

## The Passion as Paradoxical Exemplarism in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*

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Bonaventure's *Commentarius in Evangelium Ioannis* was produced at the height of the strictly academic phase of his career as Regent Master of the Franciscan School at the University of Paris between the years 1254 and 1257. In February of 1257 he was elected Minister General of the Franciscan Order and, in this last phase of his career, produced the classics for which he is most famous: the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, *Breviloquium*, and the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. Modern scholarship has tended to concentrate on the works produced in the latter part of Bonaventure's life, perhaps justly, as these encompass the full range and maturity of his synthetic thought. Even so, Bonaventure's stature as a major medieval exegete must not be underestimated. The fruits of his exegetical methodology provide a theological foundation found throughout his extensive *corpus* and often concepts developed more thoroughly in his later works are found in seminal form within the scriptural commentaries.

### Exemplarism and the Fourth Gospel

As part of an academic 'reaction' to diverse trends within the University of Paris, Bonaventure was influenced by the *Didascalicon* and *De sacramentis christianae fidei* of Hugh of Saint Victor, who championed the primacy of scriptural exegesis in any theological endeavor.<sup>1</sup> This, in turn,

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<sup>1</sup>Beryl Smalley points out that this 'reclamation' of the primacy of scripture had a distinctively Augustinian character. Hugh proposed a course of study which aimed '...to recall rebellious learning back to the scriptural framework of the *De doctrina christiana*, adapting the teaching of Rome and Carthage to the very different climate of twelfth-century Paris,' B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

was understood within the context of the broad scholastic (and Franciscan) imperative to evangelize Western Christendom.<sup>2</sup> The stakes were high. In a manner closely paralleled by the Fourth Gospel itself, Bonaventure perceived the *modus* of humanity's salvation depending on a certain kind of 'knowledge.' It is knowledge mediated by the self-revelation of God. This is accomplished in several ways, but in every way it is thoroughly Trinitarian and explicitly Christological. The question of exemplarism, with the subsidiary concept of mediation, is of primary importance when considering Bonaventure's interpretation of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel. In Bonaventure's thought, each is a natural consequence of a Neo-Platonic world-view. The relationship of creation, and humanity in particular, to the Creator is based on a kind of exemplarism in which created things subsist in the 'being' mediated to them by the Creator. For Bonaventure, recognition of its divine source on the part of humanity is a prerequisite for life and a proper orientation to all that is real. The Logos in the ages preceding Christ and Christ in the present age mediate the knowledge of human origins and eschatological destination into the world. Christ, in particular, exemplifies a 'standard of reference' as he exists *in medias res*. Bonaventure perceives Christ to be both the exemplar of the divine image present in human nature and the perfected nature that is its result.

From the human point of view, the knowledge of origin and destination mediated into nature by the Second Person of the Trinity is fragile. Sin has deformed humanity and, through it, nature. The knowledge mediated by the exemplarism of the Word was obscured, if not lost. This provides a means of understanding the importance of the concept in Bonaventure's thought. Human apprehension, by knowledge and participation, of the exemplarism of the Word is a soteriological necessity. Christ reintroduces the knowledge of origin and destination into the world and invites humanity to participation through union with him. Though the word 'exemplarism' is not used in the *Commentary*, its application is pervasive in Bonaventure's exegesis. The Johannine equation of *union* with

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(Notre Dame: 1978), 86. For an analysis of the differences in the Augustinian and Victorine approach to exegesis see: J. Taylor, trans. and intro., *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor* (New York: 1991), 28-32.

<sup>2</sup>In this respect the insight of Hugh described above fits into a wider context of Augustinian influence. The overall Scholastic agenda, based on an assessment of Christendom patterned on the supposition of a "sacred society," and inspired to some degree by Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, aimed at the dissemination of the ongoing fruits of doctrinal exegesis into society. See: M.D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. J. Taylor, c. 3: "Theology and the New Awareness of History" (Toronto: 1997), 162-201.

salvation lends itself to this interpretation. In the same way, the pervasive Johannine emphasis on seeing and then believing as a prerequisite for salvific union is understood by Bonaventure in terms of exemplarism. Bonaventure interprets the Johannine theme within the related contexts of *fide* and *certus* and the implications of each go far beyond mere casual observation and assent to the implications of various 'facts' recorded in the Gospel. It is a theme that is developed consistently throughout the *Commentary*. According to the scholastic conviction that the principle of being and intelligibility are one, the 'certainty' grasped by the faith of the believer through the articulation of Christ's words and deeds is charged with metaphysical and epistemological consequences.<sup>3</sup>

The event of the Incarnation, recorded in the Gospels, supplies all that is necessary for humanity to apprehend knowledge of God lost in the Fall. This knowledge serves as a key. It permits the re-integration of the shattered cosmos into a proper relationship with the Creator and is understood, by both the author of the Fourth Gospel and Bonaventure, in terms of intimate union. Humanity is unable to 'consummate' this union by itself. It depends on God's self-revelation; the basis of what Bonaventure would refer to as both *modus intelligendi* and *diligendi*<sup>4</sup> and, specifically in terms of the revelation founded on the historical particulars of Christ's life and teaching in the Gospels, as *doctrina*. Bonaventure is explicit in this assertion as he describes the Fourth Gospel and its author in the first paragraph of the *Commentary's Proëmium*:

Behold my servant who will understand, he will be both exalted and raised up and he will ascend to the heights.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The equation of being and knowing was subject to multiple interpretations in thirteenth-century Scholasticism. Bonaventure, though adapting certain Aristotelian modifications, adheres to the Neo-Platonic/Augustinian paradigm. With its emphasis on the objective reality of Universals—originating and residing in the Logos as the Neo-Platonic Idea—and corollary emphasis on interior illumination, the boundaries between metaphysics and epistemology are sometimes difficult to distinguish in Bonaventure's thought.

<sup>4</sup>Within the *Commentary* Bonaventure proposes a dynamic *modus*, described in three ways, by which humanity returns to God. It is inferred as the *modus certitudinis* when applied to the veracity of the divine self-revelation in the Incarnation and in scripture. It is referred to directly as *modus intelligendi* and *diligendi* in the *Commentary*. See: (*modus intelligendi*) Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.* 3.17 (VI), 280; (*modus diligendi*) 13.47 (VI), 434.

<sup>5</sup>Bonaventure's incipit is taken from Isaiah 52:13.

This commendation overflows in the work of the author, and the commendation of the work redounds to the author. Therefore...John the evangelist is commended...by a holy life...by clear understanding, with which he is supplied...[and] by correct doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

The greater part of the *Proëmium*, following the tone set by the incipit, proceeds to expand upon the theme suggested by the passage from Isaiah. The author of the Gospel is supplied with 'clear understanding' that permits him to mediate 'correct doctrine' and, in circular fashion, it is both because of this and for this reason that he is 'raised up to the heights.' In a way typical of Bonaventure the point of embarkation and arrival are in many ways the same.

Christ is both the source and destination of all human endeavors. In this respect Bonaventure's thought closely relates to a major theme of the Fourth Gospel. Christ functions as the Way; as point of origin, guide, and reference to the Father from whom all things proceed and to whom all (redeemed) things will ultimately return. The 'journey motif,' brought to fruition in Bonaventure's later classics, unifies abstract conceptions of *theoria*—often, unfortunately, associated in an exclusive way with doctrine—and *praxis*. One cannot exist without the other in any fruitful way. *Praxis* without the saving knowledge supplied by the self-revelation of God would simply be aimless rambling in a wasteland.<sup>7</sup>

Because the essential revelation supplied by Christ represents a mode of understanding beyond the capacity of unaided human reason, the question of 'certitude' assumes great importance. Revelation is given by God and cannot be proven according to a purely rational criterion. At the same time the nature of revelation informs human understanding at its deepest level and transforms it into wisdom. In doing so the dynamic of the Augustinian/Anselmian maxim, *credo ut intelligam*, comes into play. For Bonaventure, understanding craves the revelation that only faith can provide precisely so that it can truly understand. Humanity is brought to a void in which nothing is certain and it receives there the divine revelation of an ordered universe and its place within it. Since, for Bonaventure, the medium of divine revelation is fundamentally Christological, the Incarnation represents its most complete and comprehensible expression. This is where

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<sup>6</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, *Proëmium*, 1 (VI), 240.

<sup>7</sup>In the *Hexaemeron* Bonaventure describes a view of the world expressing divine self-revelation as the "highest contemplation." This is opposed to natural philosophers who only know of "natural things": "...hunc librum legere altissimorum contemplativorum, non naturalium philosophorum, quia solum sciunt naturam rerum, non ut vestigium," (*ibidem*, *Hex.*, 12.15 [V], 386).



the certitude concerning the nature of reality is founded and, if understood correctly, explains the use and importance of doctrine. Doctrine is equated with the wisdom that orientates humanity to a correct perception of reality and, since Christ mediates wisdom, the Gospel narratives of the Incarnation represent the transmission of divine wisdom in its purest form.

Following Augustine,<sup>8</sup> Bonaventure situates the Fourth Gospel, and asserts the veracity of its witness, at the highest point of the scriptural *modus* mediating divine revelation to humanity. Its doctrine is repeatedly characterized as 'exalted' and the over-arching purpose of the Gospel is, in Bonaventure's estimation, to supply an exposition of Christ's divinity. Perhaps this was truly the intent of the author of the Fourth Gospel and perhaps not. What is apparent to even a casual reader, however, is that John's portrait of Christ leaves little room for human weakness or uncertainty (some would say humanity), to such an extent that John has sometimes been accused of describing a Docetist Christ. Though specific references in the Fourth Gospel to Christ's humanity, often mirrored in the Synoptic Gospels, abound, he is consistently represented as, at least, the embodied representative of the Father; the one 'sent' from heaven whose every word and action reveal the divine reference point from which he proceeded and to which he will return. Though it could be argued, as Bonaventure certainly would, that the Synoptic Gospels describe the same Christ, it is also clear that the Fourth Gospel surpasses them in this respect in its explicit, theological portrayal of Christ's divinity. Thus, the Christ of John is both 'worldly,' in the sense that he is truly Incarnate, and 'otherworldly.' This schema produces a tension felt throughout the Gospel. John clearly intends it to be so. He alludes to it as early as the Prologue and continues, unabated, through the Resurrection narratives. The tension is expressed in two ways. In one sense it is felt in the consistent rejection experienced by Christ in his encounters with political and religious authorities. In another sense it is manifested in the doubts, confusion, and misunderstandings of the disciples. Both point, in different ways, to a resolution expressed by paradox and this is brought to its climax in the Passion narrative.

The Apostle John, presumed by Bonaventure to be the author of the Fourth Gospel, is the witness who provides a link between the revelatory event of the Incarnation and the subsequent mediation of its meaning into human history. Unlike the other Apostles, John is never portrayed as doubting or confused in the Gospel or by Bonaventure. On the contrary, he

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<sup>8</sup>Augustine, *De con. Ev.*, 1.7.10-12 (CSEL 43), 10-13.

is Christ's confidante, the one Christ loves more than all of the others.<sup>9</sup> Given the nature of the *modus diligendi*, the implications of the love shared between Christ and the Apostle go far beyond what seems, at first, to be arbitrary friendship. There is an ontological consequence as the self-diffusive love of God, mediated by Christ, finds its perfectly receptive object in John and John, in turn, travels the road to union and, ultimately, divinization. Thus, John is portrayed as a kind of archetype of redeemed humanity; the perfect contemplative or, put in another way, as representative of the capacity of the Church to absorb and mediate the saving revelation of the Incarnate God. In doing so, Bonaventure engages the theme of union found in the Fourth Gospel, which provides fertile material for his own speculations on Christology, metaphysics, and 'spiritual' anthropology. This will also prove to be problematic as the 'exalted doctrine' that 'leads to the heights' is represented in its ultimate aspect as the 'hour of glory' in which the believer is expected to assimilate an image of God crucified.

The scandal engendered by the crucifixion of one who is believed to be God is nothing new. Just as the applied implications continue to provoke the creative imagination or violent objections of the modern world, they were addressed by the Gospels, the letters of Paul, and in the incredulous reaction of large segments of classical society to a sect accused of atheism and *crimen maiestatis*. The words of Paul are echoed by the crude third century graffito found in a barracks in Rome where Christ crucified with the head of an ass is adored by a deluded Christian soldier,<sup>10</sup> and in the witness of the poor in whatever age they are found.

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<sup>9</sup>Modern scholarship is doubtful of the identity of the Beloved Disciple. Bonaventure, however, espoused the traditional view that the Beloved Disciple was John, the author of the Fourth Gospel. He writes, "Intellexit etiam Christi eruditione sublimia. Etsi enim Christus omnes suos discipulos edoceret, tamen beatum Ioannem, quem prae ceteris diligebat, prae ceteris erudit et intelligere fecit," Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan., Proëmium*, 3 (VI), 240.

<sup>10</sup>"But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-4); quotations from scripture are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* (Iowa Falls: 1975).

The third century graffito crucifix is found in the Palatine in Rome. To the side of Christ crucified with the head of an ass is the inscription: "Alexaminos adores his god." See H. and M. Schmidt, *Il linguaggio delle immagini: iconografia cristiana*, trans. U. Brehme and M. Devena (Roma: 1988), 85.

## The Franciscan Dimension

The scandal also existed for Bonaventure. The numerous Cathari of thirteenth-century Europe denied the validity and efficacy of the crucifixion. Their form of 'Neo-Gnosticism' had little to do with the redemptive suffering of God in a world corresponding to the Catholic version of hell.<sup>11</sup> In a way more subtle, but closer to home, the Franciscan *vita*, based in so many ways on *imitatio* of the Suffering Servant, had as its icon the image of the recently stigmatized—and recently canonized—Francis of Assisi. This same *vita* and, by implication, the insight of the founder was under serious attack within the University of Paris during the period in which the *Commentary* was composed. Relations between the Mendicant and Secular clergy at the university had been strained for some time, but were further aggravated by certain decrees of Innocent IV who was less in favor of the Mendicants than his predecessors had been.<sup>12</sup> Guillaume de Saint-Amour published his *Liber de Antichristo* in 1254 followed by the *Tractatus de periculis novissimorum temporum* in 1256. Both works attacked the Mendicant *vita* as being opposed to the teaching of the Gospel. The issue, *per se*, was poverty, but the Franciscans had long associated Christ's many examples of evangelical poverty, as one 'piece,' with the Passion.<sup>13</sup> For Bonaventure, the

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<sup>11</sup>A crucifix was made representing Christ with one arm and crossed feet in an attempt to ridicule orthodox iconography. See: M. Kraus, *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art* (Pennsylvania: 1972), 136.

<sup>12</sup>J.-G. Bougerol, *Introduction to Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Patterson, N.J.: 1964), 118.

<sup>13</sup>The association of the Franciscan *vita* with the Passion in the thought of the founder is important and well known. In the case of Francis, examples abound in his writings and, particularly, in pivotal events of his life. In the Second Letter to the Faithful he writes: "Istud verbum patris tam dignum sanctum et gloriosum nuntiavit altissimus pater de caelo per sanctum Gabrielem angelum suum in uterum sanctae ac gloriosae virginis Mariae ex cuius utero veram recepit carnem humanitatis et fragilitatis nostrae. Qui cum dives esset super omnia voluit ipse in mundo cum beatissima virgine matre sua eligere paupertatem. Et prope passionem celebravit pascha cum discipulis...Cuius patris talis fuit voluntas ut filius eius benedictus et gloriosus quem dedit nobis et natus fuit pro nobis se ipsum per proprium sanguinem suum sacrificium et hostiam in ara cruces...nostris relinquens nobis exemplum ut sequamur vestigia eius," *2 Ep. Fid.*, 4-11 (Francesco d'Assisi, *Scritti: testo latino e traduzione italiana* [Milano: 2002], 474-6).

Clare is even more explicit in her Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague: "Attende, inquam, principium huius specula paupertatem positi siquidem in praesepio et in panniculis involuti. O miranda humilitas, o stupenda paupertas! Rex angelorum, Dominus caeli et terrae in praesepio reclinatur. In medio autem specula considera humilitatem, saltem beatam paupertatem, labores innumeros ac poenalitates quas sustinuit pro redemptione humani generis. In fine vero eiusdem specula contemplare ineffabilem caritatem, qua pati voluit in cruces stipite et ineodem mori omni mortis

problem was further exacerbated by factions within the Order itself. If 'Paris' objected to the rigors of Franciscan observance, 'Assisi' claimed that the Order was rapidly betraying its ideals. Nearly fifty years later Jacopone da Todi would lament 'Mal vedemo Parisi che n'ha destrutto Assisi,'<sup>14</sup> but there were many in the Franciscan ranks of the mid-thirteenth century who anticipated that lament. Bougerol paints a tranquil picture of life among the Parisian Franciscans:

Life in the great monastery of Paris was far removed from Assisi and from the inner conflicts of the Order. Although friars came from every province, they had little practical part in Franciscan business. Of their brother Saint Francis they knew only what Thomas of Celano had written, and the heated arguments of the Spirituals died on the doorstep of the monastery...<sup>15</sup>

For the ordinary brother the 'heated arguments of the Spirituals' may or may not have died on the 'doorstep of the monastery', but it is inconceivable that Bonaventure would not have been aware of the controversy swirling around the proper interpretation of the founder's intentions.

The figure of Francis of Assisi, whose insights were so thoroughly centered on the Passion, was of primary importance for Bonaventure, yet he is never mentioned or quoted in the *Commentary*. Francis was not a biblical scholar, or an academic, therefore one might conclude that any reference to him in a document as distinctly academic as the *Commentary* would be inappropriate. To do so would represent a gross underestimation of Francis's importance in Bonaventure's thought, not least in the area of biblical exegesis. The scarcity of mention or direct quotation of Francis is characteristic of all of Bonaventure's academic works<sup>16</sup> and there are a number of possibilities for the omission. Given the controversies surrounding the Franciscan *vita*, Bonaventure's reticence in quoting Francis or referring to his deeds based on a radical interpretation of the Evangelical Counsels in the *Commentary* masks a concern to justify the Franciscan *vita*

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genere turpiori. Unde ipsum speculum, in ligno cruces positum, hic consideranda transeuntes monebat dicens: O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus," 4 *Ep. ad B. Agnetem Pr.*, 19-25 (*S. Chbiara d'Assisi: scritti e documenti* [Assisi - Padua - Vicenza: n.d.], 107).

<sup>14</sup>Jacopone da Todi, *Le poesie spirituali del b. Iacopone da Todi con le scolie e annotazione di Fra Francesco Teatti da Lugnano*, 1.1.10 (Venice: 1617), 43.

<sup>15</sup>Bougerol, *Intro.*, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup>Bonaventure only mentions Francis twice in the *Sentence Commentaries*, twice in the *Commentary on Luke*, and once in the *Disputed questions on Evangelical Perfection*.

on its own terms; purely in accord with the Gospels themselves. For Bonaventure, Francis of Assisi is no less authoritative than the generally accepted patristic or scholastic authors that he freely quotes. In the *Commentary*, the influence of Francis is 'hidden,' while that of other theologians is openly used to bolster Bonaventure's interpretation of the text. Even so, the various strands of influence work together in Bonaventure's exegesis. In doing so, Bonaventure attempts to reconcile the Franciscan biblical viewpoint with recognized, non-controversial authorities.

Bonaventure's view of the Incarnation, and thus the paradoxical exemplarism culminating in the Passion narrative, is clearly influenced by the unique Franciscan understanding of Evangelical Poverty. The early Franciscan conception of poverty was also expressed in terms of paradox, which closely parallels important Johannine themes. According to the Franciscan ideal, Christ and his servants are understood to be exalted according to the degree of their debasement. Francis of Assisi describes Christ as a ministering servant, a suffering servant, and mendicant pilgrim.<sup>17</sup> At first glance the Fourth Gospel both supports, but also contradicts, a strict interpretation of these views. Francis is the *Poverello*, yet in the Fourth Gospel exalted doctrine is matched to an exalted characterization of Christ. How is it that the *Poverello* can be understood to be *alter Christus* within this Johannine context of 'high' Christology? In this sense, the Fourth Gospel is particularly suited to an examination of the paradox represented by the Passion. Though Christ is consistently portrayed, in Bonaventure's words, according to 'an exposition of his divinity,' the actual context of his human experience is generally one of poverty, misunderstanding, and rejection.

It is possible to discern the Johannine dimensions of the paradox, described in Franciscan terms as debasement/exaltation, in terms of 'circularity' in Bonaventure's Prologue to *I Sentences*:

...on account of circularity, it is said that the Incarnation of the Son of God is like a river. Just as in a circle the end is joined to the beginning, the highest is joined to the lowest, as God is joined to the dust of the earth, and the first to the last, as the Eternal Son of God to human nature on the sixth day. Of this river Sirach says (24:41): *I, like The river Doryx* [interpreted by Bonaventure to mean 'life-giving remedy'], *just like an Aqueduct, have come out of Paradise*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Francis of Assisi, *Reg. non. bul.*, 4 [ministering servant]; 9 [suffering servant]; *Off. Pas.* [mendicant pilgrim], *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis*, ed. K. Esser (Grottaferrata: 1978), 248-9, 258-61, 191-222.

<sup>18</sup>Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, *Proëmium*, 3 (I), 2.

Here one discovers an early parallel to the important Johannine theme of ascent/descent. The twin concepts, which really form a single theme—and thus express the paradox—are highly favored by Bonaventure, especially in his later works, and are also explicitly developed in the Fourth Gospel itself, and in the *Commentary*. The full implications of the Incarnation, seen from both the divine and human perspectives, are understood in this context. Christ is seen as a ‘pilgrim on earth and a citizen of heaven’. The same theme is reflected throughout the Fourth Gospel: *The Word became Flesh and dwelt [pitched his tent] among us* (Jn 1:14). Christ’s divine origins are described in the Prologue; yet, he was not received by the people prepared through the proclamations of the prophets for his advent. Christ is *sent* by the Father, but encounters misunderstanding and rejection. Finally, the unified themes are expressed most poignantly, and paradoxically, in the Passion. Christ’s descent into the human condition reaches its most horrific consequence; yet, in the Fourth Gospel this is described as the ‘hour of glory’ in which the *Son of Man is lifted up*. As the Franciscans reflected on the life of Francis, they perceived intimations of the same ‘glory’ in his experience of *imitatio*.

Thus, the paradox, once expressed, is only resolved through *recognition*. It has eschatological consequences and is based on human comprehension of the nature and work of Christ. Christ’s identity and authority are founded on his heavenly origin, and the consequences for humanity are realized in Christ’s presence on earth and return to the Father.<sup>19</sup> Christ is the *principium salvans*, ‘who is able to enter heaven by himself [because he came from heaven], and all others enter through him.’ As such, Christ is also the *modus salvandi*. Recognition, then, leads to salvation and is predicated on comprehension, presuming an ontological relationship between subject and object, of the multiple implications of the Incarnational paradox. For Bonaventure, this provides a broad definition of the *modus intelligendi*.

In the same way, within the theme of ascent/descent, it is possible to discern the reason and methodology of the Incarnation. God freely initiates it in an act of condescending love, and humanity, drawn into the divine embrace, is divinized:

The descent of the Son of God does not mean that the divine likeness is degraded, but that human nature is exalted. Thus, when God exalted

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<sup>19</sup>Idem, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 1.92-97, 14.8 (VI), 266-7, 437.



human nature above the skies, that is, the celestial angels, by joining it to himself, he made them bend down.<sup>20</sup>

The consequences for humanity of Christ's descent and ascent depend on recognition: first, of Christ's divine origin, which establishes the credentials of his authority, and then of his humanity, by which the divine revelation is mediated in a perceptible—accessible—way. It is a difficult road to travel, as the Gospels themselves attest. How is it that the 'divine likeness' is not degraded in the circumstances of the Incarnation, particularly the Passion? And, if the humanity of Christ is understood to be the medium of the divine revelation, then how is human nature exalted by the 'way of the cross'?

### **The Washing of the Disciple's Feet (Jn 13:4-16)**

The episode of Jesus washing the disciple's feet begins the series of discourses that function as a prelude to the Passion narrative in the Fourth Gospel. The episode and most of the content of the discourses are not found in the Synoptics. Indeed, the entire scene of the Last Supper, of which the washing of the disciple's feet forms a part, is greatly expanded by John and operates as a kind of 'theater' where, free from the contentious distractions of his public ministry, Jesus is able to explain 'sublime doctrine' to his disciples. It is noteworthy that the scene, though free from the doubters outside the door, excepting Judas, who have rejected Jesus and plot to kill him, is still fraught with tension. The tension is felt in both an exterior and interior way that form two sides of the same coin. In one sense, there is the very real threat to Jesus' life. He will be dead in less than twenty four hours. In another sense, the disciples themselves, privy to the teachings of Jesus throughout his ministry and eyewitnesses to the signs performed by him, are, nevertheless, filled with confusion and doubts. The unspoken question in their minds is an honest one: How can this be happening to the one sent by God? The issue relates to the pivotal Johannine soteriological *nexus* of seeing and believing (understanding) and is stated explicitly by John in his description of the scene. The looming event of the crucifixion casts doubt on the entire meaning of Christ's ministry or, put in another way, of his presence on earth. Why should this be so? The notion of rejection by those who oppose Jesus, by itself, is not enough to justify the confusion felt in the upper room. The answer is found in the assertion that Jesus is not simply a prophet like those found in the Old Testament. One has only to read John's Prologue to be disabused of the notion. On the contrary, he is the embodiment of divinity. The disciples have yet to entirely grasp this point

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<sup>20</sup>Idem, *Dom. XX p. Pent.*, Sermon I (IX), 432.

and, while they grapple with it, the proximity of Christ's death increases their confusion.

The challenge to the disciples' understanding of the implications of the Incarnation comes quickly as they gather to celebrate Passover in the upper room. Bonaventure acknowledges the tense atmosphere—*do not let your hearts be troubled*—and immediately alludes to the paradox in his exegesis of verse 2. Judas' imminent betrayal does not 'diminish Christ, but elevates him.' Significantly, in verse 3 the theme of ascent/descent is stated. Jesus had 'come from God and was going back to God.' The reader is immediately made aware that Christ's approaching death is an aspect of what Bonaventure would describe as 'circularity.' This is apparent to Christ, but not to the disciples. Nevertheless, Bonaventure relates it to common human experience, thus laying the foundation for exemplarism, by prefacing the passage within a category, which he calls the 'congruity of time.'<sup>21</sup> He describes Christ's death on the Passover as a *transitus* and makes the normal association of Christ's redemptive, sacrificial death with that of the paschal lamb. As a *transitus*, however, it is not an end, but a journey. Furthermore, the journey is not for him alone. Quoting 1 Corinthians 10:1, *Our fathers all passed over the sea*; Bonaventure expands the concept of *transitus* to include all who believe. Thus, Christ's approaching death is seen to be exactly the opposite of what the disciples fear. They are afraid of separation from one they love and have come to identify with life itself. Christ invites them on a journey as a kind of 'guide,' together, through death into life. Throughout, what motivates the disciples' fears, Christ's invitation and, indeed, the journey itself is the reciprocal love shared by Christ with his disciples. The *modus diligendi* passes through death to God, the source of life. The goal of union is expressed here by Bonaventure with Eucharistic imagery utilizing a pun from Augustine:

*When he had loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end,*<sup>22</sup> then he showed them the principle signs of his love. *Augustine: Far be it that he would not put an end to love by death who did not come to an end, and this end is not a consuming end, but a consuming [as in eating] end.*<sup>23</sup>

Before this kind of salvific love can bear fruit, or the *modus diligendi* be traveled, it is necessary for the disciples to understand the nature of that love. Here, it is done by example. Jesus removes his clothing as a 'sign of

<sup>21</sup>Idem, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 13.1 (VI), 425.

<sup>22</sup>Jn 13:1.

<sup>23</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 13.2 (VI), 425; Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 55.2 (CCSL 36), 464.

humility' (verse 4) and the 'office of ministry' is assumed by the 'lord of majesty' (verse 5). In his introduction to the pericope Bonaventure makes it clear that the purpose of Christ is to confirm the faith of the disciples, and so the resolution of the paradox is once again based on recognition.

What they see is Christ, stripped, and exercising an 'office of ministry.' Here, Bonaventure makes an early allusion to a theme popular in the Middle Ages and usually applied to the Passion. Following the intent of the Fourth Gospel, which makes it clear that Christ performs this ministry in the expectation of being imitated, Bonaventure's exegesis evokes the famous formula: *Nudum Christum nudus sequere*. The concept is thought to originate with Jerome<sup>24</sup> and expresses the nature of the enigma from the perspective of believers, who, like their unbelieving counterparts, struggle with its implications. Bonaventure engages the problem of recognition and comprehension from the believer's perspective beginning with his exegesis of verse 6. Beholding the sight, and faced with the prospect of Christ washing his feet, Peter errs in his perception, but in the opposite way of the unbelievers in Chapter 8, who ridiculed the notion of Christ's divinity. Peter's inability to comprehend the paradox and its implications is based on *an excess of reverence*. The broad implication is that Peter, in some way cognizant of Christ's divinity, cannot reconcile that perception with its embodiment in the humanity of Christ, stripped, in the form of a servant. Christ admonishes him that he should let it happen because of the *mystery*.

Bonaventure describes the resolution of the problem, once again presented in terms of the consequences of recognition, in two ways. First, in Christ's insistence, against Peter's wishes, that only his feet are to be washed (verses 9-11). Dirty feet symbolize the ultimate debasement of human nature by sin. That Christ should stoop down to that level in his capacity as ministering servant not only reveals the depth of the paradox, but, in the washing, its soteriological consequences. This has a direct bearing on the second aspect of Bonaventure's description of the resolution of the paradox: 'The Lord does not find it contrary to [his] dignity to be so humbled.' Viewed in terms of *imitatio*, the disciples' participation in Christ's act of descent is understood to be a prerequisite of their own ascent in union with him. Bonaventure clarifies the theme in his exegesis of verse 8. If Peter has 'no part' in Christ's exemplary ministry, he will have no part in Christ himself, which Bonaventure describes as 'eternal company with God.'

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. Jerome, *Epist.* 14.6 (CSEL 14), 52-3.

## The Passion

The discourses that follow the pericope of Christ washing the disciples' feet are an anticipation of the Passion as Christ prepares his disciples for the event and, in doing so, they both summarize and deepen the Christological doctrine of the Fourth Gospel. For this reason they function as one of three 'conclusions' to the Gospel. The Passion narrative brings Christ's earthly ministry to an end, while the Resurrection narratives serve to verify the purpose of the Passion and complete Christ's own *itinerarium* as he returns to the Father from whom he came. The series of discourses given within the context of the Last Supper complete the teaching of Christ contained in other parts of the Gospel. In doing so, they serve as a conclusion to the Gospel in much the same way that the Prologue serves as an introduction. Since they anticipate and in many ways illuminate the meaning of the Passion, it seems best to deal with the event first, and then to conclude with the Final Discourses as a way of summarizing the depth and direction of Bonaventure's exegesis.

Hans Urs von Balthasar expresses the nature of the paradoxical exemplarism of the Incarnation, which reaches its climax in the Passion, when he writes:

The Father has given expression to himself in the Son, because he has the *incomprehensible* power to be one and the same God in another than himself; Bonaventure says that it is only this power that prevents him from ceasing to exist when he makes the total gift of his being as God.<sup>25</sup>

The 'gift' referred to is given in the Incarnation and fulfilled on the cross. It is an act of condescension defined by the paradoxical notion of God's humility in 'going outside of his own riches to be poor.'<sup>26</sup> The *descent* of God into the human condition is purposeful, and is matched by a corresponding *ascent* on the part of humanity. Recognition of the divine/human paradox within the circumstances of the Passion is, essentially, accessibility to the saving reality of divine self-revelation. The *Christus deformis* of Augustine 'hides' the beauty of divine self-revelation, and describes the nature of the problem of recognition. Bonaventure was profoundly influenced by this insight,<sup>27</sup> and this is demonstrated by his

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<sup>25</sup>H. Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 2. *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*, trans. A. Louth, F. McDonagh, B. McNeil, ed. J. Riches (Edinburgh - San Francisco: 1984), 352; cf. Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d. 9, q. 1 (I), 181.

<sup>26</sup>Idem, *The Glory of the Lord*.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Bonaventure, *Lig. Vit.*, 29 (VIII), 79; Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, 67.3 and 69.4

exegesis of the Passion narrative. Christ's death summarizes and perfects the major themes expressed by the Incarnational paradox. The Passion represents the summit of its expression, both for Bonaventure and in the Fourth Gospel, as the particular experience of Christ encompasses the most horrific consequences inherent in the Word's assumption of 'flesh,' and its meaning impacts every aspect of Bonaventure's Christology.

In the *Breviloquium* Bonaventure begins his discussion of the sufferings of Christ immediately following an analysis of 'the union of natures and the fullness of gifts in the Incarnate Word'.<sup>28</sup> The same perspective is reflected in the *Commentary* as the Passion is viewed in the context of the hypostatic union and its implications. The question posed is threefold in nature. How is it possible that one who is God should die, and in such a way, and what are the reasons? Death and suffering are antithetical to the divine nature, and the circumstances of Christ's death, in humiliation and injustice, deepen the sense of incongruity. Clearly, Christ's death is experienced in his human nature, but it is important to note that, whatever the understanding of John may have been, Bonaventure reads the Gospel through a post-Nicene/Chalcedonian lens. The crux of the paradox rests on this assumption. Bonaventure continues in the *Breviloquium*:

Christ assumed not only a human nature, but also the defects of that nature. Indeed, he assumed such penalties of the body as hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and such penalties of the soul as sorrow, anguish, fear.... He accepted the necessity of suffering, but no pain was to touch him against either his divine or his rational will, though the Passion did violence to his sensible and carnal will...<sup>29</sup>

Even so, it is a human nature joined in hypostatic union to a divine nature and, as such, the deeds of Christ must reflect both. This is the character of the problem posed at Nicea and Chalcedon. Bonaventure

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(CCSL 36), 496 and 502.

<sup>28</sup>Bonaventure, *Brev.*, 8.1 (V), 248.

<sup>29</sup>Ibidem, 8.2, 248. That Bonaventure should exempt Christ's rational will from the experience of suffering is problematic. The rational will proceeds from the faculties of the soul and is an integral part of human nature. Its existence in Christ is affirmed by Augustine and, with respect to temptations experienced by Christ, it is subject to suffering. What Bonaventure is trying to express is the notion that Christ's rational will was in full consent (perfected) with the divine will, but that would not seem to necessarily exclude the possibility of suffering. Cf. Augustine, *div. qu.*, 80.4 (CCSL 44A), 238; *en. Ps.*, 87.3 (CCSL 39), 1209; *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 49.18 (CCSL 36), 428-9.

alludes to both councils in his discussion of Christ's poverty in *Apologia Pauperum*:

Because from the diversity of works in Christ and their lesser quality in respect to the works of the Father, [when] this man [Gérard d'Abbeville in: *Contra adversarium perfectis christianae et praelatorium et faculatum Ecclesia*] infers that in Christ there are two Persons, or that in his divine Person he was less than the Father, he partakes of the erroneous impiety of both Nestorius and Arius.<sup>30</sup>

Bonaventure goes on to point out that Nestorius erred by 'proposing a plurality of Persons as a consequence of the diversity of [Christ's] works'. Arius erred in 'finding an inferiority of nature in the lesser quality [in relation to the Father] of Christ's works,' and so Arius comes to the conclusion that Christ was inferior 'both in his divine Person and in his divine Nature.' In Bonaventure's estimation both Nestorius and Arius have failed to grasp the implications of the divine/human paradox, thus impairing Christ's ability to function as the divine Exemplar. The Passion represents Christ's ultimate experience of the human condition, poverty, and serves as a focus for the objections posed to the orthodox Christological definitions of Nicea and Chalcedon. Addressing the objections helps to clarify the important questions raised by implied subordinationism, the relation between Christ's divine and human will, and, above all, the problem of divine impassibility. The quotations cited above from the *Breviloquium* and *Apologia Pauperum*, admittedly written after the *Commentary*, nevertheless summarize in a concise way the problems faced by Bonaventure when confronting the Christology of the Fourth Gospel. Throughout the Gospel, as Bonaventure states, the main task of the exegete is an examination of an 'exposition of Christ's divinity.' This is only accessible through the medium of his humanity and the results can be jarring; both in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel itself, and in Bonaventure's exegesis.

In Bonaventure's exegesis of the Passion narrative in the *Commentary* his patristic authority depends, almost exclusively, on the homilies of Augustine and Chrysostom. At first glance Bonaventure's exegesis seems rather spare, and he devotes considerable space to explanations of historical detail and the difficult task of proving the congruity of the Passion accounts represented in the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. Nevertheless, the Incarnational paradox and the thematic issues pertaining to it are clearly dealt with. The exegetical task, then, is to demonstrate the reality of divine self-revelation, along with the

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<sup>30</sup>Bonaventure, *Apolog. Paup.*, 6.5 (VIII), 266.



consequences, within the difficult context of the Passion. Bonaventure accomplishes this in several ways. First, one does not find such an extensive use of typological references anywhere else in the *Commentary*. Bonaventure's reliance on the Old Testament serves the purpose of relating the events of the Passion to his conception of the divine ordering, and imminence within, human history, which is essentially soteriological in character. In this sense, the Passion represents both a turning point and the culmination of history. The origin and purpose of divine revelation is also clarified by Bonaventure's use of the Old Testament texts. The Passion represents the ultimate form of divine self-revelation and, as such, it is important to demonstrate an inter-testamental unity, since scripture is conceived to be an essential medium of that revelation. In this respect, the importance of 'certitude' in the discernment of the *modus intelligendi* is linked to its source: the divine self-revelation expressed in the Incarnation and the 'sacramental' scriptures.

The Johannine Passion narrative begins in 18:1 with Jesus crossing a ravine over the Kedron and entering the Garden of Gethsemane. In verse 2 Judas enters the scene and the drama of Jesus' betrayal commences. After first asserting that the imminent betrayal is 'ignominious,' Bonaventure likens Christ's entry into the garden to a royal procession. Quoting 2 Kings 15:23, *The king went across the Kedron stream*, Christ enters the garden, not to run away, but to seek 'quiet' and clarity; Song of Songs 6:10, *I descended into my garden so that I could see*; Psalm 75:3, *In peace was his place made*. By utilizing the three Old Testament typological references Bonaventure immediately situates the scene within its paradoxical context. The observable reality would suggest that Christ is a fugitive and his entry into the garden is fraught with tension and uncertainty. In this respect, Bonaventure closely parallels the Johannine emphasis throughout the narrative. Jesus is a king and, throughout, he is in complete control of the situation. Bonaventure's reference to the passage from the Song of Songs is relevant to both the Johannine intent and the methodology of exemplarism. 'Seeing' in the Fourth Gospel is the prerequisite to the faith that leads to union. In both John and Bonaventure there is tense irony here. For John, the irony is expressed by the darkness of the night during which complete incomprehension will reign and Bonaventure is certainly aware of this. However, in his choices of Old Testament typology, Bonaventure goes further. Jesus is the Exemplar, the 'light,' and so he descends into the garden 'to see.' The darkness of the gathering storm has no real affect on him; he will 'see' as the Exemplar of perfected human nature, and he is able to do this because he will 'shine' as the divine source and reference point (united to the will of the Father) of that perfection.

In order to grasp fully the irony of the situation at Gethsemane, and all that follows, it is necessary to view the event within the larger context of the Gospel and the *Commentary*. It is the Incarnate Logos who descends into the darkened garden and, in doing so, commences his Passion. In his exegesis of John 1:1-4 Bonaventure lists four 'characteristics' (*conditiones*) of the Logos.<sup>31</sup> The Word (1) suffices in the beginning of creation, (2) is without deficiency, (3) has prior knowledge, and (4) offers knowledge to others. The sufficiency of the Word establishes exemplarism innate in nature because 'he suffices in producing everything.' As such, everything bears the imprint of, and is related to, the Father through the Word. Bonaventure has recourse to the insight of Augustine in the *Confessions*, which strengthens the exemplaristic associations implied by the sufficient creativity of the Word. Augustine prefaces the passage quoted by Bonaventure with an allusion to John 1:10. The nature of the Word's sufficiency as the agent of creation is not related as an abstraction, or a mere 'fact', but rather, serves to inform human understanding. This enables Augustine to rejoice in the fact that when the Word '*...was in the world, and the world was made through him...*' (Jn 1:10) he was recognized by some.<sup>32</sup> The lack of deficiency, when associated with the first characteristic, underscores the aspect of divine self-revelation found in the *modus intelligendi*. Through it, Bonaventure asserts the unity of the Word and the Father and, in that association, the trace of the divine visible in creation. It is significant that he also relates it to John 15:5. By doing so, he shifts the emphasis from creation, as the principle medium of divine self-revelation, to the soteriological mission of Christ in history. As such, the exemplarism implied in the innate Law of Nature mirrors, and pre-figures, the saving relationship of Christ and the believer. Again referring to Augustine, Bonaventure rebukes the heresy of the Manichaeans who put forth two principles, discerning a God of light in one, and a God of darkness in the other. The heresy is represented as a fundamental and fatal deviation from the *modus intelligendi*, "for they did not understand in what way all things were made through the Word."<sup>33</sup>

The first two characteristics describe the composition of nature, *per se*, as ordered signs referring back to the sign giver. Human history unfolds within, and is informed by, that context. The third and fourth characteristics complete the contextual basis of the *modus intelligendi* by explicitly referring

<sup>31</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 1.9 (VI), 203-4.

<sup>32</sup>Ibidem: "Augustinus in libro Confessionem: *Verbo tibi coaeterno dicis quaecumque dicis, et fit quod dicis, nec aliter quam dicendo facis.*" Cf. Augustine, *Conf.*, 11.7 (CSEL 33), 152; Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d. 27, p. II, q. 2 (I), 310-11.

<sup>33</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 1.10 (VI), 248.

to human (rational) experience, firmly grounding it in the primary exemplarism of the Logos.

The third characteristic represents the Word as pre-knowing and, as such, the architect of rational life. Bonaventure associates the characteristic with John 1:4 and, in an allusion to Platonic archetypes, compares the knowledge of the Word to the conceptualization of the ark in the mind of an artisan. What is conceptualized represents the fabric of rationality and is essentially the *modus intelligendi* itself. In this respect it is possible to trace Bonaventure's emphasis on the necessity of faith informing reason, taken from Augustine and Anselm, and applied specifically to John and the function of the Fourth Gospel as described in the *Prooemium*, to a principle extending back to the creation of the world and innate within it. Humanity, as *imago*, is the fullest expression of rationality found in the created material order, but it is important to realize that creation itself is conceived as an expression of divine rationality. Rationality is the basis of life and equated to it. Bonaventure quotes Augustine in asserting that, "...the Son is the complete Art of all rational life,"<sup>34</sup> and Ecclesiastes in an affirmation of life's perfection.

The gift of rationality, rooted in divine self-revelation expressed by the third characteristic, makes it possible for the perfection of God to be read in two 'books': first, in the interior book of divine Ideas expressed in the Art of the Word; and second, in the exterior expression of the divine Art made apparent in the universe of sensible reality. Humanity, endowed with reason and intellect, is capable of reading both. The reality of human sin, however, obscures the ability to read the book of divine self-revelation written in nature. The consequences of this are manifold. In a negative sense, faith is divorced from reason, with attendant effects of spiritual darkness. Human receptivity to divine self-revelation is severely impaired and the tragic course of history reflects the estrangement. In a positive sense, the fall of humanity resulted in the Incarnation of the Word, so that divine self-revelation could be made visible again, but in a manner far surpassing the reflected exemplarism of the Logos innate in nature. The 'restoration' effected by the Incarnation is recorded in the scriptures, which

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<sup>34</sup>Ibidem, 1.11, 249; cf. Augustine, *Trin.*, 16.10.11 (CCSL 50), 241-2. Bonaventure uses the term "Art" to describe the wisdom of God existing in the Word and applied to creation. It can also be understood as the perfect representative reason, within the Son, of all that the Father can bring forth, and particularly, of all that he proposes to bring forth by his action. In espousing this viewpoint, Bonaventure is as much indebted to a form of Neo-Platonism shared with Augustine, as to Augustine himself.

provide the key by which humanity is able once again to understand the book of creation and its place within it.

The fourth characteristic, described as holding out knowledge to others and applied to John 1:4, expands the basic definition of the *modus intelligendi* given in the third characteristic by relating the source (the Word as foundation or archetypal rationality) to an object, enabling humanity to 'see' (understand) in the darkness. The light that shines in the darkness is directly associated with faith, as the darkness is associated with unbelief. The Incarnate Word, standing in the center of the created order, informs the past, present, and future by the illumination of a spiritual light. For those able to see and understand, what is ultimately illuminated is the Word himself.

The revelation of the Word, recorded in the greater part of the scriptures as the history of salvation and extending through the entire span of created nature and human existence, is cast in the light of discernment. It is a spiritual light, intended for the re-integration of humanity into harmony with God through the *modus intelligendi*. It reveals things as they are. Thus, Bonaventure offers a stark contrast to the illuminating light of the fourth characteristic in his exegesis of John 18:3. In doing so he takes into account the consequences of a world in which the 'beautiful poem' of creation is often obscured by the presence of sin. Keeping in mind the exegesis of the preceding verses, in which Christ is self-illuminated and illuminating others, Judas enters the 'dark' garden; now lit by two very different kinds of light. Bonaventure writes:

He [Judas] came there, as if the leader of the others, with lanterns and torches and arms lest he [Jesus] be able to escape notice in the night, indeed because they walked in darkness. Therefore the light from their torches lied, as in Job chapter four [verse 17]: *If suddenly the dawn would appear they think it is the shadow of death, and so they are walking in darkness as in light.*<sup>35</sup>

The irony of the situation is palpable and many layered. In the first sense, the garden is dark, it is late in the evening of a blinded world. In the next sense, for those who 'see' with discerning eyes, the garden is lit by the blazing light of the exemplar. It is the dawn that heralds his 'hour of glory.' Judas enters with another kind of light because he fears that Christ is trying to 'escape notice' in the darkness. The opposite is actually true. The garden is bathed in light and this is because Christ, far from attempting to escape notice, has, by entering, crossed the threshold of his Passion, during which

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<sup>35</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 18.4 (VI), 478.

'all men will be drawn to him.'<sup>36</sup> Judas is unable to discern the paradox, and so lacking sight in the dark/illuminated garden, brings a light that is no light at all. The true light, which is Christ, is contrasted to the 'false light.' In an appeal to the imagination of the reader, flickering torches and dim lanterns illuminate the darkness with a 'light that lies.'

The scene in the garden has much to say about the nature of sin in the world and this, for Bonaventure as for John, is what Christ came to overcome. If the nature of Christ's soteriological exemplarism manifests itself as paradoxical, so must the 'sin' that serves as its counterpoint. Bonaventure's conception of what sin actually is can be understood if examined within the context of the revelation of the Word through nature and human history. When discussing the 'characteristics' of the Word in his exegesis of John 1:3, Bonaventure points out that the sufficiency of the Word would seem to make God the cause of sin. Thus, both the 'darkness' and the 'light' in the garden would seem to be the work of God. Sin 'acts,' therefore it is 'something,' and 'by him [the Word] all things were made.' Bonaventure replies that in so far as sin is spoken of as a private action, it owes something to circumstance and could be construed as something. This, however, is an action removed by its subjectivity (a private action) from the divine action (exemplarism) innate in creation. He goes on to say that sin can be perceived as a debt to the private good, but this implies insufficiency, as opposed to the sufficiency of the Word in creation. His last definition is the most damning and, perhaps, inclusive of the others. Reminiscent of the 'light that lies' in John 18:3, he points out that sin sometimes calls itself the private good. As such it remains subjective, and far worse, challenges the objective reality of the Word innate in creation. It is the Word that characterizes and expresses what is good and this, by definition, defines reality itself as it proceeds from God, and is not performed according to any deformed reason. Following Pseudo-Dionysius,<sup>37</sup> Bonaventure describes this as the 'good beneath the surface.' Sin, disguised as 'something' by the pretence of a private good, is in reality 'utterly nothing.' This viewpoint helps to explain why the exemplarism of Christ manifests itself as paradox. There are two operative views of reality that exist concurrently. One is true and the other false. This is apparent in the scene at Gethsemane and will remain so, in heightened perspective, as the drama of the Passion continues to unfold.

Sin disguised as 'something' obscures the vision of the hypostatic union by which Christ's exemplarism is manifested to the world. The

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<sup>36</sup>Cf. Jn 12:32.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Div. Nom.*, 4 (PL 122), 1129-46.

Johannine theme of seeing/believing overlaid by Bonaventure's Scholastic, Neo-Platonic epistemology coincide in the imperative to *recognize* Christ as the Son of God. Recognition presupposes relationship and relationship, the *modus diligendi*, leads to union. The rest of the Passion narrative follows two 'tracks' as the events themselves are viewed from two different perspectives. In the first case, the actual 'event' of the Passion unfolds like a tragic theatrical farce. It is characterized by blindness and gross misunderstanding. This is the event viewed from the perspective of those actually involved in the scene. The exception, of course, is Christ himself, and to some extent Mary and the Apostle John. The second view is represented by the author of the Gospel and this includes exegetes like Bonaventure and believers throughout time. It is a theological view in which the divine self-revelation reaches its climax within circumstances preordained for that very purpose. The author of the Gospel is aware of the dichotomy and expresses it through the famous literary device known as Johannine irony. Bonaventure 'sets the stage' earlier in the *Commentary* in an important passage taken from his exegesis of John 8:27-8. The crux of the paradox rests on discernment of the hypostatic union and its implications:

*They did not realize that he had been speaking to them about the Father (Jn 8:27): and since they were not able to understand how high his origin was, he sent them to the weakness of the Passion when he says: Therefore Jesus said to them, 'When the Son of Man is lifted up, namely, on the cross where it is inferred in chapter 12 [verse 32]: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself. Then you will know that I am he (Jn 8:28). Namely, a distinct Person of the Trinity—behold, personal distinction, [as in] Exodus 3:14: I am who I am. And I do nothing by myself (Jn 8:28). You will know this: I speak these things as the Father taught me, that is, as they are accepted from the Father, for the Father gives all things to the Son. In this is shown the emanation by generation [of the Son] from the Father. The Son is not able to do anything by himself, unless he sees the Father doing it (Jn 5:19). You will not only know the distinction of the Persons, but also the oneness of the essence.<sup>38</sup>*

Those who 'did not realize' were, of course, unbelievers who plotted to kill Jesus and would eventually succeed. Still, a facile interpretation of this fact must be avoided. One has only to read the discourses within the context of the Last Supper to realize that in certain ways the disciples of Jesus were also among those who 'did not realize.' Within the Passion narrative itself this is graphically demonstrated by the

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<sup>38</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 8.38 (VI), 361-2.



behavior of Peter. The cross is a necessity for all as the self-revelation of God manifests itself in a blinded world.

The pervasive Johannine theme of recognition (or rejection) is also used by Bonaventure to describe the origin and purpose of divine self-revelation. This is accomplished, particularly in instances of misunderstanding or rejection, through the use of irony, which parallels Johannine usage. The emphasis is always on Christ's divinity, as the source of Christ's authority and the object revealed by his presence on earth. Bonaventure, however, often supplies details omitted by the author of the Fourth Gospel. Outstanding examples, in terms of recognition, are found in Bonaventure's exegesis of several key passages. In 18:6 the soldiers seek to identify Jesus from among the disciples. Jesus answers 'I am he' and immediately they fall to the ground. Following the intent of the Gospel, Bonaventure interprets this as a clear reference to Christ's divinity. He expands on the Johannine conception, however, with an impressive array of scriptural and patristic references and, in doing so, delineates the nature of the paradox. Referring to Job 26:14, *Behold, these are the fringes of his ways; and how faint a word we hear from him! But his mighty thunder, who can understand?*, Bonaventure evokes the contrast, which pervades the scene. Is it a 'faint word,' or 'mighty thunder,' or both, as God reveals himself in this way? The soldiers, fully armed, fall to the ground. Bonaventure claims that Jesus 'smites without a weapon.' Instead, following Chrysostom, 'Jesus blinds the soldiers'<sup>39</sup> in a dark garden lit by flickering torches. Thus, the twin motifs of 'light' and 'recognition' reoccur in a scene only understood retroactively, since Jesus is then arrested and led to his trial. Why should recognition be so difficult? Bonaventure once again returns to the mystery of the hypostatic union through reference to Augustine. 'God is hidden in human flesh. Eternal day is obscured by human limbs.'<sup>40</sup>

The trial of Jesus is understood by Bonaventure to be an essential medium of the divine self-revelation. Of course, Jesus himself offers important testimony, but so do his enemies. They do this without any comprehension of the kind of witness being offered. Furthermore, the various events, or 'scenes,' that comprise the trial also add to the sense of paradox as they, too, speak of the divine revelation. All of this forms a part of the Johannine aspect of the narrative as, once again, Bonaventure expands on the implicit irony found in the text of the Gospel.

The operative factor of the paradox comes with the shocking realization that, throughout the arrest, trial, and even the Passion itself,

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<sup>39</sup>Chrysostom, 83.4 (PG 59), 452-5.

<sup>40</sup>Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 112.3 (CCSL 36), 634.

Jesus is in complete control of the situation. This is implied by John, but is stated specifically by Bonaventure in his exegesis of verse 11, *...shall I not drink this cup?* Bonaventure concludes that Christ wills the Passion. It is an interesting, and ambiguous, point, which reveals the subtlety of the paradox. Certainly, the Synoptic Gospels leave some room to doubt this assertion. Jesus asks the Father to remove the cup from him and experiences real fear. In John's account the scene is omitted. Where does this leave Jesus' human nature? If John had truly presented a 'Docetic' Christ the paradox of the hypostatic union would be subverted and the intricate construction of Bonaventure's Christological exemplarism would collapse.

It is true that in the Passion narrative Christ shows no sign of doubt or fear, but both are alluded to in John 12:27: Now my soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father save me from this hour?' But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify thy name. In his exegesis of the passage, Bonaventure moves beyond a traditional patristic interpretation. This can be demonstrated by comparing Bonaventure's conception of Christ's human will to that of Chrysostom, who is extensively quoted in the *Commentary*. Bonaventure moves subtly beyond Chrysostom's perceptions. Chrysostom reflects the viewpoint expressed by John of Damascus, in which Christ's human nature is not understood to be the 'hand maid' of his divinity. Chrysostom is careful to assert the manifestation of God in the Incarnation by means of 'true flesh' and this, as with Bonaventure, is understood to be a complete human nature. Chrysostom, however, seems to subvert Christ's human will to that of the Logos, and that is unacceptable to Bonaventure.<sup>41</sup> Thus, in John 10:18 Chrysostom interprets Christ voluntarily laying down his life as an exercise of his divine will, yet Christ's fear of death in John 12:27 belongs 'to the Dispensation, not the Godhead.'<sup>42</sup> Chrysostom is in agreement with Bonaventure that the actions of Christ, which seem to display human weakness are given for our instruction, but those actions that are typically 'human' are subordinated to the will of the Logos and only allowed to occur on specific, instructive occasions.<sup>43</sup> Bonaventure would not hold to this interpretation. Bonaventure, however, avoids a Monophysite (or Docetic) understanding of the will of Christ by describing, instead, a perfected human will.

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<sup>41</sup>For an overview of Chrysostom on the humanity of Christ, see: C. Hay, "John Chrysostom and the Integrity of the Human Nature of Christ," *Franciscan Studies* 19 (1959): 298-317.

<sup>42</sup>Chrysostom, *In Ioan. homil.*, 67.1 (PG 59), 369-71.

<sup>43</sup>See Chrysostom, *c. Anomoeos*, 7.6 (PG, 48), 765.

In his exegesis of John 12:27, Bonaventure describes two aspects of Christ's human will. The first is called *voluntas rationis* and the second, *voluntas sensualitatis*. In this circumstance, Christ's prayer proceeds from the sensual will and is instructive for that very reason. It is profitable to care for one's life. In Chrysostom's exegesis of the same verse the opposite perception is immediately put forward: Christ exhibits a fear of death so that his disciples, inspired by his resolution, will be able to face their own human fear and eventual martyrdom. The subtle aspect of Bonaventure's perception is made apparent by the fact that he is not really in disagreement with the main point of Chrysostom's exegesis. Rather, it is a matter of emphasis. Bonaventure goes on to say—in agreement with Chrysostom—that Christ was not trying to evade death, but to show that we should not allow the fear of death to obstruct God's will. While, in Christ's rational will, he is always in accord with the Father's will, his sensual will is not. Christ experiences both, and both are aspects of his human nature. It is an important consideration. By assuming a sensual will, Christ enters into radical incongruity with the divine nature, which is impassible. In this sense, the paradox is engaged. By assuming a perfected rational will, Christ integrates the incongruous impulses of the sensual will into harmony with the divine will, re-establishing congruity. This is the nature of the exemplarism anticipated by Chrysostom and proposed by Bonaventure, but Bonaventure represents the full implications of the paradox.

Returning to the Passion narrative in consideration of Bonaventure's exegesis of John 12:27, it is apparent that Christ's 'psychological state' throughout the unfolding event is not simply one of acceptance of the 'divine will,' but in complete union with it, even directing its course to the desired conclusion. Obviously, this would not have been evident to a casual observer present at the scene. The 'observers' are those who accuse Christ and it seems as if they hold his life in their hands. In a sense this is quite true; it is the *reason* for this that they fail to grasp. Thus, they act in two ways, consciously and unconsciously. Their intent is to accuse and condemn, but often they bear witness. Bonaventure points out in his exegesis of 18:13-14 that Caiaphas is a prophet. The nature of his prophecy sums up the exemplaristic paradox: The death of Jesus is life for the world.<sup>44</sup> Acknowledging the incongruity of the actual situation, while affirming the nature of Christological exemplarism (18:20), Bonaventure asserts that Christ's open witness is an aspect of the *modus certitudinis*, while that of his accusers is 'false' because it is secret. Even so, his enemies are his

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<sup>44</sup>Cf. *idem*, *In Ioan. homil.*, 83.2 (PG 59), 449-50.

'witnesses' and, precisely because of this, the *modus certitudinis* is vindicated in the profoundest way (18:21).

Throughout the scene of the trial, it is the Jews who receive the harshest criticism in Bonaventure's exegesis. Pilate is portrayed, almost gently, as a kind of confused fool. This can be jarring to modern ears sensitive to the long legacy of Christian anti-Semitism. Bonaventure heightens the paradoxical incongruity of the situation by noting that the Jews were "scandalized by a foreign court [they refused to enter], but not by the blood of an innocent brother (18:28)." They are described as "false." Bonaventure quotes Exodus 23:7, *Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.* In a final irony, as they accuse Jesus, but refuse Pilate's order to judge him (18:31), Bonaventure quotes Exodus 22:18, *You shall not permit an evil doer to live*—one need hardly wonder who are the "evil doers" here, despite the actual circumstances of who is accusing and who stands accused), and Augustine, "Evil is the reward for good."<sup>45</sup>

Pilate, on the other hand, is less vindictive. According to Bonaventure, he believes that Jesus is innocent (18:38). His sins seem to be weakness and vacillation. The famous exchange between Jesus and Pilate regarding truth and kingship in 18:33-38 provides an opportunity for Bonaventure to develop notions of exemplarism, truth, and its paradoxical manifestation, kingship. The theme of ascent/descent is often expressed by an ironic juxtaposition of images and in the Passion narrative the image of kingship predominates. In his exegesis of John 1:6 Bonaventure makes a somewhat ambiguous association of 'glory' and 'kingship' as a sign of Christ's divinity, and this is now clarified. In the Passion narrative the ironic usage of symbolism and inadvertent witness regarding the kingship of Christ always points to the nature of the divine revelation. This usually follows the obvious intent of the author of the Fourth Gospel, but once again, Bonaventure expands on what the Gospel leaves unsaid. Thus, Jesus frees his disciples in the garden—generally associated with political authority—in 18:6, and even his enemies 'did whatever he bid them' in 18:8. Both insights depend on Augustine. Jesus is consistently contrasted to Caesar in the text and in Bonaventure's exegesis. Pilate's question and Jesus' response regarding kingship in 18:33 is given an ironic twist by Bonaventure. Jesus is, indeed, a 'rival' of Caesar, and one is left to wonder, throughout the short discourse, exactly who is judging whom? The same theme is repeated in 19:7-15. Pilate's questions are 'beyond his capacity to ask them' and, ultimately, he is 'humiliated by Jesus.'

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<sup>45</sup> Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 114.3 (CCSL 36), 641.

Jesus, however, was not born 'to dominate, but to teach the truth' and his 'kingdom is not of this world (18:37).' According to Bonaventure, Pilate clearly believes Jesus is a king, but he does not know what kind of king. The answer is quickly supplied. When questioned about the nature of 'truth' in 18:38, Jesus makes no response in the Gospel narrative, yet Bonaventure supplies a hypothetical response by referring to John 14:6, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.* Understood within the context of Bonaventure's exegesis of the entire Gospel, there can be no clearer exposition of the exemplarism of the Logos/Christ than this; as the three-fold *modus* of union is personalized and objectified in the Incarnation. The 'ways' of *certitudinis*, *intelligendi*, and *diligendi* remain, however, difficult to discern. Bonaventure has recourse to Chrysostom, 'The truth is raised [only] by hindering...', which echoes the timeless amazement of Paul; the foolishness of the message preached.<sup>46</sup>

As Christ's death approaches, the symbolism associated with kingship becomes ever more tangible and, at the same time, ironic. Jesus is crowned with thorns and his vestment is stained red with his own blood (19:2). Both, clearly, are symbols of royalty and, in this instance, the irony is intended by those present at the scene. Jesus is 'saluted' with blows (19:3) and Augustine points out that he was "not illustrious with power, but filled with reproach."<sup>47</sup> The sign written by Pilate is a 'true witness' (19:19, 21) and, finally, the cross itself is associated with the symbolism of a throne. It is the 'key of David' and the 'office of government' (19:17).

Faced with this welter of images the reader is acquainted with the full implications of the *descent* of the Son of God into the human condition. By itself, this would be a fair representation of the paradox, but it is also made clear that, within these circumstances, the Son of God also *ascends*. This is the 'hour of glory,' in which the divine manifestation is made most apparent according to the typology of the Brass Serpent (Nm 21:9/Jn 12:32). Each of the examples cited above, in their association with the congruity of Christ's kingship within the specific circumstances of the Passion, express this concept, but the paradoxical unity of the ascent/descent theme in the Person of Christ is best summed up in Bonaventure's exegesis of 19:37. Basing his exegesis on Zechariah 22:10, *They shall look on him whom they pierced*, Bonaventure has recourse to the insights of Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine.<sup>48</sup> The ultimate debasement of Christ's humanity, expressed

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<sup>46</sup>Cf. Chrysostom, *In Ioan. homil.*, 84.2 (PG 59), 456-7 (1Cor. 1:23).

<sup>47</sup>Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 116.2 (CCSL 36), 647.

<sup>48</sup>Ambrose, *Libr. X in Luc.*, 23, 49.235; Chrysostom, *In Ioan. homil.*, 85.3 (PG 59), 463-4; Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 120.2 (CCSL 36), 661.

in the final violation of his corpse, is interpreted in three ways. Ambrose points out that the twin streams of water and uncoagulated blood flowing from Christ's side are a clear indication of his divinity. Even dead (descent), Christ manifests the signs of divine self-revelation while suspended on the cross (ascent). Bonaventure augments the theme of ascent by referring to Revelation 1:7, *All eyes will look upon him on the Day of Judgment*. It is tempting to interpret Bonaventure's remark according to the realized eschatology found in the Fourth Gospel. The insight of Chrysostom articulates the nature of the paradox: 'What seems most improbable are the foundation of our goods.' Augustine relates the dual theme to Christ, and extends the soteriological consequences to humanity. Christ is described as the New Adam and his 'sleep' on the Cross results in the creation of his 'spouse,' the Church.<sup>49</sup> In this sense Christ's descent into the human condition, and ascent on the Cross, directly results in the ascent of perfected, divinized humanity.

The Passion narrative is seen to express the divine/human paradox and its consequences according to a super-imposition of themes. Christ's divinity is expressed by 'triumphant' motifs associated with kingship, direct references to his divinity, and eschatological judgment. Christ's humanity is sometimes stated outright, but is more often implied by graphic images that present the reader with a motif of human suffering. The essential nature of the paradox is revealed in the congruity of the motifs, as the divine self-revelation is made evident in circumstances of abject poverty. This is a truth that is difficult to discern (Jn 19:38). Christ's soteriological exemplarism is brought into play through the subsidiary theme of mediation. Recognition is mandated as the theme of ascent/descent, applied to Christ, is made accessible to humanity. What is mediated to humanity, forming the basis of union with the divine, is the self-diffusive love of God.

Bonaventure's exegesis of passages that directly deal with the crucifixion is filled with the 'fruits' of recognition. Christ's place on the cross between two thieves is particularly rich in exegetical imagery. First is noted the 'worthlessness of the company' and the 'most debased kind of death,' but this is recognized as a 'sign in the middle place' as the Passion is linked to the Nativity and, in an allusion to Christ's role as hierarchical exemplar *in medias res*, he is able then to be 'true peace'; *For he himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing*

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<sup>49</sup>Augustine clarifies the concept by relating the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side to the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. This is discussed by Bonaventure in his exegesis of John 19:24.



wall (Ephesians 2:14).<sup>50</sup> Pilate's inscription, placed on the Cross, is described as 'triumphant'; it is not 'for a robber, but a king.' The name 'Jesus' (savior) offers an explanation of why he died. In his exegesis of John 19:23 Bonaventure provides a glimpse of what is being mediated to humanity by Christ: the healing grace of divine self-diffusive love. The greed of the soldiers who gamble for Christ's garment is noted. They are 'plunderers.' Even so, Bonaventure asserts that no particular of Christ's Passion is accidental. Christ's tunic is a symbol of divine love, it 'covers disgrace.' In a play on words, Bonaventure claims that the seamless garment symbolizes a 'bond' (love), not a 'binding.' Relating this to the experience of the Church, Bonaventure goes on to say that 'whoever divides this tunic is worse than the soldiers who gambled for it.' Finally, in 19:30 Jesus surrenders his life. The clash of imagery highlights the paradox. Bonaventure begins with a rather tranquil quotation from Augustine; Jesus has 'the power to lay down his life at will.'<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, he dies with 'tears and loud cries.' This fulfills prophecy and is a perfect sacrifice. The result is the 'perfection of others' as it 'brings many sons to glory.'

### The Fruits of Exemplarism

The 'many sons brought to glory' are not evident at the scene. There is one, John, who comforts Mary and is given a distinctly Franciscan cast as Bonaventure goes to great lengths in asserting that he 'had no possessions.' Some of the other 'sons' are in other, less worthy, places. If Peter is taken as an example, perhaps it can be said that the disciples had an inkling of their eventual fate without, however, understanding the full implications, and thus the true destination of their difficult and unexpected *itinerarium*. Bonaventure, writing from the retrospective angle of over a thousand years of Christian history, knows very well where they are headed. If he had been in the garden to interpret Jesus' words and actions to the disciples, he certainly would have done little to allay their fears. In his exegesis of John 18:9 Bonaventure states that when Jesus made it possible for the disciples to avoid arrest he saved them 'from hell, not martyrdom.'

Bonaventure's doctrine of Christological exemplarism represents one aspect of a process that, though initiated by God, is nevertheless complemented by the reciprocal response of humanity. From the divine point of view exemplarism can be understood as the fundamental reason for creation's existence and the means by which it is enabled to 'return' to its source. From the human point of view the same process initiated and

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<sup>50</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 18.30 (VI), 496.

<sup>51</sup>Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 119.6 (CCSL 36), 660.

completed by Christological exemplarism is apprehended and expressed according to the *praxis* of *itinerarium* and *imitatio*, and in its completion the soteriological objective of the Incarnation is realized.

*Itinerarium* describes a 'journey' of conversion. It represents a lengthy experience of *metanoia* in which the human person is brought into an ever-deepening conformity (*imitatio*) with the re-capitulated perfection exemplified by Christ. Acceptance of Christ, summed up in the Fourth Gospel in terms of 'belief,' ultimately results in union with Christ and, through him, with the Father. As in other areas of Bonaventure's Christology, the underlying dynamic of egression/regression, in which creation proceeds from and returns to God, provides a conceptual framework within which the active response of humanity to the 'divine summons' is expressed. In the Fourth Gospel this is described according to the theme of ascent/descent. However, where Christological exemplarism derives its authority from the thematic aspect of 'ascent,' and primarily relies on the aspect of 'descent' in terms of its expression, the reverse order is found in the themes of *itinerarium* and *imitatio*. The 'way' and the 'goal' find their frame of reference in the certitude provided by Christ's divine exemplarism and thus, depend on the descent of *the Only Begotten of God, who is in the bosom of the Father... [and] who has explained him.*<sup>52</sup> The *itinerarium*, however, represents a process of ascent as humanity completes the return journey to its divine source in conformity to the image and likeness of the Word made accessible by the Incarnation.

Bonaventure's emphasis on exemplarism in his exegesis of the Fourth Gospel is mirrored in the effect produced in those who 'see' and 'believe.' As such, Christ's authoritative claim to the human search for universal intelligibility is linked to the apprehension of the *modus intelligendi* on the part of humanity. Likewise, Bonaventure's close association of metaphysical and epistemological exemplarism impacts upon the themes of *itinerarium* and *imitatio*. An example is found in the Prologue. The four characteristics already described, which provide the conceptual basis of Christological exemplarism in Bonaventure's exegesis of John 1:1-4 serve the same purpose in regard to the human response. If Bonaventure's reading of the Fourth Gospel is "laden with metaphysical implications and related epistemological questions,"<sup>53</sup> it then follows that beings constituted in the Word as the First Principle of reality are going to find the foundation of their own *esse* in a process culminating in *imitatio*. In the same way, if the

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<sup>52</sup>Jn 1:18.

<sup>53</sup>See Zachary Hayes, "Christology and Metaphysics in the Thought of Bonaventure," *Journal of Religion* (Supplement, 1978): 582-96.

Incarnation is the point of history where the content of the Word is historicized, then the practice of *imitatio*, however abstract it might seem in its rational and affective characteristics, is going to find expression in concrete, particular ways. Those 'particular ways,' in conformity to the image and likeness of the Word made flesh, will impel the disciples to face eventually the implications of the Passion and, there, to find their own Golgotha.

Jesus offered an explanation during the long, intimate conversation at the Last Supper. The series of discourses preceding the Passion narrative represent the fullest exposition of the Johannine imperative to 'see,' 'believe,' and, in doing so, enter into union with the Father through Christ. In this respect they provide Bonaventure with the opportunity to develop his conceptions of *itinerarium* and *imitatio* to their fullest extent within the *Commentary*. The results of both, however, are expressed in the Passion and Resurrection narratives as events that lie in an uncertain—from the disciples' point of view—future. For this reason there is a tension, present within the discourses themselves, as the disciples are treated by Christ in a mature way befitting the arrival of the 'hour of glorification' but, at the same time, are beset by doubts and anxieties. The weakness of the disciples reflects one aspect of the state of poverty that characterizes the entire human race. It was not always so. The human race was created in the 'image and likeness' of God. Humans, at least potentially, stand, in a way similar to Christ, in the 'middle place' and as rational creatures are uniquely able to benefit from grace mediated by the hierarchical Exemplar. In this sense the receptivity of humanity to the gift of sanctifying grace, characterized in the Fourth Gospel as 'seeing' and 'believing,' also forms an important aspect of *imitatio*. This is made even more apparent as humanity, after receiving grace, is also able to mediate it in union with Christ. The nature of that union, however, leads humanity to the cross.

In the Prologue of *II Sentences*<sup>54</sup> Bonaventure refers to Ecclesiastes 7:30, *God made man upright*. In this early work Bonaventure interprets the passage in terms of the likeness of humanity to its Creator. To 'stand upright' reflects the divine image in humanity in three ways: (1) intelligence, (2) will, and (3) power. Taken together, the three aspects of 'uprightness' express what it means for humanity to exist *in medias res* and, as Zachary Hayes points out, it "is not a static position, but a task to be accomplished."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Bonaventure, *II Sent.*, *Proëmium* (II), 3ff.

<sup>55</sup>See Z. Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (New York: 1981), 19-21

This is explicit in *II Sentences* and the reason "uprightness" cannot be taken for

The experience of the disciples in the upper room and their subsequent behavior as the Passion takes place reveals the 'uprightness' of human nature to be a tentative affair. It is achieved and sustained in the face of great difficulty. Thus, the state of the disciples, directed along a 'way of the cross,' can be understood as both 'upright,' in the sense that they have been prepared to respond and follow, and 'bent over' since the 'way' of *imitatio* that leads to union is strewn with obstacles and seeming contradictions. In both respects the disciples are beggars. The 'upright' nature of discerning intellect, will, and power, to act, that illuminates the inception of the *itinerarium* begs the question, 'What is your doctrine?' The answer to that question is delivered in the face of opposition- both of the world and of the disciples' lingering unreformed instincts- so that they gather once again, near the end as in the beginning, as beggars around the table of the Last Supper.

The existential state of poverty expressed in the peculiar state of the disciples, as both 'upright' in a tentative sense and 'bent over' as they confront their doubts and anxieties, pre-supposes the necessity of mediated grace at every stage of the *itinerarium* and this forms a major part of Bonaventure's exegetical analysis of the discourses. The influence of Augustine in this area is pervasive. What has impoverished humanity is sin, defined as the free choice of a corruptible good over the eternal good of the Creator.<sup>56</sup> Christ is the divine response to the poor man's cry for mercy. He re-integrates humanity to its divine source. Christ re-awakens humanity to a positive aspect of poverty. Sin in its fundamental aspect represents the rejection of the paradoxical ontological poverty that characterized the

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granted is due to the loss of the "middle place" by post-lapsarian humanity: "Fecit igitur Deus hominem rectum, dum ipsum fecit ad se conversum. In conversione enim hominis ad Deum non tantum rectificabitur ad id quod sursum, sed etiam ad id quod deorsum. Homo enim in medio constitutus, dum factus est ad Deum converses et subiectus, cetera sunt ei subiecta, ita quod Deus omnem veritatem creatam subiecerat eius intellectui ad diiudicandum, omnem bonitatem eius affectui ad utendum, omnem virtutem eius potestati ad gubernandum," Bonaventure, *II Sent., Proëmium* (II), 5.

The point is repeated in Bonaventure's last work, the *Hexaëmeron*, with a clear reference to the *itinerarium* in terms of egression/regression: "Certum est, quod homo stans habebat cognitionem rerum creaturarum et per illarum repraesentationem ferebatur in Deum ad ipsum laudandum, venerandum, amandum; et ad hoc sunt creaturae et sic reducuntur in Deum. Cadente autem homine, cum amisisset cognitionem, non erat qui reduceret eas in Deum," idem, *Hex.*, 13.12 (V), 390. The *Hexaëmeron* also associates "uprightness" with grace: "Bestialis est homo carens his [grace] et habens faciem inclinatam ad terram sicut animal," ibidem, 20.2, 425.

<sup>56</sup>Bonaventure offers a direct parallel to the view found in Augustine, *en. Ps.*, 2.3.8 (CCSL 38), 4.

experience of the first humans before the Fall. In this respect, Bonaventure combines Augustinian conceptions of illuminationism, in terms of actual and sanctifying grace, with the dynamic Trinitarian exemplarism derived from Dionysian notions pertaining to the divine self-diffusion of the good. In doing so Bonaventure acknowledges that 'uprightness' is a gift from God and not the prerogative of humanity.

For this reason the recognition of poverty in the disciples' experience is never perceived in a negative aspect, either by the author of the Fourth Gospel or by Bonaventure, within the discourses. On the contrary, the ignorance, misery, and doubt that stand in such stark contrast to the rationality, will, and power of 'uprightness' are perceived by Bonaventure—at least in respect to those traveling the *itinerarium*—as a pre-requisite recognition of the utter dependence of humanity on God. The disciples have nothing to fear. They are in the presence of the divine Physician and an awareness of their own destitution is all that is necessary to find a welcome in that place.<sup>57</sup> It remains for Christ, Physician and Exemplar, to point out the 'way' toward wholeness. Bonaventure portrays Christ doing this throughout the discourses in a systematic way. The infirmity of the disciples is summed up by a triplet of opposition to the three-fold characteristics of 'uprightness.' Doubt is opposed to an enlightened intellect, fear to a will purified by love, and both—characterized as paralyzing anxiety—inhibit the power to act that will take the disciples to the completion of the *itinerarium*. In John 14 the remedy given by Christ is faith for doubt. In John 15 love is given as a remedy for fear, and in John 16 hope is proposed as the remedy for the anxiety that paralyzes action.

In John 14:4 Christ claims that the disciples know both the way (*itinerarium*) and the destination (*imitatio*). In verse 5 Thomas asks an ignorant question. Acknowledging the poverty that pre-disposes to grace, Bonaventure commends this ignorance and remarks that 'it helps to strengthen faith.' Indeed it does since it provides the occasion for Christ to expound on the Way, the Truth, and the Life, which forms the core of the discourse. Bonaventure's complex exegesis of the passage<sup>58</sup> represents a summation of the relationship between Christological exemplarism and the *itinerarium*. Parallels to the epistemological exemplarism found in the Prologue are listed as the Truth is associated with 'mind' and the Life with 'feelings.' Together, they represent the unified illumination of the intellect

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<sup>57</sup>Bonaventure echoes the insight of Francis of Assisi: "Et firmiter sciamus, quia non pertinent ad nos nisi vitia et peccata," *Reg. non bul.*, 17.7 (Francesco d'Assisi, *Scritti*, 283).

<sup>58</sup>See Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 14.5-7 (VI), 436-7.

and affections in the *modi intelligendi* and *diligendi*. Bonaventure makes other notable associations in his exegesis of the text. 'Leader,' associated with the Way, suggests the re-capitulated perfection achieved by the Incarnation *in medias res*, often expressed as 'headship,' in the unified epistemological and metaphysical exemplarism of the Logos as agent of creation and Christ as agent of the new creation. Similarly, 'Light' reinforces these implications in terms of interior illumination, while 'Pastor' points toward the fruit of good works as the illuminated will is drawn towards a holy and acceptable love. Christ is also described as the Example (Way), Promise (Truth), and Reward (Life). Thus, in terms of the goal, which is union, each can be understood to be both Christ and the 'place prepared' by him for those who follow.

In his exegesis of the True Vine Discourse in Chapter 15 Bonaventure addresses the ontological implications of union achieved by the *praxis* of love and its close association with obedience and grace in producing 'fruit.' In his discussion of what those 'fruits' might be, *imitatio* merges into union:

*In this is my Father glorified, that you should bear much fruit, which means that men are converted through your word and example...that is, be imitators of me, who bore most fruit in my death, as in John 12 (verse 24): If a grain of wheat dies it bears much fruit. Also, the Apostles, since the Church sings about them, that they 'planted the Church by their blood.'*<sup>59</sup>

If one understands Christ's death as the definitive expression of grace as *caritas* given by the Exemplar then it follows that 'the most fruit' should be manifested by it. Considering the behavior of the 'sons of glory' during the Passion, the rather outrageous supposition that the disciples, as receivers of grace, should be invited to share in its mediation presupposes a lot. This is particularly true when one recalls that grace is, after all, founded in divine self-diffusiveness. The ontological compatibility of humanity *in medias res* with the Exemplar makes this possible. Bonaventure deals with this theme in many areas of the *Commentary*, but here that compatibility is linked to grace, the *praxis* of divine love, and the cross represents its most profound expression. Let us remember that the disciples were saved 'from hell, not martyrdom'; this *praxis* is the reason for both. It is the mediation of divine *esse* to humanity. Once again Bonaventure returns to the mystery of the hypostatic union. Quoting Augustine, Bonaventure asserts that the 'true

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<sup>59</sup>Ibidem, 15.9, p. 448. The quotation is taken from Gregory's *libri Responsali* following the nocturn for the Apostles, resp. 3 (PL 78, col. 820), and found in the *Breviario Romano, Commun. Apostol.*, nocturn 3, resp. 1, lect.



vine' is understood to be Christ's human nature.<sup>60</sup> This is stated in response to the objection that grace only flows from God. Bonaventure replies that if Christ were only God or a man there would be no *mediation*, and that this is the fundamental purpose of the hypostatic union. Thus, in a way reminiscent of the Baptist's identification of the Lamb of God, Christ *in medias res* manifests divinity through his humanity. The ontological compatibility begins with the Exemplar. It remains for humanity to participate, through an obedient response to the Love that is God, as *imitatio* results in union. In this way the fruits of the hypostatic union itself become the inheritance of the elect.

### The Interrogation of Peter

The pericope of the triple interrogation of Peter is recorded in John 21:15-21. Peter is given a second chance. In a way typical of Bonaventure, it describes both the inception and the conclusion of the *itinerarium*. In verse 15 Jesus asks Peter if he loves him more than the other disciples. Peter's reply is ambiguous. He affirms his love but does not add 'more than the others'. Bonaventure, already having affirmed Peter's greater love for Jesus, simply states that Peter could not have known the other disciples' hearts. Bonaventure interprets the term 'great' as an invitation by Jesus to a commitment to 'great love' by Peter. This is directly associated with his Apostolic office as Bonaventure cites Gregory the Great, "The one without great love ought not to have the office of preaching." Lest the office of proclamation be understood as merely a matter of words, Bonaventure adds a citation from John 10:11, *the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep*. In this respect Peter's *itinerarium*, firmly grounded in the *modus diligendi* and exemplifying the experience of the Church, is defined by *imitatio Christi*. It is a union in which the lover is conformed to the image of the beloved. After Peter's response Jesus exhorts him to *feed my sheep*. Once again citing Gregory the Great, Bonaventure interprets Jesus remark to mean that 'love is manifested in works,' thereby situating the *itinerarium* in the *praxis* of love.

In verse 16 Jesus questions Peter for the second time. Bonaventure's exegesis is terse. He points out that Jesus' second question follows the intent of the first. There is a difference, however, in Jesus' exhortation. Peter is commanded to *shepherd my sheep*. Bonaventure points out that Peter is not only commanded to love, but to function as an example. Given the association of Peter with the Church, this represents an important

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<sup>60</sup>Ibidem, 15.13, q. 3, resp., p. 449; Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 80.1 (CCSL 36), 527-8.



consideration as Bonaventure explicitly affirms Peter's experience of the *modus diligendi* as an aspect of every believer's *itinerarium*.

Finally, in verse 17 Peter is questioned for the third time. Bonaventure points out that the verb *diligere* is replaced by *amare*. Following Augustine, Bonaventure notes that there is no real difference in meaning.<sup>61</sup> It is an important point. In Augustine's view *diligere* (equated with *caritas*) would seem to indicate a more spiritual kind of love than *amare*. In *De civitate Dei* Augustine asserts that, in the interchangeable way that the two words are used in the scriptures, this is not so. Throughout the *Commentary* Bonaventure consistently uses the word *diligere* to describe 'love.' Its associations with Augustinian conceptions of grace are apparent and as such the love derived from the meaning of *diligere* also functions as an apt description of divine *esse*.<sup>62</sup> Jesus' use of the subjective verb *amare* and Peter's response in the same terms can be interpreted as an appropriate metaphor for the love-based union characteristic of *imitatio*. In their reciprocity the divine *diligo* and the human *amo* merge and become one.

Bonaventure continues his exegesis of the passage by noting that Peter's triple affirmation of love matches his triple denial on the night of the Passion. Grace overcomes the frailty of the pilgrim Church. One could also say that grace opens the eyes of those blinded to the divine paradox. The conclusion of the pericope deals with Christ's prediction of Peter's death and Peter's question regarding the fate of John. In his exegesis of verse 18 Bonaventure begins with a summary of the *itinerarium* oriented toward the goal of *imitatio*:

*Truly I say to you* [verse 18]—after Peter was confirmed in love...he was invited to love's consummation...A man laying down his life for Christ... [the] imitation of the Passion.<sup>63</sup>

The theme alluded to in the discourses preceding the Passion is explicitly stated here. The Passion represents the ultimate revelation of the *modus diligendi* given by the Exemplar in an invitation to union. Since love is the primary attribute of divine *esse*, its accessibility manifested by the very human suffering and death of Christ *in medias res* propels the *itinerarium* to its conclusion. Confirmation in love with the human Christ is consummated, through him, in union with God. Bonaventure goes on to say that Peter is glorified in his predicted suffering. This is linked to Christ's command that

<sup>61</sup>Ibidem, 21.35, p. 525; Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, 14.7.1ff. (CCSL 48), 421ff.

<sup>62</sup>In the Vulgate, the word used for "love" in 1 Jn 4:8 is *caritas*.

<sup>63</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 21.41 (VI), 526.

Peter follows him to the Passion. In doing so Bonaventure describes the process of the *itinerarium* as *imitatio* conforms the disciple to the image of perfection exemplified in the love expressed by Christ on the cross. Peter is the 'head of the Church' and thus "many [saints] have followed through their own passion or even the same death [as Christ]." <sup>64</sup>

### The Unified Way in the High Priestly Prayer

In the Fourth Gospel there are two aspects to the progressive theme of seeing/believing/testifying/union. One is applied to believers and the other to Christ. Christ 'sees' in the sense that he comes from, and is one with, the Father. His 'faith' is essentially certainty. He testifies about himself (as does the Father and the Holy Spirit), and his testimony is true because it is founded on his union with the Father. Believers see Christ, believe in him, testify, and enter into union with the Father through him.

In the High Priestly Prayer the *modus certitudinis* is represented in its primary aspect, as Christ immediately seeks for himself the 'manifestation of his splendor' from the Father. In his exegesis of verse 4 Bonaventure makes it clear that this 'splendor' belongs to Christ since '[he] was equal with [the Father] from eternity, before the existence of the world.' Bonaventure goes on to say that Christ's request is made so that '[his] splendor...could be manifested to others.' This is the beginning of the *modus certitudinis*. Bonaventure points out that Christ's splendor has been an aspect of every particular of his earthly ministry. Here, on the threshold of the Passion, it provides a reference to certainty for those who, by 'seeing' and 'believing,' are ready to embark on the *itinerarium*. As such, it provides the *raison d'être* for the Fourth Gospel and the veracity of Johannine witness as well as the Franciscan *vita* symbolized in so many ways in Bonaventure's exegesis by the Apostle John.

The manifestation of splendor also provides a reference to the end of the *itinerarium*. The goal of discipleship is union. Christ's manifestation of the Father's splendor establishes the certainty of his testimony based on *his* union with the Father. Shared with his disciples, the 'manifestation of splendor' invites them to participate in the fullness of being expressed in Johannine terms as 'truth.' This represents another kind of certitude based on *their* participation in the unified metaphysical and epistemological exemplarism of the Logos and Christ. Jesus said to his disciples, *the truth will set you free*. He also describes himself as the *truth*. <sup>65</sup> As the *modus certitudinis* Christ functions as the Alpha and Omega of the conversion process. The

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<sup>64</sup>Ibidem, 21.50, q. 3, resp., 528.

<sup>65</sup>Jn 8:32; 14:6.

pervasive Augustinian influence in the *Commentary* finds its first frame of reference here. Psychological introspection and interior illumination are ordered toward certain comprehension of a 'truth' that is only imperfectly reflected in a world of passing, mutable forms. Viewed in this fashion, it becomes apparent why 'truth' manifests itself as paradox. The *modus certitudinis* also serves as a first frame of reference for Bonaventure's Neo-Platonic synthesis of Augustinian and Dionysian conceptions pertaining to exemplarism. As hierarchical Exemplar, Christ unites all aspects of 'being' within himself and, having mediated that 'being' into creation, directs the *itinerarium* by which creation is drawn back to its source. Thus Christ-as-Truth establishes the credibility of the *itinerarium*, enlightens the intellect and the affections along the way of understanding and love, and in the end unites the disciples to himself in the fullness of being.

The second aspect of the unified way is the *modus intelligendi*; the 'way of understanding.' In verse 7 Jesus says, *Now they have known that everything you have given me is from you.* Bonaventure interprets this to mean that 'they [the disciples] have known you [the Father] by knowing me.' Thus, the *modus certitudinis* initiates the *modus intelligendi* and the Augustinian/Anselmian maxim, *credo ut intelligam*, is engaged. The conception of Christ as *modus intelligendi* owes much to the epistemological exemplarism of the Logos, but more so to the radical expressiveness demonstrated by the unified exemplarism of the Logos and Christ in the hypostatic union. The 'manifestation of splendor' by which the certainty of Christological doctrine is established becomes intimately perceptible in the Incarnation. In his exegesis of verse 8 Bonaventure establishes a 'causal' link between the ways of certainty and understanding centered on the event of the Incarnation. The disciples 'believed' that Jesus was 'sent [by God] and thus, 'through faith in the assumed humanity, the understanding of the eternal birth is reached.'<sup>66</sup> The *modus intelligendi* reveals the doctrine of the hypostatic union and that doctrine saves because it is a prerequisite for the believer's union with the Father through Christ. It is a difficult 'way' because the revelation of the hypostatic union is paradoxical. Bonaventure concludes with a quotation from Augustine:

Hence, Augustine says, that "those who despised Christ when he was lowly did not deserve to know him when he was exalted."<sup>67</sup>

Belief in the Incarnation reveals 'sanctifying doctrine.' In his exegesis of verse 17 Bonaventure once again brings the ways of certainty and

<sup>66</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 17.5 (VI), 470.

<sup>67</sup>Ibidem; cf. Augustine, *Io. ev. tr.*, tr. 4.1-4 (CCSL 36), 31-33.

understanding together. Predicated on belief in the Incarnation, the 'Word of God' sanctifies the disciples by cleansing and purification. It is reminiscent of the 'penitential way' of the cross, characterized by *imitatio*, and supportive of the Franciscan *vita*. By the assimilation of 'penitential' doctrine the disciples are re-oriented to a correct perception of what is real. In verse 17 Jesus prays, *sanctify them in truth*. It is not disrespectful to wonder what that truth might be. Bonaventure follows his exposition of the 'penitential way' by situating the 'way' within the context of the *modus intelligendi*. Quoting Chrysostom he writes: "Sanctify them in truth. That is, instruct them. Teach them the truth, for right doctrines sanctify the soul."<sup>68</sup>

Based on 'certainty' at the inception and conclusion of the *itinerarium*, the *modus intelligendi* unites the beginning and the end because it describes the entire process of conversion; the progressive discernment of the paradox. Its fundamental importance is derived from the philosophical equation of 'knowing' and 'being.' Thus, the nature of the sanctification envisioned by Bonaventure translates the *theoria* of Christological doctrine into the *praxis* of *imitatio*, but this is best described in the final aspect of the 'way,' the *modus diligendi*.

From the outset, it should be understood that the *modus intelligendi* and the *modus diligendi* are inseparable from one another. Each represents a different aspect of illumination based on the Neo-Platonic/Augustinian 'dichotomy' of the rational and affective faculties of the intellect. Yet, it is questionable whether in Bonaventure's view—or Augustine's—this could truly be described as a dichotomy. In Question 4 Bonaventure addresses the issue directly:

Also, the question pertains to: *This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God* (Jn 17:3). This is not only knowledge, but also love, and if you say that there is love in the knowledge, then why did he [Jesus] not use the word love here?<sup>69</sup>

Bonaventure replies:

...[It] should be answered that it is necessary to understand that love is in the knowledge, which is a face-to-face one. Thus, when he says that the act of seeing is all of the reward he does not exclude love.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 17.29, 473; Chrysostom, *In Ioan. homil.*, 82.1 (PG 59), 441-3.

<sup>69</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 17.11, q. 4 (VI), 469.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibidem*, 17.11, q. 4, resp., 469.



Love is the greatest thing that the intellect is able to apprehend. This is so because *God is Love*.<sup>71</sup> If the *modus intelligendi* reveals the mystery of the hypostatic union, then the nature of that mystery, the divine *esse* united to flesh, is love: the purview of the *modus diligendi*. If the *modus diligendi* reveals divine *esse*, it must also be the substance and culmination of the conversion process. The theme is explicit in the Fourth Gospel, particularly in the 'union language' of the Final Discourses, but it is Augustine who supplies the conceptual tools for Bonaventure's exegesis. Grace as *caritas* is, for Augustine and Bonaventure, far more than 'loving help' offered by God to weak and wayward believers. Rather, it is the objective communication of divine *esse* to humanity lost in the false subjectivity of sin. As such, grace as *caritas* addresses the fundamental problem of the human condition and offers a soteriological solution. Moving to the heart of what it means to be converted, grace as *caritas* reintegrates the believer into a relationship with God so profound that the subjective alienation of sin, which can be understood as the 'negation of being,' is healed by the rediscovery of true subjective being in its divine source. This is the nature of the divine self-revelation, the 'hour of glory' revealed in the Passion.

The *modus diligendi* is arduous; ultimately it leads believers to the cross. The *praxis* of *imitatio* reflects in the inner life of the disciples. Tragically, *imitatio* involves the rejection of the disciple (as the Master) by the world. As *imitatio* is associated with love, rejection is associated with hate. This is stated by Jesus in John 17:14. In verse 15 Jesus does not ask that the disciples be taken out of the world, but only protected from the Evil One. Bonaventure interprets this to mean that they are to be protected from 'perverse love and [doctrinal] error.' His interpretation concisely describes the unified aspects of the *modus diligendi* and the *modus intelligendi*. These must be preserved because they represent the means of conversion by which the disciples are conformed through *imitatio* in union with God. The disciples are not to be 'taken out of the world.' Bonaventure understands this to be like the 'easy death' of Enoch alluded to in Genesis 5:24. On the contrary, they are invited to a better end. In verse 18 Jesus refers to another aspect of union. He sends the disciples into the world, as the Father sent him. The motive of the sending is the *modus diligendi* and the results, for Christ and the disciples, are the same. In his exegesis of verse 18 Bonaventure writes:

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<sup>71</sup>1 Jn 4:8, 16.



...here is the reason for [Jesus] being heard, which is two-fold: namely, the duty being entrusted to them [the disciples] and the sacrifice for their sakes. They had to be kept and sanctified for...the entrusted duty, since they were sent among evil men. Therefore, he says, *Just as you have sent me into the world—the Passion—and so I am sending them into the world—for suffering.*<sup>72</sup>

Union results in glory. The suffering of Christ—or of his disciples—is an aspect of glory and, as the *hour of glory*, expresses the primacy of the *modus diligendi*. At the conclusion of the High Priestly prayer Jesus asks the Father to glorify the disciples. He asks with certainty because the Father has glorified him. In his exegesis of verses 21-2 Bonaventure describes a three-fold aspect of the glorification of the disciples. The *modus certitudinis* is evoked by 'power' and the primacy of the Father is recalled. The disciples are given the power to work miracles as a sign for the conversion of others. Christ's witness depends on his union with the Father and the disciples are invited to the same certainty. The *modus intelligendi* is described by 'wisdom.' This is the evocation of the Son, who is consistently described as the 'Wisdom of the Father.' Bonaventure refers this wisdom to exegesis of the (Old Testament) scriptures. The disciples become masters of doctrine. The *modus diligendi* is evoked by 'goodness' and recalls the mission of the Paraclete. 'Goodness,' for Bonaventure, is the *praxis* of union: *that you may be one, just as we are One.*<sup>73</sup> Together, the three-fold 'way' reflects the conceptualization and intent of the Christology in Bonaventure's *Commentary*, as the Word reveals the Triune God to believers, thus effecting salvation.

It is the Incarnate Word who is able to provide a frame of reference for all of our language regarding God, and he is the point of reference by which the Triune mysteries and the complex gradations of the human *itinerarium* are made known. Scripture reveals the humanity of Christ and, in the recapitulation made possible by him, the problem of human access to the divine mysteries is redressed. Though accessible, the 'mysteries' are not abrogated by contact with the divine. In the closing paragraph of the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* Bonaventure addresses the paradox and its resolution as the famous apophatic paradigm of Exodus 33:20 is given a fresh interpretation:

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<sup>72</sup>Bonaventure, *Comm. In Ioan.*, 17.30 (VI), 473.

<sup>73</sup>Ibidem, 17.38, 474-5.

He who loves this death can see God, for it is absolutely true that man shall not see me and live (Exodus 33:20). Let us then die and enter into this darkness. With Christ crucified, let us *pass out of this world to the Father* (Jn 13:1), so that when the Father is shown to us, we may say with Philip: *It is enough for us* (Jn 14:8).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Idem, *Itin.*, 7.6 (V), 313, *Works of Saint Bonaventure II: Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, trans. P. Boehner (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: 1990).