resemble his glorified Body, and so all our bodies will be deified. All will come to share in the glory of the Godhead. Such is his argument.... Thus transformed into the image of God's Son, we are moulded into the image of him who created us; we are made anew in this image, and thereby obtain the perfection of our being. The divine plan provided for Adam is hereby, in spite of Adam's sin, brought to full realization." This is reminiscent of the Greek view of salvation history which sees deification as fulfillment of what was given in creation, made possible by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. McHugh goes on to say: "there is nothing of him [Christ] which is not deified." But *Deus erit omnia in omnibus* means more than this: Christ will be in all respects divine because all the members of his body which is the Church will also share in this same *forma Dei* "wherewith the Sacred Humanity is now glorified," thus expressing an ecclesial understanding of deification which is also familiar in the Greek Fathers, but less prominent in Hilary.

<sup>103</sup> Wild, *Divinization*. See also Marie Josèphe Rondeau, "Remarques sur l'anthropologie de saint Hilaire," *Studia Patristica 6: Papers Presented to the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1959*, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademik Verlag, 1962), pp. 197-210.

Wild believes that the main content of deification for Hilary is immortalization; he pinpoints immortality as central to Greek deification theology also, but not exclusively so. He refers to the “mystical/physical” theory of redemption prevalent in Eastern theology, which focuses on the destruction of death, re-establishment of the divine image in humanity, and union with God as the content of salvation. By contrast, the “real” theory of redemption, characteristic of Western theology, stresses that Christ by his death made satisfaction for human sin. The former, more indebted to Johannine theology (contemplation, participation in divine life), focuses on the gifts of life, incorruptibility, and re-establishment of the divine image in humans, with atonement in the background and deification in the foreground. The latter, more Pauline, emphasizes the need of God’s grace to transform human sinfulness.<sup>104</sup> The Greeks, Wild continues, see deification or likeness to God as the goal of humanity—which, for the Latins, is the vision of God. Both see the uniting of humanity with God as the final end of the incarnation, bringing about the union of all Christians with each other through Christ; and both see baptism and eucharist as central in this union.

Wild finds in Hilary a significant presence of deification, though he never uses the term itself,<sup>105</sup> with resemblances to Greek theology but also certain differences of both approach and substance. For Hilary, however, its primary meaning refers to the humanity of Christ: in his assumption of human nature, the divine Word deifies that human nature, making it immortal. Even for Christ, this deification is achieved fully only at his glorification; on earth Christ’s

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<sup>104</sup> Wild, *Divinization*, pp. 3-7.

<sup>105</sup> Wild is undeterred by this absence, since he finds the concept unmistakably present. The implicit and latent nature of the concept even in Greek theology, as well as Greek wariness of the term, and the very fact that Hilary is helping give birth to Latin vocabulary for Greek concepts, support Wild’s stance.

human nature was not fully divine, but in glory it becomes a partaker of immortality: “We accordingly must die to our body that we may live in Christ Jesus, who, while assuming the body of our sin, already lives wholly for God, since he has united the nature that he shared with us into a mutual participation of the divine immortality.”<sup>106</sup> What this means, in regard to the deification of each human person, is less clear in Hilary. He is quite comfortable in using language clearly referring to an elevation of humanity to divinity:

And by his own power, namely, the overshadowing power of God, he planted the origin of his body and decreed the beginning of his flesh in order that he might receive the nature of our flesh from the Virgin when he became man, and through this commingling and fellowship the body of the entire human race might be sanctified in him, in order that, as he willed that all should be included in him through that which was corporeal, so he himself would again pass over into all through the invisible part of him.... What he is, while appearing in the flesh, that we have in turn become: restored unto God from the flesh.<sup>107</sup>

However, Wild finds that Hilary more often refers to the assumption of Christ’s human nature than to the divinization of all humanity. Not that Hilary teaches the incarnation of God with the “universal human,” or humanity as a whole, though his language may at times tend in that direction. Yet he never states directly that humans are deified because God becomes human, but simply that human fulfillment comes about because in the incarnation Christ’s humanity was divinized, and therefore our bodies can be spiritualized after death, when we will be conformed to Christ. Hilary does not work out as fully as the Greeks the inner workings of this process, the relationship between Christ’s becoming human and humans becoming divine.

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<sup>106</sup> *De Trin.* 9.13 (FOTC, p. 334; CCL 62A, p. 384.11-15): *et per id nos corpori nostro mori oportere, ut Deo uiuamus in Christo Iesu, qui peccati nostri corpus adsumens totus iam Deo uiuit, naturae nostrae societate in communione diuinae immortalitatis unita.*

<sup>107</sup> *De Trin.* 2.24.25 (FOTC, pp. 54-55; CCL 62, p. 60.5-12 – p. 61.17-18): *et sua, Dei uidelicet, inumbrante uirtute corporis sibi initia conseuit et exordia carnis instituit: ut homo factus ex uirgine naturam in se carnis acciperet, perque huius admixtionis societatem sanctificatum in eo uniuersi generis humani corpus existeret: ut*

Nonetheless, the double movement so familiar in Greek thought—God to humanity in Christ, humans to God in Christ—is present in Hilary: “He does not lose that which God is, and he obtains for [humanity] that he be God.... For, as the fullness of the Godhead is in him, so we have received of that fullness in him.”<sup>108</sup> What Hilary insists upon, however, is the “futuraity” of human union with God (only after the resurrection), the role of faith (initiated by God’s gift, but by which humans can “merit” the life-giving gifts of the Holy Spirit), and the place of baptism and eucharist in bringing humans towards this fulfillment. Wild finds in Hilary an increasing sense of the intimacy of the ultimate relationship between God and humans, and of the image’s glorification in body as well as soul. He concludes that the tendency of Hilary’s thought increasingly approaches what the Greeks understand by deification, but does not explicitly arrive there even in his latest works.

Wild’s six-fold schematization of the Greek patristic doctrine, though insightful, is cast in Western terms, and in itself begs the question as to whether this Eastern concept can be truly rendered in Western categories, without misrepresenting it or bending it to the breaking point.<sup>109</sup> The six points of deification theology are, briefly: creation in God’s image and likeness<sup>110</sup>;

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*quemadmodum omnes in se per id quod corporum se esse uoluit conderentur, ita rursum in omnes ipse per id quod eius est inuisibile referretur.... Quod ille Deus in carne consistens, hoc nos uicissim in Deum ex carne renouati.*

<sup>108</sup> *De Trin.* 9.4, 9.8 (FOTC, pp. 326, 329; CCL 62A, pp. 375,27-28; 378,11-12): *dum nec amittit ille quod Deus est et homini acquirit ut Deus sit.... Ut enim in eo diuinitatis est plenitudo, ita nos in eo sumus repleti.*

<sup>109</sup> This question is perhaps fundamental in any theological comparison between East and West; but in the case of deification particularly so. The Greek Fathers themselves are sensitive to the potential danger of the notion, both because of its existence in extra-Christian thought and because the tensions upon which it depends are so precarious, bordering on the ineffable, and open to erroneous application and expression. Too neatly categorizing the notion already mars or even destroys it. Why is there no treatise on the topic? Not because it is insignificant or peripheral. Possibly (partly) because, like a solar eclipse, it is dangerous if viewed directly by naked human vision.

<sup>110</sup> Hilary makes no distinction between image and likeness; for him, the image, given at creation, is in the soul’s spirituality. It will be fulfilled only at the glorification after death, which constitutes human deification, and in which the body too will be conformed to Christ and so spiritualized, thus fulfilling the image-character of the human.

immortality as a consequence of deification<sup>111</sup>; indwelling of the Holy Spirit<sup>112</sup>; adoptive sonship<sup>113</sup>; incarnation and the Mystical Body<sup>114</sup>; and the two principal earthly means of deification, namely, baptism and eucharist.<sup>115</sup>

### Ambrose of Milan

The writings of Ambrose<sup>116</sup> show no usage of the word *deificare* or cognates. He cannot be said to have a full-blown concept of deification; any list of Latin patristic contributors to deification theology (meagre as these are) makes but little reference to Ambrose. There is little explicit foundation for a study of the question in him, certainly less so than in Hilary. However, there are areas of his thought which may be considered relevant to *deificatio*. He

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<sup>111</sup> Wild rightly considers immortality an important, but not the sole, element of deification in Greek theology; but he finds that for Hilary it is the only element, the precise meaning and content of deification. Hilary also has greater emphasis than the Greeks on “futurity”: placing the attainment and meaning of deification so much in the after-life that he almost forgets the present life. The Greek tendency, especially among the desert Fathers, is to allow the fulfillment after death to bleed over into this life; a tension between Eastern and Western thought on the point is whether the vision of God is reserved to life after death (as in Augustine’s view), or can be experienced already in this life.

<sup>112</sup> The Spirit, central in Greek deification theology, is quite minor in Hilary, who tends to be christocentric; his polemic aims at defending Christ’s divinity against Arian views. He does, however, use the Holy Spirit’s role in deification to demonstrate the divinity of the Spirit, as we will see also in Athanasius and Cyril: “Certainly, no one would dare any longer to follow the views of human reason and place in the ranks of creatures the Holy Spirit whom we would receive as a pledge of immortality and for a share in the divine and indestructible nature,” *de Trin.* 1.36 (FOTC, p. 33; CCL 62, p. 35.10-14): *neque iam per sensus humani sententiam Spiritum Dei inter creaturas quisquam auderet referre, quem ad immortalitatis pignus et ad diuinæ incorruptæque naturæ consortium sumeremus.*

<sup>113</sup> The point of greatest similarity between Hilary and the Greeks, Wild finds: for Hilary, becoming children of God is essentially what is meant by becoming gods. Adoptive sonship as virtually synonymous with deification is important also in Augustine’s view (see above, with respect to Tertullian).

<sup>114</sup> The Word’s union with humanity divinizes us; thus the Mystical Body comes to be.

<sup>115</sup> For the Greeks, baptism returns humans to our original incorruptibility, and eucharist deifies us by making us partakers of God’s immortality. Hilary agrees with the Greeks that baptism and eucharist deify us by making us immortal.

<sup>116</sup> Born ca. 339, Ambrose had a distinguished Christian background; he became bishop of Milan in 374, where he remained till his death in 397. He was educated in the classics and rhetoric, knew Greek well and read Eastern Christian writings. He developed liturgical hymns, and also the relationship between bishop and emperor, believing the latter should be subject to the moral laws of the Church. His role in Augustine’s conversion still has unanswered questions, but the effect of his preaching, understanding and person clearly had profound influence upon Augustine at a crucial moment in the latter’s life.

makes use of the exchange theme, namely, that what Christ gives up, humanity thereby is given; or, what Christ takes on, is thereby taken up to God:

He was small, he was an infant, so that you, a man, could be perfect; he was wrapped in swaddling-clothes so that you might be freed from the bonds of death; he was in the crib, so that you might be at the altar; he was on earth that you might be among the stars ... therefore my poverty is my patrimony and the Lord's weakness is my strength.<sup>117</sup>

Elsewhere, he speaks of Christ taking on humanness in order to perfect it:

I did not have what was his; he did not have what is mine. He assumed what is mine, that he might share what is his. He assumed it, not to confuse, but to complete it.<sup>118</sup>

Especially relevant are two themes: his theology of image and likeness, and his notion of the ascent of the soul, through both contemplation and moral practice. The latter is redolent of Neoplatonism, and also reminiscent of Greek patristic thought on the soul's upward and inward movement toward God. The former is a significant element of deification theology. A look at these two elements of Ambrose's thought will help to suggest his theology's openness to a doctrine of deification.

The theology of image and likeness is in some sense an inverse or counter-point to that of deification, for in deification is achieved the likeness to and union with God which is somehow both given and promised in creation. The dynamism central to creation as image—its sense of fullness and promise, being and doing, faculty and activity<sup>119</sup>--is present among all the Fathers; not all express it by distinguishing likeness from image, but there is an inner tension in

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<sup>117</sup> *Exp. Evang. sec. Luc.* 2.41 (CSEL 32.4, p. 63.23 – p. 64.3,7-8): *ille igitur paruulus, ille infantulus fuit, ut tu uir possis esse perfectus: ille inuolutus in pannis ut tu mortis laqueis absolutus: ille in praesaepibus, ut tu in altaribus: ille in terris, ut tu in stellis ... meum ergo paupertas illa patrimonium est et infirmitas domini mea uirtus est.* My translation.

the concept which is endemic to it. In Ambrose, the theme of image is “no more than episodic.”<sup>120</sup> I shall indicate its pertinent elements.

For Ambrose, the true locus of the image is the interior person. Only the soul is made in the image of God, while the flesh cannot be in God’s image; he does not wish to risk implying that God could be corporeal or subject to the flesh—God is spirit, immaterial and invisible, and so must his image be.<sup>121</sup> However, the soul which becomes like God will transform the body also:

Matthew has done well to write of two sparrows signifying body and soul, since the flesh too, if consenting to the law of God and stripping itself of the law of sin, will be changed into the nature of the soul by the purity of the senses, lifted up to heaven by spiritual wings.<sup>122</sup>

Having renounced allurements, and purified from all stain of vices, she [the flesh] walks now in the way of heavenly conversion by the love of obedience; not, as before, resisting the law of the mind, but, liberated through the law of the mind and the Spirit of life from the law of sin, so that the flesh becomes the complement of the soul, no longer a procurer of vices, but a kind of imitator and follower of virtue.<sup>123</sup>

He does not make the Greek distinction between image and likeness, yet does maintain the tension between gift and fulfillment. He tends to see only the Son as true Image, while the human person is created in the image of the Image. This is what distinguishes humans from

<sup>118</sup> *De Incarnationis dominicae sacramento*, 4.23 (FOTC, p. 228; CSEL 79, p. 235.7-9): *Ego, quod erat illius, non habebam, et ille, quod meum est, non habebat. Suscepit, quod meum est, ut inpartiret, quod suum est, suscepit, non ut confunderet, sed repleret.*

<sup>119</sup> Jean Kirchmeyer, “*Grecque (Eglise): l’image et la ressemblance*,” DS 6, col. 819.

<sup>120</sup> Kirchmeyer, “*Image et Ressemblance*,” DS 7.2, col. 1417.

<sup>121</sup> Ragnar Holte, *Béatitude et Sagesse: Saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l’homme, dans la philosophie ancienne* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1962), p. 167.

<sup>122</sup> *Exp. Evang. sec. Luc.* 7.114 (CSEL 32.4, p. 330.1-5): *Unde bene Matthaeus duos passeris posuit corpus animamque significans, quoniam caro quoque si consentiens legi dei et exuens se lege peccati in naturam animae sensum puritate transierit, alis ad caelum spiritalibus eleuatur.* My translation.

<sup>123</sup> *Exp. Evang. sec. Luc.* 7.141 (CSEL 32.4, p. 345.9-14): *deliciis abdicatis ab omni defaecata labe uitiorum caelestis conuersationis tramitem oboedientiae adfectione gradiatur iam non ut antea legi mentis repugnans, sed per legem*

animals. The image is truly given and never to be taken away or destroyed, although sin so defaces and impairs the image as to seem to replace it, as Adam exchanged the heavenly image for an earthly image: “Adam before he sinned was according to this image; but when he fell, he laid down the heavenly image and took up a terrestrial image.”<sup>124</sup> It is not so much that through sin one can lose the image, as that by sin one gives up one’s humanity, to be more fittingly called a fox or other animal:

For God does not damn his image nor send it into that eternal fire, but rather he appropriates his image from the one who caused injury to that image, so that through misdeeds you have ceased to be that which you were and from a man you have become a mule.... So that image, in which you were made to the image and likeness of God, is not condemned, but is crowned. You are condemned, however, in that which you yourself have changed, so that from a human you have become a serpent, a mule, a horse, a little fox.<sup>125</sup>

In other words, to be made human is to be made in God’s image; to sin is to cease to be human:

Much more loudly here it seems that the prophetic voice compares to stones humans who have lost the sense of the human soul, to the point of thinking that divine reality might be contained in stones; and they themselves are changed into the nature of stones, not by use of their body but according to the state of their mind.<sup>126</sup>

Not that the human can lose the image, but that sin is incompatible with human existence, and therefore with being in the image, for sin in itself is the work of evil, which is

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*mentis et spiritum uitae liberata a lege peccati, ut animae caro fiat adpendix, non iam lena uitiorum, sed aemula quaedam et quasi pedissequae uirtutis.* My translation.

<sup>124</sup> *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42 (CSEL 3.1, p. 234.5-7): *Secundum hanc imaginem Adam ante peccatum: sed ubi lapsus est, deposuit imaginem coelestis, sumpsit terrestres effigiem.* My translation.

<sup>125</sup> *Exp.Ps.CXVIII.10.11* (CSEL 62, p. 210.9-13,18-21): *Nam suam deus non damnat imaginem nec in illud incendium mittit aeternum, sed magis uindicat imaginem suam de eo qui imagini illi fecit iniuriam, ut per malitiam quod eras esse desineres et fieres mulus ex homine.... Ita imago illa, qua ad imaginem et similitudinem dei factus es, non condemnatur, sed coronatur. Condemnaris autem in eo quod ipse mutatus es, ut fieres ex homine serpens mulus equus uulpicula.* My translation.

<sup>126</sup> *Exp.Evang.sec.Luc. 2.75* (CSEL 32.4, p. 81.22-25, p. 82.1): *Multo altius hic uidentur uoce prophetica lapidibus homines comparati, qui ita humanae sensum mentis amiserant, ut dum lapidibus putant diuinitatis alicuius inesse rationem, ipsi in naturam lapidum non usu corporis, sed mentis habitu uerterentur.* My translation.

not a substance but an accident which deviates from the goodness of nature ... a deviation of mind and soul away from the true path of virtue.... The greater danger, therefore, is not from what is external to us, but from our own selves. Our adversary is within us, within us is the author of our error, locked, I say, within our very selves.<sup>127</sup>

It is the soul's nature which makes it "apt" as an instrument of divine union: precisely because it is immaterial, as God is, it can "tourner vers le ciel, s'unir à Dieu et adhérer au Christ"—not, however, by its own power, but by God's grace.<sup>128</sup>

In his *Hexaemeron*, sermons on the six days of creation, preached possibly in the Holy Week during which Augustine was present (386), the year before his baptism,<sup>129</sup> Ambrose moves from explaining the creation of the animals to that of humanity. He describes the human person as a painting depicted by God, which the person should not erase.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, the human fulfills its being as image in two ways; one is through contemplation:

Therefore know yourself well, beautiful soul; you are the image of God. Know yourself well, human, because you are the glory of God.... When I contemplate myself, whom you know in my hidden reflections and my inner dispositions, then I understand the mysteries of your knowledge.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>127</sup> *Hex.* 1.8.28 (FOTC, p. 32; CSEL 32.1, p. 27.28-28.2): *cum utique non substantialis, sed accidens sit malitia, quae a naturae bonitate deflexerit....* 1.8.31 (FOTC, p. 35; CSEL 32.1, p. 31.9-13): *mentis atque animi deprauatio, a tramite uirtutis deuia.... Non igitur ab extraneis est nobis quam a nobis ipsis maius periculum. Intus est aduersarius, intus auctor erroris, intus inquam clausus in nobismet ipsis.*

<sup>128</sup> Holte, *Béatitude*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>129</sup> Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1968), pp. 101-2. Du Roy accepts the likelihood that Augustine heard these sermons in Holy Week of 386, hearing from Ambrose that the human is image of God according to the spirit, not the body, and aided by him in understanding the nature of the spirit; Olivier du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1966), pp. 45-47.

<sup>130</sup> *Hex.* 6.8.47 (FOTC, p. 259 with emendation; CSEL 32.1, p. 238.3-6): "You have been painted, O human, painted by the Lord your God. You have a good craftsman and painter. You should not destroy that painting, shining not with deceit but with truth, expressed not in wax, but in grace"; *Pictus es ergo, o homo, pictus a Domino Deo tuo. Bonum habes artificem atque pictorem. Noli bonam delere picturam, non fucio sed ueritate fulgentem, non cera expressam sed gratia.*

<sup>131</sup> *Hex.* 6.8.50 (FOTC, p. 263, with emendations; CSEL 32.1, p. 241.14-15, 18-20): *cognosce ergo te, decora anima, quia imago es Dei. Cognosce te, homo, quia gloria es Dei.... Dum me intueor, quem tu in ipsis cogitationibus occultis et internis affectibus apprehendis, scientiae tuae agnosco mysteria.*

The other way is through moral living:

[God] finds repose in modes of acting, which he has made to his image and likeness when he made the man, who ought not to veil his head, since he is the image and glory of God.<sup>132</sup>

Though his image theology is highly christological, Ambrose also sees the image of God in the soul as image of the Trinity,<sup>133</sup> a theme which will be elaborated by Augustine.

Fulfilling the image-character in oneself is also the process by which the soul, by going deep within itself, ascends to God:

For Christ is the image of God, and so the soul, if it does just and religious works, magnifies this image of God to the likeness of which it was created; and in magnifying it, by a certain participation in its greatness it finds itself raised up, so that the soul may seem to express this image in itself by the brilliant colour of good works, and by a certain emulation of virtue.<sup>134</sup>

Here is a coming-together of what is given by God (image), what God calls the soul to (participation, being raised up, likeness), and the ways in which this call is expressed and realized (doing good works, virtue).

This theme of the soul's ascent to God, as the fulfillment of the image to which humans are called, is strong in Ambrose's *de Isaac uel anima*.<sup>135</sup> This work<sup>136</sup> shows a strong Plotinian

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<sup>132</sup> *Hex.* 6.8.49 (FOTC, p. 262 with emendations; CSEL 32.1, p. 240.15-18): *requiescit in moribus humanis, quos fecit Deus ad imaginem suam et similitudinem, quando fecit uirum, qui non debet uelare caput suum, quoniam imago et gloria est dei.*

<sup>133</sup> Cf. *Hex.* 6.7.

<sup>134</sup> *Exp. Evang. sec. Luc.* 2.27 (CSEL 32.4, p. 55.20-26): *Imago enim dei Christus est et ideo si quid iustum religiosumque fecerit anima illam imaginem dei, ad cuius est similitudinem creata, magnificat et ideo, dum magnificat eam, magnitudinis eius quadam participatione sublimior fit, ut illam imaginem splendido bonorum colore factorum et quadam aemulatione uirtutis in se uideatur exprimere.* My translation.

<sup>135</sup> Paredi observes that *de Isaac* is more calm, spiritual and contemplative than Ambrose's "buoyant" anti-Arian works, which seems fitting to its subject and style. Angelo Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe (Notre Dame: University, 1964), p. 349.

<sup>136</sup> Likely a written work, not a preached sermon; Michael P. McHugh, "General Introduction," *Saint Ambrose, Seven Exegetical Works*, FOTC 65 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1972), p. 9.

influence,<sup>137</sup> and was itself influential upon Augustine, and even upon his mother, at least indirectly.<sup>138</sup> Ambrose describes the contemplation of the self as the soul's ascent to union with God, drawing upon the "contemplative flight ... which [Plato] assures us will lead to godlikeness, holiness, and wisdom" in *Theaetetus* 176B.<sup>139</sup> It is the soul which is drawn upward by and to the Word<sup>140</sup>; in so doing it turns away from matter and detaches itself from subjection to the body,<sup>141</sup> going up out of the body to be with God.<sup>142</sup> The emphasis here is on becoming oneself by going within oneself and so closer to God: the soul "searches and seeks within itself, if in any way it can pursue the divine,"<sup>143</sup> called by God to know itself; and the more it seeks within, the more it knows it has not the fullness of the divine presence.<sup>144</sup> Knowing Christ and knowing oneself are inter-dependent, as is seen negatively in Peter's denial of Christ: Peter did

<sup>137</sup> Gerald A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959), p. 64. It is also influenced by Origen, Hippolytus and Porphyry; McHugh, "Introduction," p. 9. Courcelle (*Recherches*, pp. 106-117) finds Plotinus' chapters on the Beautiful highly influential—with Ambrose excising that in Plotinus which derives from the mystery religions or Hellenic myths, and "confronting" Plotinian thought with the Scriptures.

<sup>138</sup> Courcelle, *Recherches*, p. 132.

<sup>139</sup> McCool, "Ambrosian Origin," p. 69. See Chapter 1.

<sup>140</sup> *de Isaac* 3.10 (FOTC 65; CSEL 32.1, p. 649.8-9): "And therefore the soul hastens to the Word and asks that she be drawn to him": *Et ideo et ista festinat ad uerbum, et rogat ut adtrahatur.*

<sup>141</sup> *de Isaac* 2.5-3.6 (FOTC, p. 14; CSEL 32.1, pp. 645.14-22, 646.1-2): "The soul therefore is excellent according to its nature: but it generally becomes subject to corruption through its irrationality, so that it inclines to bodily pleasures and to willfulness, while it does not keep to moderation; or else, it is deceived by the imagination, turns to matter, and is glued to the body.... Moreover the perfect soul turns away from matter, shuns and rejects everything that is excessive or inconstant or wicked, and neither looks at nor approaches earthly defilement and corruption. It is attentive to things divine but shuns earthly matter." *Anima igitur secundum sui naturam optima est, sed plerumque per irrationabile sui obnoxia fit corruptioni, ut inclinatur ad uoluptates corporis et ad petulantiam, dum mensuram rerum non teneat, aut fallitur opinione atque inclinata ad materiem adglutinatur corpori.... Perfecta autem anima auersatur materiem, omne inmoderatum mobile malignum refugit ac respuit nec uidet, nec adpropinquat ad illius terrenae labis corruptionem: diuina intendit, terrenam autem materiem fugit.*

<sup>142</sup> *de Isaac* 6.54 (FOTC, p. 44; CSEL 32.1, p. 678.13-15): "Following his word, it went out of the body, lifting itself up from its dwelling and making itself a stranger to it, so that it might be with God and be a citizen with the saints." *Uerbum eius secuta exiuit de corpore eleuans se de eius habitaculo et peregrinam se faciens ei, ut adesset deo et esset ciuis sanctorum.*

<sup>143</sup> *de Isaac* 4.11 (FOTC, p. 18; CSEL 32.1, p. 650.17-19): *intra semet ipsam diuinum illud si qua insequi possit.*

<sup>144</sup> *de Isaac* 4.14 (FOTC, p. 20; CSEL 32.1, p. 652.21-22): "But she began to be in want when the fullness of the divine presence was denied to her"; *sed egere coepit, ubi diuinae praesentiae sibi copia denegata est.*

not know himself when he denied Christ<sup>145</sup>; through the presence and guidance of Christ, the soul can come to God, her home. The result is a union of love, resting under the fruitful tree, being born and reborn, being formed in Christ's image, being clothed with love, coming to know the beauty of the soul itself, and being joined to the supreme good.<sup>146</sup> The predominant themes are flight upwards (in words recalling *Theaetetus*, but with the significant amendment that the impetus and goal are God the Father<sup>147</sup>), looking within and so looking toward the divine, ascent in stages,<sup>148</sup> freedom of the spirit and freedom from matter, stripping away what is false by looking upon what is true, knowing and becoming the beauty of one's own nature, becoming what is seen so that "what is seen ... [is not] at variance with the one who sees,"<sup>149</sup> conforming to the image of Christ, and the coming of the Word which makes possible the soul's ascent to God. McCool concludes that Ambrose's inspiration here is not Plato himself, but Alexandrian image theology, which associates the soul's ascent with its "acquisition of the greatest likeness to God of which it is capable."<sup>150</sup> Ambrose explicitly Christianizes the ascent concept, showing that its culmination is *homoiosis theou* but that this means union with the Word who is God; the Word is no secondary divinity like Plotinus' Second Hypostasis, but is completely identified

<sup>145</sup> *de Isaac* 8.64 (FOTC, p. 53; CSEL 32.1, p. 687.17-18): "Peter was tempted, and Peter did not know himself: for if he had known himself, he would not have denied his Creator." *Sed temptatus est et Petrus, non se cognouit et Petrus; nam si cognouisset, non negauisset auctorem.*

<sup>146</sup> *de Isaac*, 8.73-8.78 (FOTC, pp. 58-65; CSEL 32.1, pp. 692.20 – 698.12): *copula caritatis ... requiescit sub arbore fructuosa ... ibi enim nascimur, ubi renascimur ... in quibus Christi imago formatur ... induat caritatem ... pulchritudo autem animae ... uitae enim fons est summum illud bonum, cuius caritas nobis et desiderium ascenditur, cui appropinquare et misceri uoluptas est.*

<sup>147</sup> *de Isaac* 8.78 (FOTC, p. 63; CSEL 32.1, pp. 698.10-11): "Let us flee therefore to our real, true fatherland; there is our fatherland and there is our Father, by whom we have been created." *Fugiamus ergo in patriam uerissimam. Illic patria nobis et illic pater a quo creati sumus.*

<sup>148</sup> The three stages are: formation (the Word approaches and reveals, but still the soul sees shadows), advance (enjoying sweet fragrances without the confusion of the shadows), perfection (being a resting-place for the Word, and possessing the reward she had searched for); *de Isaac* 8.68 (CSEL 32.1, p. 690.6-24).

<sup>149</sup> *de Isaac* 8.79 (FOTC, p. 64; CSEL 32.1, p. 698.21-22): *Quod enim uidetur non debet dissonare ab eo qui uidet.*

<sup>150</sup> McCool, "Ambrosian Origin," p. 66.

with God.<sup>151</sup> The dual element of contemplation and moral virtue are seen here; these are achieved not by the soul alone, but only by the soul which is called and led and accompanied by the Word. The basic notion of ascent to and union with God as fulfillment of the human person, through Christ, is fundamental in *de Isaac*. Though far from expressing deification, this work shows a sense of the human-divine interrelationship, the simultaneous givenness and promise of it, and the openness of God towards humanity which makes possible humanity's true fulfillment in union with God; these are all fundamental elements of that doctrine.

In Ambrose, then, we see a transmission of some basic Greek philosophical and theological concepts and ways of thinking which provide the context for the notion of deification. Though not explicitly focused in that way, they show a certain receptivity towards this notion.

### Later Western Theology

In the later development of Western theology, deification remains latent, but is not absent. Gerald Bonner points to both Bernard of Clairvaux and John of the Cross as having a concept of deification.<sup>152</sup> Bernard "does not hesitate to speak of a 'deification'... Undoubtedly it is a union.... The mystical union integrally respects this real distinction between the Divine substance and the human substance, between the will of God and the will of man; it is neither a confusion of the two substances in general, nor a confusion of the substances of the two wills in

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<sup>151</sup> McCool, "Ambrosian Origin," p. 71.

<sup>152</sup> Bonner, "Conception of Deification," p. 370.

particular; but it is their perfect accord, the coincidence of two willings.”<sup>153</sup> John of the Cross refers to a union of love such that “each is the other and that both are one”; and to “union by participation, not such that the saints are to be one thing in essence and nature, as are the Father and the Son, but rather that they may be so by union of love, as are the Father and the Son in unity of love ... truly gods by participation.”<sup>154</sup> For Rowan Williams, Thomas Aquinas sees deification as that which results when the formal object of the will and understanding is God, which does not preclude but indeed demands substantial transformation.<sup>155</sup> A. N. Williams is quite positive in concluding that Thomas’ notion of deification is complete in the sense established by the patristic one.<sup>156</sup> Thomas, says Williams, sees deification as the goal of God’s creative work, and this concept brings together his understanding of God, the human person, and Christ: “In view of this particular structure of Thomas’s doctrine of God, theological anthropology, Christology, and the connection between them, it is no exaggeration to say that the *Summa* lacks a question on deification because the subject of its every part is deification.”<sup>157</sup> Williams suggests that Western readers generally miss this theme precisely because it is not localized but pervasive, and also simply because they are unaccustomed to it, not recognizing the structure or language which has been so long dormant in the Western consciousness. Yet she considers that the basic characteristic of deification theology—a God “who is ontologically

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<sup>153</sup> Etienne Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (Kalamzoo: Cistercian, 1990), p. 123.

<sup>154</sup> E. Allison Peers, *Spirit of Flame: A Study of St. John of the Cross* (London: SCM, 1944), pp. 143-144.

<sup>155</sup> Rowan Williams, “Deification,” p. 107.

<sup>156</sup> A. N. Williams, “Deification.”

<sup>157</sup> A. N. Williams, “Deification,” p. 255.

independent of his creation and yet desires to draw creatures to share his life"--is strongly present in Aquinas.<sup>158</sup>

Liturgically, the clearest note of deification—as clear as any in the liturgies of the Eastern church—is in the *Ordo* of the Latin Mass, in the prayer said over the water and wine.<sup>159</sup> This prayer is derived from a Christmas prayer of the Old Roman liturgy.<sup>160</sup> Ladner has pointed to two or three other early liturgical prayers, which he finds “closely paralleled” by the sermons of Leo the Great, who may have composed some of those prayers, or at least have drawn on them in his preaching. However, deification is neither explicit nor prominent within the Western liturgy, while, in the Eastern, it forms a constant background, but remains mainly implicit.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>158</sup> A. N. Williams, “Deification,” p. 227.

<sup>159</sup> *Per huius aquae et uini mysterium eius efficiamur diuinitatis consortes, qui humanitatis nostrae fieri dignatus est particeps. Ordo Missae Cum Populo, Missale Romanum*, Vatican, 1970 (Ottawa: Publications Service, CCCB, 1983), no. 20, p. 390.

<sup>160</sup> Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p. 284. The context of Nativity for mention of deification is natural enough, as we will see in Augustine’s sermons, of which several originate from Christmas feasts. “Thus the Christmas thought, which hardly ever came under discussion in this connection in the literature of the foregoing centuries, the thought of man’s participation in the divinity through the Incarnation of the Son of God, suddenly comes into prominence. It is a concept which presupposes and, to some extent, comprises both the oriental interpretation of the admixture rite, the human and divine natures of Christ, and the western interpretation, our own union with Christ”; Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, Vol. 2, trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1955), p. 63. In Eastern liturgy, the word *theosis* is rarely used but the themes of deification and exchange permeate. For instance, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom tells us that the purpose of partaking of the “heavenly and terribly Mysteries” is “unto the pardon of our transgressions, unto the communion of the Holy Spirit, unto inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven, and unto boldness toward thee, not unto judgment or condemnation.” The Eucharistic Prayer of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil recalls the place of God in human salvation: “When thou hadst created man, and hadst fashioned him from the dust of the earth, and hadst honoured him with thine own image, O God, thou didst set him in the midst of a Paradise of plenty, promising him life eternal ... he disobeyed ... and when the fullness of time was come, thou didst speak unto us by thy Son himself.... But albeit he was God and before all the ages, yet he appeared upon earth and dwelt among men; and was incarnate of a Holy Virgin, and did empty himself, taking on the form of a servant, and becoming conformed to the fashion of our lowliness, that he might make us conformable to the image of his glory”; *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, Fourth Edition, trans. Isabel Florence Haggood (Brooklyn: Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and All North America, 1965), pp. 111 and 103, respectively. My emphasis.

<sup>161</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, a twentieth-century Orthodox liturgist, explains the whole process of creation and *theosis* in terms of eucharist: we know, he says, “that to offer this food, this world, this life to God is the initial ‘eucharistic’ function of man, his very fulfillment as man. We know that we were created as *celebrants* of the sacrament of life, of its transformation into life in God, communion with God. We know that real life is ‘eucharist,’ a movement of love and adoration towards God, the movement in which alone the meaning and the value of all that exists can be revealed and fulfilled. We know that we have lost this eucharistic life, and finally we know that in Christ, the new Adam, the perfect man, this eucharistic life was restored to man. For He Himself was the perfect Eucharist; He

Ladner speculates on the reason for this liturgical subtlety in both East and West in regard to such a significant dimension of Christian theology: “The mystical elaborations, however, of the doctrine of assimilation to God which play such a considerable role in Greek patristic theology are not a salient trait of the liturgy either in the east or in the west. It seems that in the presence of the liturgical mysteries themselves radical divinization mysticism remained reverently silent.”<sup>162</sup> Still, the liturgical texts and hymns are a rich source for a study of deification, and its relation to the Church and sacraments.

### Summary

The presence of deification in the Western tradition is not, certainly, dominant, but neither is it trivial; as in the East, it is not at all confined to explicit terminology, which is rare enough. Some points calling for further study have been flagged, and such study would surely be fruitful. In the meantime, it is enough to say that Augustine enters a theological environment in which deification, as a concept and a way of understanding the divine-human relationship and the work of salvation in Christ, is part of the landscape, but a relatively hidden and undeveloped one in the Latin tradition.

### Statement of the Question

In these two chapters, I have presented the data gathered with respect to deification in Augustine: scholarly attitudes to the notion in his own thought, and elements of the notion in

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offered Himself in total obedience, love and thanksgiving to God. God was His very life. And He gave this perfect and eucharistic life to us. In Him God became our life.” Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1973), pp. 34-35.

<sup>162</sup> Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p. 294.

relevant thinkers of his own era. The collection and presentation of these data are part of Lonergan's first functional specialty, Research. They have helped to surface the questions which are to be asked in interpreting the data: the second functional specialty. The task of Interpretation will be the work of the next two chapters, which seek to interpret selected texts of Augustine. Before proceeding to that task, I pause to consider the questions which have been raised about the concept of deification. The fundamental question is threefold: who is God, who are human beings, and what is the relationship between the two? This interrelationship is the basis of the concept of deification. To help elucidate it, further questions can be addressed in each of the three areas.

More specifically, then, we would ask with respect to the first: Who is the God revealed in Jesus Christ, whose oneness is fundamental and non-negotiable as a theological foundation, and yet whose threeness is also fundamental? What do Christ's Incarnation, passion, crucifixion and resurrection reveal about God? How does God reach out to his creatures, especially to his human creatures, and how does he draw them to himself? Is God ultimately knowable or unknowable by his creation?

With respect to the second, we ask: Who is the human person? Who are we as individuals, in relationship to each other, and in relationship to our Creator? Who are we created to be? What does it mean to be created from nothing? What is particular to humanity, created in God's image and likeness, body and soul? What is the effect of sin upon that image and likeness? How are we to understand evil and its working in human life? What is given to humanity in redemption or glorification? What is required for holiness, and for union with God?

With respect to the third: What is the promised fullness of union between God and the human person? What is the happiness promised in salvation, and how is it to be received, in this life and in the life to come? What does it mean for each human person in herself, and for humanity as a whole? What is our own role in coming to such union, and what is the work of God alone? What is the place of Christ in such union? Of the Holy Spirit? Of the Church? In envisaging such union, how do we maintain the distinctness of God in his own being, the distinctness and otherness of humanity, and the real uniting of the two?

This is the cluster of questions surrounding the concept of deification; each suggests further questions of its own. Though they cannot all be addressed in this study, their interplay is important as the background to the issue of deification in Augustine. The basic threefold question, however, is the real crux of that issue. The subsidiary questions help to point out the issues at play behind this concept, and to guide my analysis of Augustine's thought. That analysis will focus concretely on the particular works under examination, and on their own context, content and teaching, with these questions in mind. The focus on particular texts gives the discussion manageable scope; the presence of the surrounding questions provides a way of reading the texts. In the next two chapters, I examine the concept of deification in, respectively, *De Trinitate* and selected homiletic discourses.

## CHAPTER 3

### PARTICIPATION IN DIVINE LIFE IN AUGUSTINE'S *DE TRINITATE*

#### 3.1 Introduction

My study of Augustine's *De Trinitate* will focus on the text itself of this work, to detect the presence of the concept within it and to determine as far as possible the shape and contours of the concept.<sup>1</sup>

##### 3.1.1 Chronology, Structure, and Purpose of *De Trinitate*

It has been commonly supposed that this work was written between about A.D. 400 and 416. E. Hendrikx (1955) concludes that the work was begun in the middle of 399, and completed and published in 419, with an interruption due to its being leaked occurring in 416.<sup>2</sup> Chevalier considers Books V-VII a later insertion, perhaps in 413-414<sup>3</sup>; TeSelle, drawing upon Chevalier, puts Books I-IV at 400-406, VIII at 407, V-VII and IX-XII at 413-416, and XIII-XV at 418-421.<sup>4</sup> A.-M. La Bonnardière (1965; her dates are accepted, for instance, by Robert J. O'Connell<sup>5</sup>) prefers to put the whole work later, with the final segment (Books XIIb through XV; she believes the unfinished work was pirated in 418, and included the first 14 chapters of Book XII) completed certainly after 420, and possibly as late as 426; the prologues to Books I through IV she also

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<sup>1</sup> All references to *De Trinitate* will be based upon the CCL text (Vols. 50 and 50A); individual citations will be identified by paragraph, page and line number from this edition. Books I-XII appear in Vol. 50, Books XIII-XV in Vol. 50A. The English translation used is that of Edmund Hill, *The Trinity, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Brooklyn, New York: New City, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> E. Hendrikx, "La date de composition du *De Trinitate*," *La Trinité*, BA 15, pp. 557-566.

<sup>3</sup> Irénée Chevalier, *Augustin et la pensée grecque: les relations trinitaires* (Fribourg: Librairie de l'Université, 1940), pp. 16-36.

<sup>4</sup> Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 294-309. Chevalier's conclusions, however, are contested, and TeSelle's adoption of them is considered by some a flaw in an otherwise excellent work.

<sup>5</sup> Robert J. O'Connell, *The Origin of the Soul in Augustine's Later Works* (New York: Fordham, 1987), pp. 1-16.

places after 420, and the writing of Books II, III, and IV later than 409 or even 411.<sup>6</sup> Taking the earliest and latest suggested dates as a working basis, I allow the period 400–421 as covering the time of Augustine’s writing of this work.

The work’s fifteen books can be divided into two basic sections.<sup>7</sup> The first seven give teachings about the Christian doctrine of God as one and three; Books I through IV interpret the Scriptural revelation of the mystery, II-IV deal specifically with the divine missions of Son and Spirit, and V-VII express the faith in philosophical and metaphysical categories. J. Burnaby takes Books VIII-XV as comprising the second half; but E. Hill’s more appropriate assessment is that Book VIII is a “keystone” joining the two halves. The second half seeks a more inward way of presenting the same faith.<sup>8</sup> Books IX-XIV take up the project of tracing trinities in the human soul, as an analogy to the divine Trinity, because the human soul is created in the image of the Trinity and therefore contemplation of the image in the human soul is a more accessible way of contemplating the divine Trinity, which is beyond our earthly vision. Hill, who sees in the two halves of the work a chiasmic, parabolic structure, describes IX-XI as philosophical rather than scriptural, and therefore parallel to V-VII. XI-XIII look at trinitarian analogies in the outer and inner human; Burnaby notes that these books demonstrate the Christian life as a gradual ascent to contemplation. Book XIV looks at how this divine image in the human soul is renewed and transformed to become perfect likeness and image of God. Book XV, like VIII, stands somewhat on its own, as a kind of epilogue. As Hill observes, it reflects on the whole work as a “splendid failure,” by showing that even the real image of God in the human soul is inadequate to represent

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<sup>6</sup> A. M. la Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustiniennes* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1965), pp. 165-180. She does not here address the dating of the earlier portions and their revision.

<sup>7</sup> In this brief look at the structure of *De Trinitate*, I draw upon the English translations, with their introductions, of John Burnaby (“Introduction,” *The Trinity, Augustine: Later Works*, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. 8 [London: SCM, 1955], pp. 17-36), Stephen McKenna (“Introduction,” *Saint Augustine, The Trinity*, FOTC 45 [Washington, DC: Catholic University, 1963], pp. vii-xvi), Edmund Hill, (“Introduction,” *The Trinity*, pp. 18-59), and E. Hendriks (“Introduction,” *La Trinité*, BA 15 [1955], pp. 7-83).

<sup>8</sup> Hendriks divides the work somewhat differently—into a “positive” part (I-IV) and a “speculative” part (V-XV). However, he also sees VIII as transitional, and thinks that it could just as well have preceded V-VII. Thus Hendriks sees the two parts as reflecting Augustine’s twin investigations—introducing us into “le mystère de la vie intime de dieu” and into “la vie intime de sa propre âme”—with VIII as a transitional book; but he includes the work of V-VII (formulation of the dogma using philosophical categories, especially those of Aristotle) in the second, “speculative” part. Hendriks, “Introduction,” p. 10.

the divine Trinity; and the real conclusion of the work--true contemplation of the divine Trinity--can come only "with the beatific vision of God in the world to come."<sup>9</sup> Awareness of the inevitable failure of the quest, in the second half, is a necessary ingredient to understanding the quest. But Hendrikx calls XV "le fruit mûr des expositions parfour laborieuses qui précèdent, le couronnement de tout l'ouvrage"; here, continues Hendrikx, Augustine looks again at the interior trinitarian life of God and its manifestation in its "mirror" (the human spirit), and concludes by showing the difference between the Reality and its Image.<sup>10</sup>

S. McKenna notes that *De Trinitate* does not respond to an attack against the divine Trinity, but rather wishes to inspire and guide Christians to know and love the Trinity better.<sup>11</sup> Hill observes that the overall impact of the work--"the whole point and value of Augustine's coordinating" in one work discussion of the Trinity and of its image in the human--was largely missed by subsequent Western theology.<sup>12</sup> Boethius (480-524) made use of it for his own treatise on the Trinity; but his point was polemical and philosophical (in response to a debate between the Eastern and Western churches), and he focused on Books V-VII of Augustine's work without giving attention to its discussion (IX-XIV) of the human image. Peter Lombard (d. 1160), author of the most widely used textbook of the High Middle Ages in the Latin West, does consider Augustine's idea of the human image in *De Trinitate*, but misunderstands it; Thomas Aquinas notes and corrects his error. Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* makes some references to Augustine's Books XII-XIV (in q. 93, on the image of God in the human), but in his treatment of the persons of the Trinity (qq. 27-43) Thomas refers 38 times to Books V-VII, and makes no reference at all to XII-XIV. Augustine's *De Trinitate* was translated into Greek in about 1350, probably its first

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<sup>9</sup> Hill, *Trinity*, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Hendrikx, "Introduction," p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> McKenna, "Introduction," p. ix. Michel Barnes, however, points to polemical elements in *De Trin.*, especially in Augustine's corrections (in Book II) to teachings on the economic Trinity. Barnes criticizes critical "avoidance of polemical readings" in such texts, along with the "[automatic] judgment that the *de Trinitate* lacks polemical intention." (Michel René Barnes, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 246-247.)

<sup>12</sup> Hill, *Trinity*, p. 20.

translation into any language.<sup>13</sup> It was not translated into English until the late nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

However, recent Western scholarship on *De Trinitate* has given particular consideration to the conversation between the two halves of the work, and to the importance of the dynamism inherent in the human image. John Sullivan sees as fundamental to Augustine's treatise the "gradual renewal of the inner man, the divine image, [which] is simply progress in the knowledge and love of God, with love as the effective principle in the process": humanity becomes like God by knowing and loving him.<sup>15</sup> Guido Maertens notes that *De Trinitate* tries to return human interiority, in its fullness, to the trinitarian God--a theme present in all Augustine's pastoral writings, and including a call to moral action. The link between creation and image of God Maertens considers pivotal, along with the dynamism in the image; if the image loses its dynamism, it virtually ceases to exist: the human both is and becomes image, for "the *imago* is a datum and a task, the task of the '*homo interior*,'" but the *imago* is always different from God.<sup>16</sup> Herman Somers sees the image as the "meeting-point between the human and God," the place of the human capacity to see God:<sup>17</sup> it is here that the two halves of *De Trinitate* are linked. Isabelle Bochet also sees *De Trinitate* as being about the human image's progress in likeness to God; the work emphasizes the dynamism of the image-character in the human, which "is constituted *capax dei* in order to become *particeps dei*"; the potential of the image is actualized when the soul adheres to God.<sup>18</sup> Robert Markus describes the work's second half as studying God's image in the human and "its progressive reformation in the course of the soul's *renouatio*, beginning in baptism and

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<sup>13</sup> McKenna, "Introduction," p. vii. The Greek translation is noteworthy given that reception of *De Trinitate* in the Greek theological world is rather absent than negative. Lossky (*Mystical Theology*, p. 81) notes that "the 'trinitarian psychologism' of St. Augustine is viewed rather as an analogical image than as a positive theology expressing the relationship between the Persons." As Sullivan observes (John Edward Sullivan, *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and Its Influence* [Dubuque: Priory, 1963], p. 196). "The Augustinian view of the divine image in man as an image of the Trinity is a secondary consideration at best for the Greek Fathers." Greek suspicion of Latin trinitarian theology has contributed to the non-reception of Augustine's *De Trinitate* in the East, especially given Augustine's espousal in it of the Spirit's procession from both Father and Son.

<sup>14</sup> The NPNF translation. Hill, *Trinity*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Sullivan, *Image of God*, pp. 64, 146.

<sup>16</sup> Guido Maertens, "Augustine's Image of Man," *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, ed. F. Bossier et al. (Leuven: Leuven University, 1976), p. 196.

<sup>17</sup> Herman Somers, "Image de dieu et illumination divine," *AM*, Vol. I, p. 462.

consummated only in the perfect likeness to God in the perfect vision of God”; the human begins and ends as image and likeness, but “what changes is the degree of likeness between the image and original.”<sup>19</sup>

### 3.1.2 Detecting the Presence of Deification in *De Trinitate*

In this chapter, I shall examine the human entry into divine life as it appears in *De Trinitate*. The reality of that destiny, and its meaning for human life both on earth and after death, is a strong motif; I shall consider its meaning, make-up, and role in the work. For the purposes of this study, I use the term “deification” as a vehicle to designate this concept. Though Augustine does use the term *deificare* a few times in his writings, that term does not appear in *De Trinitate*. I choose the term in this chapter as a way of framing the concept and presenting it for discussion, without presupposing its content. Nor does the use of this term presuppose its similarity or distinctiveness from other theologies of deification, or *theosis*. It does presuppose that there is, in this work, an identifiable concept of human salvation as entry into and participation in divinity, which needs to receive further shape and contour.

I begin by presenting Augustine’s most concentrated exposition of the concept within *De Trinitate*: his explanation, in Book XIV, of the renewal of the divine image in the human soul so that the soul can participate in divine life. His treatment there is a climax to the work of the second half, indeed of the whole work, and encapsulates the meaning of deification in Augustine’s thought. Next, I shall consider the presence and function of deification within the work as a whole, to show that it is foundational to what Augustine is doing in this treatise. Third, I look at the principal components of deification in *De Trinitate*, and how they relate to both Christian life in this world, and human fulfillment in the next. Finally, I shall consider the particularly trinitarian dimension of deification as it appears in this work. My summary and conclusion will complete the chapter.

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<sup>18</sup> Isabelle Bochet, *Saint Augustin et le désir de dieu* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1982), p. 220.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Markus, “‘Imago’ and ‘similitudo’ in Augustine,” *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 10 (1964): 142.

## 3.2 Meaning and Role of Deification in *De Trinitate*

### 3.2.1 Perfection of the Image and Participation in Divine Life: XIV.11-26

The central section of Book XIV consists of a clear, succinct exposition of the dynamism by which the human soul enters into divine life. A good comprehension of this account of the divine-human relationship, and its earthly and heavenly fulfillment, is necessary in order to understand what Augustine means by deification and why that concept is such a vital element of this work on the divine Trinity.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, in this section I shall undertake an exegesis of these paragraphs, to show the basic shape and dimensions of Augustine's concept of deification. This will provide a foundation from which I can go on to demonstrate how that concept quickens the work as a whole (3.2.2), which really cannot be properly understood apart from it, and then to discuss the key components of deification (3.2.3) and its trinitarian dimension (3.2.4).

The exposition in Book XIV comprises a climax of Augustine's work in *De Trinitate*; Book XV stands on its own, as a kind of epilogue in which Augustine reflects on what the work has and has not accomplished. Book XIV represents the goal towards which the entire second half of the work has been building. Beginning from Book VIII, Augustine has turned to God's image in the human, since that is more familiar and easier for the mind to examine (IX.2), as a way of coming to know better the trinitarian God himself.<sup>21</sup> Thus he discusses the "outer" and "inner" human, and traces several "outer" and "inner" trinitaries of the human soul. Finally, he promises (XIII.26) to pinpoint where within the human the image of God is to be found, and why even the ultimate

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<sup>20</sup> Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, p. 199) notes that Book XIV "recapitulates" Augustine's notion of renewal of the human image, and shows how close that notion is to the "crucial Pauline formulations of the reform idea," seen especially in Rom. 12:2; Eph 4:23; Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:18.

<sup>21</sup> The creation of the human soul to the image of God (IV.7), like but not equal to Christ who is true image of God (VII.5), begins to be woven into Augustine's discussion of the divine Trinity long before Book VIII; VII ends (VII.12) with an intensive reflection on the human image-quality, based on Gen. 1:26 and some Pauline passages (eg., 1 Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10). After Book VIII, which marks a turning-point in the work, Augustine turns to direct reflection upon this image-quality, ostensibly to help illuminate the trinitarian nature of God, but also to help find how the human is related to this God.

trinity he can discover in the human soul<sup>22</sup> is not yet the image of God. The answer given in XIV is that the story of the human soul is not complete, nor even correct, unless it is known to be the story of God's love for and presence in the soul. That presence calls for a human response. In this dynamism, of the soul coming to know itself not only as soul, but as belonging to and permeated by God, is the discovery of the relationship between the trinitarian God and his image in humans which *De Trinitate* has been seeking. This is the dynamism depicted in XIV.11-26. Augustine makes clear, in his summary of the 14 books (XV.5), that what he has found and described in the fourteenth is the climax of his quest for the image of God in the human as a way of coming to know the trinitarian God: "In the fourteenth book we discuss the human's true wisdom, wisdom that is, which is bestowed on him by God's gift in an actual participation in God himself," and we discover "a trinity in the image of God which is the human in terms of mind"; when the human mind is renewed to God's image, it can "achieve wisdom in the contemplation of things eternal."<sup>23</sup> This is the culmination of the interior search which is the earthly process of deification, and lays the foundation for deification after death.

The Human Soul as Image. The key to that process--or at least, the accessible key--lies in the nature of the human soul itself. Augustine has explained (especially in XII.1-4) that the human soul (*animus*)<sup>24</sup> has a lower part (*anima*), which is the part associated with and directed towards ordering the material, finite, and temporal, and a higher part (*mens*), which is directed upwards,

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<sup>22</sup> That is, the mind remembering itself, understanding itself and loving itself; *mens meminit sui, intellegit se, diligit se*, XIV.11, CCL p. 436.14.

<sup>23</sup> XV.5, p. 467.105-112: *In quarto decimo autem de sapientia hominis uera, id est dei munere in eius ipsius dei participatione donata ... et eo peruenit disputatio ut trinitas appareat in imagine dei quod est homo secundum mentem quae renouatur in agnitione dei secundum imaginem eius qui creauit hominem ad imaginem suam et sic percipit sapientiam ubi contemplatio est aeternorum.* Book XV is a kind of epilogue, which goes beyond the climax in XIV. In XV, Augustine stands back from all that he has done in the 14 books, to see what has been accomplished, and to re-pose the original question: to "look for the trinity which is God in these eternal things, incorporeal and unchangeable, since the happy life which is nothing if not eternal is promised to us in the contemplation of them" (XV.6).

<sup>24</sup> Hill tends to translate *animus* as consciousness, *anima* as soul and *mens* as mind. In general, I shall use "soul" in reference to the whole human *animus*, both the lower and the higher parts: that is, the spiritual, non-bodily dimension of the human; and "mind" only when specifically referring to the upper part of the soul as distinguished from the lower. Augustine himself is not rigid in his terminology; he can, for example, use *mens* to refer to the whole human soul.

towards contemplation of eternal things. In XIV he states clearly that the soul is by nature immortal (4, p. 426,1), rational and intellectual (6, p. 428,7-8), and image of God (6, p. 428,11-12): all these qualities are given it and are never to be taken away. Being immortal, the soul once created never ceases to exist (4, p. 426,2); however, it may or may not have happiness, and without the happy life which is its true life it “has its own kind of death” (6, p. 428,2). Similarly, though permanently rational and intellectual, the soul may not always live up to these gifts (6). Again, the image-character given it in creation is permanent, and from its creation the image always remains; yet it may become terribly distorted and disfigured, though it does not thereby cease to be image (6). Thus the image-quality is never lost, not because the soul never ceases to direct itself towards God—indeed, Augustine emphasizes the soul’s tendency to forget God—but because God’s light never ceases to touch it, even when it is turned away (21, p. 450,35-37).<sup>25</sup> Another characteristic of the human soul which is permanent is its capacity to be present to itself; this has been shown in the discovery and explanation of the highest trinity in the inner human, by which the soul always remembers, understands and loves itself, even when not actively turning round onto itself or thinking of itself (8-10). Even when weak and confused, the soul cannot lose its natural memory, understanding and love of itself, and still walks in the image of God (19, p. 447,51-52). This capacity is part of the soul’s greatness, and certainly part of its uniqueness, for in this it is distinct from all other creatures.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Augustine’s opinion as to the permanence of the image in humanity, even after sin, undergoes some development. Before 412, he tends to think sin can destroy the image, because he thinks of sin as a turning-away from God and hence cannot conceive of the image of God being present in the soul along with sin; Sullivan, *Image*, pp. 42-43. But he becomes increasingly certain of its permanence despite severe damage and disfigurement; Kirchmeyer, “Image et Ressemblance.” c. 1420; by *De Trin.*, as seen here, he holds that the image must be permanent, for not to be in relationship with God is not to exist. Cf. *De Gen. ad Litt.* 6.27-38 (CSEL 28, pp. 198-199; cf. *En.* 72.26 [CCL 39, p. 1000,42-44]) for the earlier view, *Reconsiderations* 2.24.2 for the later. Bonner (“Augustine’s Doctrine of Man,” p. 504) points to *De Sp. et Litt.* 28.48 (CSEL 60, p. 202,12-15,19-20), AD 412, as witness of the turning-point, since Augustine’s refutation of Pelagianism spurred his thought on the image in the soul. The date and the viewpoint coincide with those of *En.* 66, discussed in Chapter 4 below. In regard to Augustine’s theology of image and likeness and its development, see also: J. Heijke, “St. Augustine’s Comments on *Imago dei*: An anthology from all his works exclusive of the *De Trinitate*,” *Classical Folia Supplement III*, April 1960; O. du Roy, *Intelligence*; A.-G. Hamman, *L’Homme, image de dieu: essai d’une anthropologie chrétienne dans l’Eglise des cinq premiers siècles* (Paris: Desclée, 1987); and Roland J. Teske, “The Image and Likeness of God in St. Augustine’s *De Genesi ad Litteram Liber Imperfectus*,” *Augustinianum* 30 (1990): 445-451.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. XI.8: Unique, among all creation, to humanity, is being like but also image of God, *nulla natura interposita*. Augustine is always consistent in seeing humanity as created in God’s image, and in seeing the *mens* or *intellectus*

Activation of the Image. Yet the true greatness of the soul—another characteristic which is permanent, though like the others not always lived properly—lies in its capacity for God: “It is a great nature ... not the greatest, yet because it is capable of the greatest nature and can become partaker of it, it is a great nature still.”<sup>27</sup> That by which it can know and participate in God is the “chief capacity of the human mind.”<sup>28</sup> Though not of the same nature as God, the mind, which is the highest part of human nature, is made to his image (11, 15), and has a capacity to partake in the light which he is (15, p. 443,10-11). This is given, and irrevocably given. Something more is required, however: the mind must turn to itself, and discover there God’s image and its own capacity for God, before it can participate in him (11). Thus Augustine makes a clear distinction between the image-quality, which—along with immortality, rationality, and greatness—is given permanently at creation, and participation in divine life, which follows upon the soul’s receiving and activating that image-quality by turning towards and contemplating itself, but itself precisely as image of God. This is why the highest inner trinity, of the mind remembering, knowing and loving itself, is not yet the image, for the image-quality depends upon its relationship with God: “It is his image insofar as it is capable of him and can participate in him; indeed it cannot achieve so

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(the highest part of the soul) as locus of that image. Still, Marie Anne Vannier (“*Creatio*,” “*Conversio*,” “*Formatio*” *chez S. Augustin*,” *Paradosis* 31 [Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1991], p. 78, n. 82) notes that, though Augustine most often situates the image in the *mens*, in some texts he has a larger conception; cf. En. 48, S. 2.11 (CCL 38, p. 574,26.28-31). Hamman (*L’Homme Image*, p. 252) sees *mens* as roughly synonymous with *animus*, *intellectus*, *ratio*, and *spiritus*. David Bell (*The Image and Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality of William of St. Thierry* [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1984], p. 252) lists, as terms Augustine uses for location of the image in the human person: *intellectus*, *homo interior*, *ratio*, *spiritus*, *spiritus mentis*, *intelligentia*, *animus*. Vannier (“*Creatio*,” p. 75) adds that Augustine equally identifies the image of God with the place of the heart, according to its capacity for choice; cf. *In Io. Ev.* 18.10 (NPNF 7, ser. 1, p. 121; CCL 36, p. 186,15-16). See also J. Heijke, “St. Augustine’s Comments on *Imago dei*.”

<sup>27</sup> p. 429, 24-27: *enim magna natura sit ... quia summa non est, tamen quia summae naturae capax est et esse particeps potest, magna natura est.* Cf. V.11: God is great not by participation but by his own greatness. We are destined for what God is (in this case, great) but not in the way that God himself is. The homiletic discourses (see Ch. 4) show Augustine’s insistence on maintaining the Creator/creature distinction, even while portraying the closeness between the two.

<sup>28</sup> 11, p. 435,2: *principale mentis humanae.*

great a good except by being his image.”<sup>29</sup> The highest created trinity is the mind remembering, knowing and loving God.<sup>30</sup>

This capacity and ability are definitive of the image, which of all created things is the closest to God: there is nothing between the image and God (20, p. 448,85-86). Because it is image, the soul can participate in God, “by whom it was created with a capacity for him and able to partake in him”;<sup>31</sup> as image it is “potent” (*potens*) and able to “cleave” (*inhaerere*) to God (20, p. 448,84). Yet there is no question of the image and God being, or becoming, identical; Augustine states clearly that they are not of the same nature (11, p. 436,4-5) and that God’s being and the human way of being are completely distinct from one another: God’s being is in himself, ours is by participation. Thus, God is wise and just in himself, but humans become so by partaking in his wisdom and justice; his light ceaselessly touches humans, but he is the light: “[the mind] will be wise not with its own light but by partaking in that supreme light.”<sup>32</sup>

By considering the nature of the soul, then, Augustine finds that it is created by God, that its highest part is the highest creation, and that it is given a powerful capacity to adhere to God and participate in him; this is described both as participation in God himself and as participation in various divine qualities such as wisdom, light and justice. Such participation involves the soul turning to itself, as Augustine has done in this work, not only to know itself with *scientia*, knowledge of temporal things, but also to know itself with *sapientia*, knowledge of divine things (3); by this latter knowledge it becomes actively aware of itself, and of itself as image of God.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 11, p. 436,11-13: *Eo quippe ipse imago eius est quo eius capax est eius que esse particeps potest, quod tam magnum bonum nisi per hoc quod imago eius est non potest.*

<sup>30</sup> As Walter Principe has pointed out, an essential ingredient in grasping Augustine’s trinity of the human mind is its active quality; the trinity is best expressed not using nouns, as in *memoria, intelligentia, voluntas*, but using verbs, as in *mens meminit sui, intellegit se, diligit se* or *meminit dei, intellegit deum, diligit deum*. (Walter Principe, “The Dynamism of Augustine’s Terms for Describing the Highest Trinitarian Image in the Human Person,” *Studia Patristica 18: Papers Presented to the Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, 1983*, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1985], pp. 1291-1299.)

<sup>31</sup> 15, p. 443,7-9: *colat deum non factum cuius ab eo capax facta est et cuius esse particeps potest.*

<sup>32</sup> p. 443,10-11: *non sua luce sed summae illius lucis participatione sapiens erit.* Cf., for example, my commentary on S. Mainz 13 (Ch. 4, below): the inequality between Creator and creature, far from inhibiting the divine-human exchange, is actually the basis of it.

<sup>33</sup> It is the *mens*, which is directed toward the eternal, which can contemplate divine things, and thus participate in wisdom. The image is found only in the *mens*, the higher part of the soul, as Augustine states clearly in XII.4.

Thus the image, capable of God and able to participate in him, is awakened to receive and activate that capacity. Herein is the process of deification, for which the soul is created.

Fall of the Soul. But there is a problem. The soul, by its own doing, has forsaken (18, p. 446,34) and forgotten God (17). It has been weakened, darkened and dragged down, worn out and made miserable (18, p. 446,30-31,37,39). This is the effect of sin (21, p. 449,11-12); the result is that the soul deforms itself and conforms itself to the world instead of to God.<sup>34</sup> Its fall, Augustine makes clear, occurs “by its own willful undoing.”<sup>35</sup> In this way the image becomes, in Augustine’s words, worn out, old, distorted, discoloured and miserable. Even in this state, it does not lose its ability to remember, understand and love itself, nor does it cease to be image of God, as we have seen (19). Though not destroyed, the image becomes inactive, unhappy, and helpless to recover from its plight.<sup>36</sup>

Renewal of the Image. The solution to this problem lies not first of all with the soul itself, which after all is incapable of righting itself, but rather with “the one who formed it in the first place” and whose image it is (22, p. 451,5).<sup>37</sup> The reformation of the deformed image is first of all God’s

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<sup>34</sup> 22, p. 451,2-3, using language taken from Rom. 12:2: *ab eo deformitate qua per cupiditates saeculares conformabantur.*

<sup>35</sup> 21, p. 449,19-20: *[mens sentit] non nisi suo uoluntario defectu cadere potuisse.* The theme of *homo et iniquus*--the human plight without God, created for participation in him but parted from him by sin, is emphasized in the homiletic discourses; cf. my commentaries in Ch. 4, below, on En. 44, S. 81, and En. 52. In the homilies, Augustine expounds upon this theme not to incite despair but to highlight his hearers’ dependence upon and need of Christ: it is Christ who breaks the prison into which sin has cast humans.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. an earlier graphic description of the fall of the soul, resulting from its forsaking its true nature. Rather than being led, by temporal goods, to the eternal goods which they reflect, the soul allows itself to become subject to its own lower part (*anima*) and to the temporal things which the *anima* directs. Thus it disturbs the proper ordering of things, by which it ought to be subject to God; “so it turns away from him and slithers and slides down into less and less which is imagined to be more and more; it can find satisfaction neither in itself nor in anything else as it gets further away from him who alone can satisfy it” (X.7). No wonder it is lost, miserable and old--and helpless to recover what it has lost. The fall of the image is also described in XII.13-16. Note that, whereas redemption involves becoming like God in fulfillment of creational likeness, the fallen soul “beginning from a distorted appetite for likeness to God ends up in likeness to the beasts”; *incipiens a peruerso appetitu similitudinis dei peruenit ad similitudinem pecorum* (XII.16, p. 37,3-4).

<sup>37</sup> *Creatio* means God’s gift of being; all creation is good, and must be converted to its Creator (*conuersio*) in order to be perfected (*formatio*), but the human perceives the gift of being, given by God, and is called to participate in it (p. 179). Hamman (*L’Homme Image*, p. 244) sees *creatio* and *conuersio* as two ontological moments in the genesis of the soul. The former is that which constitutes the soul in its metaphysical structure; in the latter, the soul

doing, just as its deformation is entirely its own doing. It is God's activity which enables the soul to be "reformed" and "renovated"<sup>38</sup>; God's grace must be given and received in order for the soul to merit happiness.<sup>39</sup> This renewal takes place, like human creation itself, according to God (*secundum deum*; Augustine's interpretation of Eph. 4:24), and also according to the image of God (*secundum imaginem dei*, Col. 3:9), which Augustine takes as meaning that it is the image itself, that is the *mens*, which is renewed (22, p. 453,42 - p. 454,66). God, who created the soul to his image, steps in to revive the image which has fallen and become distorted and inactive because of sin, and so enable it to become activated and "get those [divine qualities] back again" (22, p. 452,10-14).<sup>40</sup>

Thus the solution to the problem is inherently divine; yet the key to the solution lies also in the human soul itself which turns to God, receives again its image-character (never fully lost) and allows the image to be activated by participating in God. Though it is God's grace which produces this response (21), it is also clear that the human response of turning again to God whom it had forgotten, but now recalls, is essential: "by forgetting God it was as if they [the nations] had forgotten their own life, and so they turned back to death, that is to hell. Then they are reminded of him and turn back to the Lord, which is like their coming to life again by remembering the life they had forgotten."<sup>41</sup> The soul needs God's movement in its behalf, but also needs to receive that

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recognizes the Word, and comes to know both God and self. *Formatio* is what Vannier calls the actualization of the image. This is the perfection of being, says Vannier: its deification; Vannier, "*Creatio*," p. 179. Cf. Ch. 4 (below), commentary to S. 192, a Nativity sermon which links human creation, the Incarnation, and human glorification.

<sup>38</sup> 22, p. 452,13: *renouatur atque reformatur*.

<sup>39</sup> 21, p. 449,7-9: "And what will make it happy but its own merit and its Lord's reward? But even its merit is the grace of him whose reward will be its happiness"; *Et quod eam faciet beatam nisi meritum suum et praemium domini sui? Sed et meritum eius gratia est illius cuius praemium erit beatitudo eius*. Cf. S. 166 (Ch. 4, below).

<sup>40</sup> Rist notes that the need of divine initiative separates Augustine from the Platonists. He agrees with them that humans are to become "like God," but for Augustine this "requires the direct action of God himself. This direct action is God's adoption of man in Christ.... Adoption is God's action in removing all unlikeness and allowing us to participate in God's divinity"; cf. *De Trin.* IV.4 (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 260).

<sup>41</sup> 17, p. 445,17-21: *Obliuiscendo autem deum tamquam obliuiscendo uitam suam conuersae fuerant in mortem, hoc est in inferum. Commemoratae uero conuertuntur ad dominum tamquam reuiuiscetes reminiscendo uitam cuius eas habebat obliuio*. Augustine begins Book IV, which deals with the question of the mission of the Son, with a portrayal of the sick man awakened by God and longing to turn back to him: "and being eager yet unable to go in to him, he has taken a look at himself in the light, and discovered himself, and realized that his own sickness cannot be compounded with God's cleanness": *intrare uolens nec ualens eoque sibi lucente attendit in se inuenit que se suamque aegritudinem illius munditiae contemperari non posse cognouit* (IV.1, p. 159,9-11). The fallen soul's turn to its

movement actively: “Let it [the mind] worship the uncreated God ... [and so] reign in happiness where it reigns eternal.”<sup>42</sup> Such reception means that the process of renewal and reformation can begin, so that the worn-out image can partake in him and be “made new and fresh and happy.”<sup>43</sup> It involves the soul taking the truth into itself, making that truth its own, and allowing itself to be changed by it: the fallen mind which is touched by God thereby recalls him and “perceives quite simply--for it learns this by a wholly intimate instruction from within--that it cannot rise except by his gracious doing, and that it could not have fallen except by its own willful undoing.”<sup>44</sup> The fallen soul which receives God’s Spirit and turns back to him is given to know at once its own sinfulness, and God’s love, forgiveness and activity for its sake; by receiving all of this, not through external knowledge but intimately, in the depths of the inner human, it receives the possibility--and to some extent, the actuality--of renewal, reformation and participation.<sup>45</sup>

Stages of the Renewal. This work of God’s activity, received by the human soul, is a “cure” (*curatio*) which happens in two stages (23). The first stage is forgiveness of all sins, even the tiniest, which happens “in a moment” and takes place at the moment of baptism, renewing the soul.<sup>46</sup> Augustine likens this stage to that part of the cure which removes the cause of the illness.

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true self, as loved and awakened by God but--of its own doing--turned away from God, is crucial in the process of healing and renewal.

<sup>42</sup> 15, p. 443,9-10,11: *colat deum non factum ... atque ubi aeterna, ibi beata regnabit*. The question of the human role in its own salvation is raised also in the homiletic discourses (Ch. 4); cf. my commentaries to S. Mainz 13 and En. 84, where human receptivity is an essential ingredient.

<sup>43</sup> 18, p. 447,30-31: *ex uetustate renouatur, ex deformitate reformatur, ex infelicitate beatificatur*.

<sup>44</sup> 21, p. 449,18-20: *[mens] sentit omnino quia hoc discit intimo magisterio, non nisi eius gratuito effectu posse se surgere, non nisi suo uoluntario defectu cadere potuisse*. What is the source of the “intimate instruction from within” and how is it received? This is a central question with regard to deification, for it is the presence of God within the innermost part of the soul which is key. Deification is in no sense achieved by the human on its own without God, but is the activation of a deeply intimate relationship based on the human’s kinship with yet otherness from God. Is the change in the human’s *awareness* of an “intimate instruction within,” which had been there all along? It seems that the instruction comes not from itself but from God, who however is present in the very heart of the human. Deification leads the human both towards its own being and towards God’s own being, because at the heart of human nature is discovered God’s presence to it.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. IV.2, in which Augustine remarks (in explaining the work of God revealed in the Old Testament, and how it prepares us for the grace received through Christ and revealed in the New Testament) that we had first to be persuaded how much God loves us, and what sort of people we are who are thus loved (sinful and willful).

<sup>46</sup> p. 454,2-3: *momento uno fit illa in baptismo renouatio remissione omnium peccatorum*. Baptism as the necessary beginning of the cure, and ecclesial life as the way to live that cure, is an important dimension of the homiletic texts; cf. commentaries on S. 81 and S. 227 in Ch. 4, below. For Augustine, baptism means initiation

The second stage takes a lifetime, following upon the baptismal renewal, and consists of the gradual removal of the effects of the illness through the transformation attained by daily work.<sup>47</sup> Like the first stage, the second depends upon God's assistance, but also requires human involvement. Daily renewal means proper love of God, a "straight" and not a "twisted" love, which produces proper love of self and of neighbour.<sup>48</sup> It is a process by which the soul gradually transfers its love from the temporal to the eternal, from the visible to the intelligible, from the carnal to the spiritual. It happens not apart from God but rather by increasing nearness to God, through the image's power to adhere to God.<sup>49</sup>

The first stage of the cure--forgiveness of sins and renewal in baptism--is clearly an earthly phenomenon. The second stage also is earthly, for it is the daily progress of receiving the effects of the cure, learning to live in a new way, activating the image's capacity for God and beginning to participate in him.<sup>50</sup> Augustine speaks explicitly of two stages; but these two earthly stages of the cure lead to a third and final stage, namely, full participation in God after death: "when the last day of his life overtakes such a one [the one who has received forgiveness and made steady progress through faith]," the final stage begins.<sup>51</sup> Yet, like the first and second stages, the second and third are not completely discrete: the second prepares for, and is somehow informed by, the third.

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into divine sonship, but such a gift is not automatically and irretrievably given. On the contrary, daily reform and renewal are required of baptized Christians in order to receive, more fully each day, the gift of adoption, reform and divinity which is promised and in some way given in baptism, but cannot be fully received in this life. He repeatedly urges Christians that baptism needs to be lived out by daily reform (cf. Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 164-165), which means both inner renewal and the practice of a virtuous life. Especially when writing in the Pelagian debate, he distinguishes between the rebirth given in baptism, and what is required every day of Christians in order to receive and live it; cf. *De Pecc. Mer.* 2.7.9 (CSEL 40, p. 80,19-24). Post-baptism penance is necessary (cf. *De Perf. Iust. Hom.* 18.39 [CSEL 42, p. 40,25-27]); nonetheless, through baptism, the human is made one of the "partakers of grace along with others through the unity of the Holy Spirit" (Wilson-Kastner, "Grace," p. 148); cf. *In Io. Ep.* 5.6, PL 35.2015.

<sup>47</sup> The image of human renewal as a cure is complemented by that of Christ as Physician; cf. XIII.14. *Christus medicus* appears more frequently in the homiletic discourses discussed in Ch. 4 below; cf. my note to S. Mainz 12.

<sup>48</sup> 18, p. 446,28-29: *Iam enim se non peruerse sed recte diligit.*

<sup>49</sup> 20, p. 445,83-85: "There is such potency in this image of God in it [the mind] that it is capable of cleaving to him whose image it is"; *Qua in se imagine dei tam potens est ut ei cuius imago est ualeat inhaerere.*

<sup>50</sup> Cf. IV.4, p. 163,2-6: "Our enlightenment is to participate in the Word.... Yet we were absolutely incapable of such participation and quite unfit for it, so unclean were we through sin, so we had to be cleansed"; *Inluminatio; quippe nostra participatio uerbi est.... huic autem participatione prorsus inhabiles et minus idonei eramus propter immunditiam peccatorum; mundandi ergo eramus.* Again we see that being image does not automatically include participation, but that sin prevents such participation--without which the human cannot be fulfilled--and healing of sin is necessary in order for the image to come to participate in the divine.

Augustine portrays the relationship between the second and third stages using the Pauline image which pervades *De Trinitate* and will be prominent in Book XV, that taken from 1 Cor. 13:12:

“We see now through a puzzling reflection in a mirror, but then it will be face to face.”<sup>52</sup>

Everything received in fullness after death, is received in a “puzzling” but real way during life, by those who have undergone stage one. Thus, for example, the virtues are lived in mortal life on earth, but lead to happiness in immortality (11); some if not all of the virtues are immortal themselves, and they all bring humans to eternity (12). Similarly, the soul in stage two has become a son of God (23), and is participating in some (not full) way in God, adhering to him, beginning to love eternal rather than temporal things, being renewed and reformed, beginning to receive happiness instead of misery, and being gradually transformed from within. It is this very changeability of the soul—one of the points of distinction between its own nature and that of the unchangeable God—which is its hope,<sup>53</sup> because it can therefore receive the transformation which will lead it to immortal happiness and to contemplation of the unchangeable (20). All that is given in reality and in vision in the third stage is given in hope and in faith in the second stage<sup>54</sup>; thus having a promise and intimation of what awaits the human soul after death informs the life of the earthly soul in stage two of the cure.

The final stage consists in the human soul’s full participation in God’s nature, and in his truth, happiness, wisdom, justice and all divine attributes, through its own change, not through

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<sup>51</sup> 23, p. 455,27-28: *cum dies uitae huius ultimus quemque comprerit*; cf. 20, p. 449,92-96.

<sup>52</sup> *Uidemus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem*. The English text is Hill’s translation. He amends it in the final book from “puzzling reflection” to “enigma,” sacrificing the notion of reflection, so central to *De Trinitate*, in favour of the sense of mystery upon which Augustine concentrates in Book XV; cf. Hill, p. 438, n. 27.

<sup>53</sup> 21, p. 449,2-5: “Of this it can have no doubt, since it is unhappy and longs to be happy, and its only hope that this will be possible lies in its being changeable. If it were not changeable, it could no more switch from unhappy to happy than from happy to unhappy”; *Quod ideo certe non dubitat quoniam misera est et beata esse desiderat, nec ob aliud fieri sperat hoc posse nisi quia est mutabilis. Nam si mutabilis non esset, sicut ex beata misera sic ex misera beata esse non posset*.

<sup>54</sup> 24, p. 456,21-23: “For at the moment we can bear the same image, not yet in vision but in faith, not yet in fact but in hope”; *Sec enim nunc eandem imaginem portare possumus, nondum in uisione sed in fide, nondum in re sed in spe*.

any change in God<sup>55</sup>; its total adherence to him, in fulfillment of its own nature as image; being filled by God's plenty (20), coming into his presence in company with the angels (23), and taking delight no more in sinning but only in good things (20); all of which come together in perfect likeness and perfect vision of God.<sup>56</sup> This, then, is the final perfection of the image and participation in divine life, which come together after death but are prepared for during life. Though the renewal is first of all spiritual--renewal of the *mens*--it includes the body, for the renewed soul after death will receive an immortal body<sup>57</sup>; in this respect, it is conformed to the image, not of the whole Trinity, but only of the Son, who also has an immortal body (24, p. 456,7-11).<sup>58</sup>

Summary. This depiction of the soul's creation, nature and fall, and its path of renewal and ultimate destiny, portrays the process of coming into divine life which I have named deification. Ultimately reserved till after death, it is received already on earth in a limited way, like the puzzling reflection in a mirror, for those who have been awakened and called back by God, have turned towards him to discover their own image-quality and their capacity for God, received forgiveness of sins which heals the deformed soul, and entered into the process of healing and renewal in day-

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<sup>55</sup> 20, p. 448,88-90: "This will come about with the mind attaining to a participation of his nature, truth, and happiness, not with him growing in his own nature, truth, and happiness"; *accidente quidem ista ad participationem naturae, ueritatis et beatitudinis illius, non tamen crescente illo in natura, ueritate et beatitudine sua.*

<sup>56</sup> 23, p. 455,31-32: "For only when it comes to the perfect vision of God will this image bear God's perfect likeness"; *In hac quippe imagine tunc perfecta erit dei similitudo quando dei perfecta erit uisio.*

<sup>57</sup> Cf. IV.5--both body and soul are in need of renewal--and IV.7: "at the end of time we shall be renewed all through by the resurrection of the flesh"; *renouationis accipimus ut in fine temporis etiam resurrectione carnis omni ex parte renouati* (p. 170,29-30).

<sup>58</sup> Augustine does not in this book elaborate the role of each member of the divine Trinity in presenting this solution to the soul's problem, but does intimate particular ways in which Son and Spirit are received by the human soul which accepts renewal. Christ is the mediator, faith in whom leads finally to God's presence (23); it is divine sonship which is received through renewal of the soul (23); and it is "after the manner of Christ" that humans will finally be made immortal (24, p. 456,20: *secundum Christum immortales nos futuros esse*). And it is reception of God's Spirit which recalls the fallen mind to God and enables it to perceive within itself its own sinfulness and God's grace which raises it up: "But when the mind truly recalls its Lord after receiving his Spirit, it perceives quite simply--for it learns this by a wholly intimate instruction from within--that it cannot rise except by his gracious doing, and that it could not have fallen except by its own willful undoing"; *quando autem [mens] bene recordatur domini sui spiritu eius accepto sentit omnino quia hoc discit intimo magisterio, non nisi eius gratuito effectum posse se surgere, non nisi suo uoluntario defectu cadere potuisse* (21, p. 449,18-20). This pregnant passage suggests that human reception of the Holy Spirit is part of the human's reception of Christ, the latter being the turning-point--the

to-day life. In its fullness, after death, deification consists in immortality, happiness, adherence to God, participation in God, likeness to and vision of God, in fulfillment of its own nature as image of God and capable of God. It is expressed most clearly in this central section of Book XIV, as the apex towards which the entire second half of the work is directed.

### 3.2.2 Deification in the Theological Agenda of *De Trinitate* as a Whole

Human entry into divine life, as both the other-worldly fulfillment of human life and a process begun on earth for those who receive it, though not the primary subject of *De Trinitate*, is nevertheless woven into the fabric of this work. In the previous section, I presented Augustine's description of deification in the main portion of Book XIV. In this section, I will show how deification is part of the agenda of the work itself.

It is important to remember, in undertaking this analysis, that Augustine himself considered the work to be a highly integrated whole. The internal consistency and coherence of his step-by-step inquiry are the more remarkable given the number of years over which it was written, and the multiplicity of other duties which he carried over these years. His irritation at the theft and premature publication of the work (while he was in the midst of Book XII)--which almost persuaded him to abandon the task--was due not only to the audacity of the perpetrators, but even more to his awareness that "the inquiry proceeds in a closely-knit development from the first [book] to the last" (Prologue, p. 25,9-10), and that consequently the first books ought not to be read without reference to the last. The student of *De Trinitate* perhaps owes a debt of gratitude to these theological pirates, because the circumstance of the theft, and Augustine's own recounting of it, alert us to his sense of the work's integrity and advise us about how to receive *De Trinitate*. Our reading of the work, therefore, will be far less subject to misinterpretation, and far more conducive to understanding the depth of its subject matter, if we resist the temptation to isolate the parts from the whole, and instead read them as much as possible in light of his overall aims. Indeed, the work itself continually encourages us to do so. It is partly for this reason that my examination of

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moment of conversion--in which the process of deification (on earth) is begun. Cf. 3.2.4, below, which examines

deification needs to consider how this topic is part of the developing agenda of the work, and therefore essential to its very fabric. As the program by which Augustine proceeds unfolds, his explicit agenda is increasingly discovered to intertwine with the secondary question of how humans come to participate in divine life; this is evident not only in the subjects upon which Augustine reflects, but also in the method by which he reflects upon them. Book XV is particularly helpful in showing us how to detect the presence and influence of deification in the work.

The explicit task of *De Trinitate* is to “account for the one and only and true God being a Trinity, and for the rightness of saying, believing, understanding that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same substance or essence.”<sup>59</sup> The first seven books discuss the divine Trinity as revealed through Scripture and church teaching; they also show the contributions and limitations of philosophy and rational reflection in contributing to this inquiry.<sup>60</sup> In Book VIII, Augustine signals a change in procedure. It is necessary but not sufficient simply to present teachings about the Trinity (Books I-VII), he finds; the Christian project of grasping the divine Trinity requires and depends upon an interior relationship with God. Therefore he commences a more speculative project: coming to know the divine Trinity by direct reflection, not upon God himself, but upon his image in the human soul. The turn to the human soul is prepared for in Book VII, which concludes with an exposition of the soul as made to God’s image (VII.12); Book VIII sets up the investigation of the soul as God’s image, which occupies IX-XIV. This second half of Augustine’s project culminates in the account (XIV) of the perfection of the image by which humans enter into divine life. Finally, Book XV reviews the entire undertaking of *De Trinitate*, acknowledges its limitations, and re-poses the work’s underlying question: how humans come to know the divine Trinity.

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the role of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in deification.

<sup>59</sup> I.4, p. 31,3-6; *reddere rationem, quod trinitas sit unus et solus et uerus deus, et quam recte pater et filius et spiritus sanctus unius eiusdemque substantiae uel essentiae dicatur, credatur, intellegatur.*

<sup>60</sup> Cf. IV.10, p. 175,47-50: “As for the reasons I have given, I have gathered them from the authority of the ecclesiastical tradition received from our fathers, or from the evidence of the divine scriptures themselves, or by a process of reason”; *Ego autem quas reddidi uel ex ecclesiae auctoritate a maioribus tradita uel ex diuinarum scripturarum testimonio uel ex ratione numerorum similitudinumque collegi.*

The key to Augustine's search is the turn to God, by which we receive what he gives rather than trying to attain him by human powers alone. The aim of human life is to think about, praise and bless God at all times, and to know his truth; but "our thoughts are quite inadequate to their object, and incapable of grasping him as he is," even for people as great as St. Paul.<sup>61</sup> Therefore it is necessary, not to cease reasoning, thinking and speaking about God, but rather to go beyond these human capacities, not relying upon their powers but allowing God's grace to enflame them (V.2). "Why should we go running round the heights of the heavens and the depths of the earth looking for him who is with us if only we should wish to be with him?"<sup>62</sup> When God is allowed to be present to the mind, then the mind can work properly and even help, rather than impede, us in coming to know God. Then, instead of being impossible of fulfillment--as with the philosophers--the search itself becomes part of the finding; "Let this then be what we set our minds on, to know that a disposition to look for the truth is safer than one to presuppose that we know what is in fact unknown. Let us therefore so look as though we are going to find, and so find as though we are going to go on looking."<sup>63</sup> Finding and seeking become the dance by which one is led closer to the truth, and even given joy and delight along the path.<sup>64</sup>

But how do we see the God we cannot see, and love the God we do not know? Book VIII, which addresses the question directly, demonstrates the necessary movement from outer to inner reality. It begins by summarizing the teachings about God's oneness and threeness; but though these teachings are by now familiar, something more is needed: we must "beseech God as devoutly and earnestly as we can to open our understandings and temper our fondness for controversy, so that our minds may be able to perceive the essence of truth without any mass,

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<sup>61</sup> V.1, p. 206,4-5: *cogitamus longe se illi de quo cogitat imparem sentiat neque ut est eum capiat.*

<sup>62</sup> VIII.11, p. 286,59-62: *utquid imus et currimus in sublimia caelorum et ima terrarum quaerentes eum qui est apud nos si nos esse uelimus apud eum?*

<sup>63</sup> IX.1, p. 293,26-30: *Hoc ergo sapiamus ut nouerimus tutiorem esse affectum uera quaerendi quam incognita pro cognitis praesumendi. Sic ergo quaeramus tanquam inuenturi, est sic inueniamus tamquam quaesituri.*

<sup>64</sup> XV.2, p. 461,20-23: "You become better and better by looking for so great a good which is both sought in order to be found and found in order to be sought. It is sought in order to be found all the more delightfully, and it is found in order to be sought all the more avidly"; *melior meliorque fit quaerens tam magnum bonum quod et inueniendum quaeritur et quaerendum inuenitur? Nam et quaeritur ut inueniatur dulcius et inuenitur ut quaeratur auidius.*

without any changeableness.”<sup>65</sup> It is with this aim that Augustine undertakes to address the question of the trinitarian God “in a more inward manner” (*modo interiore*, VIII.1, p. 269,29), which will be the task of the remaining books. Yet again he cautions that this task is subject to human limitations: we are able to catch a glimpse of the truth which God is, and which we are made to seek, but only fleetingly; “immediately a fog of bodily images and a cloud of fancies will get in your way and disturb the bright fair weather that burst on you the first instant when I said ‘truth’.... stay there if you can. But you cannot; you slide back into these familiar and earthy things.”<sup>66</sup> This introduction to Book VIII encapsulates the task, the problem and the need for a divine solution. Our nature makes us seek the God whose image we are, but also makes us incapable of grasping him, partly because he is beyond us, partly because we are mired by sin. Coming to know God involves our emerging from the low places in which we dwell, to “breathe in that sublime atmosphere” of God.<sup>67</sup> This feat cannot be accomplished by reason or the mind alone. The pivotal moment in coming to know God is a moment of conversion which enables us to receive what God gives, like the sick man who longs to return to his home country (IV.1). The most exalted reasoning, all the best powers of the human intellect, cannot on their own bring us there; thus, even after fourteen books’ worth of intensive analysis, Augustine will remark: “Here we are, after exercising our understanding as much as was necessary, and perhaps more than was necessary in these lower things, wishing and not being able to raise ourselves to a sight of that

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<sup>65</sup> VIII.1, p. 268,25-28: *deoque supplicandum deuotissima pietate ut intellectum aperiat et studium contentionis absumat quo possit mente cerni essentia ueritatis sine ulla mole, sine ulla mutabilitate.*

<sup>66</sup> VIII.3, p. 271,33-37: *statim enim se opponent caligines imaginum corporalium et nubila phantasmatum et perturbabunt serenitatem quae primo ictu dilixit tibi cum dicerem, ueritas.... mane si potes; sed non potes. Relaberis in ista solita atque terrena.* Yannaras and Lot-Borodine both opine that a proper understanding of *theosis* needs a negative theology and a fundamental sense of God’s incomprehensibility, so as to avoid portraying the deified human person as coming into (becoming) God’s own essence; cf. Chapter 1, above. Richard Sorabji finds “traces” in Augustine of the theme of unknowing: “he does doubt that God is ultimately comprehensible” (Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 171). For we cannot know God just as he is, but can know what he is like, and can reject descriptions of what he is not; cf. *De Trin.* VIII.2.3, “it is no small part of knowledge ... if before we can know what God is, we are at least able to know what he is not”; and S.117, cited by Lossky, “Negative Theology,” p. 70: “We are speaking of God. What wonder is it that you do not understand? If you have understood, that is not God”). David Bell notes (in Augustine’s thought) two ways in which the human experience of God remains limited: first, because the human *mens* is not what God is, and can become the Creator, and cannot comprehend God; second, because God himself is ultimately incomprehensible (Bell, *Image and Likeness*, p. 77). Is this true only on earth, or in heaven also? Bell concludes that the *mens*, though always creature, will have a greater capacity for God than it does on earth; but that God, who alone is true being, is for Augustine ultimately *incomprehensible* (pp. 78-84).

supreme trinity which is God.”<sup>68</sup> Framed by these allusions to the impossibility of rising by our own powers to knowledge of God, and hence aware of the internal limitations of the inquiry, Books IX-XIV pursue the inquiry about how we can come to know the trinitarian God. The rational process on its own inadequate to the task; that glimpse with which the *mens* catches the truth, if only fleetingly, and the moment of conversion which raises the human from its depths into God’s atmosphere, are essential.<sup>69</sup>

And so, the explicit agenda—discovering the nature of the trinitarian God—leads Augustine to a second agenda, which informs especially the second half of the work, though it is prepared for in the first: the question of how humans come to know the trinitarian God. The answer is that we come to know him best of all through ourselves, for God is there in our innermost depths; our own selves reveal him because this is the way they were created. Reflecting on ourselves leads to God, not because we can find him on our own through our powers (as the philosophers try to do) but simply because this is where he is and where he is best discovered. The key is not first of all in the human power of reflection, but rather in the object upon which it thus reflects. Such reflection leads to God when it is trained not only on ourselves, but on ourselves precisely as image of God, that is, referring our own being “to that of which it is an image, and also see[ing] that other by inference through its image which [we] see by observation.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> VIII.3, p. 270,14-15: *cum de profundo isto in illam summitatem respiramus.*

<sup>68</sup> XV.10, p. 473,55-58: *Et ecce iam quantum necesse fuerat aut forte plus quam necesse fuerat exercitata in inferioribus intellegentia ad summam trinitatem quae deus est conspiciendam nos erigere uolumus nec ualemus.*

<sup>69</sup> Vladimir Lossky, considering the question of a negative theology in Augustine, observes that Augustine sees God not as beyond being, but as Being-Itself; he envisions a “spiritual touching ... [at] the limit of apophatic ignorance, the light of true knowledge attained without being acquired, in a passing contact of created thoughts always fleeing the present with the eternal present of God”; its “negative criterion” is “the immutability of true Being.” (Lossky, “Negative Theology,” p. 74.) Anderson notes that this assertion of the “primacy of being” separates Augustine from the Platonists and Neoplatonists, and adds that in this life, only the inner human can hear the voice of truth: everything else suffers from some degree of non-being (James F. Anderson, *St. Augustine and Being: A Metaphysical Essay* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965], pp. 75 and 21). Sorabji also finds Augustine unlike Plotinus in that Augustine depicts the highest stage mystical union with God in intellectual terms, involving a vision and a contemplation of truth, whereas Plotinus’ higher stage is beyond thinking; but Augustine “does not describe the mystical state as an unknowing, much less an unthinking experience” (Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 171).

<sup>70</sup> XV.44, p. 522,51-54: *ut possint ad eum cuius imago est quomodocumque referre quod uident et per imaginem quod conspiciendo uident etiam illud uidere coniciendo.*

Given the human impossibility of seeing God as he is, Augustine's inquiry about the trinitarian God has led him to turn inward to the human soul as a locus in which to come to God, and one which "is likely to be easier, after all, and more familiar for our mind in its weakness to examine," than the substance itself of the divine Trinity.<sup>71</sup> Because it is difficult for humans to learn to see the divine, they should "descry [God's] invisible things by understanding them through the things that are made, and especially through the rational or intellectual creature which is made to the image of God."<sup>72</sup> The turn to the soul is not an end in itself, but a path to the trinitarian God, since he reveals himself there.

In the second half of the work, as he pursues this task of finding the trinitarian image in the human soul Augustine is actually undertaking the task he is describing: coming to know the life of the divine Trinity by contemplating its reflection in the human mind. The process which Augustine describes--turning towards the human soul, not for its own sake but as a way of coming to God, contemplating the inner activities of the soul, and through it contemplating God of whom the soul is image--is the process by which the image is activated so that the human soul can participate in divine life, and come to experience fulfillment of its own image-character. This is the process in which Augustine is engaged throughout the second half of the work; in that sense, the work itself demonstrates the process of deification as it is received on earth by the human soul which is converted towards God and comes to know him. Having completed the project, Augustine concludes: "So what we have been trying to do is somehow to see him by whom we were made by means of this image which we ourselves are, as through a mirror."<sup>73</sup> By the act of contemplation in which Augustine has been leading us, we enter into divine life in the way one can on earth, namely, like a blurred image of that which will be seen clearly after death; by that process we are progressively transformed so that the image becomes increasingly clear, though never in this life completely so. In the concluding book, he dwells on this Pauline metaphor of seeing now

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<sup>71</sup> IX.1, p. 294,60-61: *familiarius enim eam et facilius fortasse intuetur nostrae mentis infirmitas.*

<sup>72</sup> XV.39, p. 516,47-49: *ut inuisibilia eius per ea quae facta sunt sicut possunt intellecta conspicerent, et maxime per rationalem uel intellectualem creaturam quae facta est ad imaginem dei.*

<sup>73</sup> XV.14, p. 479,6-9: *Hoc ergo facere conati sumus ut per hanc imaginem quod nos sumus uideremus utcumque a quo facti sumus tamquam per speculum.*

through a mirror in an enigma, but then face to face (1 Cor. 13:12; XV.14-16), which acts as a paradigmatic metaphor for what Augustine has been doing throughout the second half of the work: trying to see and express the blurred image more and more clearly, in anticipation of the clear vision which will come with perfection after death. The deification of Augustine, and of his readers, could be said to be the goal of the work, though the work itself cannot accomplish that goal.

Perhaps it would be better to say that the goal of the work is awareness, reception and understanding of his and our deification. The two-stage cure which transforms the soul is the underlying structure of the process by which the soul comes to know God. The key moment of the first stage is the soul's turning back to God, which opens for it a new vision and enables its own potential for participation finally to be realized.<sup>74</sup> The second stage--the lifetime of reform of the image and preparation for full participation in divinity--is a process, for which perhaps Augustine is giving a pattern in the procedure of the work's second half. In Books IX-XIV, he describes a series of trinities which he finds in the human, both in the outer human (lesser trinities) and in the inner human (which come closer to the true image of God); but the higher human trinity is that found in the *mens*--remembering, understanding and loving itself--because the activities in the mind come from within itself, not from outside, and are co-eternal with itself. This is still not the highest trinity, however, because the highest capacity of the human mind is to contemplate eternal things. This highest capacity is activated only when the mind remembers, understands, and loves God: the highest human trinity.<sup>75</sup> The pattern which Augustine follows in this quest, moving from outer to inner, from knowledge to wisdom, through progressively deeper and truer reflections of the divine Trinity, itself comprises a sequence by which the soul which has broken

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<sup>74</sup> Hill uses the image of moving through the looking-glass to express that penetration of the barrier (or point of contact) between two worlds, as the one seeking God moves "from his own murky world into the clarity of the divine world" (Hill, *Trinity*, p. 237). He also suggests the metaphor "breaking the surface," which is more appropriate still as it gives the sense of breaking through from a lower to an upper region. Ladner speaks of the soul's turn towards God, by which it becomes "consciously aware of its character as divine image," realizable only by being completely with God through the reformation of the image of God which the human is (Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 200-201).

the barrier between the two worlds moves progressively towards the divine world. Along the way, the soul moves increasingly into the inner world, until the inner world becomes dominant and gives shape to the outer world (instead of the reverse). It ceases to take the temporal as its term of reference (*scientia*), being rooted in the eternal even while remaining finite (*sapientia*). By moving with Augustine along his stages of reflection upon the image, then, we may actually be led along the stages by which the soul can come to know God in the way possible in this life--and therefore be prepared to know God fully in the next life.<sup>76</sup> In that sense, the work is leading the reader along the contemplative path of renewal of the image, the earthly process of deification, to prepare it for deification after death.<sup>77</sup>

Those who see the image and know it to be such, and know that God is to be sought in it, and contemplate it, are having their hearts purified by faith in order that they might one day see him face-to-face (XV.44). Those who are not aware of the image as image, and do not seek God in it, are condemning themselves.<sup>78</sup> The obstacles which would prevent humans from contemplating God in this way--even in the limited way which can be achieved on earth--are our own human limitations. Augustine's sense of such limitations can be divided into two kinds: the limitations of vision, thought and speech,<sup>79</sup> and above all, the weakness caused by sin (VIII.3; XV.50). The

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<sup>75</sup> Sullivan notes the crucial importance of this final step; without it all the preceding ones are not just pointless but destructive: "If the activity of the created trinity is not referred to God, but only to self, then we have a trinity of 'stupidity,' not a trinity of wisdom" (Sullivan, *Image of God*, p. 137).

<sup>76</sup> Sullivan picks up this pattern as he refers to three levels of the trinitarian image which Augustine finds in the human: first, "a permanent and ineradicable trinity," which at its simplest means discovering the soul's image-character; second, a renewed and re-formed trinitarian image, which is the work of life; third and finally, perfection of the trinitarian image in glory, in heaven. (Sullivan, *Image of God*, p. 142.)

<sup>77</sup> Hill takes very seriously the contemplative work which Augustine is doing in *De Trinitate*: "proposing the quest for, or the exploration of, the mystery of the Trinity as a complete program for the Christian spiritual life, a program of conversion and renewal and discovery of self in God and God in self"--which he considers the central point of the work, yet one which was "missed entirely" by medieval and scholastic western theology (Hill, "Introduction," p. 19). It must be remembered, however, though he discusses the point not at all in *De Trinitate*, that this "program of renewal"--what I have called the earthly process of deification--for Augustine comes only within the life of the Church. This is implicit but clear in his point that baptismal renewal is the first, indispensable stage of the cure. In other words, Augustine could not validly undertake this work except as a Christian living the sacramental life of the Church.

<sup>78</sup> "In Augustine's view, the difference between the use of the trinity with self as object for analogy and illustration of the divine Trinity and the trinity with God as object is based on the difference between a static, ontological image fundamentally and a dynamic, operational image." (Sullivan, *Image of God*, p. 147.)

<sup>79</sup> Cf. V.1, "Our thoughts are quite inadequate to their object, and incapable of grasping him as he is"; VIII.3, the impossibility of holding by means of thoughts or images to the fleeting glimpse of God; and the concluding XV.10,

unlikeness of sin is a barrier which needs to be overcome (XV.44); this happens in the first stage of the cure, forgiveness of sins, which comes in baptism.<sup>80</sup> The process of contemplation depicted in IX-XIV could not exist on its own, as a solitary process, since it could not occur except through membership in the Church. The limitations of human vision, thought and speech are progressively overcome from within--up to a point--in the second stage of the cure. Just as a transition from the outer to inner human must be made, and constitutes a key moment in the turn towards the self and God, so too Augustine speaks of the relationship between the outer and inner word. The inner word is that which lights us up inside; made by God, it is not our own but what he gives us (XV.20). We beget that inner word by uttering it inwardly; it anticipates the outer word, of body or speech, by which we try to embody it, and evoke in others the same light that touched us (IX.12). An outer word is true when it is a true expression of the inner word; a good word precedes a good work. This inner word of ours is a likeness of the divine Word (XV.19). The human task, then, in these terms, is to receive the inner word which God gives, and from it produce an outer word which is as transparent as possible to that inner word which gave us light in the first place.<sup>81</sup> Thus the inherent limitations of human thought and speech are overcome from within, and by receiving what only God can give. Augustine himself seems to apply that principle in his discussion of Greek terminology for God's oneness and threeness (III.1). He concludes, essentially, that the problem seems to be a problem of the outer word, for the Greek words are hard to understand and hard to translate, and opts for concluding that their inner word, and the inner word which the Latins struggle to express, are one and the same. Hence, the important thing is not the words chosen--three what? three somethings--but simply the fact of having a word as a

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the human inability to "raise ourselves to a sight of that supreme trinity which is God" (all quoted above in this Section). The inadequacy of human words is shown in Augustine's depiction, discussed immediately below, of the "outer word" which can only attempt to express the "inner word."

<sup>80</sup> Rist, discussing Augustine's notion of *concupiscentia*, calls it the basic human weakness which is a result of the fall. This, explains Rist, is the permanent weakness we have inherited from Adam; it is not in itself sinful, but the sin is in our consenting to it. This weakness is penal but can be "used well," as sexual desire can be used within marriage. (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 136.)

<sup>81</sup> Augustine, observes Lossky, senses the "radical inadequacy between all human speech and the interior sense which we have of the excellence of God"; he refers also to *De doctrina christiana* 1.6, and the vision at Ostia (*Conf. IX.10*), in which human speech "begins and ends" the fleeting contact with eternal wisdom. (Lossky, "Negative Theology," pp. 70-71.)

vehicle to point to the existence of a mysterious inner word which is beyond human comprehension (namely, God's threeness). So we see that this human limitation of speech and thought can be progressively transformed, though our inner word even at its best can only reflect--not become, or become identical with--the divine Word of which it is image.

The inequality which belongs to our human condition as creatures of the Creator (XV.43) is permanent; however, it is not in itself an obstacle to deification, but rather a defining element and even a vehicle to participation in divine life. The image never becomes precisely what God is; indeed, the Son of God alone is true image equal to the Father, whereas humans are made "to the image" (*ad imaginem*; VII.12). We approach the Trinity by likeness, but never arrive at equality or identity with it. Deification, then, in no way implies identity of the human with God, nor with Christ, but rather an entry into divine life in the way in which humans can enter it: a way that is greater than that of any other creature, but lesser than that of Christ. Augustine's contemplative task of coming to know the human soul, and in it the trinitarian God, never forgets this defining characteristic of inequality. His sense of the failure of the project, in the concluding book (XV.10: "here we are ... wishing and not being able to raise ourselves to a sight of that supreme trinity which is God"), is a reminder that coming into divine life is not a human feat, but rather a divine invitation to which humans respond. He concludes the work, not with a solution, but with a prayer (XV.51).<sup>82</sup>

Part of the reason for his failure is that deification is the goal reached only after death; in life it can be received in a certain sense only. The conversion of the human, and initiation of the process by which God's image in the human is transformed so as to participate in God and become completely like him, render the human able to see God; but such vision happens in eternal life, where we shall see God face-to-face. There is, then, a thorough-going distinction between this life and the next life: in the latter we shall see the divine Trinity "much more clearly and definitely than we now see its image which we ourselves are"; in this life we can see only "as much as it is

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<sup>82</sup> Even in prayer, remarks Lossky, we need a negative attitude "in order to reject any notion which reveals itself as inadequate to what we ought to seek in prayer"; Lossky refers to Augustine's reference, in *Ep.* 130, *ad Probum* (ca.

granted to see in this life.”<sup>83</sup> For this reason, Augustine’s project was bound to fail. We will not “see” the trinitarian God through this work, for we will not “see” him in this life at all. On the other hand, even on earth God in his image can begin to be contemplated, and in himself can in some way begin to be received by the human, as in the “enigma” in the mirror.

Summary. It can be said that Augustine’s work in *De Trinitate*—the primary work of discussing the trinitarian nature of God, through Church teaching, Scripture and human reasoning, and the secondary work of contemplating the trinitarian reflection of God in the human soul—is itself a manifestation of the process of deification, as it is begun on earth for those who have been called back to God, turned to him, received forgiveness of sins through baptism, and entered into the day-to-day process of renewal and transformation.

### 3.2.3 Key Components of Deification

Several elements essential to deification can readily be extracted from *De Trinitate*. Two belong to the process of deification as begun in this life, seven belong to the next life. However, the two dimensions—deification as begun in this life, and deification in its fullness after death—interpenetrate.<sup>84</sup> For though the boundary between life and death is absolute and irreversible, nonetheless the two dimensions are not totally discrete realities, but bleed into one another. I shall address each in turn.

#### In This Life

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AD 412) to a “certain learned ignorance,” learned in the Spirit of God who helps our infirmity (*quaedam docta ignorantia, sed docta spiritu dei, qui adiuvat infirmitatem nostram*). (Lossky, “Negative Theology,” p. 71.)

<sup>83</sup> XV.44, p. 522,46-49: *multo clarius certiusque uidebimus quam nunc eius imaginem quod nos sumus.... sicut in hac uita uidere concessum est.*

<sup>84</sup> There is a tension in Augustine’s thought here. Certainly, as noted above, life on earth and life after death are totally distinct from one another: something definitive happens at death. Yet they are deeply related; earthly life is at least a preparation for the next life, and should be already a beginning of what will be received only after death. Cf. the homiletic discourses, in which Augustine calls the baptized faithful to receive and live *now* the transformation which will lead them to deification and full participation in the divine; eg., S. Mainz 13, S. Mainz 12, S. 166, En. 109, all discussed in Ch. 4, below.

Faith is a this-worldly reality which prepares humans to enter into the next world; sin is a reality of this world, not the next, and receiving forgiveness of sins in this life is an essential step towards entry into divine life in the next. Thus the soul forgiven of sins, purified by faith, and completely healed, is the soul which is prepared to enter into divine life after death. In these ways, deification is begun already in this life. The final goal, however, is not this life but the next, when alone the human will be fully able to participate in divine life.

*Faith.* A fundamental aspect of faith,<sup>85</sup> in terms of deification, is that Augustine treats it always as a relative, finite concept. Faith is a temporal reality, belonging to the mortal life (XIV.3); by it, we are made ready to receive the ultimate, eternal gift. Though at its best it is faith in eternal things, it only leads us to eternal life; when eternity comes, faith no longer is needed. By its nature, then, it is transitional. Yet faith is not simply a desirable element of earthly life, but a necessary one; its function is to purify the mind so as to enable it to contemplate the eternal. Faith in eternal things is necessary in order to gain these eternal things<sup>86</sup>; but faith in temporal things leads to faith in eternal things, for the mind still in need of purification (IV.24). The more we give our faith to what God has done for us in time, the more we are purified by it (IV.24). It is not static, therefore, but undergoes development, and in turn develops the mind, purifying and strengthening it. Faith is first of all God's gift; when we receive it and become believers, then we can progressively be strengthened so as to see what we now believe (XV.49).<sup>87</sup> In the process, we are changed: God loves us now for what we will be then (I.21).

Faith and sight are interlocking terms. Their connection shows the inter-relation between this life and the next. Faith must be understood in this way, as the reality which lays the foundations for vision. Our earthly eyes are weak, and cannot gaze directly on the light; but faith, as it grows, strengthens our weak eyes so that we will be able to see (I.4). They are not two

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<sup>85</sup> The functioning of faith is discussed especially in Book XIII.

<sup>86</sup> XIV.3; cf. VIII.6, p. 275.14-16: "before we are capable of doing this [seeing God] we must first love by faith, or it will be impossible for our hearts to be purified and become fit and worthy to see him"; *nisi per fidem diligatur, non poterit cor mundari quo ad eum uidendum sit aptum et idoneum.*

<sup>87</sup> Cf. En. 66 (discussed in Ch. 4, below): the divine-human exchange in Christ is made *so that* we might believe.

separate or parallel realities, however, but rather two interrelated realities. As eternal life succeeds mortality, so sight succeeds faith: it is a transformation, not a replacement, a fulfillment, not simply an ending (I.21). For only the pure of heart will see God, and before humans are capable of this, they must learn to love by faith so that their hearts can be purified (VIII.6). Faith purifies us on earth, sight makes us whole after death (IV.11); the latter brings complete reception of what is received in a real but limited way on earth, due to human weakness. It is for the sake of human weakness that God gives in this way: in a certain way on earth, which is as a dim reflection of the total way he gives after death. The blurred image in the mirror, which we are in this life, but in which we can grow, is accompanied and clarified by faith; we bear this image not yet in vision but in faith, not yet in fact but in hope.<sup>88</sup> Augustine refers to both as glorious; in a reflection on Paul's terminology (2 Cor. 3:18, "we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory"), he explains that the glory of creation, received on earth, is succeeded by the glory of justification; or again, he adds, one could understand this as the transition from the glory of faith to the glory of sight, or from the glory by which we are sons of God to the glory by which we "shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn. 3:2). On earth already, glorification begins in the way that it can begin on earth, and out of this comes the glory reserved for heaven. The human role is to allow ourselves to be prepared for that total giving, by being purified, by learning to love on earth, and by practising the virtues (which lead to immortal life).

Above all, faith is faith in Christ. It is Christ, first and foremost, who enables us to have faith and be led to sight. Faith begins in the temporal, and in Christ God enables humans--who otherwise would simply be unable to see and receive him--to come to him in the way that we can, namely, through the temporal. For from him we receive first in his humanness which is visible, then in his divinity which is hidden. To see Christ's human form does not require faith; anybody can see his human form, good and bad alike (I.30). Faith in the visible--Christ as human, *in forma serui*--leads to faith in the invisible--Christ as God, *in forma dei*, and therefore God himself (I.27).

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<sup>88</sup> XIV.24, p. 456, 21-23: *Sic enim nunc eandem imaginem portare possumus, nondum in uisione sed in fide, nondum in re sed in spe.* The theme of *in spe / in re* recurs in the homiletic discourses (Ch. 4, below), eg., S. Mainz 13. En. 84; in En. 109, faith on earth leads to and prepares for vision in heaven.

Faith in Christ as God is the same as faith in the Father; by it also our true selves are revealed to us, for we are image (I.16). In this way, God gives us a way to progress here on earth--since faith is an earthly reality--towards true sight, which would otherwise be impossible for us. Thus "Adam is worn down so that Christ's glorious grace may shine through."<sup>89</sup> All this is given through Christ first of all, through the guidance of the Church (I.4), so that even on earth we can be increasingly strengthened and purified, and be prepared to receive, after death, the gift of vision.

***Forgiveness of Sins and Healing.*** The goal of human life is to enter into divine life. The true activity of the image of God in the human soul is to turn and participate in God. By this means, it fulfills its image-character and so comes to fullness of life. However, the effect of sin on the image is so dire that the image is all but lost. It is not destroyed, as we have noted: the image remains (XIV.19). But it is weakened, darkened, and dragged down, because it has forsaken the one who is its strength (XIV.18). As a result, it cannot love properly; a "straight" love loves God first, and therefore loves self and neighbour in a "straight" way, but through sin love becomes "twisted" (*diligit recte / peruerse*, XIV.18). Old, worn, and miserable, the soul through sin is caught between pride and despair (IV.2). Sin has weighed it down and plunged it into darkness, the darkness which is "the foolish minds of humans, blinded by depraved desires and unbelief."<sup>90</sup> It is caught not only by its personal sins, but by "ancestral" sins, the "hereditary evil" in which the descendants of Adam have been "tied up."<sup>91</sup> By nature humans are human, but by sin we are unjust (IV.4). As a result, the soul cannot experience fully its image-character (XV.44): it cannot be deified. Such is the plight of the human soul.

God responds to this plight not with power but with justice, to bring forgiveness of sins and so free us from the debt we have incurred (XIII.21). Forgiveness of sins, given freely by

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<sup>89</sup> II.1, p. 80,6: *atteri Adam ut Christi gratia glorificata dilucescat*; a variant reading for *Adam* is *anima* (CCL, p. 80: cf. Hill, *Trinity*, p. 97, n. 1).

<sup>90</sup> IV.3, p. 163,67-69: *Tenebrae autem sunt stultae mentes hominum prava cupiditate atque infidelitate caecatae.*

<sup>91</sup> XIII.21, p. 411,82-84: *uno eodemque primo Adam per cuius peccatum et mortem tanquam haereditariis malis posterius eius obligati sumus.*

God, enables us to be renewed. As we have seen, Augustine likens the process of forgiveness to a cure of illness in two stages: the first is removal of the cause of sickness, the second is treatment of its effects. The first stage is the baptismal forgiveness of sins, which happens “in a moment” and forgives all sins, even the tiniest; the second stage is daily progress in renewal, which takes a lifetime (XIV.23).<sup>92</sup> Part of the cure involves coming to *see* the truth: how much God loves us, and what sort of people we are whom he loves (IV.2). As with the sick man who “has taken a look at himself in the light, and discovered himself,” realized that his sickness keeps him from God and that he cannot cure himself, it is self-knowledge and standing in the truth which begin the road to recovery. The cure means returning home, like the prodigal son, to that “far country” from which the sick soul has wandered (IV.1). The road home is the Incarnation (IV.1); healing of the sick soul is the purpose of the Incarnation, and of the exchange by which Christ mediates between God and humanity.<sup>93</sup> Pride, the key sin, is cured by God’s humility; since Christ comes in weakness to take on the debt he did not incur but we did, humanity can learn how far it has withdrawn from God, “which is useful for him [humanity] as a remedial pain, when he returns to him [God] through a mediator like this, who comes to aid humans as God with his divinity and to share with them as human in their infirmity.”<sup>94</sup> Thus, forgiveness of sins is the crucial step which begins the process of healing so as to enable humans to come to vision and participation through renewal of the image, made possible by the exchange undertaken by Christ.

All this is the work of the Incarnation, the gift by which God reaches into the darkness so that humans might participate in the light. The story of sin and the cure is encapsulated within Augustine’s account of the mission of the Son of God (IV.1-24). So weighed down were we by the “accumulated dirt of sins,” collected through love of temporal things--whereas the true life of

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. S. 227 (discussed in Ch. 4, below), a paschal sermon directed to the newly baptized; Augustine explains why they ought to receive eucharist daily, now that they have been baptized, reminding them that they not only *have received* but *are going to receive* and *should receive daily*--in keeping with the two-stage cure, the first stage given all-at-once and the second the work of a lifetime.

<sup>93</sup> I.14, p. 44,5-7: The incarnation of the Word of God took place “for the sake of restoring us to health that the man Christ Jesus might be mediator of God and man [1 Tm. 2:5]”; *pro salute nostra reparanda facta est ut mediator dei et hominum esset homo Christus Iesus.*

<sup>94</sup> XIII.22, p. 413,119-22: *Discit quoque homo quam longe recesserit a deo, quod illi ualeat ad medicinalem dolorem, quando per talem mediatorem redit qui hominibus et deus diuinitate subuenit et homo infirmitate conuenit.*

the soul is to contemplate the eternal--that sin had become "almost a natural growth on our mortal stock."<sup>95</sup> (IV.24). We were in need of purifying (IV.24), healing and resurrection (IV.5); helpless, because we needed to participate in the Word, which is our enlightenment, but through sin incapable of and unfit for such participation (IV.4). The cure, Augustine observes, had to be halfway between the opposite poles of health and sickness; it could not be totally dissimilar from the sickness, but needed to draw the sick one away from the sickness (IV.24). Therefore God applied similarity to take away the dissimilarity: the similarity of Christ, who took humanity, to remove the dissimilarity of iniquity which he did not take. The cure is Christ himself, the Word made flesh; his similarity to us enables our dissimilarity to God to end, and his participation in our mortality enables our participation in divinity.<sup>96</sup> We ourselves could not achieve the cure.<sup>97</sup> He made it possible for us through a "gratuitous pledge of health" (*gratuito pignore salutis*, IV.1), when we in our despair lacked the courage even to reach up to him (IV.2). When we could do nothing, and could not receive God in himself, he came in the way that we could receive. By his crucifixion, he was crucified in the outer human (the flesh) so that our inner human could be renewed and our outer human resurrected (IV.6).

All this has been accomplished within time, in the last age (the three ages being before the law, under the law, and under grace): we receive the "sacrament of our inner human and model of our outer human,"<sup>98</sup> in Christ, in time (IV.7). The goal is not this-worldly, however; it is given so that at the end of time we might be "renewed all through by the resurrection of the flesh, and healed of every infirmity both of body and soul."<sup>99</sup> Forgiveness of sins is the direct cause of the cure by which we are healed of infirmity and sin, through the exchange brought about in Christ and absolutely beyond our own powers; when these are received, we can begin--in this life--to be

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<sup>95</sup> IV.24, p. 191,1-4: *Quia igitur ad aeterna capessenda idonei non eramus sordesque peccatorum nos praegrauabant temporalium rerum amore contractae et de propagine mortalitatis tamquam naturaliter inolitar, purgandi eramus.*

<sup>96</sup> IV.4, p. 164,13-16: *Adiungens ergo nobis similitudinem humanitatis suae abstulit dissimilitudinem iniquitatis nostrae, et factus particeps mortalitatis nostrae fecit participes diuinitatis suae.*

<sup>97</sup> IV.1, p. 159,11-13: "[We could only] implore him over and over again to take pity and pull [us] altogether out of [our] sinful condition"; *flere dulce habet et eum deprecari ut etiam atque etiam misereatur donec exuat totam miseriam.*

<sup>98</sup> IV.6, p. 169,111-112: *in sacramento interioris hominis nostri et exemplo exterioris.*

renewed and purified and have the healing brought to completion, so that--after death--we might participate fully in divine life and see God.

### After This Life

What does participation in divine life consist of for the human who has completed this earthly process? As *De Trinitate* proceeds, several constitutive elements of the other-worldly fulfillment are continually brought to the fore. These are: happiness, immortality, and the renewal which includes both body and soul; vision of God and contemplation; likeness to God, and oneness with God and with other humans. None of them alone comprises participation, but all are aspects of the life of the deified human who, having completed the process of earthly life, enters into divine life. Though Augustine clearly associates all of these elements with life after death, nevertheless all of them impinge upon earthly life, especially for the soul which has accepted the cure and begun the healing process.<sup>100</sup>

**Immortality.** In truth, immortality is an attribute of God alone, belonging to him and to no creature; it is unchangingness.<sup>101</sup> True immortality includes happiness (*beatitudo*); the two gifts must come together, if they are truly the gift of God.<sup>102</sup> Immortality is properly said of the substance of God, Father, Son and Spirit, and therefore applies to each person and to all three

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<sup>99</sup> IV.7, p. 170,28-30: *ut in fine temporis etiam resurrectione carnis omni ex parte renouati ab uniuersa non solum animi uerum etiam corporis infirmitate sanemur.*

<sup>100</sup> Cayré observes that, for Augustine, true human *bonheur* comes only in heaven, yet it is possible to have, here below, "*une certaine participation anticipée*," which is given the same names (*gaudium*, *veritas*, and so forth) despite the distance between the earthly and heavenly realities. (Fulbert Cayré *La contemplation augustinienne: principes de spiritualité et théologie* [Paris: Desclée, 1954], p. 142.)

<sup>101</sup> I.2, p.29,62-64: *uera immortalitas incommutabilitas est, quam nulla potest habere creatura quoniam solius creatoris est.*

<sup>102</sup> For the necessity of happiness to true immortality, cf. XIV.6, p. 428,1-3: "the soul does have its own kind of death, when it lacks the happy life which ought truly to be regarded as the soul's life"; *habet quippe et anima mortem suam cum uita caret quae uere animae uita dicenda est.* And, for the necessity of immortality to true happiness, XIII.11, p. 396,1-3: "All people then want to be happy; if they want something true, this necessarily

together (II.16). Any statement of human immortality must be made always and only in this context, which implies that “immortality” can be applied to humans only in terms of their relationship to God. For immortality is given to humans, in two ways: first, as a natural endowment of the human soul, meaning that “it never ceases to live with some sort of life even when it is at its unhappiest.”<sup>103</sup> Second, immortality is an essential ingredient of the final human fulfillment after death, attained by the soul which enters into the divine life. My analysis refers to immortality only in the second, “true” sense. For humans, immortality in this sense is one of the gifts of the divine-human exchange, made possible through Christ; Augustine discusses this concept in two passages of the work especially.

The first passage concludes his explanation of the mission of the Son (Book IV). The point of the Incarnation is to transform human mortality into “a fixed and firm eternity.”<sup>104</sup> What we have is mortality; what we are given is “a bridge to his eternity,” by means of the mortality Christ took on himself.<sup>105</sup> Recalling that God himself is immortal and unchangeable, we see that his entry into mortality does not change his own immortality; rather, it changes our mortality, and this is the point: “until this happens and in order that it may happen ... [truth] has sprung from the earth,<sup>106</sup> when the Son of God came in order to become Son of Man.”<sup>107</sup> Now, immortality in the true sense belongs to God alone (I.2). Yet the immortality which is proper to God is offered to humans through Christ, and thus we are given what we cannot have on our own, in fulfillment of God’s promise (“eternal life is promised us by the truth”<sup>108</sup>). Like contemplation, such immortality is the culmination of our earthly lives, when what we receive here will be succeeded and completed by what awaits us after death: as truth and sight succeed faith, so eternity succeeds mortality (IV.24). Christ, who is eternal, becomes “originated” so as to lead us back to eternity with him;

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means they want to be immortal. They cannot otherwise be happy”; *cum ergo beati esse omnes homines uolunt si uerum uolunt, profecto esse et immortales uolunt; aliter enim beati esse non possunt.*

<sup>103</sup> XIV.6, p. 428, 4-5: *immortalis ideo nuncupatur quoniam qualicumque uita etiam cum miserrima est numquam desinit uiuere*

<sup>104</sup> IV.24, p. 192, 33-34: *tunc mortalitatem nostram commutatam tenebit aeternitas.*

<sup>105</sup> IV.24, p. 192,46: *ad aeternitatem ipsius traiceremur.*

<sup>106</sup> from Ps. 85:12, a passage Augustine quotes in his Christmas sermons as expressing Christ’s birth.

<sup>107</sup> IV.24, p. 192,34,37-38: *Quod donec fiat et ut fiat ... [ipsa ueritas] de terra orta est cum filius dei sic uenit ut fieret filius hominis.*

this is meant not to erase our mortality but to raise it up: “because what has originated in him has passed over into eternity, so too will what has originated in us pass over when faith arrives at truth.”<sup>109</sup> Our idea of how our mortality becomes immortality must be modelled, as in this passage, on how the mortality Christ assumes enters into eternity.<sup>110</sup>

The second passage occurs in Augustine’s account of the redemption of the fallen soul by means of God’s justice through Christ (Book XIII). Immortality, he explains at some length, is a desire of humans--and a right desire: “No one is wrong to want immortality if human nature is capable of receiving it as God’s gift.”<sup>111</sup> This indeed is God’s promise, not just our demand (XIII.12); it is divine authority, not human reason, which tells us that humans will be made immortal.<sup>112</sup> Immortality belongs to us, not by our own efforts, nor as what is natural to us, but as what the immortal God gives us. Here is a secondary purpose of the Incarnation: to keep us from despairing of receiving such a great gift which we cannot help but desire. “It was to persuade us of this [that humans can partake in his immortality] that the Son of God came to share in our mortality.”<sup>113</sup> Augustine’s argument is that “the immortal one become mortal” is much more difficult to believe than that “mortals become immortal,” yet the former is an accomplished reality, and the latter depends upon it.<sup>114</sup> In this way, what ought to be absolutely separate realities--mortality and immortality--are bridged first by God who enters into mortality without losing immortality, then (and therefore) by humans who follow the path God has thus made, and enter into immortality.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> IV.24, p. 191,21: *Promittitur autem nobis uita aeterna per ueritatem.*

<sup>109</sup> IV.24, p. 193.52-54: *Itaque in illo quia et id quod ortum erat transiit ad aeternitatem, transiturum est et nostrum cum fides peruenerit ad ueritatem.*

<sup>110</sup> There is an eternal connection between humans in their glorified bodies and Christ, as distinct from the other two persons of the Trinity; cf. “Renewal of Both Body and Soul.” below.

<sup>111</sup> XIII.11, p. 396,9-10: *Nemo autem male uult immortalitatem si eius humana capax est deo donante natura.*

<sup>112</sup> Which, perhaps, is why it is a right desire: God’s promise is the other side of our true desire.

<sup>113</sup> III.12, p. 399,30-31: *propter quod persuadendum dei filius particeps nostrae mortalitatis effectus est.*

<sup>114</sup> An argument we will see used in the homiletic discourses; cf. S. Mainz 13, par.1, discussed in Chapter 4, below.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. the homiletic texts studied in Ch. 4, below, which demonstrate the sense of purpose in the exchange: Christ participates in mortality *so that* humans might participate in divinity (cf. En. 44); the former is the more incredible reality which enables the latter (cf. S. Mainz 13); Christ’s participation enables us to receive (cf. En. 109) and believe (cf. S. 192) our own participation in immortality.

Christ is himself the bridge. Appropriately, this is a concluding note which *De Trinitate* sounds in regard to human immortality: “As we have been mortal after the manner of Adam, so we truly believe and surely and firmly hope that we are going to be immortal after the manner of Christ,” that is, in the resurrected body.<sup>116</sup> The gift of immortality, then, is part of the transition from the “old human” (Adam) to the “new human” (Christ), part of the way in which humans are transformed. That transformation, of course, is complete only after death, but if received in this life, it can begin to transform us even here. For example, we are asked to live virtuously; the virtues “insure that you live in this mortality in such a way that you will live happily in that immortality which is promised by God.”<sup>117</sup> Augustine debates whether the virtues themselves are immortal, or whether they “cease when they have brought you to eternity”<sup>118</sup>; he concludes that justice, at least, is immortal and will continue in perfection in eternity, and in all likelihood the same can be said of the other virtues (XIV.12).

Summary. Immortality is an essential ingredient of deification, though not the sole one.<sup>119</sup> If it is to fulfill human desire, immortality must include eternal happiness. It does not make humans into precisely what God is, but does invite them to participate in what is properly divine through Christ’s participation in what is properly human, without dissolving either into the other.

**Happiness.** Happiness, like immortality, is sought and desired by all humans (XIII.6). It comes only as gift of God (XIII.10). There are two key components of happiness, Augustine explains: to have everything one wants, and to want nothing wrongly (XIII.8). He meditates with some astonishment on the “warped” (*prauitas*) human tendency to prefer to have everything we want,

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<sup>116</sup> XIV.24, p. 456,19-21: *ut scilicet qui secundum Adam mortales fuimus secundum Christum immortales nos futuros esse fide uera et spe certa firmaque teneamus.*

<sup>117</sup> XIV.11, p. 437,35-37: *sicut uirtutes quibus si uerae sunt in hac mortalitate ideo bene uiuitur ut beate in illa quae diuinitus promittitur immortalitate uiuatur.* John Burnaby describes the connection between this-worldly virtue and other-worldly happiness: moral living in this life, and happiness in the next, are two different qualities, but they have a common source. Morality changes us from the worse to the better, and happiness transcends change (and therefore can come only in immortality). (John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938; reprint, 1947], p. 53.)

<sup>118</sup> XIV.12, p. 438,3-4: *desinant esse cum ad aeterna perduxerint nonnulla quaestio est.*

<sup>119</sup> The homiletic discourses (ch. 4) also see immortality as a key component of deification, but not the only one; cf. my commentary to En. 146.

rather than to learn to want rightly, even though this separates us still further from true happiness (XIII.9). Here on earth, we can have only the hope of happiness (XIII.10), though that hope ought to give us patience. Indeed, he adds later, it is in our changeability that this hope really lies, for we are not happy but wish to be, and so to become happy requires that we be changed (XIV.21).

Like immortality, happiness is truly attainable only after death.<sup>120</sup> Augustine describes the happiness which awaits the one who comes to eternal life: “He will not want to live a bad life in that bliss, nor will he want anything that he lacks, nor will he lack anything that he wants. Whatever he loves will be there, and he will not desire anything that is not there. Everything that is there will be good, and the most high God will be the most high good, and will be available for the enjoyment of his lovers, and thus total happiness will be forever assured.”<sup>121</sup> Anything less is illusory. Happiness, then, is the gift of eternal life, which comes with immortality. The two are inseparable, and the two together are part of the human entry into divine life.

True, immortal happiness is eternal contemplation of eternal things.<sup>122</sup> Above all, this means contemplation of God, “for the fullness of our happiness, beyond which there is none else, is this: to enjoy God the Trinity to whose image we are made.”<sup>123</sup> It is attained only after death; however, the promise of receiving it ought already to begin to transform our lives on earth. Thus the promise of eternal happiness in contemplation of the triune God which introduces the work also concludes it.

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<sup>120</sup> Augustine repudiates his early idea that happiness can be attained in this life; in the *Reconsiderations* he “goes out of his way ... to correct those passages of his early writings which state or imply the possible earthly perfection of the soul” (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 170); cf. Cayré, *Contemplation*, p. 136; and Robert J. O’Connell, “Action and Contemplation,” *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. R. A. Markus (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 42, who describes Augustine’s early idea that total dedication to the contemplative life would bring happiness on earth (cf. Folliet’s comments on *Ep.* 10, Ch. 1 above). Anderson, *Augustine and Being*, p. 45, n. 2, only remarks that “Augustine never departed from the Gospel doctrine that perfect happiness is not of this life.”

<sup>121</sup> XIII.10, p. 394,8-14: *Non enim uolet male uiuere in illa felicitate aut uolet aliquid quod deerit aut deerit quod uoluerit. Quidquid amabitur aderit, nec desiderabitur quod non aderit. Omne quod ibi erit bonum erit, et summus deus summum bonum erit atque ad fruendum amantibus praesto erit, et quod est omnino beatissimum ita semper fore certum erit.*

<sup>122</sup> XV.6, p.567,1-4: *in ipsis rebus aeternis, incorporalibus et immutabilibus in quarum perfecta contemplatione nobis beata quae non nisi aeterna est uita promittitur.*

<sup>123</sup> I.18, p. 52,130-132: *Hoc est enim plenum gaudium nostrum quo amplius non est, frui trinitate deo ad cuius imaginem facti sumus.*

Summary. The deified human, who lives unendingly, has eternal happiness in eternal contemplation of the triune God. In enjoying this gift, humans have all they want and want nothing wrongly. Happiness, like its companion immortality, is an indispensable element of deification.

***Renewal of Both Body and Soul.*** The relationship of soul to body, in this life, in the fall, in the resurrection, and after death, is a question which recurs in *De Trinitate*. Augustine is very clear that both are essential elements of humanity. It is the rational soul alone which is image of God and capable of participating in God; “the soul is rational, and so although it is subject to change, it is capable of partaking in that wisdom which is changeless.”<sup>124</sup> The soul “breathed into” the body is the superior reality, of more value than the body (IV.16), part of whose task is to govern the body and help it to be raised up.<sup>125</sup> In a sense, the body follows the journey of the soul. This means that the body follows the renewed soul into divine life, in the way which is proper to it.

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<sup>124</sup> III.8, p. 133,25-27: *eademque rationalis, et ideo quamuis mutabilis tamen quae possit illius incommutabilis sapientiae particeps esse.*

<sup>125</sup> III.8, p. 133,24-25: *Hoc corpus inspirata anima regit eademque rationalis.* For Augustine, the human person is a composite of body and soul (Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 2nd ed., trans. L. E. M. Lynch [New York: Random House, 1960], p. 208). This union gives substance and being to the body (Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, trans. Ralph J. Bastian [London: Burns & Oates, 1960], p. 148). In a rightly-ordered human, the soul does not dominate but animates the body, restoring it to its proper place in the spiritual-material order (Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, p. 149). In the union of the two, each keeps its proper entity, neither becoming the other (Portalié, *Guide*, p. 148); the unity of the human requires that each, body and soul, be a distinct substance: “only and precisely by holding an anthropological dualism can the substantial oneness of man be explained and accounted for” (Ludger Hölscher, *The Reality of the Mind: Augustine’s Philosophical Arguments for the Human Soul as a Spiritual Substance* [London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986], p. 214). There is, then, a reciprocity between soul and body, but they are different and the soul is always superior: “radicalement distincts, les deux sont harmonieusement unis” (Hamman, *L’Homme Image*, p. 258). This union of body and soul, without absorption of either into the other, becomes an analogy or example for the union of divine and human through participation. “From the time of his conversion, Augustine wished to maintain both that it is man’s soul which is created in the image of God, and that man himself is some kind of composite of two substances, a soul and a body”; though Augustine always struggles with the question of how the two are united in one human, he maintains that the two are joined to make a “single rational entity” (Rist, *Augustine*, pp. 94-97).

For Augustine’s views on the relationship between body and soul, see also: Margaret R. Miles, *Augustine on the Body* (Missoula: Scholars, 1979); J. P. Burns, “Variations on a Dualist Theme: Augustine on the Body and Soul,” in *Interpreting Tradition*, ed. J. Kopas (Atlanta: Scholars, 1984); Gerald Bonner, “Adam,” *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 1, cols. 63-87; G. Lawless, “Augustine and Human Embodiment,” *Augustiniana* 40 (1990): 167-186; T. van Bavel, “‘No one ever hated his own flesh’: Eph. 4:29 in Augustine,” *Augustiniana* 45 (1995): 45-93; Margaret R. Miles, “Corpus,” *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 2, cols. 6-20; and Allan D. Fitzgerald, “Body,” *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 105-107.

Both are created by God, and created to exist together in proper harmony, which means the soul governs the body. Both fall, both are raised, and both are destined for immortal life. However, these things do not apply to each in quite the same way, and always the soul is the higher reality which leads the lower. In terms of the fall, body and soul each undergo a death, but in different ways, for the body's depends upon that of the soul, as Augustine explains in IV.5. The soul is dead through sin, the body through punishment--but this means that the body too is dead through sin.<sup>126</sup> Death for the soul is ungodliness (*impietas*), for the body corruptibility (*corruptibilitas*). In this life, therefore, the body is decaying and dying daily. But the soul--once it has turned back to God and entered the process of healing--is transformed and renewed daily, even in this life. Similarly, both body and soul are raised, but in different ways (XIV.25). The soul, having being renewed inwardly day by day, will receive its perfection in the vision of God face-to-face; the body belonging to this renewed soul will also be changed, raised, and perfected, but at the last moment before the judgement: "what is now being sown as an animal body in weakness, corruption, disgrace, will rise as a spiritual body in power, in incorruptibility, in glory."<sup>127</sup> The

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<sup>126</sup> IV.5, p. 165,4-7: *Nos certe, quod nemo christianus ambigit, et anima et corpore mortui sumus, anima propter peccatum, corpore propter poenam peccati ac per hoc et corpore propter peccatum.* cf. IV.11. Augustine, reports Rist, was sure that the primal sin was of the soul, not of the body, nor due to the soul's presence in a body (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 317). However, he has difficulty explaining how the soul's fall can affect the body without making the soul material in any way (p. 326). In general, Augustine assumes that "the 'whole man' (*totus homo*) is a composite of soul and body," but wonders how the soul "got into" or "fell into" the body; Rist notes that Augustine has three accounts of the body-soul relationship: in Adam (before the fall), now in human life, and finally in the life to come (p. 95). Some critics believe that, in his earliest writings, Augustine espoused a Plotinian theory of the "fall of the soul" (J. Kevin Coyle, *Augustine's 'De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae': A Study of the Work, Its Composition and Its Sources*, Pardosis 25 [Fribourg: University, 1978], p. 138, n. 561, and p. 372). He did hold the superiority of the soul over the body (the former "rules" and "uses" the latter), but also that death, rather than releasing the soul from the body, brings both to resurrection and transformation (Coyle, *Augustine's 'De Moribus,'* pp. 138-139).

On this question, see the work of R. J. O'Connell, in: *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1968); *Imagination and Metaphysics in St. Augustine* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1986); and *Soundings in Augustine's Imagination* (New York: Fordham University, 1994). And that of Gerard O'Daly, in: "Did St. Augustine Ever Believe in the Soul's Pre-Existence?" *Augustinian Studies* 5 (1974): 222-235; "Augustine on the Origin of Souls," in *Platonismus und Christentum: Festschrift für Heinrich Dörrie* (Münster, 1983), pp. 184-191; and *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987). See also G. R. Evans, "Augustine on the Soul: The Legacy of Unanswered Questions," *Augustinianum* 25 (1985): 283-294; and Roland J. Teske, "Soul," *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 807-812.

<sup>127</sup> XIV.25, p. 457,12-14: *resurget in uirtute, in incorruptione, in gloria corpus spiritale quod nunc seminatur in infirmitate, corruptione, contumelia corpus animale.* On the renewal of body and soul in the homiletic discourses

soul seems to be raised first, for it will “get its body back again at the end of the world”; as though vision of God by the soul happens upon death, but reunion with the body only at the end of the world.<sup>128</sup>

Just exactly how the body will be raised, and how it will participate in divine life or in the vision of God, is not clear; what is clear, in opposition to those who think eternal life is reserved to the soul without the body, is that the whole human--soul and body--will receive immortality and hence true happiness (XIII.12). Once again, the pledge of this truth is that the Son of God took on a human body, and brought it with him into eternity. Unlike us, his spirit does not need to be renewed; but because his body is raised and comes into heaven, as the model for ours, therefore we are assured that our bodies too will be raised (IV.6). Resurrection of the body is not an optional accessory, but a fundamental element of Christian belief: “it is faith in its resurrection [of Christ’s flesh] that saves and justifies,” and “it is the resurrection of the Lord’s body that gives value to our faith.”<sup>129</sup> In the *mens*, we are image of the whole divine Trinity; but in bodiliness, both on earth and in the transformed body in heaven, we are image only of the Son who alone of the divine Trinity took flesh (XIV.24). Christ, then, is the pattern of our immortality, both body and soul.

Summary. Deification in no way discounts the body: the immortal happiness of the deified human includes the entire human, both body and soul. The body receives these gifts through its connection with the soul, which is the higher reality and the leader in receiving renewal and the

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(ch. 4), cf. my commentary to S. 166: renewal of the spirit is prior, but the body too will “earn renewal and transformation at the time of its resurrection.”

<sup>128</sup> XIV.23, p. 455,30-31: *corpus in fine saeculi ... recepturus*. In regard to the resurrected body, J. Kevin Coyle (“Adapted Discourse: Heaven in Augustine’s *City of God* and in His Contemporary Preaching,” *Augustinian Studies* 30:2 [1999]: 205-206) refers to the sparse number of studies devoted to the question. He mentions G. Greshake and J. Kremer, *Resurrection Mortuorum: Zum theologischen Verständnis der leiblichen Auferstehung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986), pp. 208-215; M. Alfeche, “The Basis of Hope in the Resurrection of the Body according to Augustine,” *Augustiniana* 36 (1986): 240-296, esp. 280-296; M. Alfeche, “The Use of Some Verses in 1 Cor. 15 in Augustine’s Theology of Resurrection,” *Augustiniana* 37 (1987): 122-186; and C. W. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 94-104.

<sup>129</sup> II.29, p. 119,50-51,54-55: *Sed in ipsa carne fides resurrectionis eius saluos facit atque iustificat.... Ideoque meritum fidei nostrae resurrectio corporis domini est.*

divine gifts. This gives a special connection with Christ, uniquely within the Trinity, because our transformed bodies like our earthly bodies resemble only the second member of the Trinity.

**Vision of God.** Faith leads to sight, as discussed above: faith, the mortal reality, prepares for the eternal reality of seeing God. The metaphor of sight is a prime way in which *De Trinitate* depicts full participation in divine life, which is the goal of human life and the content of deification.<sup>130</sup> Vision of God comes “only after this life,” after death and resurrection (I.28). The final vision of God brings with it eternal life (*uita aeterna*, I.30), which means direct contemplation of God and rejoicing which is true and everlasting.<sup>131</sup>

Seeing God means contemplating his unchanging and invisible substance<sup>132</sup>; this is anomalous in itself, since one of the prime distinctions between divinity and humanity is that the former is unchanging, the latter changeable. It is our changeability itself that is humanity’s hope, and it is because humans have changed—not because God has changed, for he has not—that they are able to behold him. The change in humanity is profound: the final, perfect vision comes to the image of God which has become perfect likeness to God,<sup>133</sup> has been brought from ugly deformity to beauty,<sup>134</sup> and has been transformed daily from sonship—to what, we do not know (referring to 1 Jn. 3:2). We cannot know, for our knowledge, which comes from faith, will never be complete in this life (IX.1), but only in the next, when we will see God himself more clearly than we now

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<sup>130</sup> Sorabji comments that Augustine prefers metaphors for union with God because, wanting to dissociate himself from the Manichaean view that the soul was of God’s own substance, he “is less ready than Plotinus to talk of being united with God.” “In Christian thought, there was always a danger of blasphemy in the suggestion that a human might become God,” writes Sorabji, so in Augustine we find “a reliance on ideas other than total union, such as the metaphors of touch, sight and light.” Yet Augustine is capable of expressing an extremely close idea of unity, sometimes closer than that of Plotinus to the idea of unity, as in the expression (*Conf.* VII.10) of “being changed into (*mutari in*) God in the way that food is changed into a body.” (Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 172; cf. S. 227, discussed in Chapter 4, among other references to “becoming” in the homiletic discourses).

<sup>131</sup> I.31, pp. 76-77, 144-145, 160-161: “Eternal life consists in that contemplation by which God is seen not to one’s undoing but to everlasting joy ... no one sees him for worse and for lamentation, but only for [salvation] and true rejoicing”; *uita aeternam est in illa contemplatione qua non ad poenam uidetur deus sed ad gaudium sempiternam ... nemo eum uidet ad luctum et planctum sed tantum ad salutem et laetitiam ueram.*

<sup>132</sup> I.31, p. 78, 168-170: *uisio illa dei qua contemplantur incommutabilem atque humanis oculis inuisibilem dei substantiam.*

<sup>133</sup> XIV.23, p. 455, 31-32: “For only when it comes to the perfect vision of God will this image bear God’s perfect likeness”; *In hac quippe imagine tunc perfecta erit dei similitudo quando dei perfecta erit uisio.*

<sup>134</sup> XV.14, p. 480, 31-32: *a deformati forma formosam transformatur in formam.*

see even the image which we are; the God who will be seen clearly is the inseparable Trinity.<sup>135</sup> Such is the content of the final vision of God, such the change accomplished in the human soul which has attained such vision.

The hope of that final vision profoundly affects the present life. Two scriptural passages which Augustine continually weaves into this theme are 1 Cor. 13:12<sup>136</sup> and 1 Jn. 3:2.<sup>137</sup> The intertwining of these two passages forms the pattern for Augustine's understanding of vision after death, prepared for in a severely limited but real and necessary way in this life. The dance of finding and seeking which characterizes this life of faith (IX.1) is the process by which our hearts are purified, our eyes strengthened, and our souls transformed daily according to the veiled sight of faith, which leads to the face-to-face sight after death, beyond the limits of faith. Only the heart which is prepared in this life, and which loves God now before he can be seen, will attain vision: "Unless we love him now, we shall never see him."<sup>138</sup> We learn to "see" on earth by doing right things (I.31), by dying to fleshly attachments and so beginning to perceive in a spiritual way (*spiritaliter intellegimus*, II.28), by loving our neighbour, which can only be done when we love God (II.28), by our own longing to see God (II.28) and by our worship of God which expresses that longing (XII.22). The most progress we can make on earth will still lead only to the "puzzling reflection in a mirror," but is real and truly prepares us for the face-to-face vision. Thus there is a veiled sight which can come in this life, and which is not only desirable but essential to prepare humans for the true vision after death: the earthly reality of faith, by which we now bear the image which one day we will bear in vision (IV.24). Faith, the mortal reality, leads us to sight, the

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<sup>135</sup> XV.44, p. 522,44-48: "We shall see this trinity that is not only incorporeal but also supremely inseparable and truly unchangeable much more clearly and definitely than we now see its image which we ourselves are"; *hanc non solum incorporalem uerum etiam summe inseparabilem uereque immutabilem trinitatem ... multo clarius certiusque uidebimus quam nunc eius imaginem quod nos sumus*. The trinitarian dimension of the vision of God, and of deification, is very little evidenced in the homiletic discourses; cf. my commentary to En. 84 in Ch. 4.

<sup>136</sup> "We see now through a puzzling reflection in a mirror, but then it will be face to face" (as Hill translates).

<sup>137</sup> "Beloved, we are now sons of God, but that which we shall be has not yet appeared. We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." (Hill's translation)

<sup>138</sup> VIII.6, pp. 274-5,5-6: *Quem tamen nisi iam nunc diligamus, numquam uidebimus*.

eternal reality. Far from neutral, faith progressively transforms those who receive the gift so that they will be prepared for true vision (XIV.23).<sup>139</sup>

The vision of God is a fundamentally christological reality: that is, it is the Incarnation itself, the union of divine and human in Christ, which provides the way for humans to be able to see God. As we are, our gaze cannot behold him, for our eyes are too weak to see him: not only our “fleshly” eyes, which cannot behold even the human spirit, let alone God’s Spirit (II.34), but also our inner eyes. However, all humans can see Christ, and even after death, all will see him--the good and the bad alike--*in forma serui*, as Son of Man; the wicked will see him “to their own undoing,” the good “to eternal life” (I.30). However, only the pure of heart, those who have been cleansed by faith, will be led beyond this to see him *in forma dei*, in his equality with the Father (I.28,30).<sup>140</sup> Thus Christ himself is the necessary door by which humans come to eternal life; his humanity gives them a way to learn to see what humanity on its own cannot see, namely his divinity, and so be led to the complete vision of God after death. In this life, only faith can see Christ as God; after death, such faith passes over into the very vision of God himself.

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<sup>139</sup> As Burnaby puts it, “faith and vision are contraries which exclude one another”; to believe is to believe that which is not yet seen (Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, p. 75). Faith is our present mode of religious knowledge; sight is the contemplation of God reserved for the life to come. Likeness to God, adds Burnaby, is “the condition for the vision of God”: we shall see God insofar as we are like him, and through our likeness to him (p. 81). Cf. below, “Likeness to God.”

<sup>140</sup> Whether, even after death, humans will see God *sicuti est* is not clear in Augustine, probably because it is not clear to Augustine. Ep. 147 (A.D. 412) addresses the question directly, and also asks whether a few holy ones (notably Moses and Paul) may even have seen God in this life. *Reconsiderations* 2.67 (CSEL 36, p. 179) refers to this letter as a book, “On the Vision of God” (*De Uidendo Deo*), about the spiritual body which is to exist at the resurrection (*de spiritali corpore, quod erit in resurrectione sanctorum*); Augustine adds that he more adequately answered this question earlier, in *Civ.Dei* 22.29, and made a “*commonitorium*” or memorandum about it in his letter to Fortunatias (Ep. 148). Augustine also deals with the question posed in Ep. 147-- whether God will be seen by bodily eyes--in Ep. 92 (408), Ep. 148 (413-414), and Ep. 162 (414). His answer never substantially varies: even Moses is unlikely to have seen the substance of God in this life (cf. *De Trin.* II.27), and if he did it was by way of exception. Nor, according to Augustine’s best conclusion in Ep. 147, will God’s substance be seen by bodily eyes even at the resurrection: vision of God after death will be in the way that the angels see. Yet J. Kevin Coyle (“Adapted Discourse,” pp. 214-215) observes a shift by Ep. 148, “allowing for sight involving the use of bodily eyes, alongside a purely spiritual vision”; and notes that, in *Civ.Dei* 21.29 (ca. 426), Augustine mentions the “spiritual” eyes with which the saints will see God. David Bell notes that in *De Gen. ad Litt.* Augustine thinks that face-to-face, *sicuti est* vision is possible but rare in this life; in *De Trinitate*, it is possible but restricted to the future life. “What Augustine says,” concludes Bell, “depends on time and text, and I think there can be no doubt that he underwent considerable indecision and vacillation on this important question”; Bell, *Image of God*, p. 87. Cf. my commentary on En. 84, Ch. 4 below.

**Summary.** Vision of God is perhaps the single strongest defining element of deification: seeing God in the face-to-face vision is the event which brings humans into eternal life, which is an eternity of contemplating God.<sup>141</sup> It is reached through transformation in the human himself, for the deified human is the one whose inner eye has been strengthened and purified to see God. This cannot come about except through Christ; but, through Christ, it can--indeed, must--be received and prepared for in earthly life. That is how the transformation takes place; it is because the human has become like God that he can, after death, see God as he is. Vision leads to contemplation of God throughout eternal life; the deified human is the one who, having become perfect image of God, has become capable of contemplation of the eternal.

**Contemplation.** It is for contemplation of God that the human is created; this is the goal of human life, attainable only after death, when it becomes the pastime of eternity. Eternal contemplation is depicted in the first book of *De Trinitate* where, in the midst of his preliminary exposition of the divine Trinity, Augustine inserts a digression about humanity's final destiny: the joy of eternal contemplation which awaits us (I.17-31). In direct contemplation of God is our eternal rest, when his activity is all and when we have only to receive his light and enjoyment.<sup>142</sup> This final reward is foreshadowed in the figure of Mary, in the Martha and Mary story (Lk. 10:38), sitting at the Lord's feet intent upon the truth "in such measure as this life allows of."<sup>143</sup> The mind which has been purified by faith and made just will contemplate Father and Son and Holy Spirit (I.20); this is eternal life, "that contemplation by which God is seen not to one's undoing but to everlasting joy,"<sup>144</sup> the end of all activities, the reward given to the just when they are freed of mortality and corruption (I.16).<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Cayré goes so far as to say that "the vision of God is nothing but contemplation itself," towards which wisdom leads (Cayré, *Contemplation*, p. 133).

<sup>142</sup> I.20; p. 57,22-23: In that contemplation, "to be illumined and rejoiced by him will be enough"; *sed solo ipso illustrari perfriquetur sufficet*.

<sup>143</sup> I.20, p. 56,10-11: *secundum quendam modum cuius capax est ista uita*.

<sup>144</sup> I.31, p. 76,143-145: *Sed quia ille uitam aeternam quaerebat, uiata autem aeterna est in illa contemplatione qua non ad poenam uidetur deus sed ad gaudium sempiternum*.

<sup>145</sup> O'Connell observes that Augustine's basic view of action and contemplation remained consistent: human happiness is found in vision of God. That alone is to be "enjoyed," and all else is to be "used" in pursuit of it; thus

As he devotes these introductory paragraphs to depicting the joys awaiting those who contemplate the Trinity in the way they can on earth, Augustine intimates already the purpose of the task he will undertake in Books IX-XIV: to explore the trinitarian image in the human soul, as a way of beginning to learn to contemplate God. Because it is difficult for us “to contemplate and have full knowledge of God’s substance... it is necessary for our minds to be purified before that inexpressible reality can be inexpressibly seen by them; and in order to make us fit and capable of grasping it, we are led along more endurable routes.”<sup>146</sup> That is why Augustine discusses the soul itself as image of God, as a “more endurable route” to perceiving “in some measure or other by the understanding [*per intellegentiam*]” the supreme nature of which it is image.<sup>147</sup> Thus Augustine’s approach is to give the earthly soul a subject on which it can focus its gaze--its own nature as image of God--while it is yet incapable of “fixing its eyes in contemplation” upon God of whom it is image.<sup>148</sup> In this sense, the work itself is the task which it describes: Augustine helps the reader to contemplate God in the ways available to us on earth, so as to purify the mind and elicit faith, which prepares the soul for the eternal contemplation of God which is its happiness.

Learning to contemplate is our goal even in this world, though contemplation is to be attained only in the other world.<sup>149</sup> What is possible in this life is “progressive formation”--as in the familiar Pauline mirror where we see “in a puzzle” (XII.22)-- by which the soul learns more and more to be led from the temporal to the eternal, precisely because it is the eternal which is forming it.<sup>150</sup> In Book XII, Augustine discusses at length the contemplative dimension of the human soul, its proper working, and earthly obstacles to its proper working, through an exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27 (the creation of humans in God’s image) and 1 Cor. 11:7 (“man is the image and

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“the whole realm of action is now consigned to the category of the ‘useful.’” O’Connell, “Action and Contemplation,” pp. 46-47.

<sup>146</sup> I.3, p. 30,69-75: *Proinde substantiam dei ... intueri et plena nosse difficile est ... est necessaria purgatio mentis nostrae qua illud ineffabile ineffabiliter uideri possit ... et per quaedam tolerabiliora ut ad illud capiendum apti et habiles efficiamur itinera ducimur.*

<sup>147</sup> XV.49, p.531,60-63.

<sup>148</sup> XV.50, p. 532,92-93: *quam fixis oculis contemplari nondum uales.*

<sup>149</sup> XIII.24, p. 416,37-38: “we are purified by faith in order that we may contemplate him unchangingly in eternity”; *cui per eandem fidem mundamur et eum stabiliter contemplemur in rebus aeternis.*

glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man”). He uses man and woman as metaphors to illustrate the functioning of the soul: “a kind of rational couple of contemplation and action in the mind of everyman.”<sup>151</sup> The former represents the *mens*, the latter the *anima*.<sup>152</sup> Contemplating God activates the image-character of the human soul, and hence is properly the work of the *mens*, in which alone dwells the image of God; the *mens* by its nature is directed towards contemplation of the eternal, and only when engaged in this work is it activating its true capacity (XII.10). The *anima* is properly directed towards the temporal, and ordering the lower, temporal things is its activity. In the properly ordered soul, the activity of the *mens* is superior and directs that of the *anima*; thus temporal things can lead the soul to eternal things (which in turn fulfill the proper function of the temporal things). Sin, however, distorts this proper ordering, such that the lower part dominates the higher until enjoyment of temporal things supersedes contemplation of eternal things, instead of the other way around (XII.13-15). The result of this path is that souls “end up by becoming like beasts” through a distorted appetite for being like God—in direct opposition to the true goal of human nature, which is to be like God in the way that God gives, but cannot be

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<sup>150</sup> II.21, p. 374,26-29: “When we live according to God our mind should be intent on his invisible things and thus progressively be formed from his eternity, truth and charity”; *apparet tamen cum secundum deum uiuimus, mentem nostram in inuisibilia eius intentam ex eius aeternitate, ueritate, caritate proficienter debere formari.*

<sup>151</sup> XII.19, p. 373,57-59: *in mente uniuscuiusque hominis quaesiuimus quoddam rationale coniugium contemplationis et actionis.*

<sup>152</sup> He explicitly adds that he does not intend by this metaphor to suggest that only the man is image of God, though “man” is taken as representing the *mens*, nor that woman, who represents the *anima*, is not made to God’s image—which would contradict the Genesis text. Paul’s text, Augustine explains, “says that what was made to the image of God is the human nature that is realized in each sex, and it does not exclude the female from the image of God that is meant”; *Ad imaginem quippe dei naturam ipsam humanam factam dicit quae sexu utroque completur, nec ab intellegenda imagine dei separat feminam*; XII.10, p. 364,18-20. On the question of the creation of the female in God’s image, see: Miles, *Augustine on the Body*; C. W. Wolfskeel, “Some remarks with Aug’s conception of man as the image of God,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 30 (1976): 63-71; R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon, 1983); R. J. McGowan, “Augustine’s Spiritual Equality: The Allegory of Man and Woman with Regard to *Imago Dei*,” *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 33 (1987): 255-264; Margaret R. Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Boston: Beacon, 1989); T. J. van Bavel, “Augustine’s View on Women,” *Augustiniana* 39 (1989): 5-53; T. J. van Bavel, “Woman as the Image of God in Augustine’s ‘*De Trinitate XII*,’” *Signum Pietatis: Festgabe für Cornelius Mayer* (Würzburg: Augustinus, 1989); T. J. van Bavel, *Ever New ... Ever New ... Augustine’s View on Women* (Villanova: Augustinian, 1990); Kari Elisabeth Borresen, “In defence of Augustine: how *femina* is *homo*,” *Collactanea Augustiniana: Mélanges T. J. van Bavel*, ed. B. Brunning, et al. (Leuven: University, 1990), pp. 411-427; Vannier, “*Creatio*,” pp. 77 ff; K. Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine on Women* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

achieved when the soul turns away from God.<sup>153</sup> The mind's return to contemplation of eternal things is the activation of the image; every time it chooses temporal over eternal things, it re-enacts the fall (18). Action belongs to *scientia* (knowledge of temporal things), the function of the *anima*, belonging to the realm of the outer human. Contemplation belongs to *sapientia* (knowledge of eternal things), which is the function of the *mens*, and therefore of the realm of the inner human (XII.22). The healthily functioning soul brings the two together in their proper order; in the sick soul, distorted and sickened by sin, they are at odds with one another, such that contemplation cannot function at all.

Faith in Christ leads humans from the contemplation which is possible in this life, to the perfect contemplation to be enjoyed eternally in the next. "Now just as the rational mind is meant, once purified, to contemplate eternal things, so it is meant while still needing purification to give faith to temporal things."<sup>154</sup> Christ alone can move the soul from the latter to the former. Christ proceeds from the eternal into "originated" matters (*in rebus ortis*) and by them leads us back to the eternal, in order to produce in us the faith which purifies us to contemplate the truth (IV.25).<sup>155</sup> The work of Christ in this regard is paramount. We are made for contemplation of eternal things, but are incapable of it, not only by our natural human limitations but by sin which ties us to the temporal. This would be our tragedy, were it not for Christ, in whom the eternal which we cannot attain comes into the temporal, which we can grasp; hence we are released to respond in faith, in

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<sup>153</sup> XII.16, p. 370,1-4,6-7): "For just as a snake does not walk with open strides but wriggles along by the tiny little movements of its scales, so the careless glide little by little along the slippery path of failure, and beginning from a distorted appetite for being like God they end up by becoming like beasts... For man's true honor is God's image and likeness in him, but it can only be preserved when facing him from whom its impression is received": *Quomodo enim coluber non apertis passibus sed squamarum minutissimis nisibus rept, sic lubricus deficiendi motus neglegentes minutatim occupat, et incipiens a peruerso appetitu similitudinis dei peruenit ad similitudinem pecorum.... Honor enim hominis uerus est imago et similitudo dei quae non custoditur nisi ad ipsum a quo imprimitur.*

<sup>154</sup> IV.24, p. 191,10-12: *Mens autem rationalis sicut purgata contemplationem debet rebus aeternis, sic purganda temporalibus fidem.*

<sup>155</sup> Sorabji finds Augustine unclear as to how the self can survive translation into a non-temporal state of contemplation; in Plotinus, he observes, there are several selves, of which the higher is (so to speak) always timeless, but Augustine has no corresponding way to solve the question. (Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 168.)

this life, to what we will know fully only after this life.<sup>156</sup> For the eternal is borne on the temporal.<sup>157</sup> This is God's mercy: he comes to us in the temporal, where we are but from which we cannot move, so as to lead us to the eternal. So we can be raised from faith in temporal things to faith in eternal things (already in this life), and ultimately to contemplation of the eternal things (in the next life). In such contemplation alone is the happy life which is eternal, Augustine concludes (XV.6). Christ, by becoming "what by nature we are [human] and what by sin we are not [just]," becomes and opens to us the impossible path from *scientia* to *sapientia*, temporality to eternity, action to contemplation (XIV.24). Thus he enables us to enter into the process which leads to participation in and contemplation of God.<sup>158</sup>

Summary. If vision is the defining moment of deification, contemplation can be said to be its eternal content. Contemplation is the proper activity of the human soul, that for which it is created. It cannot achieve that goal in this life, but can--indeed, must--be prepared on earth so as to achieve it after death. Faith in Christ prepares the soul on earth to achieve contemplation in eternity. One of the ways in which the soul can learn to contemplate in earthly life is by contemplating its own nature, as Augustine has done in *De Trinitate*, because God is present there, and so seeing oneself truly leads to truly seeing God.

***Likeness to God.*** With perfect vision come perfect likeness, and perfection of the human image of God: the three are intimately linked in *De Trinitate*, and come together as the human reward received after death, in fulfillment of earthly life.

The human is like God because he is image of God: in the *mens*, image of the triune God, and in bodiliness image only of the Son of God, who alone of the divine Trinity took flesh

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<sup>156</sup> IV.26.p. 195,40-45: "Surely then it can only be meant that he was offering the flesh which the Word had been made in the fullness of time as the object to receive our faith, but that the Word itself, through whom all things had been made, was being kept for the contemplation in eternity of minds now purified through faith"; *nisi quia carnem quod uerbum in plenitudine temporis factum erat suscipiendae nostrae fidei porrigebat; ipsum autem uerbum per quod omnia facta erant purgatae per fidem menti contemplandum in aeternitate seruabat.*

<sup>157</sup> Augustine's exegesis of the Prologue of John's Gospel (XIII.1-5) shows us how temporal things bear the eternal because the eternal has come into them, just as the Baptist's coming is temporal but bears witness to something everlasting (XIII.4). This is only a lesser example which helps us to understand the work of Christ.

<sup>158</sup> IV.4, p. 164, 9-10: *per eum mundaremur factum quod natura sumus et quod peccato non sumus.*

(XIV.24). Augustine speaks of God's image and likeness in the human as that which is distinctive of us and our true honour.<sup>159</sup> He does not distinguish creational image from likeness in the Genesis text (Gen. 1:26), but his understanding of the image does contain within it a dynamism, of gift given and potential waiting to be realized.<sup>160</sup> This dynamism is evident in his description of the image-quality (cf. 2.1 above); the dynamism is activated when the image turns to participate in divine life, in response to Christ who participates in human life. Augustine also expresses this dynamism in terms of likeness: one approaches God by moving towards him, "not by moving across intervals of place, but by likeness or similarity."<sup>161</sup>

Thus likeness to God is given in three ways. It is the gift that humans have by their nature, the creational gift of Gen. 1:26. Again, it is given in the likeness to Christ who becomes like us in becoming human and mortal. But it is also the task of the human image: in itself it is given likeness to the divine, and in Christ that likeness enters into humanity itself, but the dynamism is in the human's turning to participate actively, experience fully its own image-character, and become fully like God. In fact, in this life, humans are vastly unlike God, through sin; following the path of sin makes humans not like God, as he wants them to be, but rather like the beasts through "a distorted appetite for being like God."<sup>162</sup> It is sin that makes humans "move away from [God] by dissimilarity or unlikeness."<sup>163</sup> That is why the creational likeness to God which is ours, even in this life, in blurred mirror-image, is accompanied by a great unlikeness (XV.21). The disparity of inequality will never be overcome, for we are always creature of the Creator to whom we will never be equal; Christ alone is the equal image of the Father.<sup>164</sup> But the unlikeness of sin can be

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<sup>159</sup> XII.16, p. 370,6-7: *honor enim hominis uerus est imago et similitudo dei.*

<sup>160</sup> As Ladner expresses it (*Idea of Reform*, p. 186), "likeness" has for Augustine a "lower rank" than image; an image is necessarily like, but a likeness may not be an image. Markus, who traces the relationship between image and likeness in Augustine's thought, finds that Augustine always thinks of image as a special kind of likeness: the human is image of God and therefore like God, but not an equal likeness. The human does not attain the original by equality, but approaches it by likeness. (Markus, "'Imago,'" pp. 125-143.)

<sup>161</sup> VII.12, p. 266,150-151: *Non enim locorum interuallis sed similitudine acceditur ad deum.*

<sup>162</sup> XII.16, p. 370,3-4: *incipiens a peruerso appetitu similitudinis dei.*

<sup>163</sup> VII.12, p. 266,152: *dissimilitudine receditur ab eo.*

<sup>164</sup> VII.12, p. 267,158: *imago aequalis est patri.* Cf. my commentary on En. 49 (ch. 4); that homily shows the similarity and dissimilarity between Christ and us (his equality to God and our inequality) which is at the root of the exchange.

overcome, and in so doing we become like God, actively take on our image-character, and come to vision of God.

As with the other elements of deification, likeness to God comes, in its perfection, only after death, when we reach the face-to-face vision; but on earth we can become more and more like God through renewal of the image by which we move more and more away from sin. Once again, our hope is in our changeability: the vast unlikeness which now characterizes us will be changed, while the likeness which is given us in creation and through Christ will be made perfect.

Summary. Deification includes perfect likeness of the human to God. All humans are like God because God has made them that way; it is an ineradicable aspect of their image-character, which can never be lost or destroyed. By sinning, however, humans move away towards unlikeness. Christ enables them to come back to likeness, by becoming like them even in their humanity, and showing them that humanity can be sinless. The deified human is one who, first, has become truly human by becoming like Christ in his sinlessness; and thereby, has become fully like God in the way he was created to be--but not in the way that Christ is, because humans never become equal to God. Thus the likeness of deification is more than the likeness of creation; for Christ's Incarnation, which is the means used by God to enable deification, brought about a double likeness of the human image to God (our likeness to God, and Christ's likeness to us in our humanity), and enabled the body as well as the soul to enter into deification.

***Oneness with God and with One Another.*** *De Trinitate* devotes relatively little direct attention to this element of deification, in comparison with the first six; however, oneness with God and, thereby, with one another is clearly an integral dimension of the final fulfillment.<sup>165</sup> The oneness by which God presides over all his creatures, and so makes them one with each other, is part of the right ordering of things. Augustine refers to this right ordering to set up his reflection

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<sup>165</sup> The homiletic discourses similarly intimate that oneness with God includes oneness with one another: cf. En. 84 (ch. 4), in which vision of God allows for vision of each other, and En. 118, S. 19, in which human participation in the divine accompanies our movement from multiplicity to participation in oneness.

on angels as mediators of God's presence in Old Testament manifestations of God; to help explain why such a role would be quite fitting for angels, he observes:

There [in the heavenly country] the will of God presides, as in his house or his temple, over the spirits who are joined together in the highest concord and friendship, fused indeed into one will by a kind of spiritual fire of charity.... From that lofty throne, set apart in holiness, the divine will spreads itself through all things in marvelous patterns of created movement, first spiritual then corporeal.<sup>166</sup>

There is a proper relationship between body and spirit, such that the latter is superior and governs the former. Above both is God, whose presence in each created thing, in the way proper to it, not only gives that creature its true existence but also puts it in right relationship with other creatures.

Such unity is impaired by sin, which brings division and so mars the harmony and oneness which should belong to creation. Describing the mission of the Son, Augustine shows how such oneness is disrupted by sin, and restored by Christ (IV.11-12). The human tendency to turn away from God into impiety divides us; we choose the many, instead of the One, to our own cost.<sup>167</sup> Such would be our state were it not for Christ's work of restoring oneness in the midst of the many, giving us again the chance to be one in him.<sup>168</sup> This oneness is impossible to us on our own, but available to us because Christ brings God's oneness into our disunity: for he is "in the consubstantial equality of the same substance [as the Father], and he wants his disciples to be one in him, because they cannot be one in themselves, split as they are from each other by clashing wills and desires, and the uncleanness of their sins."<sup>169</sup> By love of him and faith in him, our spirits can be raised in his own resurrection. Christ achieves this through being one with our

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<sup>166</sup> III.9, p. 135,4-11: *Illic enim dei uoluntas ... in spiritibus summa pace atque amicitia copulatis et in unam uoluntatem quodam spiritali caritatis igne conflatis tamquam in excelsa et sancta et secreta sede praesidens uelut in domo sua et in templo suo. Inde se quibusdam ordinatissimis creaturae motibus primo spiritalibus deinde corporalibus per cuncta diffundit.*

<sup>167</sup> IV.11, p. 175,7-10: "By wickedness and ungodliness with a crashing discord we had bounced away, and flowed and faded away from the one supreme true God into the many, divided by the many, clinging to the many"; *Quia enim ab uno deo summo et uero per impietatis iniquitatem resilientes et dissonantes deflueramus et euanueramus in multa discissi per multa et inhaerentis in multis.*

<sup>168</sup> Rist notes that, for Augustine, both the individual human and humanity as a collective are involved in the fall and redemption; humans fall in Adam but each human has its own sinfulness, and humanity as a whole is saved by Christ but "individual men must be purified one by one." Incorporation into the Body of Christ in the Church he calls "a theologically elaborate way of explaining the fall and restoration of that element in each individual person which is not individual but shared with the mass of humanity." (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 285.)

<sup>169</sup> IV.12, p. 177,6-9: *in eiusdem naturae consubstantiali parilitate, uult esse suos unum sed in ipso quia in se ipsis non possent dissociati ab inuicem per diuersas uoluntates et cupiditates et immunditiam peccatorum.*

human nature--by which we are equal to the angels--but also one with the divine nature, so that he can draw our human nature into the divine harmony and happiness (*beatitudo*; IV.12, with reference to Jn. 17:22, Christ's prayer for oneness). The result is that humans can go beyond their natural unity, and be drawn into a unity created by love. As Augustine will explain later in the work, the act of will by which the lover turns in love to that which it loves is the third dimension of the trinity of love; here he observes that Christ's mediation, by bringing together the human and divine natures, enables humans to complete their inner trinity and be bound in love to his humanity with which they already have oneness of nature. Thus Christ's mediating activity not only restores the natural harmony of humans with one another and with the created order, but takes it a step further, into a unity of love which Augustine likens to the oneness of Father and Son: they are one not only by equality of substance but by identity of will.<sup>170</sup> This is what happens when we cling to the One instead of clinging to the many (IV.11), to prepare us for our final destiny in which we "enjoy the one and remain for ever one."<sup>171</sup>

That final destiny of oneness is the closing note of the entire work. Augustine concludes *De Trinitate* not with rational discourse but with a prayer that God may be found more and more, "so when we do attain to you, there will be an end to these many things which we say and do not attain, and you will remain one, yet all in all, and we shall say one thing praising you in unison, even ourselves being also made one in you."<sup>172</sup> We attain to God, not first of all by our own activity, but by his invitation: "Give me the strength to seek, having caused yourself to be found and having given me the hope of finding you more and more."<sup>173</sup> When we do attain to God, he is not changed by our disunity, but rather our disunity is healed by his oneness, and liberates us also to be properly one in him.

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<sup>170</sup> IV.12, pp. 177-178,15-19: "that just as Father and Son are one not only by equality of substance but also by identity of will, so these men, for whom the Son is mediator with God, might be one not only by being of the same nature, but also by being bound in the fellowship of the same love"; *ut quemadmodum pater et filius non tantum aequalitate substantiae sed etiam uoluntate unum sint, ita et hi inter quos et deum mediator est filius non tantum per id quod eiusdem naturae sunt sed etiam per eandem dilectionis societatem unum sint.*

<sup>171</sup> IV.11, p. 176,21: *fruemur uno, permaneamus unum.*

<sup>172</sup> XV.51, p. 535,47-50: *Cum ergo peruenerimus ad te, cessabunt multa ista quae dicimus et non peruenimus, et manebis unus omnia in omnibus, et sine fine dicemus unum laudantes te in unum et in te facti etiam nos unum.*

<sup>173</sup> XV.51, p. 534,17-18: *Tu da quaerendi uires, qui inueniri te fecisti et magis magisque inueniendi te spem dedisti.*

**Summary.** This is an important element of deification because it is the only one which explicitly goes beyond the individual human's relationship with the divine Trinity, and shows the communal dimension of human fulfillment. The deified human is one with God, though not equal to God, and not one in the way that Father, Son and Spirit are one. She is so, not only by likeness, but also by the movement of her own love and will. Thus the human desires and wills to enter into the union which God offers and enables through Christ; and by so doing, enters into union with her fellow deified humans. This union fulfills the right ordering of things--Creator and creature, soul and body, creatures among themselves. And it means that deification is not an ontological necessity imposed on human creatures, but rather a divine invitation which incorporates the transformed human will; the final divine-human union itself resembles the total union in love which is the divine Trinity.

**Conclusion.** Thus we can glean from *De Trinitate* a portrait of the deified human. She remains always creature, like but unequal to God, able to fulfill her own destiny only because Christ's union of divine and human has broken the barrier of sin. Her soul is renewed and transformed in every particle; there is nothing left which does not look like God, love God, and desire God. In this she is completely happy, because she has all she wants forever. And in this she has become utterly herself, wholly able to gaze upon God who is her delight. She is reconciled with her body, which itself is transformed in a way which is vague to Augustine, but which is certainly based on the human body of Christ. She is also in harmony with all deified humans, who find their unity not in gazing at themselves or one another, but in being fully turned towards God himself. She was created this way--turned towards God--but through sin, she was born turned away. Christ's participation in humanity showed her that she needed to turn back, and gave her at the same time the means to turn, through forgiveness of her sin. In life, she did this increasingly, in every way that she could: through faith in Christ, which taught her to see and contemplate first his humanness and then his divinity, and through contemplation of her own self which also led her to

God. Therefore after death, she can gaze on God forever and never again want or need to turn away.

### 3.2.4 The Trinitarian Dimension of Deification in *De Trinitate*

Dealing as it does with both the internal life of the divine Trinity, and the relationship between the Trinity and human creatures, *De Trinitate* evokes certain questions about the place of each of the divine persons in the divine-human relationship culminating in deification. Augustine addresses himself repeatedly to the second and third persons of the Trinity, and their place both within the divine Trinity and in human life; the role of the Father is more hidden in this work, presumably reflecting the Father's own hiddenness in relationship to humanity. Therefore, I shall address the question of God by considering first the role of Christ, then that of the Holy Spirit, in deification. Third and finally, I shall turn to a question which is an undercurrent of the whole work, and an appropriate ending-point for my analysis of deification in this text: that is, just how is the divine-human relationship affected by God's trinitarian nature, and what does Augustine ultimately wish to say about entry into the divine *trinitarian* life?

#### The Role of Christ

Christ's role in the work of deification, which is pivotal, is clearly developed in *De Trinitate*. Christ is the very *content of the Christian faith*. He is *mediator* between God and humanity, who enables human fulfillment by means of the *divine-human exchange* which he institutes. As *sacrament and model* for humans, he provides the way for humans to fulfill their *likeness to God*, and to renew and perfect the *image of God* which they are created to be. I will discuss briefly each of these six points in turn.

***The Content of our Faith.*** Christ is the very content of our faith, by which God elicits faith from us and so prepares us for vision and contemplation. Reviewing the work of Book XIII, Augustine submits this concluding remark:

All humans have the will to be happy, but not all have the faith which must purify the heart if happiness is to be reached.... So faith is necessary if we are to obtain happiness with all the potentialities of human nature, that is both of body and soul. But this faith, according to its own belief, has been given actual definite content in Christ, who rose in the flesh from the dead to die no more; and it is only through him that anyone can be set free from the devil's domination by the forgiveness of sins; and in the devil's dominions life can of necessity only be unhappy, and perpetually so, a state that is better called death than life.<sup>174</sup>

Christ is the content of our faith, not only because it is he who crucifies sin and death to raise up both body and soul, but also because in coming to know and believe in him, humans are led step-by-step along the path towards vision of God. Human inner vision is too weak to see God, both because of its human limitations and even more because of the weakness of sin. But even humans can see the human Christ; and in him, as humans learn to see by faith, they learn to see beyond the human to the divine Christ. This leads them, finally, to see God himself, since in seeing the divine Christ they are truly seeing God. In this way, Christ provides in himself stages of contemplation which enable humans to progress from non-seeing to faith to seeing, in a way designed and made possible for them by the Incarnation. He is the essential door to the divine life: by following where he leads, humans can first be healed of sin, then allow that healing to undo all the effects of sin and transform them inwardly, and finally come to perfection in the vision of God.

**Mediator.** The christological emphasis in *De Trinitate* is on the Incarnation, rather than on the cross and resurrection.<sup>175</sup> Augustine's intent is to discuss the inner workings of the divine Trinity, and how the divine trinitarian life reaches out into human life to draw humanity into divine life. The purpose of the Incarnation is that the Word made flesh stands with and between God and humanity by being of the same nature as both, and so mediates between them. This he does for the sake of humanity: the Incarnation took place "for the sake of restoring us to health [*salus*]" and "so

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<sup>174</sup> XIII.25, pp. 417-418,1-2,11-18: *Beatos esse se uelle omnium hominum est, nec tamen omnium est fides qua cor mundante ad beatitudinem peruenitur.... Necessaria est ergo fides ut beatitudinem consequamur omnibus humanae naturae bonis, id est et animi et corporis. Hanc autem fidem in Christo esse definitam qui in carne resurrexit a mortuis non moriturus ulterius, nec nisi per illum quemquem liberari a diaboli dominatu per remissionem peccatorum, in cuius diaboli partibus necesse est esse miseram uitam eandemque perpetuam, quae mors potius est dicenda quam uita.*

<sup>175</sup> For Augustine, "the salvation and deification of man can come about only as the end-product of the Incarnation of God, and in bringing about the Incarnation God achieves—for the second time—the best of all possible worlds." (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 281)

that the human Christ Jesus might be mediator of God and humanity.”<sup>176</sup> Human salvation and healing are the work of the Word made flesh; the end and goal of his mediation is to bring the (healed) human “to direct sight of God, to the face to face vision [1 Cor. 13:12]”, to direct contemplation of God himself, which means of the Father, and of the Son as God.<sup>177</sup> Beyond this is nothing. We are taken beyond adoptive sonship,<sup>178</sup> which the mediator enables, to the unknown (cf. I.17; in reference to 1 Jn. 3:2). The key is that, in the process, God does not change at all, but humans are changed so as to be able to become what we do not even know, because the Son becomes and provides the way which enables us to be sons and so to be united with the Father: “So our substance changes for the better when we are made his sons; at the same time he begins to be our Father, but without any change in his substance.”<sup>179</sup>

Christ mediates life, as Augustine highlights by portraying the devil as mediator of death. As we saw in examining IV.13-15, above, the mediator of death “blocks the way” to higher things rather than drawing us to them, and points us to where he himself will not go; but the mediator of life precedes us to the place of our healing (death), where he did not deserve to go but we did, and so opens the way to higher things. The devil mediates despair and illusion; Christ mediates hope and truth, thus clearing the path for humanity to reach God himself. Christ not only points this way, but becomes it; this is another difference between himself and the anti-mediator, who refuses to go where he points. But “this one true mediator, in reconciling us to God by his sacrifice of

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<sup>176</sup> I.14, p. 44,5-7: *propter incarnationem uerbi dei, quae pro salute nostra reparanda facta est ut mediator dei et hominum esset homo Christus Iesus*; with reference to 1 Tm. 2:5, “there is one mediator between God and humanity. Christ Jesus, himself human.”

<sup>177</sup> I.16, p. 49,62-63: *mediator dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus perducturus est ad speciem quam uisionem dicit idem apostolus facie ad faciem.*

<sup>178</sup> Bonner considers adoptive sonship and deification virtually synonymous in Augustine (cf. Chapter 1, above). Rist describes the connection in this way: “Hence when God wishes to make fallen men ‘gods,’ according to Augustine’s mature theology, he enables them to survive death and participate in his divine unchangeability and immortality by the special grace of ‘adoption,’ as described by St. Paul” (Rist, *Augustine*, pp. 259-260). Rist’s notation that “adoption by grace specifically repudiates the notion that we are of divine substance” (p. 260, n. 13) suggests that Augustine’s connection between adoption and deification may help protect the Creator/creature distinction while maintaining the reality and intimacy of their union.

<sup>179</sup> V.17, p. 227,62-64: *Substantia itaque nostra mutatur in melius cum filii eius efficitur; simul et ille pater noster esse incipit, sed nulla suae commutatione substantiae.*

peace, would remain one with him to whom he offered it, and make one in himself those for whom he offered it, and be himself who offered it one and the same as what he offered.”<sup>180</sup>

Christ’s mediation, by which he intercedes for humans to God and so makes a path by which humanity can reach these eternal gifts, belongs to earthly life: when he has brought humanity to eternity, “he will then no longer intercede for us to God and the Father once he has handed over the kingdom.... he now makes intercession for them, but then he will attach them to himself there where he is equal to the Father, and will no longer beg the Father for them.”<sup>181</sup> The point is not that the Word discards his flesh at the end of time, or that the Son of God ceases to be Son of Man. Rather, once he has brought humans to God, and has drawn them to contemplation and vision, his role as intercessor and mediator will no longer be required because humans themselves will stand in the place of oneness with God, where they can see and contemplate God himself. That place is never identical with Christ’s—he is equal to the Father, and humans never will be—but it clearly is a place of unique closeness between God and the human who achieves contemplation, thanks to the unbreakable link between God and humanity forged by Christ’s becoming human:

This is what he means when he says, That they may be one as we are one [Jn. 17:22]—that just as Father and Son are one not only by equality of substance but also by identity of will, so these humans, for whom the Son is mediator with God, might be one not only by being of the same nature, but also by being bound in the fellowship of the same love. Finally, he shows that he is the mediator by whom we are reconciled to God, when he says, I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected into one [Jn. 17:23].<sup>182</sup>

Christ becomes human (“of the same nature”), but this is not the end of his work. The equality within the divine Trinity is not only of the same nature, but also of a common will and love—upon which Augustine will dwell in examining the various trinities in the second half of the work; the third element of each trinity is that which binds the first two together by will and love. Similarly,

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<sup>180</sup> IV.19, pp. 186-187, 17-21: *ipse unus uerusque mediator per sacrificium pacis reconcilians nos deo unum cum illo maneret cui offerebat, unum in se faceret pro quibus offerebat, unus ipse esset qui offerebat et quod offerebat.*

<sup>181</sup> I.21, p. 58, 43-44, p. 59, 67-69: *iam non interpellabit pro nobis tradito regno deo et patri.... nunc interpellat; tunc autem illic eos sibi faciens inhaerere ubi aequalis est patri, non iam rogabit patrem pro eis.*

<sup>182</sup> IV.12, pp. 177-178, 14-21: *Ad hoc enim ualet quod ait: Ut sint unum sicut et nos unum sumus, ut quemadmodum pater et filius non tantum aequalitate substantiae sed etiam uoluntate unum sunt, ita et hi inter quos et deum mediator est filius non tantum per id quod eiusdem naturae sunt sed etiam per eandem dilectionis societatem*

the human closeness to God which the mediator works to achieve is not only that Christ is one with us in our humanity, but also that we will to be united with God himself, and turn to God in love. In this sense, it is a mutual work: humans participate in what Christ enables.<sup>183</sup>

***Initiator of the Divine-Human Exchange.*** The pattern by which God, in Christ, first took to himself that which is human, so that humans might enter into that which is divine, is one of exchange. It turns upon the paradox at which human and divine meet: first in Christ, and therefore--but in a different way--in humans who enter into divine life.<sup>184</sup> Because the structure and terminology are part of the pattern of the exchange, I shall examine this concept by focusing upon several particularly clear texts. In each case, I will cite the text itself, then comment on its meaning in terms of deification and in the context in which it appears in *De Trinitate*.<sup>185</sup>

I.10. It is by becoming partakers in his life everlasting that even we in our own little measure have been made immortal, though the life everlasting we have been made partakers of is one thing, and we who shall live forever by partaking of it are another.<sup>186</sup>

This succinct text, which appears in the opening of the work, highlights the effect of the exchange on humanity. Augustine has been working to demonstrate the oneness of the Son with the Father; in this paragraph, he does so by showing that God alone is immortal (from 1 Tm. 6:16), but that this immortality applies to both Father and Son, for the Son is life everlasting (1 Jn. 5:20). Yet, immediately after saying that both immortality and everlasting life belong only to God, he observes in the cited text that we humans become immortal and partake in life everlasting. That is to say, what is properly divine is accessible to humans, though with certain qualifications. God

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*unum sint. Deinde idipsum quod mediator est per quem reconciliamur deo sic indicat: Ego, inquit, in eis et tu in me ut sint consummati in unum.*

<sup>183</sup> The theme of Christ as Mediator appears in the homiletic discourses (ch. 4), directly (cf. S. 81, En. 109) and indirectly, for it is Christ's mediation that enables human participation in divinity.

<sup>184</sup> The exchange theme is discussed further in Chapter 4, since several of the texts studied in that chapter involve the exchange theme.

<sup>185</sup> Most of the texts appear in Books IV and XIII, the main parts of which (as Hill points out, *Trinity*, p. 367, n. 30) are parallel to one another. Augustine himself observes, in his summary of Book XIII (XIII.25), that he has been discussing material already covered in Book IV, but "there it was for a different reason from here": in IV, to explain Christ's mission from the Father, and in XIII, "to distinguish between active knowledge and contemplation," by which the human image of God is redeemed and brought to perfection.

is immortal, but we are made immortal (*immortales efficitur*) in the little measure that is ours (*pro modulo nostro*). Christ is life everlasting, but we become partakers in everlasting life, we are not ourselves that life as Christ is. The point of the text is to support Augustine's claim about Christ, by showing that what is properly said of Christ as divine, just as in speaking of God the Father, is said of humans only in a particular way, namely, the way in which they can be said to enter into what is divine. Here we see three of the main points of the exchange theme--that the divine gifts are available to mortals, that their availability is linked inseparably to Christ, and that this is completely different from the way they belong to Christ as God. And we see Augustine referring to it as an established concept which he uses to defend his point about the inner trinitarian life.

IV.4. To cure these [the foolish, blinded minds of humans] and make them well the Word through which all things were made became flesh and dwelt among us. Our enlightenment is to participate in the Word, that is, in that life which is the light of humans. Yet we were absolutely incapable of such participation and quite unfit for it, so unclean were we through sin, so we had to be cleansed. Furthermore, the only thing to cleanse the wicked and the proud is the blood of the just human and the humility of God; to contemplate God, which by nature we are not, we would have to be cleansed by him who became what by nature we are and what by sin we are not. By nature we are not God; by nature we are humans; by sin we are not just. So God became a just human to intercede with God for the sinful human. The sinner did not match the just, but human did match human. So he applied to us the similarity of his humanity to take away the dissimilarity of our iniquity, and becoming a partaker of our mortality he made us partakers of his divinity.<sup>187</sup>

The exchange proper appears in the final sentence of this text, showing the elegant balance which characterizes this theme. There is a precise balance in each of the two main clauses of the sentence: in the first, the likeness of our humanity--taken on by God--corresponds to the unlikeness of our sin--taken away by that action of God. In the second, God's participation in human mortality is paralleled by human participation in divinity. The balance includes inequality; the action is God's in Christ, and that action has results for humans. The balance of the structure

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<sup>186</sup> I.10, p. 39, 33-36: *Eius enim uitae aeternae et nos participes facti pro modulo nostro immortales efficitur. Sed aliud est ipsa cuius participes efficitur uita aeterna, aliud nos qui eius participatione uiuemus in aeternum.*

<sup>187</sup> IV.4, pp.163-164, 1-19: *Has ut curaret atque sanaret uerbum, per quod facta sunt omnia, caro factum est et habitauit in nobis [Jn 1:14]. Inluminatio quippe nostra participatio uerbi est, illius scilicet uitae quae lux est hominum. Huic autem participationi prorsus inhabiles et minus idonei eramus propter immunditiam peccatorum; mundandi ergo eramus. Porro iniquorum et superbiorum uia mundatio est sanguis iusti et humilitas dei, ut ad contemplandum deum quod natura non sumus per eum mundaremur factum quod natura sumus et quod peccato non sumus. Deus enim natura non sumus; homines natura sumus; iusti peccato non sumus. Deus itaque factus homo iustus intercessit deo pro homine peccatore. Non enim congruit peccator iusto, sed congruit homini homo.*

emphasizes the imbalance of the terms involved; mortality in exchange for divinity, justice in exchange for sinfulness.

The final sentence as a whole expresses the remedy which God applies to the human malady of sinfulness and injustice, and the effect of this remedy upon humanity. Augustine is describing, with reference to the Prologue to John's Gospel, the cure which God has brought for foolish humans caught in the darkness of depravity and unbelief (IV.3). The light which appears in the darkness is the Word made flesh, in whom humans must participate in order to be released from the darkness in which they are caught. Sin prevents them from doing so; and so they are cut off from what is essential to them—justice, and contemplation of God. To this irresolvable dilemma God applies a totally divine solution: he takes on the nature of humans without taking on their injustice (sinfulness). The paradox of likeness/unlikeness is that, in becoming like us (in humanity), Christ shows us how unlike him we are (in sinfulness), unlike him even in his humanness, and therefore unlike ourselves; but at the same time makes it possible for us to become like him (in justice). Human ability to participate in the divine is the aim and result of the exchange; the means is the Incarnation. This passage occurs within Augustine's explication of the mission of the Son.

IV.7. Sacred scripture commends its perfection to us above all in declaring that God completed his works in six days, and that on the sixth day the human was made to the image of God. And in the sixth age of the human race the Son of God came and was made the Son of Man in order to refashion us to the image of God.<sup>188</sup>

Just a few paragraphs later, we see another formulation of the exchange theme, this time linking it to the notion of human creation in God's image. The exchange itself is stated in the second sentence: Son of God becomes Son of Man, with the result that humanity is reformed "to the image of God." The first sentence reminds us that human reformation is a fulfillment of creation itself, since humanity was already made "to the image of God," and the exchange allows

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*Adiungens ergo nobis similitudinem humanitatis suae abstulit dissimilitudinem iniquitatis nostrae, et factus particeps mortalitatis nostrae fecit participes diuinitatis suae.*

<sup>188</sup> IV.7, pp.169-170, 11-13: *Cuius perfectionem nobis sancta scriptura commendat in eo maxime quod deus sex diebus perfecit opera sua, et sexto die factus est homo ad imaginem dei. Et sexta aetate generis humani filius dei uenit et factus est filius hominis ut nos reformaret ad imaginem dei.*

for that image to be reformed to God. It is through Christ that creation can thus be fulfilled; Augustine emphasizes the creation-reformation relationship by noting that, as humanity came on the sixth day of creation, the Son of God came in the sixth age of the human race.<sup>189</sup> Human fulfillment is the purpose of the coming of the Son (*ut nos reformaret*). Thus the Incarnation initiates the exchange and makes possible the reformation which returns the created image to God.

IV.13. This is our true peace, this is our firm bond with our creator, once we have been cleansed and reconciled by the mediator of life, just as we had withdrawn far away from him, being defiled and estranged by the mediator of death. Just as the devil in his pride brought proud-thinking man down to death, so *Christ in his humility brought obedient man back to life*. The devil grew high and mighty, he fell, and pulled down man who consented to him; *the Christ came humble and lowly, he rose, and raised up man who believed in him*. The devil did not sink to what he had brought man down to, for while he indeed bore the death of the spirit in his godlessness, he did not undergo the death of the flesh, not having clothed himself with any flesh in the first place.<sup>190</sup>

So then, into the place where the mediator of death transported us without accompanying us there himself, that is into the death of the flesh, *there the Lord our God by the hidden and wholly mysterious decree of his high divine justice introduced the healing means of our amendment, which he did not himself deserve*.<sup>191</sup>

The mediator of life came to show us how little we should really fear death.... *And to do this he came to meet us at the end to which we had come, but not by the way we had come*. We came to death by sin, he came by justice; and so while our death is the punishment of sin, his death became a sacrifice for sin.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>189</sup> On the theme of the six ages of the human race and the six days of creation in Augustine (cf. ch. 4 below, analysis of S. 192), see: G. Folliet, "La typologie du sabbat chez saint Augustin: Son interprétation millénariste entre 389 et 400," *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 2 (1956): 371-390; A. Luneau, *L'histoire du salut chez les pères de l'église: La doctrine des âges du monde* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1964), pp. 285-332; R. A. Markus, "Augustine: Man in History and Society," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: University, 1967), pp. 406-419; R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: University, 1970), repr. 1989; Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*; Martine Dulaey, "L'Apocalypse: Augustin et Tyconius," in A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Saint Augustin et la Bible*, Bible de tous les temps, vol. 3 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1986), pp. 369-386; José Oroz Reta, "L'homme nouveau selon saint Augustin," *Augustinian Studies* 17 (1986): 161-167; H. A. Meynell, ed., *Grace, Politics and Desire: Essays on Augustine* (Calgary: University, 1990); B. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: University, 1991); J. Kevin Coyle, "Augustine's 'Millennialism' Reconsidered," *Augustinus* 37 (1993): 155-164; Bernhard Kötting and Wilhelm Geerlings, "Aetas," *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 1, cols. 150-158; A. Solignac, "Caelum," *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 1, cols. 698-702; A. Solignac, "Caelum caeli," *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 1, cols. 702-704.

<sup>190</sup> IV.13, p. 178.1-12: *Haec est uera pax et cum creatore nostro nobis firma connexio purgatis et reconciliatis per mediatorem uitae sicut maculati et alienati ab eo recesseramus per mediatorem mortis. Sicut enim diabolus superbus hominem superbientem perduxit ad mortem, ita Christus humilis hominem obedientem reduxit ad uitam; quia sicut ille elatus cecidit et deiecit consentientem, sic iste humiliatus surrexit et erexit credentem. Quia enim non peruenerat diabolus quo ipse perduxerat (mortem quippe spiritus in impietate gestabat sed mortem carnis non subierat quia nec indumentum susceperat).*

<sup>191</sup> IV.13, p. 181.31-35: *Quo ergo nos mediator mortis transmisit et ipse non uenit, id est ad mortem carnis, ibi nobis dominus deus noster medicinam emendationis inseruit quam ille non meruit occulta et nimis arcana ordinatione diuinae altaeque iustitiae.*

<sup>192</sup> IV.13, p.181, 41-42, 44-47: *uitae mediator ostendens quam non sit mors timenda.... occurrit nobis ad finem quo uenimus sed non qua uenimus. Nos enim ad mortem per peccatum uenimus, ille per iustitiam; et ideo cum sit mors*

The italicized portions refer particularly to elements of the exchange theme, by which Christ takes on what is human so as to bring humans to what is divine. The whole context of the passage adds a new dimension to that theme. Augustine is demonstrating the mission of the Son, who is Mediator between God and humanity, by portraying the devil as a kind of anti-mediator, mediating death instead of life. Whereas the devil mediates death by leading humanity to sin and death, but “without accompanying us there himself,” Christ mediates life by entering into what belongs to humanity--humility, lowliness, the death of the flesh--to lead humanity into death and beyond it into resurrection and life, because he himself goes there first. The passage highlights the divine activity by which Christ precedes humanity so that humans can follow, and takes on the effects of sin without taking on the sin itself. There is a sort of anti-exchange by which the devil gives humanity the effects of his own pride--“bringing them down to death”--without taking them on himself; whereas Christ takes on the punishment that humans deserve and he himself does not, so that they can be given the healing which they do not deserve. Thus the passage strongly conveys the sense of human helplessness before sin, represented by the devil’s work, and therefore of the depths from which Christ raises humans and the heights to which he raises them.

The exchange is here portrayed in terms of punishment and justice, but God’s act brings a healing far greater than the punishment deserved by sin. That healing brings humility, obedience, and life, in place of the “wholly just death.” “There”--in the deserved death of the flesh--God meets us and brings what we do not deserve. Thus Augustine puts the exchange in moral terms, introducing into it the notions of punishment, justice, the debt of sin, and the power of the devil over humanity. Yet the exchange goes beyond a moral correction, since the difference between the anti-mediator and the mediator is that Christ not only points the way but takes it himself, going into death to transform it into life (“the mediator of life came to show us how little we should really fear death”); thus the path itself is changed for humans, who still must follow Christ into death, which is the punishment of sin, but now death “raises up the human who believes in him.”

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*nostra poena peccati, mors illius facta est hostia pro peccato.* Cf. En. 52 and En. 58, S. 1 (discussed in Ch. 4) which show the exchange as conquering evil and sin.

XIII.12. But in case this feebleness that is the human, which we see and carry around with us, should despair of attaining such eminence, it went on to say And the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us [Jn 1:14], in order to convince us of what might seem incredible to us by showing us its opposite. For surely if the Son of God by nature became Son of Man by mercy for the sake of the sons of humans (that is the meaning of the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us), how much easier it is to believe that the sons of humans by nature can become sons of God by God's grace<sup>193</sup> and dwell in God; for it is in him alone and thanks to him alone that they can be happy, by partaking in his immortality; it was to persuade us of this that the Son of God came to partake in our mortality.<sup>194</sup>

Here is the exchange theme at its simplest and most elegant: Christ's participation in mortality in exchange for human participation in immortality, and sonship by grace given to humans in exchange for God's Son becoming Son of Man. The Incarnation is the pivotal moment in this exchange: "The Word became flesh" is said "in order to convince us" that humans really will receive divine sonship and immortality.

In Book XIII, Augustine has been explaining that happiness and immortality must go together as the gifts promised to humanity after death. In this text, he shows how these gifts are given, and with what assurance: by means of the exchange, which at once promises and gives the means of human fulfillment. This is the human destiny, to become by grace what Christ is by nature, namely, sons of God, which means dwelling in God in whom we partake in immortality and happiness. That destiny is pledged and promised by the Son of God's becoming Son of Man and participating in mortality. Augustine explains that the step already taken is the harder one to believe--God's participation in mortality; and that human participation in immortality, which is much less incredible, derives from it, and is to be believed though it remains to be completed.<sup>195</sup> Thus the purpose of the exchange is to make possible human entry into divine life, after death; and, in this life, to elicit our faith in God's promise of this destiny (*propter quod persuadendum*).

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<sup>193</sup> Hill translates only "by grace" because not all manuscripts include *dei*; cf. CCL 50A, p. 399, l. 28.

<sup>194</sup> XIII.12, p. 399, 21-31: *ne ista hominum quam uidemus et gestamus infirmitas tantam excellentiam desperaret ilico annexum est, Et uerbum caro factum est et habitauit in nobis, ut a contrario suaderetur quod incredibile uidebatur. Si enim natura dei filius propter filios hominum misericordia factus est hominis filius (hoc est enim, uerbum caro factum est et habitauit in hominibus), quanto est credibilius natura filios hominis gratia dei fieri dei filios et habitare in deo in quo solo et de quo solo esse possint beati participes immortalitatis eius effecti, propter quod persuadendum dei filius particeps nostrae mortalitatis effectus est?*

<sup>195</sup> Cf. S. Mainz 13, par. 1, discussed in Chapter 4 below.

XIII.13. Nothing was more needed for raising our hopes and delivering the minds of mortals, disheartened by the very condition of mortality, from despairing of immortality, than a demonstration of how much value God put on us and how much he loved us. And what could be clearer and more wonderful evidence of this than that the Son of God, unchangeably good, remaining in himself what he was and receiving from us what he was not, electing to enter into partnership with our nature without detriment to his own, should first of all endure our ills without any ill deserts of his own; and then once we had been brought in this way to believe how much God loved us and to hope at last for what we had despaired of, should confer his gifts on us with a quite uncalled for generosity, without any good deserts of ours, indeed with our ill deserts our only preparation?<sup>196</sup>

Again Augustine wishes to show that, though immortality has been promised us and not yet received, it is a sure promise of which evidence has already been given: the first half of the exchange, by which God has taken on what is human, assures the second, that humans will take on what is divine. To bring us from despair to hope, Christ takes partnership (*consortium*) in human nature, as a pledge of the full partnership awaiting us when we take on immortality. All this is given so that we might have hope (*ad erigendam spem nostram*) and faith in God's love (*credentibus quantum nos diligit deus*). Because that love is most strongly demonstrated when it is most clearly undeserved (when we have nothing but "*merita mala*"), we can the more believe that it will be faithful even "*sine ullis bonis meritis nostris*."<sup>197</sup> The exchange, then, both gives the means of the divine gifts yet to be received (here, immortality) and calls for faith in what God has given so that they might be received. The former comes after death, the latter is needed in this life to help prepare us to receive it. This passage echoes IV.2-4, as it makes the point that the Word made flesh shows us how much God loves us and how undeserving we are of that love; here, in Book XIII, developing the "more inward" reflection on the divine Trinity, Augustine stresses the effect of the Son's mission upon humanity: Christ's mission gives us the means to participation in the divine, which is both our need and our destiny, but which is unavailable to us except through Christ's mediation.

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<sup>196</sup> XIII.13. p. 400, 11-24: *Quid enim tam necessarium fuit ad erigendam spem nostram mentesque mortalium conditione ipsius mortalitatis abiectas ab immortalitatis desperatione liberandas quam ut demonstraretur nobis quanti nos penderet deus quantumque diligeret? Quid uero huius rei tanto isto indicio manifestius atque praeclarius quam ut dei filius immutabiliter bonus in se manens quod erat et a nobis pro nobis accipiens quod non erat praeter suae naturae detrimentum nostrae dignatus inire consortium prius sine ullo malo nostra perferret, ac sic iam credentibus quantum nos diligit deus et quod desperabamus iam sperantibus dona in nos sua sine ullis bonis meritis nostris, immo praecedentibus et malis meritis nostris, indebita largitate conferret?*

<sup>197</sup> Recalling Rom. 5:6: "Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly."

XIII.17. Humans imitate him [the devil] all the more thoroughly the more they neglect or even detest justice and studiously devote themselves to power, rejoicing at the possession of it or inflamed with the desire for it. So it pleased God to deliver the human from the devil's authority by conquering him by justice, not by power, so that humans too might imitate Christ by seeking to conquer the devil by justice, not power.... Let mortals hold on to justice; power will be given them when they are immortal.<sup>198</sup>

As the two previous passages picked up Book IV's theme of Christ's Incarnation (the Word made flesh) making way for our participation, through the exchange by which he participates in what is human, so this paragraph picks up Book IV's notion of the devil as anti-mediator. Our true destiny is to imitate Christ, which would raise us up; instead we imitate the devil, which brings us down low. Therefore God brings about the exchange which puts Christ in the place we deserve and he does not, the place of death to which the devil led us (cf. IV.13). The result is seen in this text: humans are enabled to imitate Christ's justice and so achieve power over the devil. Since such power comes with immortality, it is a future gift; but justice can be received by mortals, thanks to Christ. So humans who receive Christ's example are changed by it, for instead of trying to seize power they "hold on to" justice (*teneant iustitiam*), and thereby are given power along with immortality (*potentia immortalibus dabitur*). The exchange, then, leads to a transformation of the human condition, begun in mortal life but fully received after death.

XIII.18. As it is, however, he suffered human pains for us because he was human, though if he had not wanted to he would have been able not to suffer so, because he was God. In this way the justice of humility was made more acceptable, seeing that the power of divinity could have avoided the humiliation if it had wanted to; and so by the death of one so powerful we powerless mortals have justice set before us and power promised us. He did one of these two things by dying, the other by rising.<sup>199</sup>

Continuing the theme of power and justice, Augustine shows that in the exchange, God took on powerlessness and mortality so that mortals might receive justice and power. As intimated

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<sup>198</sup> XIII.17, p. 404, 5-11,14-15: (*sic enim et homines eum tanto magis imitantur quanto magis neglecta uel etiam perosa iustitia potentiae student eiusque uel adeptione laetantur uel inflammantur cupiditate*), *placuit deo ut propter eruendum hominem de diaboli potestate non potentia diabolus sed iustitia uinceretur, atque ita et homines imitantes Christum iustitia quaererent diabolus uincere non potentia.... Teneant ergo mortales iustitiam; potentia immortalibus dabitur.*

<sup>199</sup> XIII.18, pp. 406-407, 25-32: *Nunc uero humana pro nobis passus est quia homo erat; sed si nolisset, etiam hoc non pati potuisset quia et deus erat. Ideo gratior facta est in humilitate iustitia quia posset si nolisset humilitatem non perpeti tanta in diuinitate potentia, ac sic a moriente tam potente nobis mortalibus impotentibus et commendata est iustitia et promissa potentia. Horum enim duorum unum fecit moriendo, alterum resurgendo.*

also in the preceding text, justice comes already in this life (*commendata est iustitia*), but power is reserved till after death (*promissa potentia*); just as in Christ, justice was achieved by his death, but power was shown in the resurrection. All this is made possible by the free choice of God, who did not need to be humbled and suffer human pains, but did so because he wanted to, and so made the rest possible. This passage puts the exchange in terms of Christ's death and resurrection, as well as his Incarnation.

XIII.22. Again, there is the point [about the Incarnation] that human pride, which is the greatest obstacle to cleaving to God, could be confuted and cured by such humility on the part of God. The human also learns how far he has withdrawn from God, which is useful for him as a remedial pain, when he returns to him through a mediator like this, who comes to aid humans as God with his divinity and to share with them as human in their infirmity.<sup>200</sup>

Our final text is part of Augustine's explanation that the way which the mediator took for our sake--namely, the Incarnation itself--was a good way and befitting to divine dignity. He shows that the exchange brings about healing; for God gives humility, by becoming human, in exchange for the cure of human pride, which above all things separates humanity from God. As a result, humans are able to see that separation, and to see that it is the result of their own doing; yet this is seen not to despair but to hope, because at the same time, the means of return is also given by the mediator. This is the purpose and effect of the exchange of divinity for infirmity; it recalls again the man we saw at the opening of Book IV, who discovers his own distance from God and his inability to return without help. That discovery enables the first stage of the cure to be received. Here too, God provides not only the light which shows humanity its own illness, but also the cure which--though in itself painful--enables them to be healed, and their weakness to be overcome.

Summary. These texts manifest the exchange theme, by which God in Christ takes on what is human (portrayed variously as mortality, dissimilarity, infirmity, injustice, ill deserts, and the death of the flesh which comes through the workings of the devil) so that humans can take on

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<sup>200</sup> XIII.22, pp. 412-413, 16-22: *Est etiam illud ut superbia hominis quae maximo impedimento est ne inhaereatur deo per tantam dei humilitatem redargui posset atque sanari. Discit quoque homo quam longe recesserit a deo, quod illi ualeat ad medicinalem dolorem, quando per talem mediatorem redit qui hominibus et deus diuinitate subuenit et homo infirmitate conuenit.*

what is divine (immortality, likeness, healing, justice and power) so as to be healed, raised up, and given power and eternal life. They show the aims of the exchange, which are entirely for the sake of humanity: to give humans a remedy for sin, which enables healing and justification (this dimension is demonstrated particularly by the theme of the devil as anti-mediator); and to enable fulfillment of the human creation in God's image, by reformation of the image which allows humans to participate in the divine. These texts also show the means of the exchange, especially the Incarnation, itself a pledge that these aims will be accomplished. This pledge is more than just a promise; in itself, it provides the means of fulfillment. The Incarnation thereby makes possible life after death, but it also changes this life; for it elicits in humanity faith in the fulfillment, which in turn opens humanity to receive it, and hope that the fulfillment will be brought about. The exchange is brought about on two levels: it brings about a moral union (punishment and forgiveness of sins), but also a transformation of humanity itself, because the exchange is not just a moral work but the entrance of God into human life itself.

***Sacrament and Model.*** Christ is himself the sacrament (*sacramentum*) and model (*exemplum*) of healing and salvation.<sup>201</sup> In making this point, Augustine goes beyond the Incarnation to the death and resurrection of Christ. Humans were dead in soul (because of sin) and in body (because of the death of the soul, hence also because of sin). Christ entered into the death of the flesh, since his mortal flesh was crucified and died. Augustine describes this in terms of

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<sup>201</sup> For Augustine's use and understanding of the terms *sacramentum* and *exemplum*, see the excellent article by B. Studer, "Sacramentum et Exemplum chez Saint Augustin," *Recherches augustiniennes* 10 (1975): 87-141, repr. in *Dominus Salvator: Studien zur Christologie und Exegese der Kirchenväter*, Studia Anselmiana 107 (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1992), pp. 141-212. See also: H.-M. Féret, "Sacramentum-Res dans la langue théologique de saint Augustin," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 29 (1940): 218-243; Maurice Pontet, *L'exégèse de saint Augustin prédicateur* (Paris: Aubier, 1945), pp. 257-303; F. van der Meer, "'Sacramentum' chez saint Augustin," *Maison dieu* 13 (1948): 50-65; C. Couturier, "'Sacramentum' et 'mysterium' dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin," in *Etudes augustiniennes*, ed. H. Rondet et al. (Paris: Aubier, 1953), pp. 161-274; R. A. Markus, "St. Augustine on Signs," *Phronesis* 2 (1957): 60-83, repr. R. A. Markus, *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973), pp. 61-91; A. Mandouze, "A propos de 'sacramentum' chez saint Augustin," in *Mélanges offerts à Christine Mohrmann* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1963), pp. 222-234; E. Bailleux, "La sotériologie de saint Augustin dans le *De Trinitate*," *Mélanges de sciences religieuses* 23 (1966): 149-173; G. Madec, "Christus," *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 1, cols. 845-908; and Emmanuel J. Cutrone, "Sacraments," *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 741-747.

replacing multiplicity with unity, Christ's single death bringing healing to the double death of humanity, namely, death in soul and body (IV.6). His bodily death works on us in two ways: it models the death of our outer human, for it is the same death of the flesh that we must undergo; and it models the death of our inner human, which is described as the crucifixion of the inner human, "a kind of death to erase the death of ungodliness in which God does not leave us. And thus it is by this sort of cross that the body of sin is cancelled.... It all takes place within."<sup>202</sup> (Christ's own inner human needed no renewal, since he was never sinful nor dead in spirit.) Thus both inner and outer human are liberated by his physical death; and his bodily resurrection becomes "a sacrament of our inner resurrection.... the resurrection of the Lord's body is found to serve as the model for our outer man's resurrection."<sup>203</sup> In this way, as promised, the whole human, outer and inner, body and soul, is released from sin and its effects and brought to life, because Christ is "the sacrament of our inner man and the model of our outer man."<sup>204</sup> The Incarnation has enabled this to occur, since by it Christ enters into human flesh; the cross and resurrection then can heal sin and lead to salvation and resurrection. This is the saving, healing work of the mediator; its goal is to bring humanity to God, in both body and soul, through renewal.

***Fulfillment of our Likeness.*** As sacrament and model, Christ leads humanity from unlikeness to likeness of God, in two ways. First, by taking on likeness to us in our human nature, he undoes the unlikeness of sin from which we suffer but he does not. In IV.4, Augustine explains that Christ became human as we are, but did not become sinful as we are; therefore we can become like him in sinless humanity. Second, our unlikeness to God is the dynamic by which we move away from God; becoming like God means approaching God again (VII.12). Here we see the two stages of the human cure: first, the removal of the illness itself (in forgiveness of sins, which heals the unlikeness of sin); second, in the lifetime of receiving the effects of the cure and

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<sup>202</sup> IV.6, p.167,65-67,70: *per quam mortem mors impietatis perimitur in qua nos non relinquit deus. Et ideo per talem crucem euacuatur corpus peccati.... Intus namque agitur.*

<sup>203</sup> IV.6, p. 168,75-77,89-90: *Resurrectio uero corporis domini ad sacramentum interioris resurrectionis nostrae uertinere ostenditur.... et ad exemplum resurrectionis exterioris hominis nostri pertinere inuenitur resurrectio corporis domini.*

undoing the effects of the illness. Having healed the unlikeness of sin through his similarity to our humanity, Christ enables us to participate in God (IV.4). Such participation in its fullness comes after death, in the third stage of the cure, when in the full vision of God, the human will be fully like God (XIV.24).

Human likeness to God is likeness to the whole Trinity, but includes likeness to the Son in a special way. In the flesh, our likeness is to the Son; in our immortal bodies we will be conformed to the likeness of the Son only, not of the Father or the Spirit, since the Son alone took flesh (XIV.24). But in the soul, too, Augustine suggests a particular likeness of humans to the Son of God. He develops the notion of an “inner word” which we carry within us. Any “outer word,” whether of speech or action, is a true word to the extent that it truly reflects that inner word (IX.12; XV.19). In reference to the trinitarian image, the inner word has to do with the second element of the inner trinity.<sup>205</sup> Augustine suggests that this “human word” has a likeness to the Word of God, as in the puzzling reflection in a mirror (XV.20). He makes a fairly direct comparison between the way our inner word is “born” from our inner knowledge, and the way the Word of God is born of the Father (cf. XV.20); and he suggests that the truer our inner word is, the more it approaches “as far as it can to the likeness of the born image, in which God the Son is declared to be substantially like the Father in all respects” (XV.20). Again, the human word is like the divine Word in that it leads to works, just as the divine Word is creative. Finally, he suggests that our likeness in the flesh to the Son--but not the Father and the Spirit--has meaning for us also, since our lives must imitate him so as to bring us to complete truth in both the contemplation and the operation of our word (XV.20). The perfection of this likeness comes only in the future, however; on earth, presumably, we can be growing towards perfection, but we arrive there only after death.

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<sup>204</sup> IV.6, p. 169,111-112: *et in sacramento interioris hominis nostri et exemplo exterioris.*

<sup>205</sup> He discusses this in Book IX.12-14 in reference to *notitia*, the second element of the first trinity (*mens, notitia, amor*); in Book XV.19-20, he discusses the same concept in reference to the second element of the final trinity, *memoria, intellegentia, uoluntas.*

**Perfection of the Image.** Image and likeness to God are two words for the one gift given at creation, and fulfilled in deification. By becoming fully like God, the human becomes perfect image of God. This double gift comes through Christ. It is because Christ himself is the divine image that the human image can be illuminated by his model (VII.5). He alone is equal image, but we are made to the image of God (cf. VII.12); the image in us, weakened and de-activated by sin and the despair that comes of sin, needs to be re-activated so as to turn and participate in God.

This is impossible except through the mediation and model of Christ, which both creates for us the way and also draws us along that way:

Let us copy the example of this divine image, the Son, and not draw away from God. For we too are the image of God, though not the equal one like him; we are made by the Father through the Son, not born of the Father like that image; we are image because we are illuminated with light; that one is so because it is the light that illuminates, and therefore it provides a model for us without having a model itself... we by pressing on imitate him who abides motionless; we follow him who stands still, and by walking in him we move toward him, because for us he became a road or way in time by his humility, while being for us an eternal abode by his divinity.<sup>206</sup>

In the second half of the work, Augustine demonstrates that contemplation of the human image of the divine Trinity leads inevitably to the Trinity itself. That contemplation is made possible only by the mediation of Christ who illuminates our image-character by partaking in humanity and showing it to us sinless, as it is called to become. By receiving and following the way opened by Christ, humans find the way to experience fully their image-character and to participate in the divine life.

**Summary.** Christ gives humans the path to the divine Trinity, and the ability and means to enter into divine life; in so doing, he enables us to fulfill the image of God in ourselves which was given us at creation. He provides in himself the stages of contemplation by which we progress in faith, in this life, so as to come to vision in the next: he leads us from outer to inner, visible to invisible, temporal to eternal, human to divine. He does so by uniting these things in himself, and showing the right connection between them. Even Augustine's contemplation of the created

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<sup>206</sup> VII.5, pp. 252-253,52-57,59-62: *Cuius imaginis exemplo et nos non discedamus a deo quia et nos imago dei sumus, non quidem aequalis, facta quippe a patre per filium, non nata de patre sicut illa; et nos quia inluminamur lumine, illa uero quia lumen inluminans, et ideo illa sine exemplo nobis exemplum est.... Nos autem nitentes*

trinities is possible only because of Christ, who illuminates the image-character in the human. Through faith in Christ, the human can be led into the divine without his humanness being lost or swallowed up. Thus humanity is not destroyed, but transformed. Christ is the model and mediator for this pattern which humans are to follow, because he bridges the pairs of seeming opposites; all other humans follow this pattern, though not in precisely the same way, since they never become precisely what Christ is. Rather, his role is to lead humans to their own proper place within the life of the divine Trinity. Many earthly things will then pass away--faith, Christ's mediation and intercession, our own sonship; what will replace them, Augustine does not presume to say. When we stand in our own place before God--which is not the same as Christ's place, though resembling his--we stand in a place unique to us, among all creation. We will be fully one with Christ in human nature--because ours, like his, will finally be free of sin--and like though not equal to God; moreover, we will be joined to God by our own will and love. Christ is the mediator of life because he leads us to the life proper to us, in both soul and body. Augustine's depiction of the devil as the mediator of death is an effective foil which helps us understand the real work Christ brings about; it also brings the cross into the exchange. At the same time, it risks pitting Christ against the devil, and undermining the optimism of the exchange-theology by adding a flavour of punishment, guilt and retribution. The true effect of the exchange is to give a remedy for sin, and allow for healing and fulfillment of the image by participation; it not only initiates, but somehow establishes, the promise of deification, since Christ's participation in humanity is an accomplished fact which already brings about a change in humanity, and goes most of the way towards human healing. Still, all this only prepares for full participation *after death*. Christ ensures that deification includes both body and soul, each in its proper place; this depends upon the cross, in which both the outer human (the flesh) and the inner human die, so that both can be raised. Our deification resembles the Son in many ways, not only in the flesh but also in the truth of our own "inner word" in which we are somehow like the Son.

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*imitamur manentem et sequimur stantem et in ipso ambulantes tendimus ad ipsum quia factus est nobis uia temporalis per humilitatem quae mansio nobis aeterna est per diuinitatem.*

### Role of the Holy Spirit

The place of the Holy Spirit within the divine Trinity, and the Spirit's role in human deification, are less clear in Augustine and less fully developed than his christology.<sup>207</sup> He wrestles with these questions repeatedly throughout the work, notably (not exclusively) in IV.25-32, V.12-17, VI.4-7, IX.17-18, XI.9-15, XIII.14 and XV.27-39. I shall mention key points which Augustine reiterates as certain about the Holy Spirit, questions in regard to the Spirit with which he struggles, and several particularly provocative texts in regard to the Spirit's place in deification.

**Key Points.** Augustine insists repeatedly upon the absolute equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, along with their inseparability and their distinction one from the other. His conclusions in regard to language about the Trinity are spelled out at the beginning of Book VIII: all three are called whatever is said of each in reference to self, not in the plural but in the singular (as God, good, almighty), but names predicated in reference to each other belong particularly to the particular person (as Father and Son, and the gift of each which is the Holy Spirit). They are so totally equal that no one is greater than any other, nor are any two greater than any one (VIII.1). These are fundamental principles in his discussion of what is particular to the Spirit; and in that context, Augustine works especially to determine what is distinctive about the Spirit with respect to the Son. Book IV, which deals with the missions of Son and Spirit, also discusses the difference between New Testament manifestations of the Son and of the Spirit (the latter especially as a dove

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<sup>207</sup> Augustine's pneumatology is discussed in the excellent article by P. Smulders. "Esprit Saint. Pères latins." *DS*, Vol. 4.2 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1961), cols. 1272-83. Smulders warns against the danger of isolating Augustine's pneumatology in *De Trinitate* from the rest of his works, and mentions that Eusebius of Vercelli, Ambrose of Milan, Marius Victorinus and especially Hilary of Poitiers influenced Augustine's theology of the Holy Spirit. See also Gerald Bonner, "St. Augustine's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *Sobornost* 4, no. 1 (1960): 51-66, in which he discusses the processions of Son and Spirit; du Roy, *Intelligence*; Edmund Hill, *The Mystery of the Trinity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), chapters 7-10; E. P. Meijering, *Augustine: "De Fide et Symbolo."* *Introduction. Translation. Commentary* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1987), especially pp. 101-136, "Faith in God the Holy Spirit and Expositions on the Trinity"; and the recent overview by Eugene TeSelle, "Holy Spirit." *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 434-437. The homiletic discourses discussed in Ch. 4 are overwhelmingly christological in their exposition of deification and the divine-human exchange, with little mention of the Spirit; S. 227, for instance, mentions reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit as part of the inheritance of the faithful.

at Jesus' baptism, and as wind and fire at Pentecost).<sup>208</sup> Augustine concludes that both are sent by the Father, but the Son alone is begotten and born (the question of why both are not begotten is discussed, for example, in II.5, V.15, and IX.18); and that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (all of this is worked out in Books II-IV, and summarized in XV.47). Certainly, within the triad, there is a distinctiveness about the Spirit, "relationship-wise," which is difficult to pin down. Augustine dwells upon some names which apply particularly to the Spirit, although none is his name alone since they do apply to all three: holy, spirit, communion, charity (V.12, XV.27-31): "because he is common to them both, he is called distinctively what they are called in common."<sup>209</sup> "Gift" is the term above all which Augustine feels belongs peculiarly to the Spirit (XV.29); he is the common gift of Father and Son, from whom he proceeds as from one origin,<sup>210</sup> although he principally proceeds from the Father because everything, including this, was given to the Son by the Father (XV.29). Yet he is no less than Father and Son for being given, and indeed as God, he also gives himself (XV.36).

*Questions.* In the process of describing the trinitarian traces in the human image, Augustine attempts to pin down somewhat the distinctiveness of the third element of these trinities. In IX.17-18, discussing the trinity of *mens, notitia, amor*, he considers why the second element can be said to be begotten, but the third cannot. In asking the question, he explains, he is really asking about the Son and Spirit, why one is begotten and the other is not, but discusses the question by focusing on the human image, on which the mind can meditate so as to prepare to contemplate the

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<sup>208</sup> In this discussion, Augustine hints at an interesting distinction between Son and Spirit, which however he does not develop. The Word of God was manifested in creaturely form in a way quite different from the Spirit's manifestations as fire, wind and dove. The humanity which the Word took on was assumed "not simply in order to have the Word of God ... but simply to be the Word of God." But the manifestations of the Spirit are different, for he "did not join them to himself and his person to be held in an everlasting union" (II.11). The effect, in the Spirit's case, is that human minds are thereby stirred up and drawn on "to the still and hidden presence of his eternity sublime": they are led by his manifestations deeper into his real being.

<sup>209</sup> XV.37, p. 514,149-151: *Quia enim est communis ambobus, id uocatur ipse proprie quod ambo communiter.*

<sup>210</sup> V.15, p. 223,32-35: "We must confess that the Father and the Son are the origin of the Holy Spirit; not two origins, but just as Father and Son are one God, and with reference to creation one creator and one lord, so with reference to the Holy Spirit they are one origin"; *fatendum est patrem et filium principium esse spiritus sancti, non duo principia, sed sicut pater et filius unus deus et ad creaturam relatiue unus creator et unus dominus, sic relatiue ad spiritum sanctum unum principium.*

Trinity itself.<sup>211</sup> He concludes that knowledge is brought forth, like an offspring, from the appetite which makes us long to know; but “the same appetite with which one longs open-mouthed to know a thing becomes love of the thing known when it holds and embraces the acceptable offspring, that is knowledge, and joins it to its begetter.”<sup>212</sup> There is a distinctiveness in the third element, in that it somehow links the first two together: “when the mind knows and loves itself, its word is joined to it with love.”<sup>213</sup> This distinctiveness is seen again in Book XI, in which Augustine discusses two trinities of the outer human: the visible object, the act of seeing, the attention of the will; and memory, inner sight, the will which unites them.<sup>214</sup> He observes that the first two in each triad can be considered quasi-parent and quasi-offspring, but not the third: “So the will which joins them both together as quasi-parent and quasi-offspring is more spiritual than either of them.... and thus it begins to suggest the person of the Spirit in that other Trinity.”<sup>215</sup> His analogy leads him into some contrarities, and cannot hold together as a true illustration of the relationship of Spirit to Father and Son (as proceeding from both, but not begotten).<sup>216</sup> However, it does reiterate the point that the distinctiveness of the third element of the trinity (in this case, the will) is that it somehow unites the other two in their joint activity. In Book XV, having completed his tour of the trinities and arrived at the ultimate created trinity, he reflects again (XV.27-41) upon the distinctiveness of the third member, as love, will, Spirit, that which joins or binds the other two (XV.41). Thus the Holy Spirit appears as the unitive or binding force--most like love or will--within the divine Trinity.

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<sup>211</sup> IX.17, p. 308,13-16: “here our own nature can, so to say, answer our questions more familiarly; and so after practicing the mind’s gaze on the lower image we may be able to shift it from the illuminated creature to the unchangeable illuminating light”; *ut ex inferior imagine in qua nobis familiarius natura ipsa nostra quasi interrogata respondet exercitio mentis aciem ab inluminata creatura ad lumen incommutabile dirigamus.*

<sup>212</sup> IX.18, p. 73-75: *Idemque appetitus quo inhiatur rei cognoscendae fit amor cognitae dum tenet atque amplectitur placitam prolem, id est notitiam gignentique coniungit.*

<sup>213</sup> IX.15, p. 307,30-31: *Cum itaque se mens nouit et amat, iungitur et amore uerbum eius.*

<sup>214</sup> Trinity of external vision, XI.6, p. 334,2-7: *Primo ipsa res quam uidemus.... deinde uisio.... tertio ... animi intentio.* Trinity of internal vision, XI.6, p. 340,166-167: *Atque ita fit illa trinitas ex memoria et interna uisione et quae utrumque copulat uoluntate.* The first trinity is based totally upon external objects present to the outer human, but the second is more inward because it brings those objects into the memory. Even the second trinity is a trinity of the outer human, though, because though it is imagining things inside, it is still imagining things of the outer world, for the sake of bodily things (XI.8).

<sup>215</sup> XI.9, p. 345,47-49: *Itaque uoluntas quae utrumque coniungit quasi parentem et quasi prolem magis spiritalis est quam utrumlibet illorum.... et ideo tamquam personam spiritus insinuare incipit in illa trinitate.*

*Texts.* Certain references in *De Trinitate* are suggestive of a particular relationship between God's Spirit and the human, though Augustine does no more than intimate what that relationship might be. These references I will quote directly, in textual order, with a brief commentary on the implications for the place of the Holy Spirit in human deification.

I.13. [The Holy Spirit is God and not a creature.] And if he is not a creature then he is not only God--for even humans have been called gods (Ps 82:6) --but also true God; therefore absolutely equal to the Father and the Son, and consubstantial and co-eternal in the oneness of the three.<sup>217</sup>

This text is part of Augustine's defence, in the opening of the work, of the true godhood of the Holy Spirit. He supports this by distinguishing between the way in which humans are called gods (taken from Ps. 82:6) and the way only God is truly God; the Spirit, of course, falls into the latter category. Thus to defend the Spirit's divinity, he refers to human godhood (in a certain sense) as an established principle, related to but distinct from that of the Holy Spirit.<sup>218</sup> This text is noteworthy because it presupposes human godhood as a familiar category, and applies it to Augustine's point about the Spirit.

V.15. So the Spirit is both God's who gave it and ours who received it. I do not mean that spirit of ours by which we are, which is also called the spirit of the human which is in him [1 Cor 2:11]; this Holy Spirit is ours in a different way, the way in which we say Give us our bread [Mt. 6:11; Lk. 11:3]. Though as a matter of fact we also received that spirit which is called the spirit of the human; What have you, it says, that you did not receive [1 Cor 4:7]? But what we received in order to be is one thing, what we received in order to be holy is another. So then, it is said of John that he would come in the Spirit and power of Elijah (Lk. 1:17); it is called the Spirit of Elijah, but it means the Holy Spirit which Elijah received. The same is to be understood of Moses when the Lord said to him, I will take some of your Spirit and give it to them [Nm. 11:17], that is, "I will give them a share in the Holy Spirit which I have already given to you."<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Hill points out the inconsistencies of the analogy; p. 311, n. 16.

<sup>217</sup> I.13, p. 42, 109-112: *Quod si non creatura, non tantum deus (nam et homines dicti sunt dii), sed etiam uerus deus. Ergo patri et filio prorsus aequalis et in trinitatis unitate consubstantialis et coaeternus.*

<sup>218</sup> In the homiletic discourses discussed in Chapter 4, below, Ps. 82:6 [LXX 81] is several times used by Augustine in discussing human godhood or deification, so as to distinguish Christ's godhood from human godhood; cf. S. 81, S. 166, En. 49, and S. Mainz 12 which comments on Ps. 82. Here in *De Trinitate* he uses the same argument, not for christological purposes, but to establish the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>219</sup> V.15, p. 223, 19-30: *Spiritus ergo et dei qui dedit et noster qui accepimus. Non ille spiritus noster quo sumus, quia ipse spiritus est hominis qui in ipso est, sed alio modo iste noster quo dicimus et: Panem nostrum da nobis. Quamquam et illum spiritum qui hominis dicitur utique accepimus. Quid enim habes, inquit, quod non accepisti? Sed aliud est quod accepimus ut essemus, aliud quod accepimus ut sancti essemus. Unde scriptum est et de Iohanne quod in spiritu et uirtute Heliae ueniret; dictus est Heliae spiritus, sed spiritus sanctus quem accepit Helias. Hoc et*

This text about the Holy Spirit comes in the midst of Book V, which discusses proper and improper ways to speak of the three persons, “substance-wise” and “relationship-wise”; this particular section discusses the Spirit as gift of both Son and Father as of one origin. Here Augustine makes a distinction between the spirit of the human, which is our own spirit though given to us by God, as everything is; and the Spirit of God, which is God’s own spirit but which also is given to humans as a gift, though in a different way. The second way is illustrated by John, Moses and Elijah, who shared in the Spirit of God himself, beyond the way in which they had their own human spirit. This shows a kind of inter-relationship between our spirit and God’s Spirit, such that we receive and share in God’s Spirit as something other than our own, but without losing our own; it is appropriate to use the same word for both, but the two are distinct from one another.<sup>220</sup> Augustine also suggests that there is a necessary receptivity on the part of humans: the Spirit is God’s gift to give, humanity’s to receive. As a result, we can progress from humanness to holiness: our own spirit makes us what we are, but God’s Spirit makes us holy. Without using the term “participation,” this text suggests that a sharing in God’s Spirit, such that God and human remain distinct from one another, is part of coming to divine life.

VI.4. Then [the apostle] says, Whoever cleaves to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor 6:17). He did not say, “Whoever cleaves to the Lord is one” (or “they are one”) merely, but added spirit. For the Spirit of God and the spirit of the human differ by nature, and yet one spirit is made out of two different ones by cleaving in the sense that the Spirit of God is indeed blessed and perfect without the human spirit, but the spirit of the human is blessed only by being with God.<sup>221</sup>

Book VI, discussing in what manner Christ is said to be the “power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24), pauses again on the issue of the absolute oneness of Father, Son and Spirit. This text distinguishes their oneness among themselves from the oneness with God

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*de Moyse intellegendum est cum ait ei dominus: Tollam de spiritu tuo et dabo eis, hoc est dabo illis de spiritu sancto quem iam tibi dedi.*

<sup>220</sup> This passage reads like a Spirit version of the exchange theme: God’s Spirit enters into the human spirit so that the human spirit might enter into the divine Spirit.

<sup>221</sup> VI.4, p. 232, 19-25: *Et: Qui adhaeret, inquit, domino unus spiritus est. Non dixit 'qui adhaeret domino unus est' a:at 'unum sunt,' sed addidit spiritus. Diuersum enim natura spiritus hominis et spiritus dei, sed inhaerendo fit unus spiritus ex diuersis duobus, ita ut sine humano spiritu beatus sit dei spiritus atque perfectus, beatus autem hominis spiritus non nisi cum deo.*

which humans can achieve; in so doing, it suggests a relationship between God's Spirit and the human spirit. Our adherence to God means becoming one spirit with God—though, as the previous text has shown, this does not mean either that God's Spirit becomes identical to the human spirit, nor that the human spirit is lost in the divine Spirit. The difference of nature is retained, not erased; but a oneness is achieved, so close that Augustine calls it “one spirit made out of two different ones.” The union is for the sake of the human, who thereby becomes blessed, not for the sake of God who already is blessed and perfect: as we have seen, God's unchangeability and human changeability are endemic to the process of human fulfillment. Thus this text portrays an intimate joining with God by means of human clinging to the Spirit of God such that a union is achieved. Unlike the christological texts, Augustine does not explicitly discuss any likeness or unlikeness between God's Spirit and us, but he allows for a likeness by using the same term *spiritus* for that which is joined in God and the human.

VI.7. It is clear that he [the Holy Spirit, one and equal in substance with Father and Son, but distinct from them] is not one of the two [Father and Son], since he is that by which the two [Father and Son] are joined each to the other, by which the begotten is loved by the one who begets him and in turn loves the begetter. Thus They keep unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace [Eph 4:3], not in virtue of participation but of their own very being, not by gift of some superior but by their own gift. We are bidden to imitate this mutuality by grace, both with reference to God and to each other [and so to love both God and neighbour (Mt. 22:40)].<sup>222</sup>

This text dwells upon the distinctiveness of God's Spirit, showing it is the uniting force between Father and Son, the dynamism of love between the begetter and the begotten; in that sense, the Spirit brings a unity which is not something outside of the divine Trinity, but which is what the divine Trinity is: their own gift of their own being. Yet it is precisely this distinctive quality of the Spirit—distinct from Father and Son— which humans are commanded to imitate; in the case of humans, however, that unitive force of love is not their own being but the gift of grace. Humans who receive this grace are able to love God and one another, the second being a function of the first. Here, then, we can discern a particular relationship between the human and the third

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<sup>222</sup> VI.7, p. 235, 5-10: *est quo uterque coniungitur, quo genitus a gignente diligatur generatoremque suum diligit, sintque non participatione sed essentia sua neque dono superioris alicuius sed suo proprio seruantem unitatem spiritus in uinculo pacis. Quod imitari per gratiam et ad deum et ad nos ipsos iubemur.*

member of the divine Trinity, with the implication that imitating the Spirit draws humans into the relationship of love which characterizes the divine Trinity. This is the work of the human, which we achieve not on our own but by grace.<sup>223</sup>

XIII.14. For even what we call our deserts or merits are gifts of his. In order that faith might work through love, the charity of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us [Rom. 5:5]. And he was given to us when Jesus was glorified in his resurrection. It was then that he promised that he would send him and that in fact he sent him.... These gifts are merits by which we arrive at the supreme good of immortal happiness.<sup>224</sup>

Here, within his discussion of the fittingness of God becoming human, Augustine discusses the gifts which are given through the Holy Spirit. In fact, as we know, the Spirit himself is God's gift, the one true gift, and the most apt term for that gift is charity (*caritas*). This gift, the text shows, is given to humans through Christ, who sends the Spirit. With it comes all the other gifts, from the Holy Spirit, through Christ. By receiving these gifts, humans come to deserve immortal happiness, which is the goal of human life. Thus the path to deification involves reception of the Holy Spirit through Christ, who gives us everything we need to come to our ultimate goal, and whose gift becomes our merit. The human role is receptivity; the role of the Spirit is to be the gift by which humans earn such happiness. Clearly, it is not what the Spirit teaches or points out, but what he is, that is crucial for human entrance into immortality. As always, his role is related to Christ, who sends and gives him; but giving and reception of the Spirit is an indispensable element of human entrance into that which is divine.

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<sup>223</sup> Cf. XV.41, p. 518,22-24: "As far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, the only thing I pointed to in this puzzle as seeming to be like him is our will, or love or esteem, which is will at its most effective": *De spiritu autem sancto nihil in hoc aenigmate quod ei simile uideretur ostendi nisi uoluntatem nostram, uel amorem seu dilectionem quae ualentior est uoluntas*. In this concluding reflection on the Holy Spirit, especially in terms of the love or will which is characteristic of the third, unifying element of the trinity of the inner human, Augustine mentions this possible connection between the human image and the third member of the divine Trinity, as distinct from the three together. The will or love, which is the third element of the highest created trinity Augustine has found, resembles the Holy Spirit. One could infer that, by receiving this likeness to the Spirit, we also are given a way into the divine trinitarian relationship, since the element associated with the Spirit is also the one which joins or unites the other two elements of the trinity. If so, then the trinitarian image in us reflects in a particular way the Holy Spirit, as distinct from Father and Son.

<sup>224</sup> XIII.14, p. 400,25-29,31-33: *Quia et ea quae dicuntur merita nostra dona sunt eius. Ut enim fides per dilectionem operetur, caritas dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis. Tunc est autem datus quando est Iesus resurrectione clarificatus; tunc enim eum se missurum esse promisit et misit.... Haec dona sunt merita nostra quibus ad summum bonum immortalis beatitudinis peruenimus.*

XIV.21. But when the mind truly recalls its Lord after receiving his Spirit, it perceives quite simply--for it learns this by a wholly intimate instruction from within--that it cannot rise except by his gracious doing, and that it could not have fallen except by its own willful doing.<sup>225</sup>

At the pivotal moment of the activation of the human image--the moment at which it discovers its unbridgeable distance from God, achieved by its own will, and God's invitation to return to him, entirely by his doing--is the Spirit. All happens interiorly. It is reception of the Spirit which brings the mind back to itself, so that it can return to God; thus, as we have seen in Book XIV, the image can be activated so as to come to participate in God, such participation being its destiny. Reception of God's Spirit, then, is a key ingredient to the turn back to God, the moment of healing which comprises stage one of the cure and allows for stage two to begin. Augustine does not give the details of the process, nor discuss the Spirit's role in it, but this text suggests that reception of the Spirit initiates a process in which the mind turns to God and perceives within itself the need of God's grace.

XV.32. So the love which is from God and is God is distinctively the Holy Spirit; through him the charity of God is poured out in our hearts, and through it the whole triad dwells in us. This is the reason why it is most apposite that the Holy Spirit, while being God, should also be called the gift of God. And this gift, surely, is distinctively to be understood as being the charity which brings us through to God, without which no other gift of God at all can bring us through to God.<sup>226</sup>

As in XIII.14 above, Augustine identifies the Spirit particularly with the one gift of charity, in which all God's gifts are received. Here he calls the reception of the Spirit the indwelling of the whole divine Trinity in us, suggesting again that it is through the Spirit that the intimate relationship between God and the human can come about: this gift of the Spirit is necessary to bring us to God. Thus the intimate joining of the divine Trinity with the human is a special work of the Spirit, received by humans who receive the gift(s) of the Spirit.

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<sup>225</sup> XIV.21, p. 449,17-20: *Quando autem bene recordatur domini sui spiritu eius accepto, sentit omnino quia hoc discit intimo magisterio, non nisi eius gratuito effectu posse se surgere, non nisi suo uoluntario defectu cadere potuisse.*

<sup>226</sup> XV.32, p. 508,26-32: *Dilectio igitur quae ex deo est et deus est proprie spiritus sanctus est per quem diffunditur in cordibus nostris dei caritas per quam nos tota inhabitet trinitas. Quocirca rectissime spiritus sanctus, cum sit deus, uocatur etiam donum dei. Quod donum proprie quid nisi caritas intellegenda est quae perducit ad deum et sine qua quodlibet aliud dei donum non perducit ad deum?*

XV.46. [Why did Christ first give the Holy Spirit on earth after his resurrection (Jn 20:22), then send him from heaven (the ascension, Mt. 28:19)?] I think it is because charity is poured out in our hearts [Rom. 5:5] through this gift, charity by which we are to love God and neighbor according to those two commandments on which the whole law depends and the prophets. It was to signify this that the Lord Jesus gave the Holy Spirit twice, once on earth for love of neighbor, and again from heaven for love of God.... That is why the Lord Jesus himself not only gave the Holy Spirit as God but also received him as human, and for that reason he was called full of grace [Jn 1:14].... He received it [the Spirit] as human, he poured it out as God. As for us, we can receive this gift in our own small way, but we certainly cannot pour it out upon others. That this might happen, though, we invoke over them the God by whom it is done.<sup>227</sup>

In this final text, Augustine returns again to his notion that the Spirit is the gift *par excellence* given by God, which enables humans to love both God and one another; in it, all the gifts are given. That gift is given through Christ, on two different occasions which Augustine speculates have two different meanings: the first, commanding love of each other (an earthly gift), the second, love of God (a heavenly gift). In receiving that gift of God's Spirit, we are already like Christ, for as a human Christ also received the Spirit. So we imitate Christ in receiving God's Spirit; Augustine thinks it too much to say we could also give God's Spirit, as Christ does, but speculates that we may at least ask the gift of the Spirit for others. In this portrayal are both a similarity and a distinctness between us and Christ: as human, we like him receive God's Spirit; but we receive it in a different way and with certain limitations. Nonetheless, reception of the Spirit's gift brings us into the divine relationship of love.

Summary. These texts show a certain sense of relationship between the divine Spirit and the human spirit, as a point of union between the divine Trinity and its human image. Moreover, the Spirit clearly occupies an essential place in the process of the human return to God; reception of the Spirit awakens the human image to its need of, and potential for, participation in God. Reception of the Spirit is a necessary step which changes humans, leading them to holiness. It is through the Spirit that humans enter into the trinitarian dynamic of love; and Augustine even suggests that love

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<sup>227</sup> XV.46, p. 525,21-26, p. 526,45-47, p. 527,72-75: *hoc ego existimo quia per ipsum donum diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris qua diligamus deum et proximum secundum duo illa praecepta in quibus tota lex pendet et prophetae. Hoc significans dominus Iesus bis dedit spiritum sanctum, semel in terra propter dilectionem proximi et iterum de caelo propter dilectionem dei.... Propter hoc et dominus ipse Iesus spiritum sanctum non solum dedit ut deus sed etiam accepit ut homo, propterea dictus est plenus gratia.... Accepit quippe ut homo, effudit ut deus. Nos*

itself, in the human, resembles the Spirit. It is in loving that we are most like God, that the divine Trinity dwells in us, and that we can begin to come into the life of the Trinity. The joining of the human with God is portrayed as a union of spirit, such that the Spirit of God makes holy and blesses, but does not replace or erase, the human spirit, in an intimacy so close that the two become one. This work of the Spirit comes through and is connected to Christ, who himself gives but also receives the Spirit; receptivity makes us Christ-like. Here, then, are ingredients for a sense of the place of the Spirit within the human process of entry into divine life, a place dependent upon and connected to Christ, but distinct in itself.

### Trinitarian Content of Deification

It is appropriate to conclude this analysis of deification in *De Trinitate* by asking whether, and to what extent, Augustine succeeds in finding a specifically trinitarian dimension of that process.

The first half of the work wants to show that God's threeness is a positive truth, and to examine the meaning of that truth. The second half labours to show a trinitarian dimension in the human mind itself, and to show that this created triad exists because it reflects something true and undeniable--though beyond understanding--about God. Finally, the last book turns to examine what has been accomplished, and to ask how humans come to the life of the divine Trinity. At this point, in one sense, the trinitarian dimension simply falls away as Augustine stands before the mystery of God, to which only God himself can invite humanity, and which will always be beyond the limitations of human knowledge or even wisdom. This is the ultimate resting-point of his contemplative journey, in its way more important than the need to understand the divine Trinity or find a way there. That the way is given in Christ is clear to Augustine; where exactly it leads cannot be clear, in this life, although it can be glimpsed in the dimness of the mirror-puzzle. What the work does not and cannot accomplish is to lead us to see the trinitarian God clearly by looking at the human analogy; the analogy remains analogy, though an informative one. What does go beyond the analogy is simply the relationship between God and his human creation: humans are

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*autem accipere quidem hoc donum possumus pro modulo nostro; effundere autem super alios non utique possumus.*

made for participation in divinity, with an ineradicable capacity for deification which prepares them for contemplation of God in himself, as he is. This basic insight of the work is not specifically trinitarian in content.

Nonetheless, Augustine does suggest particular ways in which each of the members of the divine Trinity draws us into the divine life. Christ opens the door and works on our behalf to bring us to contemplation of God in himself. Our relationship to Christ changes after our death, for he ceases to be mediator and intercessor; but something of the particular relationship of humans to Christ--as distinct from the whole Trinity--is eternal, for he never ceases to be Son of Man, and humans never cease to retain bodiliness in some fashion. The Spirit also appears as the necessary way into the trinitarian life, since he himself is portrayed as the link between the first two persons, and his unifying dimension is to be imitated by us. The Father is simply the hidden one to whom human lives are ultimately directed; it is through the Son and Spirit that the divine Trinity reaches into humanity, and draws humans into divinity.

Augustine clearly wishes to say that the inner divine trinitarian life is eternal and has eternal meaning. However, he has some difficulty in showing a real distinctiveness between Son and Spirit, an issue with which he struggles but never arrives at an answer satisfactory to himself; he finally concludes that we will simply have to await direct vision of God in order to understand why the Spirit is not a son: "here I have been acutely conscious of the enormous difficulty of the effort to perceive this.... I found that no adequate expression followed whatever understanding I came to; and I was only too well aware that my attempt even to understand involved more effort than result."<sup>228</sup> Their mutual distinction from the Father is clearer simply by virtue of the Father's hiddenness. Augustine succeeds in distinguishing the threeness from the oneness by way of relationship and substance: what is predicated about each of the three in reference to one another is predicated by way of relationship, not substance. The effect of this distinction is to portray the divine Trinity as an eternal relationship in itself. For humans, there is a way into this divine

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*sed ut hoc fiat deum super eos a quo id efficitur inuocamus.*

relationship, because the divinity provides it. The way which the work of *De Trinitate* itself proposes is contemplation, in the model Augustine provides; this way becomes possible for the human whose soul is moved to turn back to the God from whom it had turned away. This discovery of the relationality within the divine Trinity is important, because it suggests that deification means humans coming into an eternal relationship. To get there they must be changed, but arrival means arrival into an eternal relationship within the life of the divine Trinity.

For Augustine, that divine-human relationship comes about first and foremost in Christ. He knows that Christ's relationship with us will be different after our own death, but does not work out our new, eternal relationship with Christ, except that it must involve our transformed bodies. Christ is the indispensable link and entrance-point for us into the divine Trinity; but somehow our direct connection with the Spirit is equally necessary. Just as our resemblance to Christ (and his to us, through his own action) allows us to participate in divine life, so too our reception of God's Spirit, such that our spirit joins with it, brings us into the divine Trinity by way of love and will: our own, and that of God's Spirit. We receive and share in God's Spirit. It remains God's and other than our own, yet still it is proper to say (for instance) "Elijah's Spirit" meaning the Spirit of God within Elijah, which does not erase but rather makes holy Elijah's own spirit. Thus we are drawn into the divine relationship of love through the Spirit, who himself binds together the divine Trinity. This Spirit, however, is given through the Son, as though Christ were the "first" entry point, who opens us to the necessary reception of the Spirit by which we can come completely into the divine life. In this way, presumably, we come also to the Father. Augustine portrays the Son and Spirit--not the Father--as doing the work of drawing humans into the divine trinitarian life. The Father, alone among the Trinity, sends but is not sent; this is his work in the Trinity's outreach to humanity. It would seem that, in the resulting human entrance into the divine Trinity, the Father receives the humans whom the Son and Spirit draw.

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<sup>228</sup> XV.45, p. 524,21-22,26-29: *Hic uero ipsa experientia tam mihi apparuit esse difficilis.... qualemcumque intellectum meum sufficiens elocutio mea secuta non fuerit, quamuis et in ipso intellectu conatum me senserim magis habuisse quam effectum.*

Augustine suggests possible one-to-one correspondences between the members of the divine Trinity and the elements of the highest inner (created) trinity: the Father is most like memory (XV.22-23), the Son most like understanding or the inner word (XV.25-26), the Spirit most like will or love (XV.32). By doing so, he runs the risk of differentiating the three members of the divine Trinity by function, contrary to his conclusion that the only distinctiveness among them is by way of relationship. The correspondences between the divine Trinity and the created trinity could mean that each human, by virtue of being image of the divine Trinity, has in herself particular resemblances to each of Father, Son and Spirit; it certainly means so in terms of the Son, whom alone we resemble in our bodiliness. Again, it could mean that each human in being deified (having the image-likeness renewed and coming to participate in divine life) is drawn into a specifically trinitarian relationship; the work of the Holy Spirit is most suggestive of this latter possibility. It would seem, however, that though Augustine is certain that the human's ultimate destiny is an intimacy with the God whom he knows to be trinitarian, he does not assign definite eternal meaning to the trinitarian dimension of that intimacy. This is the tenor of the final book, which acknowledges the impossibility of arriving at a clear vision of God in this life, and chooses simply to cling to God.

### 3.3 Summary and Conclusion

Within the pages of *De Trinitate*, as part of his work of discussing the divine Trinity, Augustine tells of the human's creation, nature and fall, its path of renewal and ultimate destiny: this is the story of deification. We are created for deification. This is evident in our own nature as image and likeness, for we are created turned towards God. To see God face-to-face and be eternally towards him is our destiny. Yet we turn away from our own true nature and destiny; even when we are born, we are already turned away from God, and so our true nature as image is marred. In this position we are caught; on our own we cannot move from it. The Incarnation makes it possible for us to turn back to God, and awakens us to the need to do so. Christ's participation in humanness brings about a real change in humanity; because of it, the turned-away

image can turn back. Christ awakens the deformed image to the need of reform, and so activates the inactive image, so that it can receive forgiveness of sins, both the sin into which it was born and its own sinfulness. This constitutes a real change in the human, and brings about a definitive cure, *here in this life*. Consequently, the rest of human life can consist in the soul's gradual renewal, healing, and reformation towards perfection. That constitutes the process of deification as it can be received in this life; it requires the prior work of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and reception of God's Spirit. The earthly process is a necessary (not optional) foundation for the ultimate deification which occurs only after death. The earthly deifying process changes us so that we become able, upon death, to receive the vision of God and contemplate God in his divinity, not only in his temporal, human manifestations. The ultimate deification, which is our goal, occurs only in the next life, where it brings about eternal happiness, the happiness of being forever turned towards God face-to-face. The deified human is the perfect image and likeness of God in eternal contemplation of God. We are deified in both body and soul. These will be properly united for the first time, giving us internal harmony, and also establishing in eternity our special connection with Christ, who alone of the Trinity takes flesh. We are thereby brought into union with one another. Thus, a joining of divine and human can be achieved by way of human transformation, such that ultimately the deified human stands before God as truly human--indeed, fully human for the first time--but also God-like, in the way that humans can be God-like.

Such is the content of deification, its story within human life, its promise and pledge to humanity, and what it reveals of life after death. That story of the human soul, and its relationship with the trinitarian God, works its way into every page of *De Trinitate*. In this work, Augustine not only tells about, but actually engages in, the earthly process of deification: contemplation of the human soul as image of God, and therefore of God of whom it is image. The earthly process depends upon Christ, but leads to the divine Trinity. It proceeds by stages: from external to internal reality, such that the inner world gradually and increasingly transforms and informs the outer. It draws us from the mortal into the immortal without destroying or swallowing up the

mortal.<sup>229</sup> It is also internally limited, because it cannot be completed in this life, but only in the next.

Augustine wants to find a uniquely trinitarian dimension of deification. Certainly in this life there is one; it is Christ who awakes us and draws us in, the Spirit who makes it possible for us, the Father who sends Son and Spirit (though the Son also sends, and the Spirit too in his oneness with Father and Son sends). In the next life, however, the trinitarian dimension is more nebulous. Theoretically, deification must be trinitarian, since threeness is true of the one God, and it is to the true God that the human is led. But does this threeness have ultimate meaning for humans? Augustine has little to say on this. However, one of the most promising avenues towards a truly trinitarian content in deification is his certainty that our particular relationship to Christ is eternal. This is clear because his humanness is eternal and our transformed bodies enter into deification; and because the “true inner word” of the human also has a special relationship to Christ. Another promising avenue is the Spirit, who seems to offer a way into the inner-trinitarian life of mutual knowledge and love. From the pneumatological perspective, we can describe the deified human as the one who has come within the divine loving relationship, in which it can share and by becoming fully loving.

Thus, though Augustine does not speak explicitly in this work of “deification,” *De Trinitate* describes, and probes very deeply, the earthly process leading to the heavenly reality of deification. Of critical importance to his notion of deification is his image theology. Through it, he connects creation with salvation and eternal life: creation, incarnation and deification are the inter-related elements of the drama. Christ’s cross and resurrection are integral to the story, though in this work they are relatively in the background. Augustine’s christology and pneumatology help shape his concept of deification, as we have seen, and his anthropology is critical to that concept. He demonstrates a fundamental optimism about human nature, which is created for and able to achieve such an exalted destiny, and even able to receive and begin it (in a way) here on earth. At the same

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<sup>229</sup> Sorabji’s question--how, in Augustine, can the self survive translation from the temporal to the non-temporal?--is perhaps best answered by the sense of *progressive* transformation in this life, preparing for total transformation in the next, a theme so evident in *De Trinitate*. Cf. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 168.

time, he is always realistic about the reality of sin, which in fact penetrates the whole human history in a way from which humanity itself cannot escape; but the reality and inescapability of the promise of eternal divine life are paramount. The transformation is totally within ourselves, the possibility and means for it totally given by God. The divine Trinity does not change, but humans are drawn more and more into its reality, to the extent to which they are changed by and for it. Hence, the deified human is one who has been made able to receive divine gifts eternally.

*De Trinitate* has much to say about the connection between this life and the next. In one sense, the two are totally other and distinct from one another. There is no going backwards through death, for instance, and what happens at death is definitive. In this life there is a strong element of becoming; indeed, it is in our ability to change and become that lies the human hope. In the next life, there seems to be little place for becoming; perhaps the ultimate deification renders the human, like God, changeless. At the same time, however, earthly life and after-life are seen to be mutually inter-penetrating. This is most evident in the relationship between faith and vision, in the first two stages of the cure which are real but earthly, in the possibility of learning to contemplate even here though contemplation is in fact an eternal reality, in the opportunity of receiving divine, eternal gifts even in this life, and in the divine Trinity's real operation in this life so as to draw us into the eternal life--which *already* is present and active in human history. Augustine, then, does not dissolve the tension between this life and the next, but finds the meaning of human life precisely within that tension. There is a transformation which truly is given and received in this life, in a fundamental way, comprising the first and second stages of the cure. Nonetheless, what is reserved till after death is definitive: the vision of God cannot happen in this life, yet must happen in order for us to enter fully into divine life.

Finally, if Augustine's turn to the soul as described in *De Trinitate* is an element of the earthly process of deification, then is deification in this life merely an intellectual endeavour? His answer is surely negative, though the evidence for it goes somewhat beyond the confines of *De Trinitate* itself. His process of reflecting on the human soul is not "intellectual" in the contemporary usage of the word. However, it is contemplative, and the path he takes in this book

is a rather elitist one; its terms could not easily be followed by much of the population. Yet baptismal renewal is the presumed starting-point of the process. By inference, only the baptized Christian can undertake this process: Augustine as a Christian leads other Christians into the life of contemplation. One could also infer that the lived Christian life of eucharist and sacraments must accompany this type of inner reflection, although certainly Augustine never pauses to say so. Still, the question remains: how does the “ordinary” Christian enter into such earthly contemplation, so as to be prepared for deification after death? *De Trinitate* itself gives little room to the question. However, Augustine’s notion of participation in divinity is not reserved to this work, where we see the notion developed in a form which tends to the rational and speculative. In Chapter 4, I will consider its presence in his contemporary homiletic works which, though certainly highly rational and literary, are directed towards the “ordinary” Christian.

## CHAPTER 4

### SELECTED CONTEMPORARY HOMILETIC DISCOURSES

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to interpret selected texts relevant to the theme of participation in the divine life, taken from among Augustine's homiletic discourses. The work of this chapter aims to provide a complement to my analysis of divine-human participation in *De Trinitate* by considering the notion in his contemporaneous homiletic treatises. To begin, I will explain the reasons for choosing homiletic works, the basis for selection among them, and the method according to which they will be read and interpreted.

#### Purpose of Selecting from among Homiletic Discourses

The sampling of texts studied in this chapter is taken from among Augustine's homiletic works of the same time period as *De Trinitate*. This secondary study will help to indicate ways the theme was operative in his more pastoral compositions during the time in which he was formulating that work, which is more scholarly in style and content. Focusing on works pastoral in intent and flavour will give some indication of Augustine's thinking on deification in ecclesial contexts and for public consumption; and, because preaching was so huge a part of his episcopal ministry—Agostino Trapè reports that Augustine preached twice weekly at minimum,

sometimes twice a day, more during Christmas and Epiphany, and regularly on every liturgical feast<sup>1</sup>—will show this theme at play in a significant dimension of his life and work.

This series of texts, dispersed throughout the twenty or so years in which the major work was being written, contains texts short enough to allow attention to the context in which the theme appears in each text. Moreover, a study of these references can attend to the diversity of expression and setting in which he uses the concept, to other Augustinian themes which are significant to it or which it significantly affects, and to accompanying scriptural references. Thus any consistencies in Augustine's deification thinking over this time can be identified, to show something of the contour and features of deification in his theology, as conveyed in his pastoral work during this time period. Further, to know the kinds of construction, images, references and thought processes which commonly accompany the theme, where it is more or less explicitly present, will help to identify it within these same constructs where it is not explicitly present. This will give clues as to how to read texts of which deification is a significant element even in the absence of its explicit language, as in *De Trinitate*. In short, we can add breadth of understanding to the depth gained in the analysis of *De Trinitate*, and begin to see typical types of expression and setting in which the theme appears.

### Selection of Texts

Augustine's homiletic discourses are generally classified in three groups: Tractates on John (Gospel and First Letter), Commentaries on the Psalms, and Sermons. All three groups

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<sup>1</sup> A. Trapè, *St. Augustine: Man, Pastor, Mystic*, trans. M. J. O'Connell (New York: Catholic Book Publishers,

include preached sermons, while the first two also include dictated homilies<sup>2</sup>; the various terms to describe them—*expositio*, *sermo*, *tractatus*, *commentarium*, *explanatio*—seem to have no significant variation in meaning, though *tractatus* can be a more technical term for a particular type of sermon which combines preaching, scriptural exegesis, and spiritual theological reflection.<sup>3</sup> “Sermons,” Michele Pellegrino explains, refer to all Augustine’s homiletic discourses “except those that constitute a running commentary on a book of the Bible” (Johannine, or the Psalms).<sup>4</sup> I shall use the terms “Homilies” or “Discourses” to refer to Augustine’s homiletic discourses of all three types, whether written or preached.

In this chapter, I select from among Sermons and Commentaries on the Psalms, leaving aside the Tractates on John, although at least some are contemporary with *De Trinitate*.<sup>5</sup> The *Tractates on the Gospel of John* contain no uses of any form of *deificare*, but do include rich passages on the theme: for example, a complex explanation of why humans are called to be gods, not merely humans (1.4), a lengthy exposition on the exchange which makes humans adopted sons and co-heirs with Christ (2.13-15), a reflection on human participation in the substance of God (23.5), and an exhortation on the human destiny of becoming gods (48.9). For this chapter, I have chosen to select from among the Commentaries on the Psalms instead of the Johannine

1986), p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Scholarship has debated whether some of the sermons also were dictated, but based on the CSEL text of the critical passage in *Reconsiderations*, current opinion mainly concurs that all were preached; Michele Pellegrino, “General Introduction,” *Sermons I (1-19) on the Old Testament*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Vol. III/1 (Brooklyn, New York: New City, 1990), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> John W. Rettig, “Introduction,” *St. Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John 1-10*, trans. John W. Rettig, FOTC 78, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Michele Pellegrino, “General Introduction,” p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> The Tractates on the Gospel of John (*Tractatus in euangelium Ioannis*) fall into two groups. The first, Tractates 1-54, are dated between 411 and 414, though La Bonnardière puts some after 418; the second, Tractates 55-124, are dated at 416 (La Landais), 418 (Zarb), or 419-20 or later (La Bonnardière). The ten Tractates on the Epistle of John (*Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos*) were delivered during one Easter between 413 and 418.

Tractates, because the term *deificare* does appear in some form in the former and not in the latter. This choice gains the Psalm texts, while sacrificing some Johannine ones; but Johannine allusions are present in the discourses outside the Tractates, and are an important element of *De Trinitate* also, as seen in Chapter 3 (especially the Prologue to John's Gospel). The Tractates deserve to be studied as a unit, to explore further the Johannine influence on Augustine's deification thought, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. Of the other two categories, Sermons and Commentaries on the Psalms, I have chosen seven from the former and twelve from the latter. The choice has been guided by the presence in them of passages which are especially expressive of the theme of deification.<sup>6</sup>

Preaching and pastoral work were a large part of Augustine's life as a bishop (and even before that; because of his oratorical prowess he was asked by Bishop Valerius to preach as a presbyter, which was not customary practice). C. Lambot, describing the idiosyncracies of Augustine's preaching (which are of use to the critic in determining, by internal criteria, their authenticity), refers to its liveliness and dynamism, as well as the familiarity of tone which "often make of the sermon a colloquy between the preacher and the audience."<sup>7</sup> Augustine, while clinging with tenacity to his main argument, also likes to follow the inspiration of the

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<sup>6</sup> A computer word search is helpful in pinpointing usage of particular words and phrases, but not totally reliable because the terminology can be fluid, and the theme also manifests itself in constructions such as the exchange theme. For example, a search among the Commentaries on the Psalms yielded the following results: *deific\** - 49 (3 references), 117; *immortalit\* + particip\** - 44, 52, 66, 118.S16, 118.S19, 138, 146; *diuinit\* + particip\** - 52, 66, 118.S16, 118.S19, 138; *dii facti* or *dei facti* - 18, 32, 49, 52, 70. Of the above texts, all but 18, 32 and 70 have been chosen for analysis. In these three cases, "*dei*" is in the genitive singular, not nominative plural. Those in 32 and 70 are references to being made in God's image, which is not the primary focus of this study (En.32.S2 [CCL 38, p. 249,4]; *ad imaginem dei facti estis*; En. 70.S2 [CCL 39, p. 964,20]: *Quia ad imaginem Dei facti sumus*). En. 18 speaks of being changed by the glory of God (En. 18.S2 [CCL 38,6, p. 107,33-34]: *Quia illa gloria Dei facti sumus quod digni non fuimus*).

moment and sometimes the responses of the assembly, not infrequently wandering into digression after digression. Unlike his books and letters, which use literary Latin, his preaching not surprisingly adopts a more colloquial style. His biblical exegesis and doctrine remain complex, however, even in the simpler formulas used in preaching.<sup>8</sup> It is precisely this combination of doctrinal content, scriptural exegesis, pastoral reflection and interaction, and a more colloquial approach, which makes these works an appropriate complement to analysis of *De Trinitate*.

**Sermons.** Verbraken calculates that 544 sermons of Augustine are extant<sup>9</sup>; though others may estimate slightly more or less, all agree that this figure, though more than we have of any other Church Father,<sup>10</sup> represents only perhaps one-tenth of Augustine's whole legacy. The history of the collection, translation and assessment of those 544 sermons is complex enough, beginning with the collection in Augustine's library at Hippo, where they were catalogued as *tractatus*, Augustine's translation of the Greek *homilia*<sup>11</sup>; Possidius never had time to make an inventory, nor Augustine himself to devote a *Reconsideration* to it, though he probably intended and may have begun to do so.<sup>12</sup> The seventeenth-century Maurist collection (Vol. 5), adopted (Vols. 38

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<sup>7</sup> C. Lambot, "Critique interne et sermons de saint Augustin," *Studia Patristica 1: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1955*, ed. Kurt Aland and F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), p. 124. My translation.

<sup>8</sup> Lambot, "Critique," p. 126.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre-Patrick Verbraken, *Etudes critiques sur les sermons authentiques de saint Augustin* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 18. This estimate includes neither the Tractates on John, the Commentaries on the Psalms, nor the sermons published by Dolbeau.

<sup>10</sup> A. G. Hamman, "La Transmission des sermons de saint Augustin: les authentiques et les apocryphes," *Augustinianum* 25 (1985): 311.

<sup>11</sup> Hamman, "Transmission," p. 312.

<sup>12</sup> Pellegrino, "General Introduction," p. 18.

and 39) and supplemented (Vol. 46) by Migne, is the basis for the collection of the sermons, which has been expanded by twentieth-century research.

The dating of the sermons is no precise science. D. de Bruyne observes that they are among the most difficult of Augustine's works to fix chronologically, because they make few references to contemporary events, and because we have not the benefit (as with his books) of the chronological order supplied in the *Reconsiderations*.<sup>13</sup> Newly discovered and undatable sermons provide difficulties of their own. As to the locations at which they were given, A.-M. la Bonnardière mentions that, as bishop, he was usually present in Hippo for liturgical "*temps forts*," but many sermons on saints' days and special events were given outside Hippo, frequently at Carthage.<sup>14</sup> There is debate over the origin of extant texts of his sermons: did he dictate them beforehand, or dictate them after preaching them, or are our texts mainly indebted to the *notarii* who took them down as they were preached? The latter seems to be the likeliest source. In the light of these uncertainties, I have taken as a working basis the summary of critical opinions provided by P. Verbraken<sup>15</sup>; his conclusions about the dates and liturgical occasions of the pertinent sermons are indicated for each sermon, and the bibliography lists the critical editions recommended by him, and which are the ones used in this study.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> D. de Bruyne, "La chronologie de quelques sermons de saint Augustin," *Revue Bénédictine* 43 (1931): 185.

<sup>14</sup> A. M. La Bonnardière, "La Bible 'liturgique' de saint Augustin," *Jean Chrysostome et Augustin*. *Théologie Historique* 35 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1975), p. 157.

<sup>15</sup> Verbraken, *Etudes critiques*.

<sup>16</sup> Those studied here are: Ss. Mainz 13 (403-404); Mainz 12 (403); 81 (410/411); 194 (before 411/412); 166 (after 409/410); 192 (after 411/412); 227 (412/413).

It is not accidental that the majority of these sermons stem from paschal or Christmas liturgies<sup>17</sup>; the theme of divine-human participation and its relation to human salvation is particularly relevant to those liturgical occasions. The paschal sermons involve addresses to the newly baptized, which are meant to apply also to all the faithful who renew their own baptism in that of the new members. The *competentes* (those in the final stage of initiation; *competentes* began as *rudes*, then entered the catechumenate) participated in Holy Week before baptism, and at the paschal feast. Catechesis of the *competentes* included preaching on the *traditio Symboli* and the *traditio orationis dominicae*: the symbol of the faith (the creed) and the Lord's Prayer were given (*traditio*) to the *competentes* and given back by them (*redditio*) at their baptism. Catechesis about each credal article, and the Scripture passages underlying them, was common to all churches of the time.<sup>18</sup> Their catechetical program ended with their baptism on Easter night; they retained their white baptismal garments and special place in the assembly during the octave of Easter, and on the octave Sunday took their place among the faithful.<sup>19</sup> This Sunday was the time of Augustine's *sermones ad infantes*, in which he preached on the typology and rites of the sacraments of initiation.<sup>20</sup> The sermons for paschal night itself, the liturgy at which sacramental initiation occurs, are not catechetical, and usually take as themes the beginning of Genesis or the cosmic battle between light and darkness, reflected in the paschal vigil itself and in its readings

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<sup>17</sup>Ss. 192 and 194 appear to have been preached Christmas morning; Ss. 166 and 227 are paschal. Ss. 81, Mainz 12 and Mainz 13 are not traced to particular feasts.

<sup>18</sup>Th.-André Audet, "Note sur les catechèses baptismales de Saint Augustin," AM, Vol. I, p. 152. Audet adds that Augustine's sermons are in keeping with the models of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, and others.

<sup>19</sup>Audet, "Catechèses baptismales," p. 152.

<sup>20</sup>Audet, "Catechèses baptismales," pp. 152-153. Audet lists the following groups of such sermons: 227 (included in the present study), 272, and Guelf 7, along with 229 which is a fragment of Denis 6, a sermon of doubtful

from the Prologue of the Gospel of John, Rom. 13:3 and Eph. 5:8.<sup>21</sup> The concept of deification could be pursued fruitfully by exploring any or all of these liturgical themes, to see how it appears in similar sermons or passages which do not show such explicit mention of it; thus, for example, Christmas or Easter homilies, addresses to *rudes*, *competentes* or *infantes*, or sermons from martyrs' feasts.

**Commentaries on the Psalms.** Most of these were preached orally, but some were dictated. The term *Enarrationes*, from Erasmus, refers to a running commentary on a Psalm, one verse at a time.<sup>22</sup> In reading the Psalms, Augustine examines each verse, each word, for its hidden meaning and allegorical sense. He believes the speaker can be taken to be at times the prophet, at times God, and often tries out both interpretations to see which is preferable (his general notion being that, where one cannot be sure which is the more appropriate reading, one ought to choose the one which is more helpful). Taking for granted that the Psalms speak of Christ and the Church, he uses them to educate the audience about both, as well as to exhort them on living the Christian life and relationship with God and one another.

Rondet points out the difficulty of dating the Commentaries, with few external indicators, no mention in the *Reconsiderations* and few in the letters, and not too many internal

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authenticity. Augustine's preaching on the occasion always took the same theme, reports Audet, citing Ss. 259, 260, 353, 376, Mainz 89 and 94, Guelf 18 and 19.

<sup>21</sup>Audet, "Catechèses baptismales," pp. 155-156. Audet notes that Possidius mentions 23 such sermons, but we have only 15.

<sup>22</sup>Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan, "Introduction," *St. Augustine on the Psalms*, trans. Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan, Ancient Christian Writers Vols. 29 and 30 (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1960), p. 4.

clues.<sup>23</sup> Unlike the sermons, however, the Commentaries form a complete set. The dates provided by CCL (Vol. 38) are taken from Zarb and adopted here (psalm numbering according to the Septuagint). They are virtually undisputed: Francisco Moriones<sup>24</sup> gives the same dating for all twelve commentaries, as does Seraphino M. Zarb.<sup>25</sup> As a group, the Commentaries were composed between Augustine's priestly ordination (391) and 418 (some say as late as 422).<sup>26</sup> Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, in agreement with Charles Kannengiesser, puts 118 between 420-422, after the condemnation of Pelagianism by Pope Zosimos. She indicates the peculiarity of this collection of sermons, as opposed to the rest of the commentaries, and points out that Possidius includes it neither in his list of preached sermons, nor in his list of *dictatae*. The explanation she considers most plausible is that it was delivered sermon by sermon as a private course, either for Augustine's clergy or for a select group who wished a commentary on this psalm. In regard to En.117, she points out that it is the last in a "homogenous and rather strange" series of commentaries, all brief in length, from Ps. 110 to 117; they were composed, she concludes, probably in the order of the Psalter, all contemporaneously with each other, and

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<sup>23</sup> Henri Rondet, "Bulletin d'histoire de la théologie: Etudes augustinienes," *Recherches de science religieuse* 37 (1950): 628-633.

<sup>24</sup>Francisco Moriones, *Enchiridion Theologicum Sancti Augustini*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Vol. 205 (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1961), pp. 719-721.

<sup>25</sup>Seraphino M. Zarb, *Chronologia Enarrationum S. Augustini* (Valetta, Malta: St. Dominic's Priory, 1948). Zarb also suggests locations for their delivery. The full list of those treated in this chapter is as follows:

44	403, Hippo
84	after 410, Hippo
49	412, Hippo
66	412, Carthage
109	412, Hippo
138	412, Carthage
146	412, Carthage
58.S1	413, Carthage
52	414, Thagaste
117	414, Hippo
118.S16	418
118.S19	418

were given as preached sermons (but not, as Zarb believes, as sermons from a Paschal week).<sup>27</sup>

The rest of the commentaries under consideration here are not included in the list of *dictatae*, but are considered preached sermons.

### Interpretation of Texts

The discourses are analyzed in their chronological order, insofar as this can be determined.<sup>28</sup> For the Commentaries, the ordering at least is reliable, whereas the Sermons are more difficult to place with respect to one another. For each discourse, I proceed in four steps. First, I select the **focus text** in which the concept of deification appears most clearly, and cite that text directly. Second, I examine this **text**, with attention to what it says about participation in the divine life, other themes or concepts which are brought to bear, ways in which the structure unfolds the theme, and consistencies or variables with respect to other texts. Third, I consider the **context** in which the text appears, to show its place in the entire discourse, whether it is an isolated thought within the larger whole or whether (and how) the rest of the work touches upon and develops the theme. Finally, I give a brief **commentary** on the pertinence of these findings in relation to Augustine's broader thought, to other concepts in his theology, or to the contours of deification as it emerges in these discourses.

My Summary and Conclusion to the chapter will, after gathering together the pertinent themes, consistencies and variables as they emerge from this analysis, indicate the relevance of

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<sup>26</sup> Emilien Lamirande, *L'Eglise céleste selon Saint Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1963), p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> La Bonnardière, *Recherches*, p. 141.

<sup>28</sup> The editions used for the homiletic discourses are listed in the Bibliography; I have used, with emendations, the translations also listed in the bibliography.

these findings to Augustine's concept of deification as revealed in these selected homiletic discourses contemporary with *De Trinitate*.

## 4.2 Analysis of Texts

### Enarratio in Psalmum 44 (403)

Who then are his [Christ's] sharers? The sons of humans; since he himself, the Son of Man, became partaker of their mortality in order to make them partakers of his immortality.<sup>29</sup>

*Text.* This passage shows the basic pattern of divine-human exchange, which brings together seeming opposites. By the exchange, mortality and immortality are brought into relationship, indeed doubly so; first the immortal partakes in mortality, thus breaking the barrier between them, then the mortal partakes in immortality, entering through the broken barrier. Augustine uses the identical term "*particeps*" for both. Clearly, the latter depends upon the former, which is the cause of its possibility; Christ, the Son of Man, partakes in immortality so that (*ut*) sons of humans can partake in immortality. Further, Christ's participation in mortality is an accomplished reality (*has become* partaker), which produces the possibility for mortals to enter into immortality, but whether that possibility is realized is not defined in the text itself. The elegance and simplicity of the exchange are not lessened by the inequality of the terms it brings together, but indeed derive from that inequality. The result is human participation in what is divine, that is, immortality.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>21 (p. 509,6-8); *Qui enim participes eius? Filii hominum; quoniam et ipse Filius hominis particeps factus est mortalitatis illorum, ut faceret eos participes immortalitatis suae.*

<sup>30</sup>Anderson (*Augustine and Being*, p. 31): Though Augustine, unlike Aquinas, proposes no set order for the divine attributes, he does consider immortality a key attribute of God; the exchange of mortality for divinity therefore means entrance into what is quintessentially divine.

**Context.** This text is taken from the last of four paragraphs (18-21) which comment upon v. 7 of the wedding-psalm Augustine is discussing: “God your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above his sharers [*participes*].” He reads this verse as meaning that God has been anointed by God, therefore as referring to Christ; he poses the question, “Who are Christ’s *participes*?” and responds to that question by formulating the exchange theme in terms of participation--Christ’s participation in mortality makes possible mortals’ participation in immortality. Augustine prepares for this formulation, which expresses the meeting between Christ and humanity, by examining who humans are (18) and who Christ is (19). To humans he applies two words, human and unrighteous (*homo et iniquus*), explaining that both are appropriate names; but one expresses our nature and the other our fault, one what God has made for us and the other our own work (18, p. 506,16-19). Yet the apparent inevitability of human iniquity can be overcome, if humans become joined to God and hate iniquity because God hates it.<sup>31</sup> Human nature, though caught in iniquity, can be united to God and so its ties to iniquity can be broken. Christ, the one anointed by God, is anointed both as human and as God; he is human without ceasing to be God, God without “disdaining” to be human.<sup>32</sup> Thus, by looking at human nature, Augustine finds a need for union with God; by looking at Christ, he finds the reality of union between God and humanity. It is in this context that he goes on to elaborate the exchange theme.

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<sup>31</sup> 18 (p. 506,19-21); “Love that which God has made, and hate that which you have made, in that he hates it too; see how you are already beginning to become united to him, now that you hate what he hates”; *ama quod Deus fecit, oderis quod tu fecisti, quia et ipse hoc odit. Uide quomodo iam illi incipias coniungi, cum odisti quod odit.*

<sup>32</sup> 19 (p. 507, 13,21-24); “It was God who was anointed by God.... God then was anointed for us, and sent to us; and God himself was human, in order that he might be anointed. But he was human in such a way as to be God still, and he was God in such a way as not to disdain to be human. True human, true God”; *Unctus est Deus a*

The wedding-psalm itself Augustine interprets as referring to the union between Christ, the bridegroom, and the Church, his bride; Christ, the Word who assumes flesh, also assumes the Church to himself (3). Because Christ is both Head (above) and Body (below) of the Church, and because humans are the members who make up the Body, therefore humans can be raised to where he is, that is, to be with God (20). Christ's relationship to the Church is also the context out of which Augustine, in the following paragraph, formulates the exchange by which humans participate in immortality through Christ.

*Commentary.* In examining the exchange pattern, its appearances in the *Enarrationes*, and its significance in Augustine's christology,<sup>33</sup> William Babcock finds that symmetry, balance, and antithesis are constitutive features of that pattern: not only the likeness achieved between Christ and humanity, but also the unlikeness out of which it is brought about.<sup>34</sup> "The sense of purpose, of action toward a goal, is, of course, a feature of the very grammar of the pattern of the exchange"<sup>35</sup>: as in this text, Christ's participation in what is human is brought about not for its own sake, but in order that humans can participate in what is divine. As Babcock's study shows, not only the words of the exchange, but its structure, constants and variables, are all constitutive of its significance for Augustine's christology and soteriology.<sup>36</sup> Babcock mentions

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*Deo... Unctus est nobis Deus, et missus est nobis; et ipse Deus ut ungeretur, homo erat; sed ita homo erat, ut Deus esset; ita Deus erat, ut homo esse non dedignaretur: uerus homo, uerus Deus.*

<sup>33</sup> The exchange pattern in *De Trinitate* was discussed in Section 3.2.4, "Christ the Initiator of the Divine-Human Exchange."

<sup>34</sup> Babcock, *Christ of the Exchange*, p. 94.

<sup>35</sup> Babcock, *Christ of the Exchange*, p. 95, n. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Babcock does not, however, consider deification a central concept in the exchange theme nor in Augustine's thought in general. He differentiates the "realistic-mystic" Greek doctrine of *theosis* from Augustine's notion of salvation, explaining that for the Greeks the incarnational moment of human transformation brings about divine-human union, whereas for Augustine that union occurs in the human vision of God, after death, by which humans participate in divinity. Augustine, he adds, sees the Incarnation as "the pledge that we shall participate in God's

mortality/immortality as one of the most prominent images Augustine uses in regard to the exchange.<sup>37</sup> The dual direction of participation, which is integral to the exchange theme, is also key in Augustine's soteriology, as Vernon Bourke has pointed out. Humans partake in divinity, and in divine attributes, but only because God first participates in humanity in the Incarnation; even our likeness to God is a sharing in the perfect divine likeness between Father, Son and Spirit.<sup>38</sup> Such participation is reserved to humans alone; all that exists has being insofar as it partakes in God, but full participation in divinity is particular, among creation, to humanity, created in God's image and likeness.<sup>39</sup>

Sermo Mainz 13 (403-404)<sup>40</sup>

1. It does not seem incredible to us, brothers, that humans should become gods, that is, that those who were humans should be made gods. It is more incredible that now it has been offered to us, that the one who was God should become human. And certainly we believe the one already done, and we expect the other to be done.<sup>41</sup>

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eternity and immortality, not the point at which that participation begins"; Babcock, *Christ of the Exchange*, p. 128, n. 128, and p. 136.

<sup>37</sup> Along with deformity/beauty, used in this Commentary (3, p. 496), and poverty/riches, based on 2 Cor 8:9.

<sup>38</sup> Bourke, "Participation," *Saint Augustine's View*, pp. 117-123.

<sup>39</sup> cf. *Conf.* 7.11.17.

<sup>40</sup> This is one of the sermons collected and edited by François Dolbeau. It appears in "Nouveaux sermons de saint Augustin pour la conversion des païens et des donatistes (V)," *Augustin d'Hippone: Vingt-Six Sermons au Peuple d'Afrique, Retrouvés à Mayence*, édités et commentés par François Dolbeau, Collection des Etudes Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 147 (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1996), pp. 57-108. This chapter was originally published in *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 39 (1993): 57-108; it follows articles originally published under the same title in *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 7 (1991): 37-78, 261-306 (= "Nouveaux sermons I-II"); 38 (1992): 50-79 (= "Nouveaux sermons III"); *Recherches Augustiniennes* 26 (1992): 69-141 (= "Nouveaux sermons IV"), also reprinted in *Vingt-Six Sermons*. For an overview of Dolbeau's publications, see: Henry Chadwick, "New Sermons of St. Augustine," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s.47 (1996): 69-91. Dolbeau's proposed date is the winter of 403-404, at Carthage. Hill, who translates this sermon (*The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Vol. III/I, [Hyde Park, New York: New City, 1997], pp. 37-47), thinks 404 is more likely.

<sup>41</sup> (p. 97, 13-15); *Non nobis uideatur incredibile, fratres, deos fieri homines, id est <ut> qui homines erant dii fiant. Incredibilis est quod iam nobis praestitum est, ut qui deus erat homo fieret. Et illud quidem iam factum credimus, alterum futurum exspectamus.*

**Text.** Here is the simple promise of deification, that humans are to be made gods. It is reiterated in connection with God's having become human as the prior condition; as in the exchange formula, human entrance into the divine depends upon and results from God's entrance into humanity. This passage stresses the parallel between the two, by using the same structure and almost the same wording to express the deification of humans (*qui homines erant dii fiant*) and the Incarnation of God (*qui deus erat homo fieret*); it also stresses the difference between them, since the first is "*non incredibile*" and the second "*incredibilius*." As the final line shows, the latter is an accomplished reality, the former an offer awaiting realization.

2. The Son of God was made Son of Man, so that he might make sons of humans into sons of God.<sup>42</sup>

**Text.** Again Augustine expresses the exchange by which humans are given entrance into the divine, this time in terms of divine sonship. Like the first passage, this one is stated chiasmatically; the Son of God become Son of Man is paralleled with sons of humans becoming sons of God. As a result, there is a new similarity, that between sons of God and Son of God. The former is brought about so that the latter can come to be.

3. For the creator of humanity was made human so that the human might become receiver of God.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>1 (p. 97,22); *Filius dei factus est filius hominis, ut filios hominum faceret filios dei*. For the purposes of clarity and simplicity, I shall translate *filius/filii dei* as Son/sons of God, *filius homini* as Son of Man, and *filii homini* as sons of humans. Here I sacrifice somewhat gender-inclusivity in my desire to be as true as possible to the nuances of Augustine's text without rendering extremely awkward English. "Children of God," for example, would be more inclusive than sons of God, but would obscure the parallel between the Son of God made Son of Man and the sons of humans made sons of God, which is the type of word-play typical of the exchange and deification themes.

<sup>43</sup>1 (p. 97,22); *homo enim factus est hominis factor, ut homo fieret dei perceptor*.

**Text.** The same exchange is stated in somewhat different terms, this time stressing the inequality of the exchange and the dramatic change which it brings about. God and human meet, first of all, in humanity: already the creator of humanity, he is himself made human. The result is that humans are changed. However, they are not changed into precisely what he is; what they become is receivers of God. Humanity itself is the centre-point, the point of meeting; and the effect on humanity is the purpose of the exchange, yet the human role (*perceptor*) is passive and receptive compared to the active, creative role of God.

**Context.** These three texts are all taken from the first paragraph of the sermon, which is based upon Ps. 82 [LXX 81], “God in the synagogue of gods.” Most of the sermon exhorts the hearers to avoid pagan idol-worship, partly by portraying the difference between human-made gods and humans made gods. In this sense, Augustine is not explaining or defending deification itself, but rather, is using the concept of deification to support his argument about Christian worship and the Christian God. Only the first two paragraphs explicitly discuss deification and portray its meaning; but these two paragraphs show more usages (three) of forms of the term *deificare* than we see in any other sermon or commentary. According to Dolbeau, S. Mainz 13 coins the expression *deifictor*,<sup>44</sup> besides referring to God as *deificus* and *deus deos faciens* (2, p. 98,36). Here, deification is expressed as an attribute with which God is identified, a usage not seen in other texts in the present study, where the stress tends to be not on what deification tells us about God, but on its meaning for humanity and the divine-human relationship. In this case,

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<sup>44</sup>2 (p. 98,36). The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Vol. 5, col. 403, mentions one usage of it, Ps. Rufinus in Ps. 49.1, which Dolbeau ascribes to the twelfth century (Dolbeau, *Vingt-Six Sermons*, p. 96).

however, Augustine uses deification to defend divinity.<sup>45</sup> For the most part, deification is not used as a descriptor of God; rather, God's being (as revealed by Christ) shows us what humanity is and is called to become, which is the purpose of the divine-human exchange.<sup>46</sup>

In these opening paragraphs, Augustine explains that God promises to give divinity to humans, again emphasizing the futurity of the promise (1, p. 97,12); *now* we believe, *now* the promise is received in hope, but *then* it will be manifest.<sup>47</sup> He also links deification with God's gift of life itself: "God wishes not only to vivify, but also to deify us" (1, p. 97,5). The exchange is portrayed not only as godhood for humanity, but also as divinity in exchange for weakness (1), though just what that weakness means Augustine does not develop here.

However, he does explain that the exchange is based upon both the distinction between God and humanity, and the relationship between them: the Son becomes mortal "not out of his own" in one sense, since his own substance is and remains immortal, but indeed "out of his own" in that

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<sup>45</sup>2 (p. 98,32-36); "There is a great difference between God who exists, God who is always God, true God, not only God but also deifying God; that is, if I may so put it, god-making God, God not made making gods, and gods who are made, but not by a craftsman"; *Multum interest inter deum existentem, deum semper deum, uerum deum, non solum deum, sed etiam deificatorem deum, hoc est, ut ita dicam, deificum deum, deum non factum deos facientem, et deos qui fiunt, sed non a fabro.*

<sup>46</sup>Augustine's use of deification to defend divinity is in keeping with the usage of Greek Christians, who also tend not to define or explain *theosis*. Rather, as their christology and trinitarian theology develop, they increasingly draw on *theosis* as an established (though undefined) tenet which they can use to support their theological positions. The Greek Fathers, writing polemically, at times use deification in defence of the divinity of either Son or Spirit, who must be divine because otherwise he would be unable to deify humans. In that sense, they take deifying power as a descriptor of God, but the intent is not to describe God or understand God's own being, but rather to express the divinity of Son or Spirit. Here, Augustine uses deification as though a given, in order to defend his point about the true God: God is the one who deifies, and that makes him different from pagan gods.

<sup>47</sup>Ladner stresses Augustine's notion that deification is received now *in spe*, and reserved *in re* till after death; this distinction is evident throughout these texts. Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, pp.194-195): Augustine "insists more strongly than the Greek Fathers on the fact that deification by grace on earth is not yet the glory of heaven, except *in spe*." Augustine certainly reserves the fullness of divine-human participation till after death, but also in his pastoral teachings assures his readers that already there is something to be received and lived in this life, in anticipation of that fullness. Sullivan, *Image of God*, p. 54: Perfection comes only in the final glorification, but "renewal of the image extends to the whole of man's spiritual and moral life as perfected through grace." Cf. the connection, in *De Trinitate*, between deification as a process begun in this life, in such a way as to transform this life and prepare for the next, and as a destiny fully attained only in the next, along with vision, contemplation, immortal happiness, and so forth; see Section 3.2.3 above, "Key Components of Deification."

mortals are his creation.<sup>48</sup> That Creator-creature relationship is not altered by the exchange. Nor do humans become exactly what God is: they are gods not by nature, but by adoption and by grace (2, p. 98,33).<sup>49</sup>

*Commentary.* These texts make a strong link between deification and sonship, by juxtaposing two different statements of the exchange, first in terms of godhood and then in terms of sonship. The same internal structure, in which God and humanity are brought into intimate relationship but not thereby made equivalent, is evident in each. In both cases, that which humanity can become--gods, and sons of God--is dependent upon that which God himself is--God, and Son of God. Sonship and deification are here used as virtually equivalent expressions to show the distance between God and humanity, the similarity given them through God's activity, and the resultant intimacy which can be brought about between them.

The connection of deification with vivification recalls the connection between redemption and creation: creation is God's call of humans from non-being into being; redemption is a second call from non-being, the non-being of sin, into renewal.<sup>50</sup> The God who gives humans life also gives them the new life which makes them sons of God, receivers of God, and gods.

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<sup>48</sup>1 (p. 97,19-21); *non de suo, nec de natura sua, non de substantia qua est ipse deus; alio autem modo de suo, quia de creatura sua, quia de eo quod condidit, de eo quod creavit.*

<sup>49</sup>Qualifications which Augustine regularly adds when discussing the notion of adoptive sonship: the Son of God is Son by nature and by begetting; humans are sons by adoption and by grace. In this text, however, he uses these explications usually associated with sonship in direct reference to deification itself.

<sup>50</sup>Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 167-185.

S. Mainz 12 (403)<sup>51</sup>

Therefore our physician said this: “In the last times, the sick one will be more strongly and more powerfully convulsed; and so that he might take his medicine, it is necessary that I myself come at that time; I myself will restore the believer, I will console him, I will exhort him, I will assure him, I will heal him.” Thus it was done. He came, he was made human, participant of our mortality, so that we might be able to become participants of his immortality. And still the sick one is tormented.... O stupid sick one, it is not because the physician came that your illness has become more serious, but the physician came for that, because your illness was going to become more serious: he foresaw that, he did not create it; but he came to console you and to truly heal you.<sup>52</sup>

**Text.** This text again states the exchange in terms of mortality and immortality, by which humans are enabled to partake in mortality because God has already partaken in mortality, being made human. Here, this work of deification is expressed in the added dimension of healing: the healing of the whole human race, which is like a sick person under the care of a physician. The

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<sup>51</sup> Another of the sermons collected and edited by François Dolbeau, “Nouveaux Sermons,” *Vingt-Six Sermons*, pp. 73-87. Fragments of it were previously published in: A. B. Caillau and B. Saint-Yves, *S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi operum supplementum*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1839), pp. 29-32; and *Bibliotheca Casinensis*, vol. 1, (Monte Cassino, 1873), pp. 27-131; and MA, Vol. 1 (Roma, 1930), pp. 265-271. Dolbeau’s date is the winter of 403-404, at Carthage. S. Mainz 12 is described by Dolbeau as the original of a sermon of which, previously, only remnants were known. These remnants include the text of S. 346A (Caillou II.19), generally held to be authentic, and dated at December, 399 (Kunzelmann and Beuron both suggest 399; Lambot suggests December, with the year unknown). Concerning the fragments involved, see Goulven Madec, “Bulletin Augustinien pour 1991/1992 et compléments d’années antérieures,” *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 38 (1992): 390. Several other fragments make up Dolbeau’s S. Mainz 12, including a commentary on Ps. 147, which La Bonnardière considers a truncation of En. 147, preached on a Sunday at Carthage; A.-M. La Bonnardière, “Les *Enarrationes in psalmos* prêchées par saint Augustin à Carthage en décembre 409,” *Recherches augustiniennes* 11 (1976): 85-86. La Bonnardière puts En. 147 at December 409, Zarb at September-December 412, Rondet at 411. Dolbeau sees Kunzelmann’s 399 as the earliest possible date of the sermon in its entirety, which he tentatively (and with “unsolved difficulties”) puts in the winter of 403-404. The majority of the entire text of S. 346A is included (again, with minor grammatical and syntactical alterations) in S. Mainz 12; only two extended segments are completely missing, neither of which is particularly significant in regard to the present theme: part of 3 (p. 266,26 - p.267,9) and the second part of 6 (p. 269,14-32). The major sections of S. Mainz 12 which do not appear at all in S. 346A are: all of 1-4; 7, p. 77,129 - p. 78,147; 8, p. 78, 148-161; 10, p. 80,203-214; 11, p. 82,249-255; 12, p. 82,256 - p. 83,291; 13, p. 83,292 - p. 84,313; 14, p. 84,333 - p. 85,343; and the closing lines, 16, p. 87,385-390. My analysis, therefore, draws on and refers to the text of S. Mainz 12. The pertinent passage, which appears in par. 8 in S. 346A and par. 15 in S. Mainz 12, is highly similar in the two, with only minor grammatical differences.

<sup>52</sup> 15 (p. 86, 359-364,371-374); *Hoc ergo medicus noster dixit: ‘In nouissimo tempore fortius et ualidius factabitur aeger, ad cuius medicinam suscipiendam oportet ut ego ueniam illo tempore; ego reficiam, ego consolabor, ego exhortabor, ego promittam, ego credentem sanabo’. Ita factum est. Uenit, factus est homo, particeps mortalitatis nostrae, ut possemus fieri participes immortalitatis ipsius. Et adhuc iactatur aeger.... O aeger insipiens, non quia medicus uenit, grauior facta est aegritudo tua, sed ideo medicus uenit, quia grauior futura erat aegritudo tua: praeuidit illam, non fecit; uenit autem ut consoletur te et uere sis sanus.*

physician, however, not only provides but becomes the healing, as the exchange formula suggests. This text also shows that this work of healing humans and bringing them into divinity is not yet accomplished, though the first half of the exchange has itself been accomplished (“he came, he was made human”). The medication is already provided and given (*ita factum est*), yet the healing has not yet been received; the patient is still sick, indeed sicker, now tormented by illness. There is also a distinction between the work of God in bringing healing, and the work of humanity in receiving that healing: God did not create the illness, but did initiate the medication which can provide restoration. That restoration, however, requires something on the part of humanity, namely faith, for “I will heal the believer.”

**Context.** This sermon is, as Dolbeau remarks, highly improvised, since as we are informed in the opening lines, Augustine was surprised to discover the text of the day was Lk. 17:26-27, and had planned only to explicate the psalm. His image of the human race as a great patient being treated by a physician, who brings medication accompanied by increased anguish, arises from his reflections with his audience about the harshness of the times (*mala tempora, dura tempora, molesta tempora*), when many are suffering and some are blaming Christianity for that suffering (14). His response, that the harsh times brought Christ, not the reverse, hearkens back to the opening of the sermon: Christ is the one who stands at the cross-road of the broad way, which looks easy but leads to destruction, and the narrow way which looks (and is) difficult but leads to joy (1). Christ’s presence, the sermon goes on to show, is the fulfillment of God’s promise, just as the promises of the Old Testament prophets have been and are being fulfilled, because God’s word is always truth (2). Christ comes to heal the illness which began with Adam and accompanied humanity’s exit from paradise (15). The invitation which this text

brings, to receive the medication brought by God in Christ and so be healed, is an invitation to receive Christ himself and enter into his immortality, thereby fulfilling God's promise to humanity.

**Commentary.** The image of Christ the Physician not uncommonly accompanies the theme of deification and participation in divine life.<sup>53</sup> Our reception of that participation, which is offered through Christ's participation in our life, brings about our healing. Participation is not only about immortality, though that is a key element, but also about healing of human illness, the illness which belonged to Adam. Though it is God who brings the offer and means of healing, in the person of *Christus Medicus*, humanity has a positive role in accepting and receiving that healing, as this sermon shows.<sup>54</sup> It is not easy to accept; it seems and indeed is painful, all the

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<sup>53</sup>Pertinent texts in this study are S. Mainz 13; En. 84; 66; 146; 117; and 58. R. Arbesmann, "The Concept of 'Christus Medicus' in St. Augustine," *Traditio* 10 (1954): 23-25, refers to this sermon (S. 346A), along with two others (Ss. 87 and Denis 24), in which Augustine uses the concept of Christ as physician to combat the notion that Christians suffered because they neglected the pagan gods; rather, says Augustine, current pains occur because of human sickness, which the Divine Physician is working to heal as does a skilled surgeon. In at least five sermons, Arbesmann notes, is found this image of the human race as one great patient. Arbesmann also observes that *Christus Medicus* is in fact a concept frequently used in Augustine's sermons, but rarely outside them. Arbesmann attributes this fact to the concept's appeal to the African populace, and also its availability to Augustine in earlier Christian writings, beginning with second- and third-century attacks on Asclepius, the pagan god of healing, and used more positively by Christian Fathers such as Ambrose, Jerome, Ephraem the Syrian, Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom. To the suggestion of L. Olschki ("The Wise Men of the East in Oriental Traditions," *Semitic and Oriental Studies: University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 11 [1951]: 391, n. 25), that Augustine is also influenced by the Manichaeic hymns in praise of Christ the Physician, Arbesmann replies that some of these hymns contain nothing not already available to Augustine in Christian literature, while others "are hardly of such a nature as to be considered necessarily a source of Augustinian thought." However, Kevin Coyle, having observed that Manichaeic writings apply the image of physician most frequently to Jesus and, among humans, most often to Mani, notes: "Christian opponents of Mani do not refer to him as a physician... Augustine's insistence on spiritual 'medicine' and references to *medici* (e.g., in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 27:52, PL 32 col. 1332; CSEL 90, p. 56) could be understood as a response to these themes in Manichaeism." J. Kevin Coyle, "Healing and the 'Physician' in Manichaeism," *Healing in Religion and Society, from Hippocrates to the Puritans: Selected Studies, Studies in Religion and Society*, Vol. 43, ed. J. Kevin Coyle and Steven C. Muir (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1997), p. 147, n. 50.

<sup>54</sup> Christ as not only *medicus* but also *medicina*: cf. En. 117.16; Arbesmann, "Christus Medicus," p. 27. As we have seen, the image of humanity as needing to be cured of an illness, and receiving that cure in two (earthly) stages, is also helpful in understanding the renewal of the image and deification of the human in *De Trinitate*; cf. Section 3.2.1. above.

more for those trying to live the Christian life. Yet human willingness to receive this healing is part of the healing process: “Wanting to be cured, do not be tormented against your will.”<sup>55</sup>

Sermo 81 (410/411)<sup>56</sup>

Since you are humans, you are the sons of humans; and if you are not the sons of the Most High, then you are liars, for every human is a liar. But if you are the sons of God--if you are redeemed by the grace of the Saviour, if you have been touched by his precious blood, if you have been reborn by the water and the Spirit, if you are destined to inherit the heavens--then you are truly the sons of God. Therefore you are also gods.<sup>57</sup>

**Text.** Two different possibilities for humans are portrayed in this passage, which begins with humans and ends with gods. The first is what happens to those who do not receive divine sonship: they are humans because they are sons of humans, and hence they are liars; this is the “normal” state of humanity. The second possibility is that humans do become divine sons and so become gods. In both cases, there seems to be a necessary progression; humans without God are divorced from truth and can only be liars, but humans with God become sons and are deified. The second possibility can be realized through redemption, which fulfills the human potential for sonship: “sons of God” are made “truly sons of God” if they have received what is offered them through Christ. True sonship and godhood (deification) are virtually identical in this passage.

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<sup>55</sup>16 (p. 87,379-380): *Curari uolens, ne crucieris inuitus*. The text of S. 346A has a slightly different twist on this line (8.35): *curari nolens, ne crucieris inuitus*, S. 346A.8.35, which Hill translates as, “don’t suffer torments against your will by being unwilling to be cured.” In either case, the point is that suffering comes—we have no choice about this—but we do have choice in choosing to receive and be raised up by it or not.

<sup>56</sup>Van der Meer and Mandouze suggest 410-411; Beuron, Kunzelmann and Pontet, 410.

<sup>57</sup>6 (col. 503); *Quoniam homines filii hominum, si non filii Altissimi, mendaces; quia omnis homo mendax. Si filii Dei, si gratia Salvatoris redempti, si pretioso sanguine comparati, si aqua et Spiritu renati, si ad haereditatem coelorum praedestinati, utique filii Dei. Ergo iam dii.* PL notes a variant reading, *Ergo audi*. In the context, however, especially with the reference to Ps. 82, PL’s selected text of *ergo iam dii* is perfectly logical, and as analysis of the passage will show, intrinsically coherent.

The activity which brings both about is overwhelmingly that of God, through grace given in Christ. However, there is implicit a necessity for human receptivity of that activity in all its facets; sonship becomes truly sonship for those who receive all that is given in Christ.

**Context.** The sermon refers to Ps. 82:6 [LXX 81], “You are gods,” which we have seen behind other texts. Augustine uses this passage in conjunction with Ps. 116, “All humans are liars,” and Jn. 1:12, “you have been given the power to become sons of God,”<sup>58</sup> a prime text with respect to the theme of adoptive sonship. He takes these texts to show his hearers that the presence of both good and evil in the world makes Christian life difficult and painful, but ought not to deter them from following that way of life, which will lead them to the heavenly city and to “join the blessed angels,” for one only passes through this life (7). It is God’s grace, he stresses, which is the difference between humans being always liars, or becoming sons of God. The notion of humans as liars, and the choice of two ways, is associated with the contrast between the old Adam--the human in his pure state--and the new Adam, Christ--the human mediator of God, midway between God and the human (6). Because of Christ, humans are no longer confined to the old Adam in whom they are bound by lies, but can ascend to God through him.

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<sup>58</sup> Augustine believes that even Scripture texts which seem contradictory or confusing can be found to harmonize. S. 81 includes the following remark (S. 81, 1, c. 499,36-40): “How diverse are the voices of Scripture, and yet how harmoniously they flow and merge into a single thought. Thus whatever you may hear from that bountiful fountain, you find peace and enter into warm accord with the truth; then you are full of peace, fervent in your love, and proof against the stumbling blocks of the world”; *Quam diuersae uidentur Scripturae uoces, et in unam sententiam sic confluunt atque concurrunt, ut quidquid audire potueris de fonte illo uberrimo, acquiescas et tu, concordas ueritati amicus, pace plenus, charitate feruidus, contra scandala munitus*. This remark voices something of the spirit of S. 166, discussed below, which seeks “warm accord with the truth” not in one text or the other, but in the tension which they raise between them. The present theme of deification is often found by Augustine in the tension underlying Scriptural texts about God, humanity, and their interrelationship.

**Commentary.** The theme of the two ways between which humans must choose (lies and truth, Adam and Christ, to be sons of humans or to be sons of God and gods) often accompanies Augustine's references to divine-human participation. As in this sermon, which focuses upon *homo mendax*, the trigger point is the human predicament without God; the only way out is through what God brings in, and this way leads not only to the solution of the dilemma but to heights as exalted as divine sonship and godhood itself.<sup>59</sup> In this text, we see that deification involves human reception of redemption in Christ, as well as rebirth by water and the Spirit, with its baptismal associations.<sup>60</sup> Augustine does make mention of the role of the Spirit in divine-human participation, but for the most part his focus in this regard is overwhelmingly christological. Christ as Mediator, the one who stands between God and humanity and enables the two to meet--first of all in humanity, and then, because Christ stands "midway between," in the divine life itself--is another key notion in Augustine's concept of deification and participation.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Augustine, in his early optimism, looked forward to humans returning to the state of perfection (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 112); this view became tempered by his increasing sense of the difficulty of that return, but also by the idea that renewal would be *ad meliorem*. Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, p. 161) observes a distinction between the Greek understanding, in which renewal is a ceaseless mystical progress not ending even in heaven, and Augustine, for whom renewal brings a greater grace to help Christians persevere amid sufferings and temptations on earth, to be given rest in God after death. That tenor is certainly prominent in this sermon, and Augustine's sense of the dichotomy between the evils of this life, and the freedom from evil in eternal life, only increases over time. Ladner sees (*Idea of Reform*, p. 58) renewal *ad meliorem* as fulfillment of the movement of creation, which itself recalls creatures to God even in his creation of them; the course of human history is constant renewal to a higher plane, leading up to human reformation in the image and likeness given humanity at creation (p. 72). The state of the just in heaven, therefore, is superior to that of Adam; they are deified, with sin no longer an option (Rist, *Augustine*, p. 278).

<sup>60</sup>Elsewhere, Augustine associates baptism with rebirth and sonship; cf. S. 121 (SC 116, 3 [p. 228,70], 4 [p. 228,75-77]). Note also the eucharistic allusion in "touched by his precious blood"; in eucharist, the faithful regularly participates in what baptism allows. Cf. Section 3.2.1 above, "Stages of the Renewal."

<sup>61</sup>Gerald Bonner ("Augustine and Mysticism," *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren, et al. [New York: P. Lang, 1994], p. 125) emphasizes Augustine's christocentricity as one of the key elements of his spirituality: Christ as mediator "accorded excellently with the Platonic notion of participation with the Christian amendment of the need for grace" (leaving aside, also, philosophical abhorrence of the notion of God incarnate); Bonner highlights Christ Mediator as a pivotal dimension of deification in Augustine, since the concept reconciles

Sermo 194 (before 411/412) <sup>62</sup>

That we may be fit to possess this perfection, he who is equal to the Father in the form of God was made in our likeness, in the form a slave; he remade us into the likeness of God. Thus the only Son of God was made the Son of Man, and many sons of humans he made into sons of God. For once the slaves had been nurtured by the visible form of a slave, he made them free to see the form of God.<sup>63</sup>

*Text.* The exchange is expressed in terms of sonship, the Son of God in return for the sons of God. It stresses the relationship between the one and the many, for the only Son makes many sons; he does so by becoming Son of Man, which gives him a likeness to sons of humans. Babcock's observation that symmetry and antithesis are endemic to the exchange is evident here, for the Son's likeness to humans--whom he is also unlike, being equal to the Father, whereas they are slaves--brings about human likeness to God. The result of the exchange is that humans are made free, whereas their own lot is slavery, and in freedom are able to see (*uidere*) God; this vision of God comes through Christ who, as human, is visible to humans. The process by which such freedom and vision are achieved for humanity is Christ's movement from God to humanity, which enables a corresponding movement of humanity to God: Christ in himself is equal to God, *in forma Dei*, but becomes like (*similis*) us, *in forma serui*; therefore, humans are remade, and brought to the likeness (*ad similitudinem*) of God. The parabolic structure, as well as the language of *forma Dei* and *forma serui*, echo St. Paul's christological hymn (Phil. 2).

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God's transcendence and immanence (Bonner, "Christ, God and Man," p. 270). Cf. *Conf.* 7.18.24 (CSEL 33, p. 163,6-9); *Ep.ad Gal.Exp.*24.8 (CSEL 84, p. 87,6-10); *De Trin.* 4.10.13 (CCL 50, p. 178.1 - p. 179.2). The theme of Christ as Mediator is virtually omnipresent in the set of texts studied in this thesis.

<sup>62</sup>Kunzelmann and Beuron.

**Context.** This is a Christmas sermon, inspired by the nativity of Christ which brings eternal reality into a moment of time; Augustine reflects on a favourite nativity theme, that of Christ's two births (God, immortal, eternal, from his Father; human, mortal, in time, from his mother). He refers explicitly to 1 Jn. 3:2 ("We are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be; we know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him just as he is"), a favourite Scriptural reference for divine sonship as well as vision of God, both of which are important themes in this text. He addresses his listeners (the baptized) as "sons of light, you who have been adopted into the kingdom of God" (1), and the sermon goes on to amplify the meaning of adoptive sonship. Christ's taking on poverty instead of riches, which brings riches to human poverty (based on 2 Cor. 8:9), is a common metaphor for the divine-human exchange (3). Again, the exchange is repeated with reference to the angels; the similarity and difference between humans and angels is used to show that humans seek, long for, and believe in that which angels already have.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>3 (col. 1016); *Cui capiendo ut idonei praestaremur, ille aequalis Patri in forma Dei, in forma serui factus similis nobis, reformat nos ad similitudinem Dei: et factus filius hominis unicus Filius Dei, multos filios hominum facit filios Dei; et nutritos seruos per uisibilem formam serui, perficit liberos ad uidendam formam Dei.*  
<sup>64</sup>2 (col. 1016); "That the human might eat the bread of angels, the Creator of angels was made human": *Ut enim panem angelorum manducaret homo, creator angelorum factus est homo.* The notion of equality with angels as expressing the human destiny, and mention of angels in the exchange theme, is characteristic of Augustine; as here, he uses the angel theme partly to show the exalted status to which humans are destined after death, and partly to show the significance of the Incarnation, its uniqueness, and its implications for the divine-human relationship. Augustine sees both good angels and bad humans as making up the heavenly city (or Church, of which the earthly Church is an extension); their ultimate union does not make them indistinguishable from each other, but leaves intact the proper characteristics of each (Lamirande, *L'église céleste selon saint Augustin* [Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1963], p. 143). The notion of equality with the angels is linked with the ultimate human destiny, but humans are not said to "become" angels as they are to "become" gods or "become" children of God, nor did God become an angel as he became human. Still, the angels' union with God tells something of the ultimate human destiny; Goulven Madec, "'Panis angelorum' selon les pères de l'Eglise, surtout S. Augustin," *Forma Futuri: Studi in Onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1975), p. 828. Cf. Jean Pepin, "Influence Païennes sur l'angéologie et démonologie de saint Augustin," *Entretiens sur l'homme et le diable* (Paris, the Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965), pp. 51-59; Goulven Madec, "Angelus," *Aug-Lex*, Vol. 1, cols. 303-315.

*Commentary.* This text's parabolic structure--the descent and ascent of Christ, which enables the ascent of humans, with its echo of Paul's kenotic hymn--is a prominent image in Augustine's thought on deification and divine-human participation. The idea that this exchange brings about human reformation (*reformatio*), by which we are made like God, made sons of God, and made gods, expresses a key Augustinian notion of the renewal of humans, created in the image of God.<sup>65</sup> Here, Augustine states that the result of this renewal is human likeness (*similitudo*) to God, as well as vision of God. For Augustine, vision, the final stage of renewal, is reserved in its fullness till after death<sup>66</sup>; what, then, is possible for this life? Certainly, humans can "see" the human form which God takes on in Christ, and in faith are asked to "see" in that human form God himself in Christ, hidden in human mortality and, even more, in humiliation and weakness<sup>67</sup>; but only after death will human vision of God as God be possible. Even then, there is a question of whether humans will see God "just as he is."<sup>68</sup>

Sermo 166 (after 409/410)<sup>69</sup>

God wants to make you a god; not by nature, like the one whom he begot, but by his gift and by adoption. For just as he through humanity was made partaker of your mortality, so through lifting you up he makes you partaker of his immortality.... So, putting aside lying, speak the truth, in order that this mortal flesh, too, which you still have from Adam, may, having been preceded by newness of spirit, itself earn renewal and transformation at the time of its

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<sup>65</sup> Vannier ("*Creatio*," p. 75), notes that to express the notion of renewal of the image, Augustine uses especially the terms *renouare*, *efficere* and, as here, *reformare*; cf. *In Io. Ev.* 8,2; 18,10 (CCL 36, p. 186,17).

<sup>66</sup>The final stage of renovation of the image is perfection, "quand la ressemblance et la plénitude de l'image seront réalisées par la vision" (Vannier, "*Creatio*," p. 81); cf. *Ep.* 112.3 (CSEL 34, p. 658,24-26 - p. 659,1).

<sup>67</sup>Babcock calls this theme of the divine Word's hiddenness in human form "decisive" for exchange theology; the challenge then is to recognize God in him by faith, first within ordinary human need, and more importantly, within the suffering and crucifixion. Babcock, *Christ of the Exchange*, pp. 104-106.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. commentary on *En.* 84, below.

<sup>69</sup>Lambot: octave Sunday of Easter; Poque adds, after 410.

resurrection; and thus the whole human, being deified, may adhere forever to the everlasting and unchangeable truth.<sup>70</sup>

*Text.* Within this passage is a concise formulation of the exchange theme in terms of mortality and immortality; its balance is emphasized by the precise correspondence of the grammatical construction (*sicut ... sic*, with each term of the divine descent into human participation exactly balanced in the human ascent to divine participation). The parabolic structure recalls once again the movement of the Philippians hymn, in which humanity's exaltation is made possible by the humiliation of the Son of God.<sup>71</sup> The entire process of the exchange brings about deification: God, because he wants to do so, makes humans into gods; that process is God's gift. Godhood is here associated with sonship, for humans become gods by adoption, "like the one whom he begot"; for humans godhood, like sonship, does not mean becoming by nature what God is. The balance of the exchange is seen also in the contrast between the destiny of humans (gods by gift and by adoption) with the nature of the Son (by nature). The result of the process is renewal and transformation of the whole human--spirit and mortal flesh--but renewal of the spirit is prior. The body is renewed "at the time of its resurrection," which is evidently the last step; by it, even the body becomes part of the renewal,

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<sup>70</sup>4 (col. 909); *Deus enim deum te uult facere: non natura, sicut est ille quem genuit; sed dono suo et adoptione. Sicut enim ille per humanitatem factus est particeps mortalitatis tuae; sic te per exaltationem facit participem immortalitatis suae.... Deponentes ergo mendacium, loquimini ueritatem, ut et caro ista mortalis quam adhuc habetis de Adam, praecedente nouitate spiritus, mereatur et ipsa innouationem et commutationem tempore resurrectionis suae: ac si totus homo deificatus inhaereat perpetuae atque incommutabili ueritati.*

<sup>71</sup>Hill's translation emends the textual *per humanitatem* to *per humilitatem*, and therefore reads "through being humbled." He admits (n. 8) that there is no manuscript support for this change, but allows himself the interpretation based on its plausibility. However, there is no necessity of putting words in Augustine's mouth in this way, for it is the careful positioning of *per humanitatem* within the parabolic movement which invokes the Philippians kenosis, which refers to Christ's humility; the plain reading of "through humanity," corresponding to "through exaltation," already describes the dynamism by which God enters humanity and so allows for human entrance into divinity.

and itself merits transformation through the renewed spirit. The fulfillment of the process comes after death, when both body and spirit will be completely transformed. Yet the process is to be lived in some way on earth, for Augustine urges his hearers to “speak the truth” and put aside lying, which anticipates the heavenly reality of adhering to truth. The accomplishment of this human renewal, which fulfills what began on earth and brings both body and spirit to eternal life at the resurrection, is named in this passage deification of the human.

**Context.** This appears to be a Paschal homily, given on the octave Sunday of Easter.<sup>72</sup> Once again, its content emerges from Augustine’s simultaneous exegesis of two apparently contradictory Scripture passages, Ps. 116:11 (LXX 115), “every human is a liar,” and Eph. 4:25, “Putting aside lying, speak the truth.” How can truth be demanded of liars? The answer, Augustine warns his hearers in the opening paragraph, may seem offensive, but within it is found the secret of salvation: “God is commanding you not to be humans.” This command, he explains, ceases to be offensive when it is understood that God is commanding humans to cease being humans as Adam, the “old human,” was--bound to lies--and become human as Christ is--the new human, belonging to truth, called to become sons of God and indeed gods. He refers also to the familiar Ps. 82:6 (“you are gods, and sons of the Most High”) and Jn. 1:12 (“power to become sons of God”).

**Commentary.** The human who has received, entered into and undergone this entire process is said to “merit” renewal, even in the flesh; but this meriting must be understood in the

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<sup>72</sup>Lambot’s dating of the homily to the octave of Easter is amply borne out by the themes, style and tone of the sermon, though Hill notes particularly the sentence, “*Iam enim ueteres homines eratis: accessistis ad gratiam Dei*” (4. col. 909). Paschal addresses to the newly baptized (and, through them, to all the faithful) exhort them to live out their baptism, and therefore tend to include catechesis about baptism and Christian life.

context of the whole sermon, which shows that renewal is God's free gift achieved by his own work in Christ which calls for human response, and which is addressed to the baptized.<sup>73</sup> It begins with renewal of the spirit, through which the whole human, including mortal flesh, is renewed to likeness of God.<sup>74</sup> Though reserved till after death, this renewal begins already on earth in some sense; it means being able ultimately to come into renewal, godhood, sonship, vision of God, and participation in the truth. Since Augustine is here addressing the newly baptized on the meaning of the Christian life they have begun, and through them all the faithful are being catechized about life in the Church, it is evident that reception of all of this begins with baptism and is lived (to the extent that it can be lived in this life) within the Church.<sup>75</sup>

Enarratio in Psalmum 84 (after 410)

Indeed, he has already given us Christ, but as human; the one whom he has given to us as human, he will give to us as God. For to humans he gave a human; he gave to humans such as humans could receive; for no human could receive Christ as God. He became human for humans, he reserved himself as God for gods.... We are renewed even to adoption, so that we might be made

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<sup>73</sup>Human nature, as image of God, "merits" grace, but that itself is God's free gift, as is participation in God's own life; Sullivan, *Image of God*, p. 53. Even if the human only wills such change, without being able to bring it about, this is already reception of God's work; cf. S. Mainz 12, 11 (p. 81,236-237); En. 83.3 (CCL 39, p. 1147,22-23). But even that human willing is a gift of God; cf. S. 297A.4.6, c. 1561-1562; S. 297A 6 (c. 1361). Cf. Section 3.2.1, above, "Renewal of the Image": even the soul's merit is God's grace.

<sup>74</sup>Renewal into a spiritual body will happen only at the resurrection, yet even on earth we are being renewed to God's image "*spiritu mentis nostrae*," not according to the body; Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, p. 158) . Cf. *De Trin.* 14.16.22; Ep. 147, 46 (p. 321,19-20).

<sup>75</sup>Cf. Section 3.2.1, above, on *De Trinitate* XIV, in which Augustine describes the two stages of the human "*curatio*." The Church as Body of Christ on earth--earthly anticipation of the heavenly fulfillment, already bringing eternal rest, participation in God, and renewal, both personal and ecclesial--is a significant aspect of Augustine's idea of deification. Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, p. 158) observes that Augustine calls the Church *paradisus*, as the Greek Fathers often do (*De Gen.ad Litt.* 11.40, CSEL 28, p. 375,40.11: *in hoc paradiso, id est ecclesia*). It is through the Church, and its sacramental life, that one comes to participate in the Creator; cf. *Civ.Dei* 10.6 (CSEL 40.1, p. 456,26-30). However, such membership is not automatic achievement of divinity, for there are wicked people in the Church. Therefore, daily reform and renewal are required of baptized Christians in order to receive, more fully each day, the gift of adoption, reform and divinity; this means inner renewal, the practice of a virtuous life, and reception of the sacraments.

sons of God. Already indeed we are so, but by faith; we are so in hope, we are not yet such in reality.<sup>76</sup>

*Text.* Augustine demonstrates in this text the contrast between what is available to humans now, on earth, and what will be given to them (after death). The two are not in opposition, but rather in tension; both are true, and in the distinction between them is the key to the process of deification. Christ *is* given now, as human, but *will be* given as God; the change occurs because the human capacity changes, such that humans who could receive only the human Christ are made able to receive the divine Christ, and so receive God. Similarly, we *are* but *will be* sons of God; now sons through faith (*iam ... per fidem*) and in hope (*in spe*), but in the future in reality (*in re*). The meeting-point, already achieved, between God and humanity is in humanity itself; it is not the human inability to receive God, but the human ability to receive a human, which Christ first addresses, and it is into humanity that God enters in Christ. The offer of deification is also christocentric; the giving of Christ, both divine and human, is what allows for any meeting-point at all between God and humanity. Still, human receptivity is an essential part of the process, and it is in the changed receptivity of humanity that godhood is accomplished. Indeed, godhood is both the means and the result of the change; by becoming gods, humans are enabled to receive God, and by receiving God humans are made gods. The product of the change, then, is human deification, and also renewal which leads to adoption, true sonship, and real reception of God.

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<sup>76</sup>9 (pp. 1167-68,29-38); *Dedit enim nobis Christum, sed hominem; quem nobis dedit hominem, eum ipsum nobis daturus est Deum. Hominibus enim hominem dedit; quia talem illum dedit hominibus qualis posset capi ab hominibus; Deum enim Christum nullus hominum capere poterat. Factus est hominibus homo, seruaui se Deum*

**Context.** This passage comments on v. 7 of the psalm, “Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation”; it culminates a reflection on salvation (4-6) beginning with v. 4, “turn us, O God of our salvation.” This reflection discusses human renewal and regeneration, conversion and healing. Now (9), Augustine turns to the question of the meaning of salvation in Christ, and how it can be *already* given, yet *to be* given. The answer is *in spe ... in re*: we believe now, but will see then. Such vision will be vision of the Son, but necessarily also of the Father (9, 66-67) and of the trinitarian God, Father Son and Spirit (9, 64-65): the theme so endemic to *De Trinitate*—the trinitarian dimension of deification—is relatively peripheral here. Vision of God is reserved for the pure of heart (Mt. 5); the process by which human hearts become purified moves them from love of created things (*amare*) to longing for God who made them (*desiderare*) to love of him (*diligere*) to purified hearts (*mundare*) to vision of God (*uidere*; seeing as the angels see). Not here, but only “*in quadam ciuitate*,” will vision be complete—which means not only that each one sees God, but that all see God (“God as our common object of vision”) and also see “one another full of God” (10, p. 1170,68-72); instead of receiving his gifts, humans will receive God himself (10, p. 1170,72-73).

**Commentary.** Salvation, then, involves not only humans’ relationship with God, but their relationship with one another; it means vision of God, which allows also for vision of one another.<sup>77</sup> To be received by the holy, vision of God is a gift unattainable in this life, except perhaps in a certain anticipatory sense, being fully received only after death; this is Augustine’s

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*diis.... Ad ipsam adoptionem renouamur, ut efficiamur filii Dei. Iam quidem sumus, sed per fidem; sumus quidem in spe, nondum sumus in re.*

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Section 3.2.3 above, “Oneness with God and with One Another” in *De Trinitate*.

consistent view.<sup>78</sup> The christocentricity which this commentary evidences is typical; Bonner emphasizes Augustine's christocentricity as one of the key elements of his spirituality,<sup>79</sup> Babcock sees it as pivotal to the exchange theme, and this is consistently the case in the set of texts studied in this chapter. This passage also shows that the distinction between God's immutability and human mutability, rather than impeding or preventing salvation, actually is crucial to the dynamism of divine-human participation. Christ's divinity is unchanged by his becoming human: he "became human [but] reserved himself as God." Humans, however, are able to change, and therefore able to receive Christ, first as human, then as God, until ultimately they are able to "become" gods. Thus the Incarnation is in fact the "mercy" to which the psalm verse refers: instead of withholding what humans cannot receive (God), he gives what they can receive (the human Christ) so as to enable them to receive God himself. The already / not yet flavour of the text gives a sense of how Augustine views deification as reserved till after death, but already (if it is received and accepted) changing the way one lives on earth.

#### Enarratio in Psalmum 49 (412)

It is evident then that he has called humans gods, deified of his grace, not born of his substance. For he justifies, who is just through his own self, and not of another; and he deifies who is God through himself, not by the partaking of another. But he who justifies himself deifies, since by

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<sup>78</sup> Ladner (*Idea*, p. 191) suggests that there may be for some a "mystical foretaste" of the heavenly vision, but if so, such a privilege is *in fide* (cf. *De Cons. Ev.* 1.5, CSEL 43, p. 8,8-10); one should not expect such vision on earth, and if it does happen, it is exceptional and not essential. Cf. Vannier, "*Creatio*," pp. 81-82: "Augustine explique qu'une certaine vision est possible dès à présent, bien qu'elle n'ait aucune commune mesure avec la vision face à face." In *De Trin.* II.27, Augustine observes that even Moses did not see God's substance in this life, though he begged to do so. The question of whether some holy people, such as Moses or Paul, might have been granted a glimpse of God in this life, was one which Augustine played with at different times without reaching a definite conclusion. As Ladner notes, this is a significant difference between Augustine and the Greeks, for whom such vision, even in this life, is the goal of mystical experience. Cf. Section 3.2.3 above, "Vision of God."

<sup>79</sup> Bonner, "Augustine and Mysticism," p. 125. Christ's mediation is essential for the human initiation to deification.

justifying he makes sons of God. For he has given them power to become the sons of God [Jn 1:12]. If we have been made sons of God, we have also been made gods; but this is the effect of grace adopting, not of nature generating. For the only Son of God, God, and one God with the Father, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was in the beginning the Word, and the Word with God, the Word God. The rest that are made gods, are made such by his own grace; they are not born of his substance, that they should be what he is, but that by favour they should come to him, and be fellow-heirs with Christ.<sup>80</sup>

*Text.* Here Augustine connects adoptive sonship, deification, and justification. Becoming sons of God implies being made gods (*si filii dei ... et dii*); the one leads directly to the other as if they were indistinguishable, and the similarity of the language for the two processes is marked in this text. Humans can become sons and gods, because he is Son and God; this enables humans, not to become what he is, but to come to him (*perueniant ad eum*). But sonship and deification are also connected with justification. It is by justification that humans become sons of God; they are given the power for sonship (Jn. 1:12), but that power results in sonship because God justifies. Between justification and deification the parallel is precise, as shown by the grammatical symmetry of the second sentence: God alone is just, but through him humans may become just; similarly, humans may become gods (be deified) through participation, but God alone is God. The parallel stresses not only the ultimate similarity between God and deified humans, but also the difference, for even as humans do not become just in the way that God is just, so also they do not become gods in the way that God is God. Three times in this text, Augustine notes the difference between the Sonship of the Word, who is God (described in

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<sup>80</sup>2 (p. 575. 8 - p. 576,20): *Manifestum est ergo, quia homines dixit deos, ex gratia sua deificatos, non de substantia sua natos. Ille enim iustificat, qui per semetipsum non ex alio iustus est; et ille deificat, qui per seipsum non alterius participatione Deus est. Qui autem iustificat, ipse deificat, quia iustificando, filios Dei facit. Dedit enim eis potestatem filios Dei fieri. Si filii Dei facti sumus, et dii facti sumus; sed hoc gratiae est adoptantis, non naturae generantis. Unicus enim Dei Filius Deus et cum Patre unus Deus, Dominus et Saluator noster Iesus Christus, in principio Uerbum et Uerbum apud Deum, Uerbum Deus. Ceteri qui fiunt dii, gratia*

language echoing Jn. 1), and our own sonship, in that we are deified by his grace which adopts us, not born of his substance.

**Context.** This theme is touched on only in reference to the first verse of the psalm, “The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken,” upon which this paragraph comments; Augustine does not return to it in the remainder of the Commentary. Because he concludes that Christ is the “God of gods,” he recalls again Ps. 82, “God in the synagogue of gods,” which he commonly reads as being about Christ and human deification. Other key scriptural references in the present Commentary include Jn. 1:12, and 1 Jn. 3:1-2, both of which refer to divine sonship; and, on the theme of humans made gods, Augustine recalls Ps. 96:4 (LXX 95), “he is terrible over all gods”: terrible to those who make themselves gods, but amiable to those whom he himself has made gods, namely his sons. Sonship and deification imply likeness to God, as Christ is like God, but that likeness also involves a radical unlikeness: he is “equal therefore like,” we are like but not equal; he is “like by birth,” we are “like by seeing” (2, p. 576,32-35). Once again, the fundamental inequality of the divine-human relationship is essential to the process of deification and adoption.

**Commentary.** The interplay of divine sonship and deification is a recurring motif in the present set of texts; the two expressions are at times used interchangeably, though Augustine seems to be somewhat more cautious of the terms godhood and deification. In either case, the distinction of “by nature / by grace,” by which Augustine distinguishes Christ from humanity, is a frequent accompaniment. There also seems to be a strong relationship between justification and these other notions; Oroz Reta observes that justification, deification and divine adoption all

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*ipsius fiunt, non de substantia eius nascuntur ut hoc sint quod ille, sed ut per beneficium perueniant ad eum, et*

come together, as in this text.<sup>81</sup> The passage also shows the combination of similarity and dissimilarity which is at the root of the divine-human exchange. The closeness of humanity to God, both in his Son and in the adopted sons who become his co-heirs, comes about not despite but because of God's otherness from humanity. This is seen also in the distinction between Christ who is equal to God and therefore like him, and humans who are like but not equal.<sup>82</sup>

Enarratio in Psalmum 66 (412)

Therefore, my sisters and brothers, so abundantly has God blessed us in the name of Christ, that he fills the entire face of the earth with his sons, adopted into his kingdom, co-heirs of his only-begotten. He begot an only Son, and would not have him be alone: an only Son he begot, I say, and would not have him remain alone. He made brothers and sisters for him; though not by begetting, yet by adopting, he made them co-heirs with him. He made him first a partaker of our mortality, in order that we might believe ourselves able to be partakers of his divinity.<sup>83</sup>

*Text.* Divine-human participation, in this text, exchanges divinity for mortality. The effect is on the order of faith, that humans might come to believe in their own participation in divinity. This disruption of the parallelism (“made him a partaker ... *so that we might believe ourselves able to be partakers*”) shows that the possibility of human faith is an effect of the

*sint coheredes Christi.*

<sup>81</sup>Oroz Reta, “De l’illumination,” p. 376. He refers to the vine and branches imagery of *In Io. Ev.* 81.1 (CCL 36, p. 530,1-13), which develops these themes.

<sup>82</sup>R. A. Markus, “*Imago*,” pp. 135-137, in discussing the constants and the developments in Augustine’s image-theology, notes that the Son is both image and equal of the Father, and therefore his likeness. The human person is God’s image and therefore his likeness (no distinction between the two), but not an equal likeness; cf. Section 3.2.3 above, “Likeness to God” in *De Trinitate*. The human image-quality depends upon Christ, just as human redemption and deification come about through Christ; the image “according to which we are to become like God is the Son of God, God’s only true image”; J. K. Coyle, *Augustine’s ‘De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae: A Study of the Work, Its Compositions and Its Sources*, in *Paradosis* 25 (Fribourg: University, 1978), p. 387. Humanity never attains equality with the original, but does approach it by likeness. Ladner (*Idea of Reform*, p. 187) remarks that the concept of equality—“the perfection of similarity”—is the point of overlap between image and likeness; cf. *De div. quaest.* 83, qu. 74 (CCL 44A, p. 213,5-11).

<sup>83</sup>9 (p. 867, 38-46); *Ergo, fratres mei, sic abundanter in nomine Christi benedixit nos Deus, ut filiis suis impleat uniuersam faciem terrae, adoptatis in regnum suum coheredibus Unigeniti sui. Unicum genuit, et unum esse noluit: unicum genuit, inquam, et unum eum noluit remanere. Fecit ei fratres; etsi non gignendo, tamen*

exchange. Augustine here shows the contrast between the one Christ who is Son, and the many humans who are made sons and therefore his brothers. His uniqueness is stressed: *unicum, genuit, unum*. Also stressed are the abundant effects of the exchange: sons, co-heirs, participants, “fill the whole face of the earth.” Still, the Son remains *Unigenitus*, one but no longer alone; this is God’s own choice (“*unum esse noluit*”). There is both likeness and unlikeness between the Only-begotten and the sons and brothers, who are co-heirs but not by begetting, only by adoption. There is also a clear causality between the one and the other; *first* he is made partaker in mortality, *so that* humans might believe themselves able to be participants in divinity.

**Context.** The contrast between the one and the many arises from v. 7 of the psalm, upon which this text comments, “May God bless us, and let all the ends of the earth fear him.” Augustine explains, therefore, what it means to be blessed by God, and that his blessing implies abundance, just as the adopted sons and co-heirs are so many that they fill the earth. He adds (9) that humans are blessed in a way unique among all of creation, since humans are made after his own image (*ad imaginem suam*, p. 867,32-33); all of creation can be blessed and multiply, but only humans can become co-heirs and partakers in divinity. Earlier in the commentary (4), Augustine has explained that God’s blessing applies to humans in a special way, since humans who are pure of heart will be blessed by seeing God (Mt. 5:8). For humans are made after God’s image and likeness (*fecisti nos ad imaginem et similitudinem tuam*), but do not always know

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*adoptando fecit ei coheredes. Fecit eum participem prius mortalitatis nostrae, ut crederemus nos esse posse participes diuinitatis eius.*

themselves to be that image, if they are in the darkness of sin and hence deformed; however, God who has formed them can also reform them.<sup>84</sup>

**Commentary.** Faith as the effect of the exchange suggests Augustine's distinction between what is received in this life and what comes in the next: here, something is truly received and begun, *in faith*; there, it is received *in reality*. Faith, then, is the this-worldly way in which humans receive what will come fully after death. This text also shows that the relationship between Augustine's concept of divine-human participation, and his understanding of human creation in God's image and likeness, is an important consideration in assessing his notion of deification. Augustine does not tend to distinguish between image and likeness--unlike some Eastern Fathers, who do distinguish between image (Greek *eikon*, Latin *imago*) as that which is given in creation, and likeness (*homoiosis*, *similitudo*) as the realization of that image to which the human person is destined to come at (if not before) the end of time.<sup>85</sup> He does, however, distinguish between that which is given humanity in creation and that which is to be accomplished in salvation; Augustine's idea of image and likeness is never static, because he always links it with reform. Distinguishing image from likeness is not a significant part of his notion of participation in divinity; the main point is the dynamic by which the image-likeness is given to humanity in creation, lost or darkened by sin, restored by Christ, and by him called back

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<sup>84</sup>4 (p. 861,38-39): "may your countenance appear; but if perhaps it appears to have been somewhat deformed through me, may what you have formed be reformed by you"; *appareat uultus tuus, et si forte apparet per me aliquantulum deformis effectus, a te reformetur quod a te formatum est.*

<sup>85</sup>Markus ("*Imago*," p. 140) points out that Augustine is aware of but does not adopt the Greek distinction. Vannier ("*Creatio*," p. 76, n. 4) agrees that, though Augustine broke with the tradition that distinguished image and likeness, he added the dimension of dynamism in the image. The distinction, she observes, does appear (cf. *De Div. Quaest.*, qu. 51.4 [CCL 44A, pp. 81-82]) but has disappeared by the time of *De Trin.* 7.6.12; *Reconsiderations* 1.25 (CSEL 36, p. 122,11-12,14-15) remarks on the *De Div. Quaest.* text. Cf. Section 3.2.1 above, "The Human

to full likeness, which is the ultimate goal of humanity and constitutes deification. That view is the context in which the text of this Commentary appears.

*Enarratio in Psalmum 109 (412)*

For this is that very milk of infants, which he tempered, making bread pass through flesh. For that bread of angels was in the beginning the Word, yet so that the human might eat angels' bread, the Creator of angels was made human, and thus we became able to receive the incarnate Word. We should not be able to receive it unless the Son, equal with God, had made himself of no reputation, taking upon him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of humans and found in human condition. That we might therefore in some way be able to receive him who could not be received by mortals, he who was immortal became mortal, so that after his death he might make them immortal, and might give something to be beheld, something to be believed, and something to be afterwards seen.<sup>86</sup>

*Text.* This passage expresses the divine-human exchange in two different ways. The first is itself two-fold, stated in terms of Word and flesh, angels and angels' bread. In the beginning was the Word (echoing Jn. 1); he is both the Creator of angels, and the bread of angels. The result of the exchange is that humans become eaters of angels' bread, and able to receive the Word made incarnate. This they would not be able to do, except through the kenosis of the Word (in an echo of the Philippians hymn). The effect, as seen in previous texts, is that humans are made able to receive what they could not receive (the divine Word), by means of what they *are* able to receive (the incarnate Word). The introduction of angels into this exchange adds two more dimensions.

Soul as Image," and the change in Augustine's thinking about the permanence of the image in humanity: that change occurs at about the time of this Commentary.

<sup>86</sup>12 (pp. 1611-12, 16-27); *Hoc est enim illud lac paruulorum, quod temperauit, panem traiciens per carnem. Nam panis ille angelorum, in principio erat Uerbum: ut tamen panem angelorum manducaret homo, Creator angelorum factus est homo. Ita nobis Uerbum incarnatum factum est receptibile; quod recipere non ualeremus, si Filius aequalis Deo non se exinaniret formam serui accipiens, in similitudine hominum factus, et habitu inuentus ut homo. Ut ergo utcumque capere possemus eum qui non posset capi a mortalibus, mortalis factus est*

The first is the inequality of the divine-human exchange; the Creator is higher than both angels and humans, but becomes lower by being food for both. The second is the uniqueness of the Incarnation, for the Creator of angels is not made angel, but is made human.<sup>87</sup> The final sentence of the text expresses the exchange in terms of mortality and immortality; human immortality is linked here not only with Christ's Incarnation but also with his death, which is a prior condition to it. First this immortality is received in faith through Christ, "afterwards" it is seen, which at least means after Christ's death, but surely also after human death and resurrection.<sup>88</sup> There is a three-part progression in this text: from gazing on (*inspicere*) to believing (*credere*) to seeing (*uidere*).

**Context.** The opening three paragraphs of the Commentary explain that the whole Psalm is an expression of God's promise to his people, and prophesies Christ the Mediator (2) and Physician (3). The promise includes: "everlasting salvation, a life of unending bliss with the angels ... the sweetness of his countenance, the home of his sanctification in the heavens" (1); all this comes after death. God has even indicated the right ordering of things, adds Augustine, by indicating the way in which the promises would be fulfilled: "to humans divinity, to mortals immortality, to sinners justification, and to cast-aways glorification."<sup>89</sup> Augustine connects the way the promise was given in the past (3: prophecies which produce belief and expectation), is

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*immortalis; ut peracta sua morte faceret immortales, et aliquid daret inspiciendum, aliquid credendum, aliquid post uidendum.*

<sup>87</sup>As Bonner puts it ("Christ, God and Man," p. 275), the angels did not need a mediator, but humans did; Christ the Mediator forgives sins, but also fulfills the creational destiny of humanity, which humans therefore can follow. Cf. *Ep. ad Gal. Exp. 24.8* (CSEL 84, p. 87,6-10); *De Trin. 4.10.13* (CCL 50, p. 178.1 - p. 179.2).

<sup>88</sup>because vision of God is ultimately after death. Towards the end of the same paragraph, Augustine explains what the pure of heart will see in seeing God, including "the Substance of God," *haec substantia Dei est* (12, p. 1613,76).

to be received now (1: a grace freely received by the unworthy, not a reward for works; that grace should produce right living), and will be attained in its fullness after death. Thus this Commentary portrays well the interplay between reception of the promise on earth in an anticipatory way, and full reception of it in the next.

*Commentary.* The notion alluded to in this text, that Christ provides milk to infants, bread to humans, is picked up by Babcock, who observes that the *Enarrationes* “are dotted with this image”: as God, Christ is solid food, as human he is milk, and humans’ reception of the latter enables them to receive the former.<sup>90</sup> Because Christ’s divinity (bread) is hidden in his humanity (milk), humans must learn to recognize him by faith, Babcock notes.<sup>91</sup> The one whom humans could not receive, as God, is able to be received as human—*so that* humans can become able to receive God himself. By gazing upon (*inspicere*) the human Christ, they are able to believe in him as God (*credere*); this faith on earth, which comes through Christ, leads to vision (*uidere*) “afterwards”—presumably, vision of God himself after death.<sup>92</sup> The image of humans eating the bread which the Word becomes has eucharistic overtones, which is in keeping with Augustine’s view that human participation in divinity is tasted on earth in the Church, beginning with baptism and received throughout the life of the Christian in eucharist. The image of mother’s milk passing through her flesh so as to feed the baby is picked up by Augustine as a eucharistic image of Christ’s becoming bread for God’s children, though often the theme is by allusion

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<sup>89</sup>1 (p. 1601,27 - p. 1602,28); *promisit enim hominibus diuinitatem, mortalibus immortalitatem, peccatoribus iustificationem, abiectis glorificationem.*

<sup>90</sup>Babcock, *Christ of the Exchange*, p. 98. Cf. Cayré: Christ’s mortal life, sufferings and examples are milk; knowledge of divinity by wisdom is the more solid food (Cayré, *Contemplation*, p. 149).

<sup>91</sup>Babcock, *Christ of the Exchange*, p. 104.

only.<sup>93</sup> Human relationship with the angels is a part of Augustine's ecclesiology as well as his soteriology; he sees both good angels and good humans as making up the heavenly city (or Church), while the earthly Church is an extension of the heavenly Church. Together they constitute not two churches, but two forms of existence of one and the same Church.<sup>94</sup> These two manifestations of the one Church are united now by a bond of love, and will be fully united after the resurrection.<sup>95</sup> Though the notion of equality with angels is linked with divine-human participation, there is a distinction: humans are not said to "become" angels as they are to "become" gods or "become" children of God; and God became human in Christ but did not become an angel.

*Enarratio in Psalmum 138 (412)*

Our Lord Jesus Christ then speaks in the Prophets, sometimes in his own name, sometimes in ours, because he makes himself one with us; as it is said, the two shall be one flesh.... One flesh, since of our mortality he took flesh; but not one divinity, since he is the Creator, we the creature.... From everlasting he was the Creator of all things, but in time he was born of his creature. Let us believe that Godhead and, so far as we can, understand him to be equal to the Father. But that Godhead equal to the Father was made partaker of our mortality, not out of his

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<sup>92</sup> But the reference here to "gazing upon" Christ in this life may also refer to the eucharistic bread itself, since the human Christ is not visible to the assembly but the eucharistic bread is. The same progression in faith, from material to immaterial things, would apply.

<sup>93</sup> Madec, "Panis Angelorum," p. 829 n. 53. The self-giving by which God becomes food for humans, so that humans might take on the divine and so in turn become food for one another, clearly plays upon the exchange by which human deification is brought about. Cf. S. 130.1: If he had not become human, we would not have his flesh; if we did not have his flesh, we would not be eating the bread of the altar. Cf. also S. 227 below, which is built upon the idea that in eucharist, divine-human participation is tasted here on earth in the Church's liturgical life.

<sup>94</sup> cf. S. 341.11; PL 39.1500).

<sup>95</sup> Lamirande, *L'Eglise*, pp. 140-143. Angels and humans are co-citizens of the heavenly city, Lamirande adds, yet that ultimate union does not make them indistinguishable from each other, but leaves intact the proper characteristics of each. Human life is not of a different origin from angelic life, and the angels' eternal well-being in union with God tells something of the ultimate human destiny; Madec, "Panis angelorum," p. 828.

own, but of ours; that we too might be made partakers of his divinity, not out of our own, but of his.<sup>96</sup>

To this Form God is Father, the Form equal to himself, the only-begotten Son, begotten of his substance. But for our sakes, so that we might be re-made, and made partakers of his divine nature, being renewed to eternal life, he was made partaker of our mortal nature.<sup>97</sup>

*Text.* The exchange of Godhood for mortality in Christ is directly related to the corresponding exchange of divinity for mortality in humans. The first text emphasizes the inequality of the exchange, in two ways. First, though Christ completely takes on human mortality (“one flesh”), humans do not completely take on his divinity (not “one divinity”). Second, the Creator-creature relationship is totally unaltered; God himself is unchanged “from all time” by the exchange, for Christ remains Creator, and retains his Godhood and equality to the Father. The change occurs, rather, in humanity, and within time: “in time” the Creator is born of his creature, and so a new link is forged between God and humanity. Therefore, humans can be changed into partakers of divinity. The second text highlights the difference between humans and Christ by insisting upon what is unique to him and not shared by us; he alone is Son of the Father, equal to the Father, and begotten of the Father’s substance. Again, it shows the purpose of divine-human participation: it enables transformation in humans, who are to be remade, renewed, and so brought to eternal life. The exchange is made, not for God’s sake, but to bring about a transformation in humanity.

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<sup>96</sup>2 (p. 1991, 28-35,43-48); *Loquitur ergo Dominus noster Iesus Christus in Prophetis aliquando ex uoce sua, aliquando ex uoce nostra, quia unum se facit nobiscum; sicut dictum est: Erunt duo in carne una.... Una caro, quia de nostra mortalitate carnem suscepit; non autem una diuinitas, quia ille Creator, nos creatura.... Semper enim Creator omnium, aliquando autem et natus ex creatura. Diuinitatem illam credamus, et quantum possumus, intellegamus aequalem Patri. Sed illa diuinitas Patri aequalis, facta est particeps nostrae mortalitatis, non de suo, sed de nostro; ut et nos efficeremur participes diuinitatis eius, non de nostro, sed de ipsius.*

**Context.** The first text comments not on the psalm proper, but on the way in which Christ speaks in the psalms, according to Augustine’s reading: sometimes as Head of the Church, sometimes as its Body. He sees already in the psalms themselves, as in the relationship between Christ and the Church, a divine-human conjunction so close that he compares it with the conjugal union of husband and wife. His note that the Church was formed from Christ’s suffering and death puts the exchange, renewal, and divine-human participation in the context not only of the Incarnation, but also of the cross.<sup>98</sup> The second text interprets v. 1 of the psalm, “Lord, you have tried me and known me,” as words of Christ addressed to the Father. Christ calls God “Lord” in his humanness, in which he is one with us; Christ is also equal to the Father and of his substance, for which reason his participation in our nature does not simply bring him to us, but also raises us up to God. It also recalls the Philippians hymn by which the Son, “*in forma dei,*” is made “*in forma serui.*”<sup>99</sup>

**Commentary.** The relationship of Godhood and humanity within human flesh and mortality, such that God remains God, is key to Augustine’s notion of deification; the two really meet, first in humanity and therefore in divinity, but the purpose of the meeting is for human

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<sup>97</sup>3 (p. 1991, 7-11); *Huic formae Pater est Deus, aequali sibi formae, unigenito Filio nato de substantia sua. Propter nos autem, ut reficeremur, et efficeremur participes diuinitatis eius, reparati ad uitam aeternam, quia ipse, ut dixi, factus est particeps mortalitatis nostrae.*

<sup>98</sup>In his discussion of *reformatio*, Ladner finds that, whereas Greek theology emphasizes the Incarnation and makes the crucifixion less central, Augustine puts the passion and crucifixion in the foreground of the process of renewal. The role of Christ, the divine reformer, is primary, but calls for continual reform in human life—*conversio*, the movement parallel to *creatio*, in which God calls his creatures back to himself—and such reform comes through taking on the pattern of Christ’s cross. Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 169-170. In these texts, the cross is present but not, for the most part, in the foreground; it is Augustine’s general awareness of suffering and evil which mitigates the optimism of deification as renewal of the fallen, creational image-likeness.

<sup>99</sup> Augustine quotes Phil. 2:6-7 just following the second text (3, p. 1991, 11-15).

renewal and transformation, and the change comes about in humanity.<sup>100</sup> Through the idea that Christ's divinity is present but hidden within his humanity on earth, and even more hidden in his suffering and death, Augustine exhorts Christians to faith in the unseen, which will both prepare them for divine-human participation after death, and enable them to endure the sufferings of this life.

*Enarratio in Psalmum 146 (412)*

Let human voices be hushed, human thoughts still; let them not stretch themselves out to incomprehensible things, as though they were to be comprehended, but as though they were to be partaken of, for partakers we shall be. We shall not be this which we grasp, nor shall we grasp the whole; but we shall be partakers.... [Augustine next quotes Ps. 121:3, literally, "Jerusalem is built as a city, whose partaking is in the same," *Ierusalem quae aedificatur ut ciuitas, cuius participatio eius in idipsum*, and interprets "the same" as meaning the One who cannot be changed.] If then he is the same, and can in no degree be changed, then by partaking of his divinity, we too shall be immortal for ever. And this pledge has been given us from the Son of God, as I have already said to you, holy brothers, that before we became partakers of his immortality, he should first become partaker of our mortality. But as he became mortal, not of his own substance, but of ours, so do we become immortal, not of our own substance, but of his. Partakers then we shall be. Let none doubt it: Scripture says it.<sup>101</sup>

*Text.* This passage shows that the exchange depends upon God's immutability and human mutability; it is the inequality and otherness which make possible the participation of humanity in immortality (*si ipse idem ipse est ... et nos immortales*). After stating twice that we

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<sup>100</sup>Cf. *Ench.* 10.34 (CCL 46, p. 68,34.31-32): "the Word was made flesh through the assuming of flesh by divinity, not by the conversion of divinity into flesh"; *Ita quippe uerbum caro factum est, a diuinitate carne suscepta, non in carnem diuinitate mutata.*" God is not "humanized" in the exchange which enables humanity to be deified.

<sup>101</sup>11 (p. 2130, 28-32,39-47); *Conticescant humanae uoces, requiescant humanae cogitationes; ad incomprehensibilia non se extendant quasi comprehensuri, sed tamquam participaturi; participes enim erimus. Non hoc quod capimus erimus, nec totum capiemus: sed participes erimus.... Igitur si ipse idem ipse est, et mutari ex nulla parte potest; participando eius diuinitatem erimus et nos immortales in uitam aeternam. Et hoc nobis pignus datum est de Filio Dei, quod iam dixi Sanctitati uestrae, ut antequam efficeremur participes immortalitatis ipsius, fieret ipse prius particeps mortalitatis nostrae. Sicut autem ille mortalis, non de sua*

“shall be” partakers, and once that we “shall be” immortal, Augustine reveals that the prior condition of this human transformation is God’s participation in mortality. God’s participation is the pledge (*pignus*), the *fait accompli* (*pignus datum est*), the absolutely reliable promise which means, as Augustine asserts for the fourth time in this one text, “partakers we shall be,” and there can be no doubt of that. The certainty is based in God himself, not on anything humans do or fail to do; indeed, he urges his audience not even to try to comprehend it, but only to accept the certainty. Divine-human participation does not come about through any human capacity, nor does it mean identity of substance with God, nor any disappearance of divinity into humanity or humanity into divinity. Humans will never comprehend or grasp God, but will partake in him. The futurity of the promise is evident in this text: God’s participation is in the past and present tense, but human reception and participation are emphatically future.

*Context.* The text is part of Augustine’s reflection on who God is (regarding the psalm’s v. 5, “Great is our Lord, and great is his power”). Therefore it reflects upon God’s transcendence primarily, and human receptivity only in light of that. God’s greatness, human weakness, and yet the certainty of the promise, are the themes sounded throughout the Commentary. The promise consists in humans receiving incorruption and immortality (6), eternal praise of God (2), equality with angels (2), membership in the heavenly city (4) and vision of God (4). It is we who departed from God, not God from us: but it is overwhelmingly God’s initiative which allows our return, refashioning and nearness to God (14).

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*substantia, sed de nostra, sic nos immortales, non de nostra substantia, sed de ipsius. Participes ergo erimus: nemo dubitet; scriptura hoc dixit.*

**Commentary.** Just as Augustine does not limit God's being to immortality, so he associates human deification with immortality but does not limit it to that. This discourse shows that, though immortality is a key component of deification, it is far from being the only one; related concepts such as those mentioned above, and the connection among them, are also integral. Humans participate in, but do not become, true being, which God is and which creatures—even humans—are not and never will be.<sup>102</sup> Participation is uniquely accessible to humans, among all creation, for they alone are created in God's image (18)<sup>103</sup>; nevertheless, there is and remains a "huge, unique gap" between God's nature and human nature. The unchangeable God is "in a sense" unknowable,<sup>104</sup> yet in another sense not inaccessible.<sup>105</sup> No wonder Augustine exhorts silence and stillness in the face of incomprehensibility; for this text touches upon the mystery of otherness and intimacy at the heart of deification.

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<sup>102</sup>Anderson (*Augustine and Being*, pp. 59,64) calls such participation, not the communication of a common nature (i.e. God's nature) but "to have *esse* without being it," and a "proportional relationship" between creature and creator. Rist relates being and participation in this way: Augustine "does not assume that, if God is good and, say, a man is good, we must infer that there is a common higher goodness in which God and man share. Rather he thinks that in so far as a man is called 'good,' that is because he partakes or shares in the unqualified goodness which is God": and God does not share in goodness (or other attributes), but *is* goodness and so forth. Rist, *Augustine*, p. 259.

<sup>103</sup>Renewal is unique, in creation, to the human soul, for "the human soul is made to the image of God: he will not give his image to a dog or a pig" (18, p. 2136,12-13); *anima humana facta est ad imaginem Dei: non dabit imaginem suam cani et porco*. All created things exist insofar as they partake of the Creator; but for humans, caught and trapped by sin and mortality, full participation means receiving immortality and divinity in response to his invitation.

<sup>104</sup>Rist (*Augustine*, pp. 256-27); "it is easier," observes Rist, "to assert *that* he is than *what* he is; it is also easier to say what he is not." Vladimir Lossky, an Orthodox theologian, picks up Augustine's notion of God as *Idipsum*, yet somehow participable, as indications of a negative theology in Augustine (Lossky, "Elements of Negative Theology")—though it is this very point which makes some Orthodox theologians wary of a Western notion of human participation in God as implying participation in God's very substance, thereby destroying God's otherness and transcendence. Augustine can use language which suggests that humans come to God's own substance, yet he clearly wishes to hold that humans do not become the substance of God. How that substance can be participable in such a way is a key question in deification.

<sup>105</sup>Vannier, "*Creatio*," p. 178; the mystery remains mystery, she remarks.

Sermo 192 (after 411/412)<sup>106</sup>

A far, far more brilliant hope has lit up the earth; the promise to earthlings of life in heaven. To help us believe in this hope, something much more unbelievable has been paid us in advance. In order to make gods of those who were human, the one who was God was made human; without forfeiting what he was, he wished to become what he himself had made. He himself made what he would become; because he added the human to God, he did not lose God in the human.<sup>107</sup>

**Text.** Deification as the product and purpose of the exchange is the focus of this text.

The construction of the third sentence creates a precise symmetry between the progress of humanity to divinity, and that of divinity to humanity; this symmetry highlights not only the similarity of the two movements, but also their unlikeness. God already was God; and he *has been* made human. Humans already were human; and they *will be* made gods. The structure is an elegant chiasm, such that God relates to gods, human to humans; his action of becoming human is the condition for the human movement of becoming divine. In his becoming, there is no dissolution of God in humanity; having created humanity, he adds the human to himself without losing what he is. The passage emphasizes the connection with creation, by reiterating twice that God made the human before becoming it; deification follows and depends upon creation. The pledge of deification already has been given (“paid in advance”), so that people might have faith.

**Context.** This homily, delivered on Christmas morning, strives to impress upon the faithful the meaning of the Incarnation. Augustine dwells upon what has been given, and what is still being awaited. Hope, a promise, the ground of faith, the pledge of God’s participation in

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<sup>106</sup>Kunzelmann and Beuron.

<sup>107</sup>l (cols. 1011-1012); *Spes longe clarior effulsit in terris, ut terrenis uita promitteretur in coelis. Hoc ut crederetur, res incredibilior praerogata est. Deos facturus qui homines erant, homo factus est qui Deus erat: nec amittens quod erat, fieri uoluit ipse quod fecerat. Ipse fecit quod esset, quia hominem Deo addidit, non Deum in homine perdidit.*

humanity, all have been given already; human godhood and eternal life are therefore available, though not yet received. They will come on the “eternal day.”<sup>108</sup> However, they have results now; the sermon’s second paragraph demonstrates ways in which the hearers’ lives should be changed outwardly so as to reflect inward reception of the promise. The sermon also connects deification with divine sonship, calling upon the congregation to seize the sonship which is their privilege, because of what the Incarnation has given.

**Commentary.** The incarnational context is a significant aspect of Augustine’s idea of deification; because God has become human in Christ, therefore humans can become divine. Though Augustine does not use the terms renewal or re-creation in this text, he does connect the Nativity with the promise of eternal life for humans, and links creation with glorification: having created humans, God adds them to himself, and this is the condition of deification, which requires that humans take on the godhood (sonship) he has provided for them. Like creation, deification is God’s call, requiring human response.<sup>109</sup>

Sermo 227 (412/413)<sup>110</sup>

I promised to deliver a sermon to instruct you, who have just been baptized, on the Sacrament of the Lord’s table, which you now see and of which you became partakers last night. You ought to know what you have received, what you are going to receive, and what you ought to receive

<sup>108</sup> The “eternal day” fulfills the “ages” of humanity, which correspond to the six days of creation. On this theme, cf. Section 3.2.4 above, “Christ as Initiator of the Divine-Human Exchange.” In one of the exchange texts of *De Trinitate* (IV.7), Augustine’s notion of the six days / six ages recalls the connection between human creation in God’s image (on the sixth day) and human renewal through the Incarnation of Christ (in the sixth age).

<sup>109</sup> Solignac describes two “moments” in the life of the image of God, those of creation and reformation; Aimé Solignac, “*Image et Ressemblance: Pères de l’Eglise*,” DS 7, cols. 1420-1421. Creation is the expression of divine self-giving, reformation the complete participation of the image following upon its conversion through divine grace. That constitutes deification. As Vannier expresses it (“*Creatio*,” p. 73), Augustine introduces into the Platonic/Plotinian schema of *conversio-formatio* the concept of *creatio*, and therefore of *relatio*.

<sup>110</sup> The earlier date is suggested by Beuron, the later by Kunzelmann. S. 227 is closely paralleled by Denis 6, a sermon of which the authenticity is doubtful.

daily. That bread which you see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the Body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what the chalice holds, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. Through those, Christ the Lord wished to entrust his body and the blood which he poured out for us for the remission of sins. If you have received worthily, you are what you have received.<sup>111</sup>

**Text.** This text, which opens the sermon, discusses human participation in the divine within the context of the eucharist, using the term participation to describe Christians' reception of Christ's body and blood. It shows the human half of the divine-human exchange: humans receive, and so become, what Christ gives. The divine half is implicit in the sanctification of the bread and wine by God's word, that is, the entrance of the divine into bread and wine, and into Christ's body and blood which they are. Humans who can partake of bread and wine can thereby partake also of Christ. The purpose is not only human participation, but also the forgiveness of sins. All of this requires the human activity of reception, which occurs not just once but over and over, and which is not automatic but needs to be done "worthily."

**Context.** In this sermon, delivered on the octave Sunday of Easter, Augustine (as is his wont on such occasions) addresses the newly baptized and, through them, all the faithful, instructing them in the Christian life. This text tells them they "are what they have received"; the rest of the sermon develops just what it is they have received, by discussing "the sacraments in their order" and the whole eucharistic prayer. In particular, they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in fire at chrismation, and the eucharistic bread which is the body of Christ, the Church (p.

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<sup>111</sup>p.234, 4-15; *Promiseram enim uobis, qui baptizati estis, sermonem quo exponerem mensae dominicae sacramentum quod modo etiam uidetis et cuius nocte praeterita participes facti estis. Debetis scire quid accepistis, quid accepturi estis, quid cottidie accipere debeatis. Panis ille quem uidetis in altari sanctificatus per uerbum dei, corpus est Christi. Calix ille, immo quod habet calix, sanctificatum per uerbum dei, sanguis est*

238,39-41).<sup>112</sup> They also receive a process of “moistening, grinding, crushing and firing” similar to that which the bread itself undergoes in being made from wheat; thus the bread which Christ has become, the faithful also become. To receive worthily means participating in the life of the Church, changing one’s ways in accordance with that life. Yet Augustine concludes the sermon by noting that the hope to which the Church calls them is reserved to heaven, not earth.

*Commentary.* The allusion to divine-human participation, in the context of baptism, eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church, reflects Augustine’s sense that the Church is the earthly locus of the lived reality which can be accomplished fully only after death. The Church, and participation in its sacraments, make real already on earth the (heavenly) divine-human participation which is the goal of human life.<sup>113</sup> What is begun at baptism, however, requires daily renewal, as this text suggests: the newly baptized *have* received, *will* receive, and *should* receive daily, showing the connection between what happens in this life and what will happen in heaven.<sup>114</sup> In receiving eucharist, they become the “sign” and “sacrifice,” which Christ already is: participation in eucharist is virtually equated with participation in Christ himself, which is fitting since the faithful are the Church, the Body of Christ, but Christ himself is Body as well as Head

*Christi. Per ista uoluit dominus Christus commendare corpus et sanguinem suum quem pro nobis fudit in remissionem peccatorum. Si bene accepistis, uos estis quod accepistis.*

<sup>112</sup> The role of the Holy Spirit in deification is not at all prominent in these discourses, especially as compared with *De Trinitate*.

<sup>113</sup> cf. *In Io.Ev.*26.15 (NPNF, p. 173; CCL 36, p. 267,27-33). Eucharist for Augustine is both “the sign indicating the presence of the true church, and the sign which makes the true church” (Wilson-Kastner, “Grace,” p. 148); cf. *In Io.Ev.*123.2 (NPNF, p. 444; CCL 36, p. 676,32-34). Renewal and redemption are personal (for each human person), but also corporate (redemption of humanity); these two dimensions come together in the Church, in which the fallen mass of humanity is raised up. Our sinfulness is individual but also stems from our belonging to Adam; renewal is for each of us, but comes through our belonging to Christ in his Church. Cf. Rist, *Augustine*, p. 285.

<sup>114</sup> Augustine repeatedly urges Christians that baptism needs to be lived out by daily reform (Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, pp. 164-165), which means both inner renewal and the practice of a virtuous life. Augustine does not directly equate membership in the Church with holiness; cf. *Civ.Dei* 18.51; 18.49 (Bettenson, p. 831; CSEL 40.2, p. 349, 10-13. Yet it is through membership in the Church that humans come to God.

of the Church.<sup>115</sup> This text also intimates that divine-human participation involves overcoming sinfulness, by divine initiative and through the life of the Church. Just to receive the eucharist is not sufficient, for it must not be received unworthily, which, Augustine explains, means receiving “in mockery or contempt”; in other words, faith is required as part of human receptivity.

*Enarratio in Psalmum 58, Sermo 1 (413)*

But the teacher of humility, partaker of our weakness, giving to partake of his own divinity, came down for this purpose, so that he might teach the way and become the Way. He deigned very much to recommend his own humility to us; and therefore did not disdain to be baptized by a servant, in order that he might teach us to confess our sins, and to be made weak in order that we may be strong.... (7)

Whereas therefore he was such, and nevertheless had taken flesh without sin, he was made partaker of our own weakness, not of our own iniquity; in order that, out of having shared our weakness with us, he might undo our iniquity. (10)<sup>116</sup>

**Text.** These passages portray human participation in divinity as the purpose of the divine descent (*descendens ut*). That purpose is realized because Christ not only shows or tells us the way, but becomes it (in an allusion to Jn.14:6). Into the familiar exchange sequence

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<sup>115</sup> p. 240, 60-65: “Thereupon after the sanctification of the sacrifice of God, because he wished us to be his sacrifice, which was demonstrated when that was first laid down, that sacrifice of God, indeed us, that is, the sign of the matter, which we are—behold, when the sanctification has been completed, we say the Lord’s Prayer, which you have received and given back”; *Deinde post sanctificationem sacrificii dei, quia nos ipsos uoluit esse sacrificium suum, quod demonstratum est ubi impositum est primum illud sacrificium dei et nos—id est signum rei—quod sumus, ecce ubi est peracta sanctificatio, dicimus orationem dominicam, quam accepistis et reddistis.* As Bonner reiterates, for Augustine christology can never be separated from ecclesiology; Christ is present in the life of the Church. Cf. *Civ.Dei* 10.20 (CSEL 40, pp. 480,20 - 481,11). The Church as earthly anticipation of the eschatological reality is a recurrent theme, and an important one for deification, since it makes the link between Christ and Church, earthly promise and heavenly fulfillment.

<sup>116</sup>7 (p. 734, 22-29) and 10 (p. 736, 26-30); *Doctor autem humilitas, particeps nostrae infirmitatis, donans participationem suae diuinitatis, ad hoc descendens ut uiam doceret et uia fieret, maxime suam humilitatem nobis commendare dignatus est; et ideo a seruo baptizari non dedignatus est, ut nos doceret confiteri peccata nostra, et infirmari ut fortes simus.... cum talis ergo esset, et tamen carnem sine peccato suscepisset, factus est particeps nostrae infirmitatis, non iniquitatis, ut ex eo quod nobiscum communicauit infirmitatem, solueret nostram iniquitatem.* Cf. *De Trinitate* IV.13, discussed in Section 3.2.4 above, “Christ as Initiator of the Divine-Human Exchange”; this text brings sin and its destruction into the exchange.

(divinity into humanity, humanity into divinity), this text interjects the elements of weakness and sin: divinity shares human weakness, and therefore humanity is forgiven its sin and made strong. The link between human weakness and sinfulness is broken because Christ takes on the first but not the second; therefore, humans can be released from their sinfulness, and find that their weakness can be transformed into strength. For it is not his strength that makes us strong, but rather his taking on weakness; and this is the way of strength which he teaches, namely, entering into weakness. Thus we receive the ability to confess our sins.<sup>117</sup> The purpose and result of his action, in taking on human flesh and human weakness, are our release from sin.

**Context.** The first passage comments upon v. 3 of the psalm, “strong ones have rushed upon me.” Who are the strong ones? Augustine asks (6): they are the devil, and humans who rely upon temporal things, upon their own righteousness (*iustitia*), upon their own strength, and hence have no need of the Physician whose blood is medicine for the sick (7).<sup>118</sup> He opposes this strength not by a similar show of strength, nor even by revealing the “dignity which he has with the Father,” but rather by being emptied of that dignity and entering into human weakness (10; following upon a reference to Phil. 2:6-11). We are called to recognize him in his weakness, by faith not by sight, so that “by believing what we do not see, we may become qualified to see it.”<sup>119</sup> This weakness is both of human flesh (*caro*) and of suffering, mockery and crucifixion<sup>120</sup>;

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<sup>117</sup>Confession of sins is the earthly activity which liberates us to the heavenly activity, confession of praise; yet the latter is also an earthly activity, which increases the nearer we approach to God. Because praise of God is an activity of eternity, therefore when we engage in it on earth we are beginning eternal life. Unceasing praise is the activity of eternal life, the activity proper to angels and the special destiny of humans who enter into divine life. The theme of confession of sins / praise accompanies many of the texts studied in this chapter.

<sup>118</sup>7 (p. 734,44-46); note the eucharistic allusion in the blood of Christ which brings healing to the sick.

<sup>119</sup>10 (p. 737,47-49); “He must be recognized in the weakness itself, not by vision but by faith, so that at least we may believe what we are not yet able to see, and by believing what we do not see, we may become worthy to see it”; *in ipsa infirmitate agnoscendus est, non uisione, sed fide; ut quod uidere nondum possumus, saltem credamus,*

Christ takes on human weakness in these ways, but without taking on human sinfulness. Sin belongs entirely to humans, being the only thing we have which is not his; human nature itself is God's creation, but sinfulness is our own.<sup>121</sup> For out of one (human) mass God has made some to be vessels of honour, others to be vessels of dishonour.<sup>122</sup>

*Commentary.* These passages, and the context in which they appear, bring to divine-human participation the issue of human weakness and sinfulness, and the human need of healing. The healing wrought by the exchange brings about the possibility of sinless humanity, because the Word becomes a sinless human; he not only provides but becomes the medicine which enables human healing. Even more, it raises the human whose sin is forgiven to a share in divinity. The exchange, then, has a two-fold purpose: to heal human sin, and to bring humans to participation in divinity through Christ. Thus we see a connection between the two moments of redemption and deification. He takes on the two-fold weakness of humanity which, however, is not equivalent to sin; for he takes such weakness upon himself without taking on sinfulness, which belongs to humans and not to God. Thus he separates human nature from its sin, showing them to be distinct from one another and so "releasing" humanity from sin. Christ, in becoming

*et credendo quod non uideremus, etiam uidere mereamur.* This paragraph is commenting upon v. 4 of the psalm, "Rise up to meet me, and see."

<sup>120</sup>10 (p. 736,20-23); "he who has been made weak for our sakes, receiving flesh from us, that is, from the human race, crucified, despised, beaten with blows, scourged, hanged on the tree, wounded with the spear"; *qui infirmatus est propter nos, accipiens carnem a nobis, id est a genere humano; crucifixus, contemptus, alapis caesus, flagellatus, ligno suspensus, lancea uulneratus.*

<sup>121</sup>19 (p. 743,4-6); "What have you found in me, except sins alone? Of yours there is nothing except the nature which you have created; the others are my own evils which you have destroyed"; *Quid in me inuenisti, nisi sola peccata? Tuum nihil aliud nisi natura quam creasti; cetera, mala mea quae deleuisti.*

<sup>122</sup>20 (p. 743,4-6); "Let the one gathered compare himself with the ones forsaken, and the one elect with the ones rejected; let the vessel of mercy compare itself with the vessel of wrath, and let it see how out of one mass God has made one vessel unto honour, the other unto dishonour"; *Relictis comparet se collectus, et repulsis electus; comparet se uasis irae uas misericordiae, et uideat quia ex una massa fecit Deus aliud uas in honorem, aliud in contumeliam.*

human, takes on not our sin but our disposition to sin. Augustine's description of the so-called "strong ones" of the world speaks of our disposition to sin as the disposition to self-sufficiency, rather than to the humility which Christ himself displays.<sup>123</sup> Now there can be "flesh without sin," which Christ not only teaches us but becomes for us, so that we might also become it through him. The path for humans is the same as that for Christ: he enters not through strength but through choosing weakness, and so we too are asked not to become strong but to enter into the weakness which is ours, but which he has changed by absolving it of sin. So he becomes the medicine. All this is to be received now, because here it can only be believed, not seen; by believing now in the dignity of Christ and his equality with the Father, which are hidden, we will "become qualified" to see them then. Thus this discourse shows that faith on earth is related to vision of God hereafter, and that ultimate participation in divinity follows upon humans' healing and release from sin and sinfulness. It also shows both Augustine's pessimism about human nature, which is tied to sin and released from "dishonour" by God's mercy alone, and his optimism about the human destiny of overcoming sin to participate in the divine, though this destiny is reserved to the "gathered" and the "elect," not the "forsaken" and the "rejected."

*Enarratio in Psalmum 52 (414)*

I have given to humans to do well; but of me, he says, not of themselves; for of themselves they are evil; they are sons of humans when they do evil, when well they are my sons. For this God does: out of sons of humans he makes sons of God; because out of the Son of God he has made

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<sup>123</sup>Holte (*Béatitude*, p. 298) describes humility, in Augustine, as a "just ontological attitude" involving obedience and submission to God, such that one allows God to form and fill oneself. Pride, by contrast, is a false ontological attitude, refusing to submit to God and allow oneself to be formed by him, thus rejecting one's proper place in the *ordo*. Humility, then, can easily be seen as entrance into that re-formation which leads to deification--which means, at its simplest, receiving God and entering completely into the divine life.

Son of Man. See what this participation is: there has been promised to us a participation of divinity; he lies who has promised, if he is not first made partaker of mortality. For the Son of God has been made partaker of mortality, in order that the mortal human may be made partaker of divinity. He who has promised that his good is to be shared with you, first has shared with you your evil; he who has promised to you divinity, shows in you love. Therefore take away that humans are sons of God, there remains that they are sons of humans: "There is none that does good, no, not one."<sup>124</sup>

**Text.** This passage includes three statements of the divine-human exchange, in terms of: sonship (divine and human); divinity and mortality; good and evil. The absolute distinction between God and humans--the latter being capable only of evil, and of remaining sons of humans--is penetrated by God, who enables mortal humans to become sons of gods, and to share his good and his divinity. Participation must be dual; the promise to us of divinity is a lie unless God first partakes of mortality--and since the implication that God could be a liar is clearly unacceptable, it must be that he has indeed participated in mortality in this way. This is the work of God alone, who shows love (*ostendit caritatem*) in humans, and *prior* partakes in mortality, so that (*ut*) the mortal can partake in divinity. The emphasis is on God's doing: "I have given to humans to do well ... of myself, not of themselves," are the words Augustine puts in God's mouth, for humans on their own cannot do well, and they can receive goodness (like divinity) only by God's gift.

**Context.** These statements of divine-human participation come out of Augustine's commentary on v. 4 of the psalm, "There is no one that does good, not so much as one"; he reflects upon this verse along with the reference in v. 3 to "the sons of humans" upon whom the

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<sup>124</sup>6 (p. 642, 8-21); *Donau hominibus bene facere, sed ex me, inquit, non ex se; ex se enim mali sunt; filii hominum sunt, quando male faciunt; quando bene, filii mei. Hoc enim facit Deus, ex filiis hominum filios Dei, quia ex Filio Dei fecit filium hominis. Uidete quae sit illa participatio: promissa est nobis participatio diuinitatis; mentitur qui promisit, si non est prior factus particeps mortalitatis. Filius enim Dei particeps mortalitatis effectus est, ut mortalis homo fiat particeps diuinitatis. Qui tibi promisit communicandum tecum bonum suum, prius tecum*

Lord looks from heaven, to conclude that among the sons of humans are no good ones at all. Thus, humans are totally subject to evil. However, the first paragraph of the Commentary has interpreted the inscription of the psalm, “for Maeleth,” as meaning “for one travailing in pain”; this one could be only Christ, who is in pain because he shares our evil, and with him the Body of Christ, the Church, is in pain on earth because it exists amid the world’s evil. In the Church, sons of humans are made sons of God (7); because of this transformation they come to share in the pain of Christ, and so they suffer because of the multitude of evil people.<sup>125</sup>

*Commentary.* The psalm verse upon which this text reflects is one of Augustine’s favourite scriptural passages for the theme of divine-human participation; therefore this brief Commentary is helpful in showing how he employs the notion of dual participation. The “more unbelievable” reality, as Augustine has expressed it in previous texts and in *De Trinitate*, is God’s participation in humanity--human participation in the divine is much less shocking.<sup>126</sup> This text suggests why Augustine can dare to make such a claim on behalf of God: the alternate--accusing God of lying--is so obviously unacceptable that he does not bother to refute it. The text also demonstrates that the transformation of sons of humans into sons of God comes out of the contrast between the two, and out of the human inability to move from one to the other on its own. This is why the Church exists--to help humans enter into this divine reality through

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*communicavit malum tuum; qui tibi promisit diuinitatem, ostendit in te caritatem. Ergo tolle quod homines filii Dei sunt, remanet quod filii hominum sunt: Non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum.*

<sup>1257</sup> (p. 642,4-5,7-9); “For your people is devoured for the food of bread. There is therefore here a people of God that is being devoured.... But this people that is devoured, this people that suffers evil ones, this that groans and travails amid evil ones, now out of sons of humans have been made sons of God: therefore they are devoured”; *Populus enim tuus deuoratur in cibo panis. Est ergo hic populus Dei qui deuoratur.... Sed iste populus qui deuoratur, iste populus qui patitur malos, iste qui gemit et parturit inter malos, iam ex filiis hominum filii Dei facti sunt; ideo deuoratur.* One can read a eucharistic allusion in this text, since by becoming sons of God as Christ is Son of God, his people are eaten as bread.

Christ--and why human efforts to be holy on earth lead inevitably to suffering. Yet it breaks the pattern in which humanity is locked: to be a son of humans is to be a liar and therefore trapped by evil. God intervenes to share not only mortality, but even the evil to which mortals are subject; consequently sonship, participation in divinity, truth and goodness become available even to humans. This does not answer the question of the *source* of the evil in humans, or why they are so completely subject to it. Yet it does mean that the psalmist's lament, "there is none that does good," is no longer a condemnation and word of despair for humans, but rather the place where God enters into human life and liberates it.

*Enarratio in Psalmum 117 (414)*

For this reason he has become their means to salvation; not that he has become anything which he was not before, but because they, when they believed in him, became what they were not before, and then, not for himself but for them, he began to be salvation for those turned towards him, which he was not to those turned away from himself.<sup>127</sup>

It is a mighty thing to exalt the humble, to deify the mortal, to bring perfection out of weakness, glory out of subjection, victory out of suffering, to give help, to raise out of trouble; so that the true salvation of God might be laid open to the afflicted, and the salvation of the human might remain of no avail to the afflictors... Humanity did not exalt itself, humanity did not perfect itself, humanity did not give itself the glory, humanity did not conquer, humanity was not salvation to itself: the right hand of the Lord has brought this mighty thing to pass.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>126</sup>To a Platonist or Neoplatonist, God's participation in humanity is not only shocking but unthinkable; but even to Christians, as Augustine intimates, shocking when one truly contemplates its meaning.

<sup>127</sup>9 (p.1661, 6-10); *Et ideo eis factus est in salutem; non quia ipse aliquid factus est quod ante non erat, sed quia ipsi cum in eum crederent, quod non erant facti sunt, et iam ipse non sibi, sed illis, quod auersis a se non erat, salus coepit esse conuersis.*

<sup>128</sup>11. (p. 1661, 3-10); *Magna uirtus exaltare humilem, deificare mortalem, praeberere de infirmitate perfectionem, de subiectione gloriam, de passione uictoriam, dare auxilium de tribulatione, ut afflictis uera salus Dei patesceret, affligentibus autem uana salus hominis remaneret.... Non homo se exaltauit, non homo se perfecit, non sibi homo gloriam dedit, non homo uicit, non homo sibi saluti fuit: Dextera Domini fecit uirtutem.*

**Text.** The first text shows the role of humanity in its own salvation: to turn towards and believe in Christ. For their sake, and not for his own, he begins to be their salvation. However, he is not salvation for those turned away from him. The difference is not in God, but in the different human responses to God (*aversis* or *conuersis*, believing or not believing); when they turn towards him, he “begins to be” their salvation. *They* are changed: they become what they were not (saved). *He* is not changed, for he becomes nothing which he was not already. The implication is that his *divinity* is not changed; in fact, he does become what he was not before in becoming human.<sup>129</sup> The second text describes salvation as coming about through (among other things) deification of the mortal. It emphasizes that salvation is entirely the work of God, and not at all of humanity. Nor does it come to all humanity: the afflicted receive salvation, but to the afflictor it avails nothing.

**Context.** The first text reflects on the meaning of salvation in accord with v. 14 of the psalm, “The Lord has become for me salvation.”<sup>130</sup> The second text, reflecting on v. 16, “the Lord has done mighty things (*uirtutem*),” asks what these mighty things are that the Lord has done. Augustine uses the passage both to emphasize that it is indeed God who “has done,” not humans, and to show that the “mighty things” are themselves the salvation which God is, and which brings humans to perfection, glory and victory.

**Commentary.** The two texts together demonstrate that salvation is entirely God’s work, which he takes on and indeed is, entirely for the sake of humanity. Yet humans themselves have a role to play, in their receptivity of this work (by turning towards God or not) and their faith in

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<sup>129</sup> Cf. En. 84, above: “He became human for human, he reserved himself as God for gods”; and S. 192, above,

him. Humans become what they were not by receiving what God is: salvation. Augustine wishes to underscore that God does not “become” anything he was not; he always was salvation, but the dynamic of “becoming” is reserved to humans who do or do not believe in him yet turn to him. Then something can begin, when it is received by humans.<sup>131</sup> Salvation is there in God, but is simply unavailable to some humans, as suggested by the contrast between the afflictor and the afflicted.

*Enarratio in Psalmum 118 Sermo 16 (418)*<sup>132</sup>

Each one who clings to him becomes a partaker in him, as it is written, But it is good for me to cling to God [Ps 73:28]; for it is not by their own existence that humans become gods, but by partaking in that one who is true God.<sup>133</sup>

What else does this mean, but that he became their companion? For we should not be made partakers in his divinity, unless he were made a partaker in our mortality. For in the Gospel it is said in these words, that we have been made partakers in his divinity: To them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God [Jn 1:12-14]. But that this might be so, since he also has become a partaker in our mortality, it is also said, And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Through this partaking of him, grace is ministered to us, so that we may have a chaste fear of God, and may keep his commandments.<sup>134</sup>

“without forfeiting what he was, he wished to become what he himself had made.”

<sup>130</sup> *Factus est mihi in salutem.*

<sup>131</sup> God’s being is always God’s being, *uere esse*; humans do not become *uere esse*, but participate in true being by participating in God. Evil is non-being, a turning away from good; created beings share in being, but also share in non-being (evil) insofar as they are not Being in itself (Anderson, *Augustine and Being*, p. 24). Augustine’s idea that humans approach God and so become like him, or withdraw from God and become unlike, is closely associated with the theme of deification and divine-human participation.

<sup>132</sup> As indicated in the Introduction to this chapter, this Commentary and the following one are part of a series composed by Augustine on Ps. 118. Though 418 is the more commonly accepted date, La Bonnardière would place them as late as 422.

<sup>133</sup> 1 (p. 1716, 4-7); *particeps eius fit quisquis ei adhaeret, sicut scriptum est: Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est; non enim existendo sunt homines dii, sed fiunt participando illius unius qui uerus est Deus.*

<sup>134</sup> 6 (p. 1718, 11-21); *Quod quid est aliud, quam: Eorum particeps factus est? Neque enim efficeremur participes diuinitatis eius, nisi ipse mortalitatis nostrae particeps fieret. Nam et in euangelio, quod nos diuinitatis eius participes facti sumus, ita dicitur: Dedit potestatem filios Dei fieri; his qui credunt in nomine eius, qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex uoluntate carnis, neque ex uoluntate uiri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. Ut autem hoc fieret, quia et ipse factus est particeps mortalitatis nostrae, ita ibi sequitur: Et Uerbum caro factum est, et habitauit in nobis. Per hanc eius participationem nobis gratia subministratur, ut caste timeamus Deum, et custodiamus mandata eius.*

**Text.** Human participation in divinity is clearly associated with deification in the first text: it is by means of such participation that humans become gods. Deification is seen as the result of partaking in God, which itself is the result of God's partaking in humanity. This end is achieved because humans cling to him, but that human role is derivative of God's work, for it is not by their own existence but by partaking in his that they become gods. The second text adds that this participation which brings deification is the result of divine participation in mortality. Augustine interprets the Johannine text as affirming the exchange which brings about human participation in divinity ("*nam et in euangelio*"): the Word was made flesh (divine half of the exchange) so that humans might be born of God and be given power to become sons of God (human half of the exchange). Those humans who partake in the exchange are given healing, through grace, for they are enabled to keep the commandments.

**Context.** The first text, which is taken from the Commentary's opening paragraph, is one of two interpretations of v. 5, "The Lord is my portion," both of which Augustine considers plausible. The second comments on v. 63, "I am a companion [*particeps*] of all who fear you, and keep your commandments." Since Augustine, as always, interprets these words as spoken by Christ to the Father, they lead him to explain what it means to become Christ's *particeps*, which he does by expounding his notion of dual participation.

**Commentary.** Here, Augustine definitively dissociates himself from any notion that deification or participation stem from any innate divinity of the human. Humans become sons, gods and partakers through grace, through reception of the power God gives them, and through birth from God. Our participation in divinity is absolutely dependent upon God's initiative

which brings him into mortality. Humans indeed become gods, but always and only in a qualified sense, absolutely not in the way that God is God. The first text clearly links human participation in divinity with deification (humans become gods). The second, drawing on the Johannine text, virtually equates participation with divine sonship. Augustine's concept of clinging to God (*adhaerere deo*) is associated with both *beatitudo* and *participatio deo*: the soul, wanting to adhere to God, comes to the blessed life which means participating in God.<sup>135</sup>

*Enarratio in Psalmum 118 Sermo 19 (418)*

Who is he who says this ? For no human will venture to say this, or if he say it, should be listened to. Indeed, it is he who above also interposed his own words, saying, "I am a partaker of all who fear you." Because he was made partaker in our mortality, so that we might also become partakers in his divinity, we became partakers in One unto life, he a partaker in many unto death. He it is to whom those who fear God turn.<sup>136</sup>

**Text.** Here the exchange is expressed in new terms, namely life and death: he partakes in death so that we might partake in life. Thus divine-human participation is associated with human freedom from corruptibility. It also means a movement from multiplicity to unity, as he participates in many so that the many can participate in One. The human task is simply to turn towards him (be converted). But this is done by those who fear God, and they are already the ones in whom he partakes; he participates in those who fear him, and they turn to him.

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<sup>135</sup>Holte, *Béatitude*, p. 219. Holte also associates these with enjoying God (*frui deo*), which he describes as both a divine activity which reaches into the soul's passivity, and an activity of the soul. This expression succinctly articulates the dynamic between God's activity and human activity which we have seen at work throughout these texts.

<sup>136</sup>6 (pp. 1728, 4 - 1729, 1); *Sed quis est iste qui hoc dicit? Non enim quisquam hominum hoc dicere audebit, aut si dicat, audiendus est. Nimirum ergo ille est qui etiam superius interposuit proprietatem uocis suae, dicens: Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te. Quia factus est particeps mortalitatis nostrae, ut et nos participes diuinitatis ipsius fieremus; nos unius participes ad uitam, ad mortem uero particeps ille multorum. Ipse est enim ad quem conuertuntur timentes Deum.*

**Context.** “This” refers to v. 79 of the psalm, “Let those who fear you and have known your testimonies be turned to me.” No human could say this, because it puts the speaker in the same place as God. Augustine associates this verse with v. 63, which he already associated with divine sonship and divine-human participation (in his Commentary on En. 118, S. 16, above). Learning God’s commands, he has explained in the opening of this sermon, means being reformed (*reformare*) by the God who formed (*formare*) us (1). The discourse has also touched upon the interplay between death and life: we are humbled to death by his judgements because he is truth; but his mercy renews us to life (*instauramur ad uitam*) through grace. This brings the regeneration (*regeneratio*) which makes us sons of God (3). All of these belong to this life in one way, to the after-life in another, for they are “in this stormy and troublesome life the consolations of the miserable, not the joys of the blessed” (3).

**Commentary.** The exchange enables humans, not to escape death, but to go through it to life, as Christ himself does; thus divine-human participation is associated with the human acquisition of incorruptibility through Christ’s taking on corruptibility. This involves the conversion of humans, for it is when they are turned towards God that they can enter into the exchange, and when they turn away that they turn from life.<sup>137</sup> The context shows that this entrance into new life<sup>138</sup> also involves regeneration and reformation,<sup>139</sup> which Augustine

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<sup>137</sup>In falling, Adam turned from God, and hence from his unhindered participation in God which was the blessedness of Paradise; Bonner, “Christ, God and Man,” p. 274. Renewal means turning back to God, and so to the state better than that from which Adam fell.

<sup>138</sup>As Ladner stresses in his discussion of reformation and renewal, the new life to which humans are brought is a state higher than that from which Adam fell (*ad meliorem*), which fulfills but heightens the movement of creation. Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p. 58.

<sup>139</sup>On *reformare* to express the process of being joined to God, cf. *De quant.anim.* 28.55 (ACW 9, p. 82; CSEL 89, pp. 201-202).

associates with divine sonship. This text puts the exchange on the level of being, since by it death is overcome so that humans can enter into life and oneness.

### 4.3 Summary and Conclusion

#### Summary

Deification as participation in divine life is a recurrent theme in the texts selected and analyzed in this chapter. They address the three-fold question at the heart of deification: who is God, who are humans, and what is the relationship between them? These texts consistently emphasize the ineradicable distinction between God and humankind, yet the unique, abiding intimacy of God with humans which enables humans to come into divine life. The texts use identifiable terminology and structures to express this understanding, but also show variety of expression and draw in other significant concepts which relate to that of deification.

As Augustine sees it, deification brings God and humankind into proper relationship. This relationship is real and abiding, maintaining the truth of who God is while also bringing humankind to the truth of its own nature. God is unchangeable and humankind changeable, and so in the meeting of the two, God remains as he is but humankind becomes what it should be. God can invite change into himself yet be unchanged: he becomes what he is not in becoming human, even though God simply is God and cannot “become” at all. Humankind itself is the meeting-point between divine and human, because for humans it is the only possible meeting-point; Christ is the one in whom this meeting comes about, both in himself (in one way), and

derivatively in humans (in another way). The christological focus of all the texts is axial: Christ is Mediator, and *because* he brings together human and divine, *therefore* humankind can be brought into divinity. This effect on humankind is the purpose of God's activity in Christ; the pattern which he not only teaches but becomes enables humans to mirror that pattern.

The relationship which is brought about through Christ is the participation of humankind in divinity, because God in Christ first partook in humanity. This dual participation, the former dependent upon the latter, is the heart of the exchange by which humans take on what is God's as a result of Christ taking on what is human. The exchange depends upon the inequality of human and divine, and upon the priority of God's activity which brings about the possibility of human response. The divine role is creative and active; the human, receptive and passive. This basic human-divine relationship, this right ordering of things, is not altered by the exchange, but rather fulfilled. Human receptivity of God's work happens through faith, an inner change which is reflected in outward behaviour; in other words, it begins to work a change in human lives, as they turn more and more towards God. Apart from God's participation in humanity, humans are merely human, which means that they are trapped by lies, slaves to sin and bound by mortality; but because of God's participation, humans can choose another way, by choosing Christ. This narrow way leads to their own exaltation, adoptive sonship, and even godhood, which releases them from sinfulness. They do not thereby escape death, but they do find new life in death, which means belonging to the truth and becoming, not other than human, but more than human: humans who participate in divinity, or gods who have fulfilled their humanity. Humans who receive God's gift are said to merit such fulfillment, but even that meriting is God's gift. It brings them to purity of heart, and hence to vision of God; these, along with immortality, sonship,

godhood and all the other ultimate gifts, belong only to the after-life (in reality, and by seeing), yet paradoxically can begin to be received in this life (in hope, and by faith).

Though participation in immortality is a necessary element of deification, it is not by any means the only one. It is accompanied by healing of the sinfulness which began with Adam, vision of God, eternal praise of God, incorruption, equality with the angels, membership in the heavenly city, redemption, renewal, re-birth, nearness to God, and likeness to God. Equality with angels means being citizens with them in the heavenly city, but not becoming identical to them. Renewal means not only being healed of sin, but being brought to a state beyond that which preceded sinfulness; it is renewal of both spirit and flesh, though the former is prior, and though reserved till after death, it is begun on earth. Deification is profoundly linked with adoptive sonship, with which in some texts it is virtually synonymous. It is associated also with justification, which is a necessary part of the process of deification, and forgiveness of sins, which connects it with redemption. Human participation in divinity, which makes humans like God, restores in them the image of God which sin deforms—and which, enslaved to sin, humans are incapable of restoring on their own without Christ's participation. That participation enables the possibility of human renewal, connecting redemption with creation. These texts focus upon the role of the Incarnation in bringing about all of this, but also point to the further dimension of suffering, crucifixion and death, in all of which Christ partook, and in which therefore humans too must partake in order to mirror his pattern of descent and ascent, and so reach immortality with him.

In keeping with the christocentricity of these texts is the irreplaceable role of the Church in this human fulfillment; for Augustine, Christ is Head and Body of the Church, which cannot be

separated from him. It is not surprising therefore that the Church, though not the direct subject of the works analyzed, is woven into the very fabric of divine-human participation. The full divine-human participation reserved for heaven is anticipated on earth in the Church, where however it is still accompanied by the presence of evil, which will be totally absent in heaven. Renewal on earth begins with baptism, and is received again as often as one participates in eucharist; as Christ becomes eucharist, so humans who participate in eucharist become that which Christ offers. On earth, divine-human participation is to be lived through a virtuous life in the Church; though Christian life tends to bring increase of suffering, this in turn brings a deeper participation in the life of Christ. Deification therefore is not solely individual, but involves humans' relationship with one another, and (ultimately) vision of one another, when they are able finally to see God.

Several scriptural texts recur among these discussions. Among the Psalms, Augustine cites especially Pss. 82 and 96, both of which refer to gods in the plural and which he takes as indicating that some humans will become gods, with a special relationship to God. He also cites Pss. 52 and 116, which speak in absolute terms of the evil to which humans are subject, and so lead Augustine to express the totality of humankind's predicament apart from God, while their release from that predicament must be entirely God's work and a total gift from him. From the New Testament, he leans on two Johannine texts which speak of divine adoption as sons and the future fulfillment, Jn. 1:12 and 1 Jn. 3:2, as well as referring more generally to the Prologue of John's Gospel. Pauline themes are equally predominant, with special mention in these texts of 2 Cor. 8:9 and Phil. 2:5-11, which help him to express the divine-human exchange in Christ. The

more general themes which these texts draw upon are the nativity of Christ, the Easter themes and (in that context) baptism, eucharist and the sacramental life of Christians.

### Conclusion

Some important questions are left unanswered, or even unasked, in these texts. For instance, the issue of the complete subjection of humans to evil (insofar as they are apart from God) is reiterated and elaborated, but the source of this subjection is not. In addition, though Augustine does not directly discuss the question in these texts, it is evident that not all humans will enter into deification either in this life or in the next, though he does not discuss why this is so, nor who will be accepted and who rejected. It is clear that the fullness of divine participation is reserved till after death, yet in some way that participation can begin already on earth, especially in the Church; but just what is available on earth and what is reserved to heaven is not always clear, and indeed Augustine is eager to respect the mystery and content to leave such questions unanswered. A question left somewhat in the background is the relationship among the Incarnation, the crucifixion and the resurrection; the human process of deification (which is a fulfillment of what is given in creation) begins but does not end with the Incarnation, involves suffering and death, and leads to resurrection. Finally, the mystery itself of deification—how humans can participate in without becoming God's being, or (to put it the other way) how God can share his being yet remain other—is left as mystery, and the contradictions it raises are left unresolved. Just what is it that humans will receive, partake in, and see in the final fulfillment? Included are immortality, incorruptibility, eternal life, freedom from sin, God's own substance, truth, and a real, intimate joining of divine and human. The focal point of that joining is Christ

himself, and though the life of the Trinity is not absent from these texts, neither is it brought to the fore in terms of human entrance into the divine life.

Some fundamental themes seen in *De Trinitate* are reinforced in these texts. In the latter as in the former, the distinction between Creator and creature is paramount, in human creation, in redemption and in our final destiny; that destiny in no way abolishes, but draws on and fulfills, the distinction. In order for humans to arrive at their final destiny, they are changed so as to be able to enter into it; God is not changed at all. This fundamental distinction between God and humanity—his immutability, our mutability—does not prevent the exchange and fulfillment from occurring, but on the contrary is the ground which enables that fulfillment to occur. As Augustine emphasizes in *De Trinitate*, it is our very changeability which is our hope, for we need to be changed in a way which we ourselves are incapable of bringing about. These homiletic texts are christocentric in their understanding of salvation and deification; it is the Incarnation, the relationship of Christ to humanity, the cross and resurrection, which show and bring us the possibility of entering into divine life. The theme of the “old Adam” and the “new Adam,” the old human and the new human, recurs in these texts. The gratuitous coming of Christ, the new Adam, breaks the impasse which bound the old Adam and all humans; by breaking apart this prison from within, Christ renders it possible for humans to enter into the promise of divine life for which they are created, but from which sin has barred them. Augustine insists on the dual participation—Christ in human life, and therefore humans in divine life—which is the dynamism of the exchange. These texts give very little attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in the exchange and in the final fulfillment, certainly less so than in *De Trinitate*. Nor is the sense of human entrance into trinitarian life at all prominent here; the focus is, predominantly, on the need

to conform to the pattern of Christ, in Incarnation, life, death and resurrection, so as to enter into the divine life in a way impossible to humans on their own, but made possible by Christ.

As in *De Trinitate*, these texts show that Augustine sees in baptism the accomplishment of a real and thorough transformation, which initiates a lifetime of healing. That healing, which involves labour on the part of the Christian who receives it, is brought about by Christ the physician, an image more conspicuous in the homiletic texts than in *De Trinitate*; the theme of human healing is important in *De Trinitate*, and that work does refer to Christ as physician, but Christ as mediator is the more prominent image in *De Trinitate*. Also clear in both the homiletic discourses and *De Trinitate* is the inevitability of human iniquity: *homo et iniquus* is the plight in which the human is found by Christ, but is also the point at which God enters in to transform the situation from despair to hope; it is into human helplessness, as En. 84 explains, that God's mercy is poured out. Humanity's task is to receive the healing which has been thus given—and which, the homiletic texts stress, is neither easy nor cheap, but often painful and generally against the grain.

In general, the homiletic texts are directed towards showing Christians how to receive, here and now in this life, the promise given by Christ's participation in humanity. Augustine is quite clear, as in *De Trinitate*, that the promise is fully received only after death, where alone is given the vision of God and complete participation in divinity; and part of his task is to portray the other-worldly destiny. Nonetheless, there is ample reason to know, receive and learn to live all that is given in this life. Indeed, it is necessary to do so. The homiletic discourses show Augustine's awareness of his audience as surrounded by non-Christians, and by forces which would lead them away from the life into which their baptism initiates them; even within the

Church are those who live flagrantly bad lives. He is insistent that, though evil and sin will be completely absent from the next life, they are overwhelmingly evident in the present one. By bringing deification and divine-human participation into his homilies, he reminds his audience that these, not sin and evil, are the ultimate realities even though the opposite may often seem to be the case; and also, to show them that the more they accept and live these realities, which they cannot see but must learn by way of faith, the more their lives will be changed by them, even now, and hence the better prepared they will be for the final fulfillment. As in *De Trinitate*, it is not a question of life and death being totally unrelated, though they are certainly distinct, the first marked by evil and sin, the second by their absence; rather, the needed divine initiative which breaks open the human plight already transforms this life, so that humans can be led through it into the next. It is in this context that Augustine wishes to exhort his audience to live in a new way, fitting to the divine initiative which already has taken place. This new way brings an inner transformation which takes expression in changed outward behaviour. The homiletic texts show constant awareness of how difficult the change is to receive and live, and how prevalent are the obstacles against it; these obstacles are not erased by baptism but, on the contrary, seem only to increase the more one enters into Christian life. It is both necessary and urgent that humans hear and respond to the promise of participation in divine life, which they can do because Christ's participation in human life has given them a way to do so, and the Church has given them a way and a place to live it.

God's participation in humanity, in Christ, is more than a promise; it is the "more incredible reality" which is an accomplished fact, and which means that the "less incredible reality" of human participation in the divine can and will come about for those who receive it.

These texts state in varied ways that something has already been given, which is available now in this life, and can be received here though it can be fulfilled only in the next. Something definitive has already been done: the more incredible reality is accomplished (S. Mainz 13), the physician has already administered the medicine (S. Mainz 12), the slave has been made free to see the form of God (S. 194), the reality which will be received “then” is given “now” in hope (En. 84), the more unbelievable thing has been paid in advance (S. 192), our human reality has been shared with us (En. 52), we have been given power to become sons of God (En. 49, referring to Jn. 1:12). En. 146 uses the word pledge (*pignus*): the pledge is God’s participation in humanity. Much more than a promise, it not only heralds but in some way actually gives the reality which will come to fruition only after death. To receive the pledge is to begin to receive the final reality, even in this life, in faith and in hope but also in a way that changes this life, and changes the human gradually from within. The exchange theme is prevalent in these texts; it conveys a strong sense of purpose, for the divine half of the exchange has occurred in order that the human half may occur. It is God who has brought this about; but it is humans who receive it, and to the extent that they do so, their lives begin to be changed in the here-and-now.

The homiletic texts also show that this destiny is uniquely available to humans among the created order. The angel theme, which appears in them, shows at once the height to which humans are to be raised—to a level with that of the angels—and also that in some way the human destiny surpasses even that of the angels. The human destiny of participation in divinity is the other side of human creation in God’s image and likeness, as seen also in *De Trinitate*. The theme of eucharist is touched on in the homilies; eucharist brings, in some way, participation in Christ, in the way this can occur on earth, within the Church. The Church context is much more

prevalent in these texts than in *De Trinitate*, which is reflective of the different genres and their purposes. On the other hand, it is *De Trinitate* which makes stunningly clear the change wrought in the human soul: its coming to know itself as created for but turned away from God, trapped by iniquity and unable to turn back. *De Trinitate* fills out the interior dynamism of human conversion, while the homiletic texts stress the ecclesial life which enables and accompanies it, along with the worldly evils which oppose it. Unlike *De Trinitate*, the homiletic texts do use the term deification itself, not liberally but not timidly; they place the notion of humans becoming gods on a level with divine sonship, human participation in divinity, renewal and reformation. Human godhood (deification) and divine adoption appear to be virtually synonymous, with the same internal structure, the same emphasis on the exchange which brings them about, the same christological focus, and the same sense of the simultaneous distance and closeness between God and humans.

## CONCLUSION

Human participation in divine life is a significant theme in Augustine, as reflected in selected writings of the time period covered in this analysis (roughly AD 400–420). This theme is woven into the homiletic discourses studied, and is part of the very fabric of *De Trinitate*. It is an essential element of Augustine’s anthropology, soteriology, and his christology. In order to understand these properly, as well as Augustine’s trinitarian theology and pneumatology, a good grasp of the concept and its place in his thought is essential. My interpretation of the selected texts of Augustine (the second of Lonergan’s eight functional specialties) has identified, and given shape and contour, to his concept of deification as expressed in them.

“Deification” is a term which Augustine uses (in some form), sparingly but quite directly, during this period; I have used the term “deification” to identify Augustine’s concept of human entry into divine life. That term is closely linked with other, more common expressions, especially: divine adoption as sons, justification, participation, and renewal (also renovation, reformation, perfection) of the human image of God. As a description of the human destiny, deification needs to be seen together with other essential elements, especially: immortality, happiness, forgiveness of sins, healing, faith, contemplation, equality with the angels, and likeness to God. The work of this thesis also helps to illuminate the history (the third functional specialty) of the concept of deification, by examining its place in Augustine’s thought—a place of some significance—and within the Latin Christian world of which Augustine was part, where it is certainly present, though neither common nor well-developed. In Augustine, however, it does take an identifiable shape, with discernible elements.

### The Meaning of Deification in Augustine's Theology

Based on the texts of Augustine which I have selected and interpreted, the meaning and shape of deification can now be described. He sees deification as the fulfillment of human creation in the image and likeness of God, which is a fulfillment to something better than that originally given (that is, given to Adam and Eve). It begins in earthly life, where it can be truly tasted; though it cannot be completed here, it must begin here, but in its fullness it means human participation in divine life after death and throughout eternity.

In earthly life, humans are never entirely separated from sin and evil, never fully able to choose God, never able to see God as he is. The most exceptional humans, such as Moses or St. Paul, may perhaps have risen beyond this, but even in their case we cannot be certain; certainly, the normal lot of humans, even Christians, is to be subject on earth to sin and evil both within and without. The earthly process of deification begins with forgiveness of sins and conversion; baptism and entry into the Church are essential elements of this beginning. The human soul, which is God's image, is awakened to its own image-character, and to its separation from and need of God, as well as its own helplessness to return to God whom it has left of its own accord. The image is activated when the soul, having been thus awakened, turns to participate in God, in the way that it can in life.

All this can come about through the pledge, already given in the Incarnation, which is the first and more incredible half of the divine-human exchange, by which God enters into humanity so that humans can enter into divinity. The pledge, already accomplished, and given for the purpose of human salvation, is embedded in the Incarnation, by which God participates in humanity. "Pledge," a term Augustine uses in the homiletic texts to refer to the divine half of the exchange, conveys well the already/not yet theme which recurs throughout all the texts: something definitive, much more than a promise, is given through Christ's participation in humanity, but needs to be worked out in particular human lives, and awaits complete fulfillment after death. The accomplishment of the pledge enables the second half of the exchange: human reception of Christ and participation in God. All this is lived out in a lifetime of faith, virtue, progressive reception of

the pledge given in Christ, and uncovering and renewal of the divine image in oneself, which occurs within the life of the Church. Christ makes it possible for humans to receive and enter into the pledge, since his unique union of humanity and divinity gives humans a way into the divine life, of which (though created for it) they would otherwise be incapable. Human reception also somehow involves the work of the Holy Spirit, whom humans are to imitate, so as to receive Christ's gift of participation; this leads, ultimately, to the Father, but the Son and Spirit are our primary experiences here on earth.

This earthly process is fulfilled only after death, for the saved. In its other-worldly fullness, it means humans' complete participation in God, in fulfillment of the capacity for God given to us in our creation in God's image. Deification, in fact, is indelibly linked to image theology, and is best understood as fulfillment of the image-character through the soul's active participation in God. The vision of God is the definitive point of entrance into divine life, for the human who has completed the earthly process and become so changed as to be able to see God. Vision and contemplation of God are interrelated terms. The first really is given only after death, having been prepared for through faith on earth, but both seem to be the content of eternal life; contemplation is its eternal pastime, enjoyed by the perfected image, in immortal happiness, in union with all the blessed. Deification means complete human entry into the divine trinitarian life--complete, in that the whole human, resurrected body and perfected soul, enters in; though not complete in another sense, for the human never becomes identical with any member of the divine Trinity, not even Christ, nor takes on the very being of God. The deified human is the renewed and perfected soul and resurrected body, in proper union with each other, perpetually turned towards God in union with all deified humans and with the angels. Humans, unique among all creatures, are designed for and capable of such participation in God; human reception and activation of that capacity brings participation in divinity.

Such is the meaning and shape of human deification, as it can be received on earth, and in its completion after death. Both dimensions are important to us in the here-and-now, as the homiletic discourses especially show, because to receive the pledge on earth is already to begin to

be changed, both in oneself and in one's way of life. Augustine continually calls on his audience to receive the pledge and be transformed by it, so as to enter into divine life in eternity. He also insists that deification is not a human feat but a divine gift, to be received by some humans; he does not, in the texts studied, discuss which humans are to receive it, nor why some and not others. He does present the divine initiative as essential and total, and the human response as necessary but completely dependent upon the divine; one might say that the divine role comprises 100%, and the human 1%, but together they add up to 100%.

### Questions about Augustine's Notion of Deification

Some questions about the elements of deification are raised by the texts. What, then, is the relationship between the remission of sins and deification? The former must happen in this life in order for the second to come about. Deification is, in a sense, the "new and improved" human destiny, in response to sin and the fall; it is the result of the renewal *ad meliorem*. Yet forgiveness of sins is a primary and necessary step, which allows human healing to begin here on earth. The devil is an obstacle to be overcome in this regard; in fact, Christ has already overcome him for humanity, but this defeat needs to be worked out for the individual; that, too, is the earthly process of deification for humans who accept it. Despite the optimism underlying his Creation-Incarnation-Participation schema, Augustine is very aware of and attentive to sin, evil and the devil. He is convinced of the human helplessness to overcome them and their detrimental effects upon the human image--almost, but not quite, to the point of destroying it altogether. His concept of deification, therefore, deeply involves this dimension of sin and evil, and to a corresponding degree, the absolute necessity of divine intervention. The lavishness of God's love and activity on behalf of his human creation does not simply erase sin, nor only "pay the debt"; as *De Trinitate* explains, Christ's death and resurrection do not overcome the devil by power, but rather draw his works into the total schema of divine justice, which is the true power. Christ reaches into human sinfulness and precisely there, where despair ought to reign, makes a path to goodness; he breaks open and transforms human helplessness. The deified human, who has activated his capacity to

participate in divine life, participates in a fuller way than did Adam and Eve before the fall: he has been redeemed from sin, theirs and his own, which is real and has real effects, but into which God's mercy has been poured.

For Augustine, the human being is not understandable without reference to God. His idea of activation and renewal of the image, necessary to full participation, complements his sense of human helplessness, pointed out by present-day Eastern and Western theologians alike: the height which deified humans are destined to attain is commensurate with the depth of the human plight without God. As Bonner and Rowan Williams stress, among others, Augustine is pessimistic about human nature; but this actually serves to increase the sense of exaltation of the deified human, who ultimately stands in a place where Christ himself has stood. Christ goes beyond that to a region where humans cannot follow, but he truly brings them to a place within the life of the divine Trinity, a privileged place totally unique among all creatures, equal to the angels but also greater because the special Christ-human relationship is eternal. How that special relationship translates into eternal life is not clear to Augustine, but that it will be transformed is evident, for Christ's role as mediator and intercessor, so crucial to us on earth, will no longer be needed after our death; but his participation in humanity comes into eternity, as does human bodiliness in some transformed way.

Is the trinitarian dimension of participation ultimate, or does it fade away in the mystery of God in himself? The question of the trinitarian dimension of human deification is not fully answerable. Certainly the trinitarian element is essential in earthly life, but in eternal life this is less clear. The christological dimension is paramount in both; but, though Augustine sees that Christ's role for humans will change radically after our death, he does not see clearly into what it will change. Still, the particular relationship between humanity (uniquely among all creation) and Christ (uniquely within the divine Trinity) is somehow eternal, because Christ, in taking on humanity, does not put it off again, but takes it eternally into the Godhead. There are seeds of a pneumatology in the texts studied, though they are little developed, and not at all in terms of human relationship to the Holy Spirit after death. As to the Father's place in human lives, it is more

hidden in this world, and Augustine does not discuss it in regard to the next world; but since the work of Son and Spirit is to bring us to the Father, it is to be assumed that full participation in divine life includes coming closer to the Father. Seeing God as he is, contemplating not only the “milk” of Christ’s humanity but also the “solid food” of his divinity, leaves unanswered the question of what this means in terms of “seeing” the Father, or whether this is distinct from “seeing” the one God.

How does Augustine perceive the distinction and relationship between the Uncreated and the created? The human soul, for him, is not of the same nature as God and never will be; yet it has an essential kinship, because it is created in God’s image, and again because of the Incarnation. Augustine in no way wants the human soul to be equal to God, nor to become God’s essence. His notion of participation seems to be a principal way of holding on to the distinction. God’s being is his own, and God alone truly is; yet humanity is given the capacity for participatory being, and full awakening of that capacity brings the human so close to God as to allow of expressions such as “made god” and “deified.” Augustine certainly envisions both body and soul as being part of the ultimate human fulfillment, each in its proper place; but just what their relationship will be after death he does not fully clarify, though he knows it relates (eternally) to the Son of God who truly and eternally took flesh.

As to whether the deified human will see God just as he is, even after death, Augustine is likewise unclear; though he does not entirely reject the possibility, he is more inclined to think not. Similarly, he is not clear as to God’s ultimate knowability or unknowability. He does suggest that there is a human limitation in regard to knowing God, beyond the limitation of sin; it is inherent in the Creator-creature distinction, and therefore perhaps not to be overcome even when sin is completely overcome. He sees sin as both individual and communal (sharing in the sin of Adam); likewise, his idea of redemption is both individual and communal, but the emphasis in the texts studied is the individual’s redemption and deification.

The questions just outlined invite further analysis in several relevant areas of Augustine’s thought. These include the following. What is the connection between the human body and soul,

in their distinctness and inter-dependence in this life, and in their renewed state after death? What is the relationship of the “interior human” to the divine Trinity both in this life and in the next? In this life, how is that relationship altered in turn by sin, by forgiveness of sins, and by the lifetime of healing which can follow that forgiveness? What fruits of the healed divine-human relationship are available already in this life, and what is reserved till after death? What is the role of each member of the divine Trinity in the divine-human relationship, especially that of the Holy Spirit? What will be the changes in that relationship after death? How does the Trinitarian dimension of the divine-human relationship translate in eternal life? What is the connection between remission of sins and deification, and what is the role of the devil here? How do we understand the interplay, in Augustine’s anthropology, between a fundamental optimism about the human origin and destiny, and a dark, pessimistic view of human nature and human sinfulness, both in the particular human and in humanity as a whole? How does that interplay affect his notion of deification, and his ideas as to which humans will be deified? All of these issues are integral to his concept of deification; study of them in light of that concept should help give further contour to it, and help elucidate the place and significance of the concept in his theology. Augustinian texts which may be particularly apt for such analysis include writings of the Pelagian debate; these overlap with the period studied here, and raise issues such as the role of the Holy Spirit in awakening the human soul, and the place of the human being in her own salvation. Again, a closer study of scriptural foundations of Augustine’s concept of deification is in order: for example, his use of Pauline imagery (such as the often referred to kenotic hymn of Philippians 2, and the “puzzling reflection” of 1 Cor. 13) and Pauline texts on adoptive sonship and human likeness to God; and his use of Johannine images and writings, for example in the *Tractates on John*.

### Implications for Further Study

An important area of study, which has not been possible within this dissertation but which would be fruitful ecumenically, is to consider Augustine’s idea of deification in relationship to the Eastern concept of *theosis*. In that regard, a few preliminary comments can be made. Certainly,

never does Augustine in these texts reject the notion of deification, nor does he commit himself to a position which would entail its rejection. Indeed, his cautious openness to the term itself is far more than neutral. Deification is not his explicit focus, perhaps; nor, for that matter, do Eastern theologians of his era discuss it directly. Yet, in *De Trinitate*, one of the major works of his lifetime, the idea of human salvation and fulfillment as participation in divine life is the very canvas on which Augustine paints. His emphasis on remission of sins, the devil's role, and the otherworldliness of the fulfillment, are distinct from Eastern theology; and they coincide with his general tendency to see original sin as introducing into the human spirit a depravity, not just a deprivation. The interplay of optimism and pessimism in his anthropology, and his stress on individual redemption, are points which need to be compared with Eastern thought. The connection between image-theology and *theosis* is a strong characteristic of Greek theology; *De Trinitate*, in particular, shows how intimately connected Augustine's image-theology is to his soteriology: human glorification comes out of, and brings to its fullness, human creation in God's image and likeness.

As seen in the discussion of Orthodox attitudes to Augustine (Chapter 1), Eastern theologians such as Yannaras and Lot-Borodine point to the Eastern distinction between God's essence and energies as essential to *theosis*, and question whether Augustine's theology allows for a real entry into divine life such that God truly remains other without human absorption into him. In the texts analyzed, Augustine does not run the risk of absorbing humans into the divine; he is perhaps at greater risk of losing God's transcendence. He clearly does not wish to do so, and this leads him to questions such as whether God will be seen just as he is, how the trinitarian dimension will apply in eternity, and what Christ will be for us when the "milk" of his human form is no longer required. The question he implicitly asks is: can we be so changed as to see God *sicuti est* and "know" him in his innermost being, yet still remain human creatures, not ourselves of God's essence? Augustine's anthropology opposes such a blurring of human with divine, but are his theology and soteriology fully able to help him maintain their distinctness? His idea of

being and participation may be the best aid here, enabling him to keep the distinction while allowing the real union.

Is that union only, or primarily, a moral one? Certainly, Augustine stresses the moral union, especially in his preaching, but such union also needs to be on the level of being, and it is the human herself--her innermost being--which is changed in the awakening, activation and renewal of the image which enables her to participate in divine life. Moral perfection comes with perfection of the image; but the two are part of the one process, which results in a real change in humanity to *and beyond* what was given it at creation. Ladner particularly emphasizes the redemption *ad meliorem* (cf. Chapter 1); further analysis is in order about Augustine's distinctiveness on this point, with respect to both Eastern and Western theologians of his era. A point of diversity between Augustine and the Eastern tradition concerns Augustine's conviction that the vision of God is reserved till after death, when it is given completely and definitively; Eastern thought tends to be open to the possibility of *theosis* even on earth (especially in the desert tradition), and to the idea that even in heaven one's capacity to see God continues to grow (especially in Gregory of Nyssa). Yet, though Augustine certainly maintains a clear distinction between this life and the next, carefully distinguishing what belongs to each, he also sees necessary connections between them: for him, something definitive of human salvation is already available here on earth, and reception of it *in this life* is crucial for attaining that other-worldly vision of God. That is the "pledge" given in the Incarnation. Just what does the "pledge" bring humans in this life, and how does it lead us to the next? There is room for discussion here. Certainly the "beatific vision" is reserved till after death; but we have seen that transformation of the human in this life is a necessary, not optional, ingredient of the final deification, and that vision of God after death is prepared for by faith in this life.

A serious question in regard to Greek *theosis* and western deification is how they are affected by fundamental differences in trinitarian theology. Augustine certainly believes, as demonstrated in *De Trinitate*, that the human's own interior reflection of the divine Trinity is, ultimately, a true though limited reflection, given by God himself in our creation. It is in the image

of the *trinitarian* God that humans are created, and it is the *trinitarian* life in which deified humans participate (however difficult it may be for Augustine to integrate this reality fully into his soteriology and eschatology). This suggests that the fine points of trinitarian theology are critically important to Christian anthropology. Augustine himself takes some tentative steps towards describing how the divine trinitarian relations might help us understand the inner working of the human being, and also the ultimate relationship between the deified human and the trinitarian God. For instance, his sense of the divine inter-relations is distinctively Western, as regards its view of the Son and Spirit in their relationship to one another and to the Father. It is noteworthy that his essays at the question of why the Spirit is not begotten, as is the Son, are made not only in the context of his “positive” theology of the divine Trinity (in the first section of *De Trinitate*), but also in his “speculative” exploration of the created trinities (in the second section). All of this suggests that a comparative study of deification thought, Eastern and Western, is closely connected with their respective trinitarian theologies, and that real differences in the latter will affect the former. Further study of Augustine’s pneumatology, in particular, but also his christology and anthropology, will help to identify the points of distinctiveness between his notion of deification and the Greek notion. His ecclesiology has been only a peripheral element of this thesis, but is also an important aspect of his deification thought, as seen particularly in the homiletic discourses.

Augustine’s own idea of the connection between the “inner” and the “outer” word, as developed in his *De Trinitate*, is a hopeful model for approaching Eastern and Western differences, especially given that the difference of language has been a significant factor therein. Perhaps Augustine’s model could help in achieving the dialectic which Lonergan describes: “acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions.”<sup>1</sup> Accomplishment of that goal should be aided by the conclusions reached in this study, and the questions it has raised. If the possibility, at least, exists that our differing “outer words” are nonetheless expressions of one and the same “inner word,” then there is both reason and means for productive conversation.

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<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 130.

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<i>Number</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Date</i>
Mainz 13 (De Ps. 81)	Dolbeau 57-108	Hill <sup>1</sup> III/11: 37-47	403-404
Mainz 12 (346A = Caillou 2,19)	Dolbeau 73-87 (MA 1:265-271 cfr PLS 2:435-441)	Hill III/11: 102-117	403-404 (346A – 399)
81	PL 38:499-506	SS, 143-155	410-411
194	PL 38:1015-1017	SS, 49-52	before 411-412
166	SPM 1:61-63	Hill III/5, 208-210	from 410
192	PL 38:1011-1013	Hill III/6, 46-49	after 411-412
227	SC 116:234-243	Hill III/6, 254-256	412-413/416-417

#### Augustine: Commentaries on the Psalms<sup>2</sup>

<i>Number</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Date</i>
44	CCL 38:493-517	Exp 2:226-260	403
84	CCL 39:1161-1175	Exp 4:167-183	after 410
49	CCL 38:575-599	Exp 2:333-365	412
66	CCL 39:856-868	Exp 3:295-312	412
109	CCL 40:1601-1620	Exp 5:229-255	412
138	CCL 40:1990-2011	Exp 6:191-218	412
146	CCL 40:2121-2137	Exp 6:357-415	412
58 S.1	CCL 39:900-930	Exp 3:127-147	413
52	CCL 39:637-645	Exp 3:1-11	414
117	CCL 40:1657-1664	Exp 5:304-312	414
118 S.16	CCL 40:1716-1718	Exp 5:380-383	418
118 S.19	CCL 40:1726-1729	Exp 5:394-398	418

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (Brooklyn and New Rochelle, NY: New City, 1990-).

<sup>2</sup> Dates are according to A. L. Goldbacher, "De Epistularum Ordine Atque Temporibus," CSEL 58, Index 3, pp. 12-63. Abbreviation used: *En*.

Augustine: *De Trinitate*<sup>3</sup>

*Text* CCL 50 and 50A  
*Translation* Edmund Hill, *The Trinity. The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Translated by Edmund Hill. Edited by John E. Rotelle. Brooklyn, New York: New City, 1991.

Tertullian

<i>Title</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Translation</i>
<i>Apologeticum</i>	CSEL 69	FOTC 10, pp. 7-128
<i>de Resurrectione Carnis</i>	CSEL 47:25-125	ANF 5, pp. 545-596
<i>Adversus Praexean</i>	CSEL 47:227-289	ANF 3, pp. 597-632

Novatian

<i>de Trinitate</i>	PL 3.885-913	<i>Novatian's Treatise on the Trinity</i> , ed. W. Yorke Fausset. Cambridge, 1909.
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Marius Victorinus

<i>Ad Ephesios</i>	CSEL 83.2:1-94	
<i>Adversus Arium</i>	CSEL 83.1:54-277	FOTC 69, pp. 89-304

Hilary of Poitiers

<i>de Trinitate</i>	CCL 52 and 52A	FOTC 25
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<sup>3</sup> Dating is discussed in Chapter 3. Abbreviation used: *De Trin.*

Ambrose

<i>de Isaac uel Anima</i>	CSEL 32.1:641-700	FOTC 65, pp. 9-68
<i>Exp. Euang. sec. Luc.</i>	CSEL 32.4:3-528	
<i>Exp. Ps. CXVIII</i>	CSEL 62.5:3-510	
<i>de Incarnationis dominicæ sacramento</i>	CSEL 79:225-281	FOTC 44, pp. 219-264
<i>Hexaemeron</i>	CSEL 32.1:3-261	FOTC 42, pp. 3-283

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