Chapter Four: Christ: Way, Truth and Life

1. Introduction
2. The humanity of Christ united with the Person of the Word was the instrument of our salvation.
   1. Salvation comes to us through incorporation into Christ, through our participation in the mysteries of his life, becoming intimately attached to him the way parts of the body participate in the life of the Head.
   2. It is not simply the communication of his Word. What makes us a new creation is his very life that he communicates to us. Jesus saves us through the particular events of his life, particularly his death and resurrection.
3. Views to avoid
   1. Gnostic view: Christ is the mere revealer to the Gnostic, who would save himself through self-realization.
   2. Pelagian view: The work of Jesus Christ was reduced to merely good example. He simply shows us how to live a virtuous life.
4. The Lord not only enlightens the mind by preaching and showing us the way of life, he redeems us by atoning for our sins, healing us with his grace and sanctifying us in his power.
   1. This is why the notion of Christ the Mediator is of such great importance. Christ is the true Mediator and manifests various aspects of his mediation.
   2. The Mediation of Christ is entirely a function of his being. Mediator and mediation are inseparable.
5. Christ, Mediator between God and man
6. A Mediator is one who brings about union between people who are separated from one another.
   1. In one sense, there is no separation between God and men.
   2. In another sense, sin cuts off man from intimacy with God to which man was raised by grace.
7. God chose to re-establish man as a son of God through the Incarnation of his Only-Begotten Son.
   1. Christ is the Bridge-builder, the Bridge, which is at the same time the goal of the journey. He is not only the way to new life, he is new life.
   2. Christ’s mediation is the most direct mediation possible. In Christ, God is immediately present to us. He leads to immediacy with God because he is that immediacy.
   3. There are also subordinate mediators: the angels, the Saints and especially the Virgin Mary lead men to union with God. Any Christian in the world can and should be a mediator between God and other men.
   4. Every Christian can and should cooperate with Christ in his work of uniting men to God.
8. The Mediation of Christ is grounded in the Hypostatic Union
   1. A. Jesus is the mediator between God and man because he is God and man, but he mediates through his humanity.
   2. It is the human nature of Christ that stands in the middle. Jesus’ humanity is also in the middle insofar as, in addition to its union in regard to the person of the Godhead, in itself it has no need for reconciliation with God because there is no sin.
   3. Christ’s mediation is effected through his human acts, which because they are the human acts of God, have salvific value for man.
   4. Christ’s mediation operates in two directions:

* Upwards: Offers God worship, thanksgiving, expiation of sins and prayer on behalf of man.
* Downwards: Jesus himself causes all the divine gifts, all the grace of salvation to reach man.
  1. The mediation of Christ is seen in light of the triplex munera and is rooted in the Incarnation. These are not three separate functions
* Priestly: Life
* Pastoral (Royal): Way
* Prophetic (Teaching): Truth
  1. In each and every action and word, Christ exercises the triplex munera.

1. Christ: King and Shepherd
2. The kingly divinity of Christ was already proclaimed in the OT and equated with the status of Shepherd of the people.
   1. Because the Jews possessed such a material and earthbound idea of the messianic kingdom, Jesus does not make reference to his Kingship.
3. The Nature of Christ’s Kingship:
   1. Christ’s kingship is a fact, derived from his being God-man. His kingdom is based on the Hypostatic Union and by virtue of the redemption.
   2. Christ establishes his kingship by gathering the people and establishing the laws, while he declares himself to be the supreme judge. This is seen in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain. In John’s Gospel, the Father has given all judgment to the Son (Jn 5:22)
   3. Christ is the judge, lawgiver and Lord. It is a new revelation of the God of the Covenant who comes to free the human race from slavery to sin. Jesus establishes the Kingdom himself and in fact becomes the embodiment of the Kingdom.
   4. This Kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom in men’s hearts, but as it consists of men, it is a visible people, the Church, which is the sign that points to the fullness of the Kingdom at the end of time.
   5. The role of Christ consists in giving his life to establish the new people of God, forming a kingdom of holiness, grace, justice, love and peace. For Christ, being King is the same as being Savior. To reject one is to reject the other.
4. The Universality of the Kingdom
   1. The Kingdom can be said to cover all creation, but it is established in a gradual way, beginning with the Incarnation and reaching fulfillment at the Parousia.
   2. The Church is the visible sign of the Kingdom, present in mystery, growing visibly through the power of God in the world.
   3. Jesus Christ is not only the author of salvation, but truly salvation himself so he not only establishes the Kingdom, he is in fact the Kingdom.
   4. Jesus always possessed this Lordship over creation. He did not fully exercise it until after his death. From the Ascension to the Parousia, he does not impose himself with all his power, he desires men to merit salvation by freely choosing him. “Thy Kingdom Come.”
5. The Power of Christ
   1. Jesus demonstrates that his humanity has an operative potency that supposes the natural abilities of man, particularly when he performs miracles.
   2. There is a double human potency in Christ:

* Natural potency proper to man: He can do everything proper to being human because he has a perfect human nature.
* It is the instrumental potency is what Jesus’ humanity has to do things beyond the natural power of man, things that only God can do. (Theandric actions) This is a permanent power because the Incarnation, which makes the humanity of Jesus the humanity of God, an instrument joined to the Godhead that is permanent and definitive.
  1. The permanence is seen when he works miracles. The fact that he does not ask the Father for help. Jesus uses direct imperative words that produce the result. The power of the God man is not Almighty, because it cannot be communicated to his humanity.
  2. Jesus used superhuman power to establish the Kingdom, but not to dominate men to force them to believe.

1. Christ: Prophet and Teacher
2. Fullness of God’s revelation.
   1. A prophet is one who speaks to men words which God has personally revealed to him for passing on to others.
   2. Jesus’ contemporaries expected a Messiah who would be the “Prophet”. But Jesus is more than a prophet since he teaches on his own authority. Jesus expands on the Sacred text in light of himself.
   3. Jesus reveals God in the most authentic way, because it is based on the only absolutely sure and undoubted source, the essence of God himself.
   4. The definitive teaching of Jesus derives from the fact that he is the God man. His human words are in the fullest sense the human words of God.
   5. Jesus is in himself the revelation of god both through his words and deeds. Everything that Jesus did has a transcendent value. It shows us the way of living with God. Jesus is the mysterious wisdom, pre-existent in God. Jesus is a teacher on a different level than all the others; he is the only teacher.
   6. To know Jesus does not mean a mere act of reason; it is an existential action that effects a person’s entire being, an action which requires a commitment from a person of the area of his love and freedom.
   7. The words and parables and arguments are never separable from his life and his very being. The whole of Christ’s life is a continual teaching.
   8. Christ’s teaching is definitive. There will be no new revelation to surpass it. While it is possible for one to obtain a deeper knowledge of gOd and grow in fidelity to Christian truth, Christian progress is progress in identification with Christ, living in accordance with his teaching and drawing on the life he has given us.
3. Christ’s human knowledge
   1. In Christ there are two modes of knowledge: one divine(common to the Trinity) and the other is Christ’s human intellect. By possessing genuine human knowledge, he is capable of free human decisions and he has the capacity to merit salvation for us.
4. Three Modes of Jesus’ human knowledge:
   1. Acquired (experiential) Knowledge: This is the knowledge by which one comes to know through his own efforts, starting with sense knowledge.
      * He gains a type of experiential knowledge which develops through time and experience as time goes on. His acquired knowledge extends to all that can be known by the activity of the agent intellect in terms of time and space.
   2. Infused knowledge: This knowledge is communicated to the mind directly by God (eg. Prophetic knowledge)
      * Scripture does not provide any texts which clearly demonstrate that Christ had infused knowledge, but they indicate the knowledge Jesus had of human hearts and events not only of the present, but the future.
   3. Science of Vision: Christ has knowledge of the intuitive vision of the Godhead, what is called the Beatific Vision. The revelatory power of Christ originated not in a revelation made to him, nor in faith, but in the direct knowledge he possesses of the Father. He bears witness to what he has seen.
      * Because of this knowledge, Christ could be seen neither as s believer nor as one who possessed faith.
      * Appropriateness of the vision: The Christ man should have the beatific vision since the cause ought to be more perfect than the effects.
      * As Mediator, the one who unites man to God, the beatific vision is the climax of this union. It cannot be allowed that he as man needed to be united to God, for he would need mediation, but he is the first and only Mediator.
      * Given that God is infinite and the Lord’s human intellect is limited, this knowledge cannot take in the divine mysteries or embrace God totally.
   4. Jesus is both Viator and Comprehensor: He both travelled through the world possessing our human nature and arrived at the human destiny of the vision of God. Both of these states co-exist in Christ.
      * Before the passion, Christ’s soul saw God fully and he had the beatitude that was proper to his human soul; he as missing though the other elements since his soul was passible and his body passible and mortal.
      * Jesus therefore did not have the virtue of hope directed to its proper object of God; he only possessed hope as to the things he did not yet possess, such as the glorification of his body that would occur at the resurrection.
   5. How are these three modes of knowledge reconciled in Jesus?
      * Natural knowledge: acquired through images
      * Science of vision is communicated directly by God, who causes the soul to know in a way beyond human knowledge.
      * Both forms work together in the revelatory mission.
   6. Jesus’ faith: Jesus did not have the virtue of faith. Christ is perfectly obedient to the Father. Faith is not direct and immediate knowledge of the object; it is a mediated knowledge and needs mediation by the authority of witnesses.
      * The best evidence for Jesus not possessing authority is that he teaches on his own authority without referring to his faith.
5. Jesus’ Infallbility: were there thing he did not know?
   1. Christians in every age have trusted in the word of Christ and take his teaching as the very word of God.
   2. Some wished to argue that Jesus preached that there would be an imminent end of the world and since the world did not quickly end, it proves that his teaching was wrong.
   3. If Jesus would have been wrong about something in regard to his teaching and mission, it would imply that Jesus was not God.
   4. It seems to be a matter of faith that not only did Christ not make a mistake, but that he was infallible because of the Hypostatic Union. It would not have been metaphysically possible for him to err.
   5. Christ, even as man, knew the day of judgment, but he did not know it through his natural powers. But one must distinguish between error, ignorance and not knowing.
      * Error: Something is true or false
      * Ignorance: Not knowing what one ought to know
      * Not-knowing: Not to know something that was not pertinent to him.
6. Jesus Christ: Priest of the New Covenant

3. Priest and Victim

a. The perfect identity between the priest who offers and the victim offered

makes for perfect unity between the interior and exterior sacrifice,

adoration of God

b. Jesus speaks of his body as offered as food as his blood as the blood of the

covenant poured out for sins. Paul speaks of Christ as the Paschal Lamb, the

fragrant sacrifice and offering given to God.

c. While it is true that the death of Christ does not have the trappings of a

liturgical ceremony, it is clear that Jesus dies offering his life to the Father

as a supreme act of love and obedience. The death of Christ is cult-like

without being liturgical; it is also the source and center of all liturgy.

d. External sacrifice has meaning and value to the extent that it is the

expression of the interior sacrifice by which the victim is offered to God for

sin or as a sacrifice of praise. AS priest and victim, interior and exterior

sacrifice coincide exactly.

4. Christ’s Priesthood, One and Eternal

a. The sacrifice of Christ is unique. The OT sacrifices were a prefigurement of

the NT. The priesthood of the new covenant is a participation in the unique

priesthood of Christ by means of assimilation to Christ; identification with

Christ, putting on Christ by means of the sacraments.

b. Both the priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood are a

participation in Christ’s priesthood.

c. The sacrifice is renewed in the Eucharist, without adding anything essential

to what happened at Calvary. In the configuration of the ministerial

priesthood to Christ the priest and in their action in persona Christi Capitis,

when renewing the unique sacrifice of Calvary, that of the unicity of Christ’s

priesthood is most irrefutably manifested.

d. Only from Christ does salvation come and only in conformity to and

conformation with Christ is salvation to be found. Christ by means of the

Church and the actions of his ministers renders acceptable worship to God

and offers salvation to man.

e. The priesthood of Christ began at the Incarnation and will never end. It is

forever because of the effects of the glorification of God and the salvation

of men that extend over time and will endure forever.

f. The event of the sacrifice is not eternal: it happened only once. He cannot

sacrifice himself again in heaven. Still Christ continues to exercise his

priestly role. He permanently intercedes through the sacrifice offered on the

cross. He is the advocate to the Father and the expiation of our sins.

g. The intercession of Christ is linked to his self-giving, his sacrifice which is

renewed in the Eucharist.

5. Christ is priest as man

a. In the Incarnation, he was chosen among men and appointed to act on our

behalf. The priestly meditation of Christ is two-fold. The mediation is found

in Christ precisely through his humanity insofar as it is hypostatically united

to the Word, because on the one hand offering sacrifice and praying are acts

of man, and on the other hand, the infinite value of this mediation comes to

the humanity of Christ through its union in unity of Person with the Word.

b. There are also two other characteristics of the priesthood of Christ- divine

calling and consecration.

c. The priestly consecration of Christ is the very grace of union insofar as it

brings with it habitual and capital grace. There are two reasons for this:

* It is the hypostatic union that ontologically constitutes Christ as Mediator between God and man, capable of offering his own sacrifice.
* If Christ’s priesthood is not only ontological, but dynamic so that it is also essential that Christ’s habitual by which he freely gives himself in infinite love, merits salvation and his capital grace b which he sanctifies us.

d. In Jesus, priestly consecration is the Hypostatic union itself because it is

through that union that his humanity is constituted the humanity of God and

therefore has been established as a bridge and perfect mediation between

God and man.

e. Concluding points:

* Jesus is a priest from the first moment of his conception.
* In Jesus the fullness of priesthood resides.
* Christ’s priesthood is infinitely superior to every other priesthood.

E. The Holiness of Jesus Christ

1. Introduction

a. Holiness designates the transcendence of God, his perfections and majesty

to whom rational creatures owe worship and love in recognition of his

righteousness and mercy.

b. God is holiness Himself and all his works are Holy.

c. Things are holy because they have a special union with God. God

communicates his holiness to creatures that should be reflected in their

lives. Sanctification of the priests is effected by anointing and consecration.

d. Christians constitute the Holy People of God and it requires that their works

be holy. This is accomplished through the gift of God’s grace, which is a

communication which God makes to man of his own inner life and involves

adoptive filiation.

2. The Holy Mediator

a. The entire meaning of Christ’s mediation lies in uniting men to God,

sanctifying them. This holiness is not in reference to the holiness of the

Word, rather the holiness of God that is communicated to Jesus’ human

nature, joined to the Word in the unity of Person.

b. There is a three-fold grace in Christ:

* Grace of Union: Hypostatic Union
* Habitual Grace: Sanctifying grace
* Capital Grace: Head of the human race

c. Jesus possesses sanctifying grace because the grace of union changes nothing

in his human nature. Because of the distinction of natures, Christ’s human

nature is not changed in its qualities and therefore needs to be raised to the

supernatural order through grace.

d. The Word is the subject of the sanctification of his human nature.

3. Grace of Union and Substantial Holiness

a. Through the incarnation, the human nature of Christ was raised to that of

union with the Godhead. Because of this union, the man Jesus does not

receive adoptive filiation, but has natural filiation. He is the natural Son of

the Father.

b. Jesus is substantially holy in his human nature. His humanity is holy because

it is the holiness of the Word and Jesus is to be worshipped in his humanity.

c. Substantial holiness is called Anointing because it sanctifies and consecrates

Christ as priest. The Son is anointed because of his divinity, which is the

uniting of his humanity , sanctified by the total presence of the one who

anoints. It is substantial because the human nature is united to the Word

substantially.

d. What does the Holiness of Christ involve?

* A participation in the divine nature which cannot be greater than that of union in the unity of Person.
* Confers in Christ a natural divine filiation
* Makes one pleasing to God and Christ’s humanity is pleasing to God because it is that of the Son. The grace of union totally sanctifies Christ.

4. Habitual Grace, Infuse Virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

a. If the humanity of Christ did not possess habitual grace, it would simply

remain human, without being divinized which raises the nature and work of

the soul to the supernatural level.

b. There are three reasons that Christ possesses habitual grace:

* The closeness of Christ’s humanity to the source of grace.
* Christ’s soul needed to be elevated by grace
* If Christ is the source of grace for humanity, he must possess it himself.

c. In Christ, habitual grace follows the grace of union as something morally

required by the grace of union. It is a deification of the essence of his soul

and its powers since they belong to the humanity of the Word.

d. Christ possessed all the virtues in the manner befitting his perfection as Son

and his mission as Redeemer. In regard to the virtues of faith and hope:

These are not found formally in Christ. While Jesus did not hope for union

with God since he already possessed it, he does hope for everything he does

not possess in his earthly life, such as a glorified body. Christ al=so did not

possess the virtue of penance, because he had no sin.

e. The gifts of the Holy Spirit bring the virtues to their highest perfection. The

work of the Holy Spirit not only accomplished the conception of Christ, but

the sanctification of his soul.

f. Christ also possesses the grace freely given and the charismata befitting the

first and principal teacher of the faith, as well as the Gift of Prophecy.

5. Gratia Capitis

a. Christ was given grace as the new Adam and the Head of the Church to

sanctify it. Christ is the Author and efficient cause of his Holiness.

b. All Grace comes from and through him. However, that does not mean that

what is passed on is materially Christ’s own habitual grace, but rather he is

the instrumental cause of all holiness.

6. the Fullness of grace in Christ

a. There are two aspects in which Jesus’ presence possesses the fullness of

grace:

* It is intensive due to its perfection.
* It is extensive in terms of the gifts and grace it includes.

b. The fullness is due to Christ’s human nature by virtue of its union in unity of

person with the Word and in view also of his mission as head of the human

race.

c. Jesus possesses this fullness of grace from the very moment of his

conception, because he was already the natural Son of the Father and the

New Adam. If this is the case, then Christ had the Beatific vision from the

first moment of his conception, but he could then he could not grow in grace

over the course of his life. This brings up the viator - comprehensor problem.

d. If Christ could not grow in grace, then that seems to imply that he was not

truly human. It would also contradict Luke 2:52.

e. St. Thomas argues that Christ did not grow in the sense that the very habits

of wisdom and grace grow. BUT, in regard to the effects, in as much as they

produce wiser and greater works, Christ did grow in this way to show that he

was true man, both in the things of God and man.

7. Christ is incapable of sin and he is free

a. Scripture explicitly states that Christ did not commit a sin. This absence of

sin flows from three things:

* The Hypostatic Union
* Christ’s Holiness
* His Mission as Redeemer

b. Peter Lombard, Bonaventure, Thomas and Suarez believe Jesus possessed

this impeccability through the Hypostatic Union and it is absolute and

antecedent to every other grace.

c. Scotus views that the impeccability of Christ is through Divine Providence

and the Beatific Vision which he possessed form the moment of his

conception. Christ is free from sin not because he is the Word made Flesh,

but by an external grace.

d. Impeccability also brings up the question of freedom. It is clear that the

reality of human nature is not proved by sin, because sin is not part of the

nature of which God is the cause.

e. It is a matter of the faith that Christ is free, because the Gospels show him

to be free and without liberty he would be unable to obey.

f. Freedom and impeccability are addressed by the idea that Christ was given a

genuine commandment to die, a commandment he obeyed with impeccable

freedom. Scripture teaches that Christ was obedient at his death and of his

impeccability, which located in Christ’s obedience the reason why his

sacrifice was pleasing to God.

g. Sin is not intrinsic to human nature. Sin does not perfect freedom. Choice is

a sign of freedom, but choice is not essential to a free act. The will is free

because it is the cause of its own act, because it is not moved of necessity

either by the intellect or any other internal or external factor. Because the

good is proper to the object of the will, there is no contradiction between

being free and not being able to choose evil.

8. The Temptation of Christ

a. Because of his impeccability rooted in the Hypostatic Union, Christ did not

have the “fomes peccati,” the internal disorder of the will due to original

sin. Christ did not experience temptation from within his own heart.

b. While Jesus did not possess disordered passions, he did possess passions . IN

terms of the agony in the Garden, Jesus would naturally reject anything in

his human nature anything that would harm him. It is also in the same

human nature that he act in freedom and obedience to the Father.

c. IN regard to the Temptations in the wilderness, the temptations came from

outside of Christ, pushing him to be untrue to his mission and debase his

messiahship. The temptations point to the Messiahship of Christ and are in

parallel to the earthly understanding of who the Messiah is to be by the Jews.

d. While Christ never dialogues with evil, he is still truly tempted. It is clear

exegetically that the Wilderness Temptations is a recapitulation of sins of

Adam and Israel. Christ’s victory over the devil reaches its climax on the

cross.

F. Descending and Ascending Mediation

1. Jesus is not only the Mediator. He is in fact MEDIATION because mediation takes

place in him, seen in the fact that he holds all things together.

1. Christ’s mediation on behalf of the human race takes place precisely through their incorporation in the Mediator, whereby they become virtually linked to him.
2. Christ’s mediation is unique, universal and absolutely necessary:

* Universal: It extends to every people and nation
* Unique: Every other Mediator is but an instrument of Christ’s unique mediation.

2. Descending Mediation

a. Christ is the Father’s gift to man who has come down from heaven. This

mode is prior because it focuses on the fact that salvation is the divine

initiative and totally gratuitous.

1. In this descending mediation:

* Christ bears witness to the Father
* He speaks in the name of the Father
* He causes our sanctification and liberation, by which humanity shares in the divine life through adoptive filiation.

3. Ascending Mediation

a. This consists in making man a gift to God in uniting them to God and in

offering them to him. God makes a loving gift of self to man; the response

can only take place in the form of the loving gift of man to God. At the core

of this ascending mediation is the sacrifice Christ offers to the Father on the

cross.

1. In the movement of ascending mediation man loves God unto death, for in the sacrifice of Christ there is total adoration and total self-giving. The self-surrender of Jesus makes it possible for each person to make their own personal act of self-surrender.
2. The effective of descending mediation lies in the fact that is makes ascending mediation possible. Because of our incorporation into Christ, we are truly justified. By incorporating us into himself, the Mediator truly sanctifies us and so because we are inserted into him, he can present us to the Father as a spiritual sacrifice.