The Human Soul of Christ

Introduction

St. Augustine wrote that by Christ’s joining of Himself to created nature there was “…one Person…made up of these – the Word, a soul and flesh…”¹ This union of the Divine and human natures in the Person of Christ is a very delicate and complicated subject and one that has generated countless studies, debates, heresies and councils in man’s attempt to understand it. Dionysius placed in Christ a “…God-manlike or Divino-human operation…[in which] He performed Divine works not as God does, and human works not as man does, but God having been made man, by a new operation of God and man”.² But to use this human nature, Christ had both a soul and a body that were “mutually united at the same time in order to constitute the human nature of the Word…for even as He assumed the body on account of its relation to the rational soul, so likewise He assumed a body and soul on account of their relation to human nature”.³ This humanity was “…neither absorbed nor reduced by his divinity. It exists in its fullness, while subsisting in the divine person of the Logos.”⁴ Christ allowed His soul to be “human”⁵ and permitted all the powers of the soul to do what belonged to them properly.⁶

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¹ ST III, q.1, a.1c.
² ST III, q.19, a.1, ad.1.
³ ST III, q.6, a.5c.
⁵ See ST III, q.13, a.3, ad.1 & q.14, a.1, ad.2.
⁶ ST III, q.18, a.5c.
In this short paper, we will engage in a necessarily speculative look at the human nature of Christ. It may be possible to tease out threads from the incredibly rich tapestry of the *Summa* and construct some definition of Christ’s human soul in both its sensitive and intellectual functions. This will necessarily involve a very close adherence to the *Summa* text itself. Particular attention will be paid to the sensitive power of the imagination and the intellectual power of the active intellect. Is it possible that these two separate powers provide us with links between the human and Divine natures of the Person of Christ? St. Thomas identifies an overall unity of operation within the Person in that both the human and Divine natures have their proper, distinctive operations. Yet, and this is key, “the Divine Nature makes use of the operation of the human nature, as of the operation of its instrument; and in the same way the human nature shares in the operation of the Divine Nature, *as an instrument shares in the operation of the principle agent* [emphasis added].” Can we understand this usage by looking at the specific powers and functions within the human soul that could be used as a conduit by the Divine Nature?

**The Two Natures**

We have to begin with an understanding of the two natures in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas addresses the mode of the Union on the part of the Person and states that “it is by the Divine Nature that a Divine Person is constituted simply. Hence the Divine Person is not said to assume the Divine Nature but to assume the human nature”. The Son of Man is a temporal sonship, “following upon the temporal nativity”, while the eternal Son of God constitutes the Divine Person. This eternal Divine Nature has operation in heaven while

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7 See *ST III*, q.19, a.1.c.
8 *Ibid*.
9 *ST III*, q.3, a.1, ad.3.
10 *ST III*, q.3, a.5, ad.1.
operating “in a new way viz. His assumed [human] nature”. This “new way” of operation is further defined in that “…each [Divine and human natures] communicates its actions to the other; in as far as the human nature is the instrument of the Divine action, and the human action receives power from the Divine Nature….” Specifically, the Divine Nature uses the assumed human nature as an instrument of operation. Since it was “necessary to admit a human operation, distinct from Divine operation,” it was necessary for Him [the Divine Person] to have habitual grace [in the human nature] whereby the [human] operation might be perfect in Him.

St. Thomas is careful to point out that Christ’s humanity is not an “inanimate instrument”. We have already seen that the human nature is animated by a rational soul. This rational soul is “so acted upon as to act and hence the nature of the action demanded that He should have habitual grace”. The human nature, with its own union of body and soul is not essentially Divine. Divinity is gained by participation and this is by habitual grace. But can we further define this deified human nature that participates by grace? How does the Divine Nature use this instrument of the human nature? We can begin by defining the human soul, itself, and its powers and operations.

A Rational Animal

Christoph Cardinal Schonborn refers us to the role that man plays as a bridge between the world of spirit and matter: “[Man] is the point at which the material world and the spiritual world meet and thus occupies a special place in the matrix of created order. Through man, the material

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11 Footnote: The other two Persons of the Trinity (the Father and the Holy Spirit) do not share in the human operation except by consent, while they do share in the operation of the Divine Son of God. See ST III, q.19, a.1, ad1.
12 ST III, q.5, a.2, ad1.
13 ST III, q.43, a.2c.
14 See ST III, q.19, a.1c.
15 ST III, q.7, a.1, ad2.
16 ST III, q.7, a.1, ad3.
world is lifted up into the spiritual realm, and through their combination in man we see that the two are compatible, each with the other….”\textsuperscript{17} This is accomplished by that “principle of intellectual operation which is called the soul, [and which] is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent”.\textsuperscript{18} It is the principle of intellectual operation that is the form of the human body; for it is the soul which is “…the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and local movement; and likewise of our understanding. Therefore the principle by which we primarily understand, whether it be called the intellect or the intellectual soul, is the form of the body.”\textsuperscript{19} The soul, by its power of “informing” the individual matter of man, is able to interact with the material world around it through (i) the sensitive soul with its five exterior senses and four interior senses; and (ii) the intellectual soul with the functions and powers of the active and passive intellects.\textsuperscript{20} While we can identify three “souls” (the third being the vegetative or nutritive soul) in the writing of St. Thomas, there is only one human soul in terms of essence. The various powers of these “souls” operate through corporeal and incorporeal means: “…some operations of the soul are performed without a corporeal organ, as understanding and will. Hence the powers of these operations are in the soul as their subject. But some operations of the soul are performed by means of corporeal organs…. And so it is with all the other operations of the nutritive and sensitive parts. Therefore the powers which are the principles of these operations have their subject in the composite [body/soul composite – sensitive soul], and the soul alone [intellectual soul]”.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{17} Christoph Schönborn, Chance or Purpose? Creation, Evolution and a Rational Faith, ed. Hubert Philip Weber, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2007), 90.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ST I}, q.75, a.2c.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{ST I}, q.76, a.1c; see also \textit{ST I}, q.75, a.4c & a.7c on the nature of the body/soul union.
\textsuperscript{20} “The Son of God assumed an entire human nature, i.e., not only a body, but also a soul and not only sensitive, but also a rational soul.” \textit{ST III}, q.9, a.1c.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{ST I}, q.77, a.5c.
The Soul of Christ

St. Thomas is firm in his assertion of a union of a human soul and body with the Word of God: “Hence it must be said that in Christ the soul was united to the body; and the contrary is heretical, since it destroys the truth of Christ’s humanity”. He dismisses arguments that the Word took the place of a human soul in a union with the body by reference to Scripture (Mat 26:38 and John 10:18) and St. Augustine. The soul, itself, is “nearer the Word of God than the body is,” and hence “Christ’s soul excels our soul, ‘not by diversity of power’; for it’s of the same genus as our [human] souls, yet excels even the angels in ‘fullness of grace and truth’.”

While Christ’s powers of the soul do not excel by diversity of power, the impediments or interference among the powers and functions of a human soul as a result of The Fall do not occur in Christ’s soul. In Christ, “every faculty [of the sensitive and intellectual souls] was allowed to do what was proper to it; and one power was not impeded by another. Hence as the joy of His mind in contemplation [intellectual soul] did not impede the sorrow or pain of the inferior part [sensitive soul], so conversely, the passions of the inferior part nowise impeded the act of reason”.

The Sensitive Soul

We know that Christ’s human soul shared the same sensory apprehension mechanisms as the men around Him. Cates provides a concise summary of the sensory apprehension of the sensitive soul in that “it takes the form of the exterior and interior senses, both of which Aquinas

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22 ST III, q.2, a.5.c.
21 ST III, q.5, a.3.c.
24 De Heres, 69, 55.
25 ST III, q.6, a.1, ad 2.
26 ST III, q.6, a.3, ad 2.
27 ST III, q.15, a.9, ad 3.
takes to be exercised by means of a corporeal organ”. The exterior senses include the powers of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. The interior senses include some version of the “common sense, the imagination, estimative, and memorative powers, all of which are exercised by means of the brain [and nervous system]”. In terms of the exterior senses, St. Thomas believed that by the union of the Word with flesh, the natural properties, i.e., the operation of the exterior senses, would remain but “may be considered as deified, inasmuch as it becomes the flesh of the Word of God, but not that it becomes God”. It seems probable that Christ’s senses would operate at the highest functional levels and that the data coming in to the interior senses would not suffer any distortion. We also know that “in the Man Jesus Christ there was no motion of the sensitive part which was not ordered by reason.”

There is very little in the *Summa* specifically on the work of either the exterior or interior senses in terms of sensory apprehension in regard to Christ. We know that there was apprehension of bodily pain and that Christ, “in order to satisfy fully for original sin, wished to suffer sensible pain [through the interplay of the exterior and interior senses], and that He might consume death and the like in Himself”. St. Thomas also believed that in Christ “the delight of contemplation was so kept in the mind as not to overflow into the sensitive powers, lest the sensitive pain should thereby be prevented”. If we look at the interior sensitive sense of the imagination, St. Thomas gives a general definition as “for the retention and preservation of these forms [intelligible species received by the external senses and routed through the interior

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29 ST I, q.78, a.3c.
30 Cates, 112.
31 ST III, q.2, a.1, ad3.
32 ST III, q.19, a.2c.
33 ST III, q.15, a.5c.
34 ST III, q.1, a.4, ad2.
35 ST III, q.15, a.5, ad3.
common and estimative senses] – the phantasy or imagination is appointed…. For phantasy or imagination is, at it were, a storehouse of forms received through the senses [specifically the common sense operations]\(^36\)\(^37\). In *De Anima*, he refers to the movement of the imagination by the external senses: “…now this is possible because the forms of the imagination and those of the external senses are generically the same, for all are individual forms. Therefore the forms which are in the external senses can impress those forms which exist in the imagination by moving the imagination, because they are similar to these forms”\(^38\). We know that the Son of Man had the most exquisite function of the external senses and therefore we can probably safely assume that the individual sensed forms would be of the highest quality and with no distortion to them. Within His imagination there would be similar perfect forms that could then be matched to the sensed forms.

St. Thomas specifically refers to the role of imagination in the retention and preservation of phantasia in *De Vieritate*, q.1, a.11 in that the imagination apprehends a sensible thing – through the sensible form and not the matter of it – when that sensible thing is absent to immediate apprehension by the proper sensible. The sensible thing, as form, is present in the imagination in the form of phantasia, and these “furnish sustained cognitive contact with the external world, beyond the occurrent acts of sensation; they provide a wider and richer base from which the intellect can abstract intelligible form (which is universal [intelligible species]) existing in particular things.”\(^39\) St. Thomas held that the phantasia of the imagination hold something like a midway point between pure form and form in matter: “the nature of a form in

\(^{36}\) See *ST I*, q.78, a.4; *Ibid.*, ad.1. Note the singular form he uses when he begins with reference to the “...entire ‘Interior Sense’; whereas he introduces *ST I*, q.78, a.4, with the question of “...whether the Interior Senses are suitably distinguished....”; *ST I*, q.78, a.4, ad.2.

\(^{37}\) *ST I*, q.78, a.4.


\(^{39}\) Paul MacDonald, Jr., “Direct Realism and Aquinas’ Account of Sensory Cognition”, *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 371 (see *ST I*, q.85, a.1, ad.3).
[the] imagination, which form is without matter but not without material conditions, stands midway between the nature of a form which is in matter, and the nature of a form which is in the intellect by abstraction from matter and from material conditions” [the active intellect and thence to the passive intellect]. ⁴⁰ If the human mind is able to grasp these abstracted, universal species to varying degrees, from the midway style of forms of the imagination, we can only imagine Christ’s grasp of the form side of our matter-based world. There would be no limits to His apprehension and integration of both the sensible and form. This opens up the idea that Christ, in His human nature, was aware of the truth of all things. ⁴¹ We also have the imagination subject to infusion in that we can have “images in the human imagination…divinely formed, so as to express divine things better than those which we receive from sensible objects, as appears in prophetic visions…. ”⁴² In the case of the Person of Christ, the imagination of the human nature could be enhanced by the infused knowledge “imprinted upon the soul of Christ” by the Word of God or perhaps even the beatific knowledge whereby “He knows the Word and things in the Word”. ⁴³ Either of these two forms of knowledge could open the human imagination to the forms of types. Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas commented on the ability of the souls of the blessed being able to perceive eternal types with “…the blessed who see God and all things in Him, thus know[ing] all things in the eternal types”⁴⁴ and that “…not each and every rational soul can be said to be worthy of that vision, namely the eternal types, but only those that are holy and pure, such as the souls of the blessed.”⁴⁵ If the souls of the blessed are able to “see” the eternal types, how much more could the perfect soul of Christ perceive!

⁴⁰ ST I, q.55, a.2 ad 2.
⁴¹ ST I, q.106, a.1 c.
⁴² ST I, q.12, a.13 c.
⁴³ ST III, q.9, a.3 c.
⁴⁴ ST I, q.84, a.5 c.
⁴⁵ Ibid. See ST III, q.10, a.4 c.
St. Augustine believed that “the type, according to which the creature is fashioned, is in the Word of the Lord before the creature which is fashioned, so the knowledge of the same type exists in the intellectual creature….”\(^{46}\) Was the human soul of Christ able to access, be aware of, the types fashioned by the Divine nature of Christ? If “God moves the created intellect, inasmuch as He gives it the intellectual power, whether natural or super-added; and impresses on the created intellect the intelligible species….”\(^{47}\), we should be able to say that Christ’s soul, super-added as it were by all graces\(^{48}\), and in which “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3)\(^{49}\), was aware of all types.

**Intellectual Soul**

The imagination’s phantasia make way for the phantasms of the active intellect. Phantasms, themselves, are defined as “images of bodies”\(^ {50}\) or “the likeness of a particular thing.”\(^ {51}\) And with phantasms we cross over from the powers and operations of the sensitive soul to that of the intellectual soul. St. Thomas writes on the distinction of the intellect in that “although the intellect is not distinct from the soul in essence, it’s distinct from other parts of the soul as a power; and it is in this way that it has the nature of a medium.”\(^ {52}\) This idea of a “medium” is further fleshed out when the “soul of Christ is said to be a medium in the union of flesh with the Word, in the order of Nature….”\(^ {53}\) This unification of the Word to the flesh through the rational soul (which is also called the “mind” by St. Thomas) served to “perfect the

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\(^{46}\) *ST I*, q.55, a.2, ad.1.

\(^{47}\) *ST I*, q.105, a.3.

\(^{48}\) See *ST III*, q.2, a.12, c.; q.7, a.2, c.; q.7, a.7, & a.7, ad.1; q.7, q.9, c.

\(^{49}\) *ST III*, q.14, a.2, ad.1.


\(^{51}\) *ST I*, q.84, a.7, ad.2.

\(^{52}\) *ST III*, q.6, a.2, ad.1.

\(^{53}\) *ST III*, q.6, a.3, ad.1.
human mind”\textsuperscript{54} in that “…the intellect of man is, as it were, a light lit up by the light of the Divine World; and hence by the presence of the Word in the mind of man, it is perfected rather than overshadowed”.\textsuperscript{55} Damascene wrote that “the Word of God is united to flesh through the medium of the intellect; for the intellect is the purest part of the soul, God Himself being an intellect”.\textsuperscript{56}

The idea of a “light” both of the human intellect and of the light of God\textsuperscript{57} brings us, in turn, to phantasms and the role of the active intellect. The active intellect in the human mind works with the raw input of the phantasms supplied by the interior senses of the sensitive soul, i.e. primarily from the imagination and the common sense. Cates maintains that after the formation of a phantasm, “one uses one’s intellect [i.e., the active intellect at this point] to ‘light up’ the phantasm. Lighting up a phantasm involves identifying the sort of thing one has in mind: it involves ‘abstracting’ the form of an individual thing…”\textsuperscript{58} If we add this to our very brief look at phantasia, etc., we could have something like the phantasia of the imagination going through the cognitive sense (another interior sense) in the exercise of particular reason. The active intellect of the intellectual soul then uses the “light of natural reason,” granted by God, to abstract the intelligible species. This abstracted intellectual species is then subject to the practical reason of the active intellect in order to understand it. Through this act, we see the triggering of the universal reason within the passive intellect.

St. Thomas devotes some time to outlining the types of “rational knowledge” that it was believed that Jesus Christ possessed. He begins with the assertion that Christ understood by His

\textsuperscript{54} ST III, q.5, a.4, ad1.
\textsuperscript{55} ST III, q.5, a.4, ad2.
\textsuperscript{56} ST III, q.6, a.2, De Fide orthod. iii. 6.
\textsuperscript{57} “The divinely infused light is the common formality for understanding what is divinely revealed, as the light of the active intellect is with regard to what is naturally known.” ST III, q.11, a.6, ad3.
\textsuperscript{58} Cates, 87.
intellective soul and this was manifested in a (i) rational intellect illumined by Divine Light (the work of the active intellect); (ii) infused knowledge (directly to both the active and passive intellects); and (iii) acquired knowledge (garnered through the sensitive powers/functions in creating and maintaining phantasia/phantasms).\textsuperscript{59} As opposed to the men around Him, Christ’s human nature possessed both a beatific and infused knowledge besides His soul’s acquired knowledge. His apprehension of infused species would be complete and not fragmented.\textsuperscript{60} St. Thomas did believe, however, that in Christ’s “empiric knowledge” (acquired knowledge) there could be “new and unwonted” things in regard to which “new things could occur to Him day by day…”\textsuperscript{61} In the habit of knowledge in Christ, “it seems becoming to place even this action [the action of the active intellect] in Christ”\textsuperscript{62} and to see that it “does not produce the whole at once, but successively; and hence by this knowledge Christ did not know everything from the beginning, but step by step, and after a time [emphasis added]…”\textsuperscript{63} But it is probably safe to say that this new empiric knowledge would be quickly processed and compared to the infused and beatific knowledge already held.

Cardinal Schonborn believes that Christ’s “…human intelligence is not that of a man enlightened by God, but the human intelligence of the Logos of God. It follows from the hypostatic union that it is possible for Jesus’ divine knowledge to be communicated to his humanity…”\textsuperscript{64} Perhaps this method of communication was through the hyper-awareness of His active intellect? If we go back to looking at the active intellect from the point of view of the

\textsuperscript{59} See \textit{ST} III,q.9, aa.1-4 for an overall view of the different types of knowledge; q.11, aa.1-6 on infused knowledge; and q.12, aa.1-4 on acquired knowledge.
\textsuperscript{60} See \textit{ST} III, q.9, a.4, ad.2.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{ST} III q.15, a.8c.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{ST} III, q.12, a.2c.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid}.
common man, we can read that “the active intellect, of which the Philosopher speaks, is something in the soul. In order to make this evident, we must needs suppose a superior intellect [i.e., God; and for Christ, His Divine knowledge as the Logos of God], from which the soul [the active and passive intellects] acquires the power of understanding [through the different levels of reasoning already mentioned]…. Wherefore we must say that in the soul is some power, derived from a higher intellect, whereby it is able to light up phantasms.”

This “power” is a gift of God given to man whereby he might reason and thus understand the world around him. “[S]ince we maintained that the agent [i.e., active] intellect is a certain power in which our soul shares, as a kind of light, we must maintain that some exterior cause exists from which such light is participated, and we call this exterior cause, God, who teaches within us inasmuch as He infuses light of this kind into our souls.”

This raises the interesting question of whether the “light” could be considered as coming from an exterior cause or source to Christ. As a Divine Person, He already has Divine knowledge “interior” to Himself. Is the source of the infused knowledge received in the active intellect either external (God) or internal (the Divine Nature of the Person of Christ)? The answer would have to be both; but we can look to St. Thomas on the matter of the intensity of the light of the human intellect. We read that “the intellect or mind of man is, as it were, a light lit up by the light of the Divine Word [emphasis added]; and hence by the presence of the Word the mind of man is perfected rather than overshadowed.” And again, we “must admit in the soul of Christ an infused knowledge, inasmuch as the Word of God imprinted upon the soul of Christ…[the] intelligible species of all things to which the possible [passive]

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65 ST I, q.79, a.4.
66 Referred to as the “active intellect” in the Summa.
67 De Anima, a.5, ad.6.
68 ST III, q.5, a.4.
intellect is in potentiality….”69 We can return to types and their comprehension by the human nature of the Person when we find that “…the intellectual light itself which is in us, is nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light in which are contained the eternal types”. 70 It may not be going too far to hold that the types of all things were accessible to the active intellect of Christ via the passive intellect’s apprehension of them through the infused light of his Divine Nature.

Scholastic development of the three types of knowledge of Christ defined the triplex scientia humanana as being: (i) scientia acquisita; (ii) scientia infusa which was seen as “prophetic knowledge arising from supernatural communication”; and (iii) scientia visionis which is the “vision of God that other people will have only in eternal life”. 71 In the case of the scientia infusa, we could apply this to Jesus Christ in terms of the Divinely-inspired communication between Father and Son which is known to his human soul through infused knowledge to the active intellect and thence to the passive intellect. We could also look to the infused imagination and its role in prophetic vision. The scientia visionis would be expressed by the human nature of Christ through his possession of the light of glory while on still on Earth. Schonborn warns that we have to consider “visio” as a “contemplation, but not as a comprehension, since God remains even for the soul of Christ – inexhaustible.” 72 Would this also mean a limitation of comprehension by the human nature of this soul toward the Divine Nature of the Person of Christ? This is such a delicate question that one hesitates to even consider it. Scholastic theology places a “relative omniscience” in Christ’s soul in that there was “not an

69 ST III, q.9, a.3c.
70 ST I, q.84, a.5c.
71 Schonborn, God..., Ibid., pp. 178-179.
72 Ibid., pg. 179.
unlimited amount of knowledge….” This seems to imply there was a limitation to access to the Divine knowledge by the soul. The question has been raised as to how “…a finite, created capacity for perception [the human soul even with infused knowledge] can really know God ‘as he is?’” The Summa defines the limitations of Christ’s humanity in that “Christ’s soul, which, being a creature, is finite in might, can know, indeed, all things, but not in every way; yet it cannot do all things, which pertains to the nature of omnipotence…it cannot create itself.” Schonborn continues his discussion of Christ’s self-awareness with a further question on “…whether Jesus’ awareness of God truly refers principally to his being God himself, toward divinity at all, and not rather toward an ‘intentional’, ‘I-thou relationship with the Father that occurs in history’.” Cross, in his work on the metaphysics of the Incarnation, raises a “modern” question on “whether the assumed nature knew that it was hypostatically united to the Word – or whether the Word had human knowledge of the fact?”

The enormous difficulty here is that we must avoid the idea of two completely separate natures – Divine and human – that have either (i) no contact or (ii) some kind of “synchronized swimming” scenario with no “cross-fertilization” as it were. With the first problem, if we know that Christ’s human nature was fully open to infused light/knowledge from God directly (whether directly from God the Father and/or from the Person of the Son of God) and that this included openness and response to the Light of Glory itself (for example, during the Transfiguration), it is difficult to claim that the human nature had no knowledge of the Divine Nature. Perhaps we could even say that the human nature was immersed in the Divine Nature –

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73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., pg. 180.
75 ST III, q.13, a.1, ad.2.
76 Schonborn, God..., Ibid., pg. 187; see also pg. 188.
not of a Divine Nature but able to contemplate and be informed by the Divine Nature so as to be “perfected with a beatific knowledge whereby it sees God in essence.”

In beatific knowledge, we are no longer working with the awareness of acquired intellectual species and the work of the active intellect, or the imagination and its work in combining similitudes. Rather, there is an immediate awareness or knowledge of the Divine Essence in that the “Divine Essence, itself, is united to the beatified mind as an intelligible to an intelligent being.” (Remember that this is a “knowledge” and not a “comprehension” of the Essence of God!) The second issue of “synchronized swimming” also becomes problematic when you look at the role of infused knowledge into the active and passive intellects.

This, along with Christ’s great power of contemplation and assent to the will of God, could let us say that the human soul of Christ was, to use modern vernacular, “plugged in and obedient to” the Divine and not just swimming alongside.

Conclusion

Is it possible to identify elements in Christ’s soul, such as the pain of the senses, the use of the imagination, and the work of the active intellect, that are shared by every man’s soul?

Pope Benedict XVI directs us to the historical question of whether the human nature of Jesus Christ, subsisting in the one divine Person, can have “any real, specific existence in itself? Must it not be absorbed by the divine, at least at its highest point, the will?”

Do we lose the distinctive work of the human imagination in the sensitive soul and the various intellects of the

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78 ST III, q.9, a.2, ad 1.
79 ST III, q.9, a.3, ad 3.
80 ST III, q.12, a.1.c.
81 See ST III, q.18, a.1, ad 2 and ST III, q.18, a.5c: “Christ...in His will as reason...always willed the same as God....”
intellectual soul under the power and glory of the Divine Nature? The answer must be a definitive no! In the Person of Christ, there was a human soul and body which contained the same elements as any man’s soul and body. We need to see this soul’s functions as perfected in the light of the Divine Nature, and then look for possible links between these two natures – human and Divine – in the Person of the Son of God. Such links might be in the work of the soul’s imagination and the active intellect. In this short paper, we have looked at some possible connections between the imagination and its usage of sensible and divine forms, as well as the potential for hyper-awareness of the active intellect of Christ’s infused knowledge, all leading to an awareness of the types in the human nature, itself. A future avenue for exploration could be along the lines of the role of the passive intellect in contemplative study of Christ’s beatific knowledge.

Christ was both human and divine and no man can attain such a perfection of function and being in his own limited union of body and soul. But perhaps each of us can find some share in the light of Christ by using the grace freely granted to us to light up our own imaginations and active intellects. With the human passive intellect, we can contemplate the glory of God and the gift of salvation so hard-won for us. The very fullness of grace in Christ’s soul “poured out from it[self] to others….” It is up to each of us to open ourselves to that grace which Christ pours out so that we may, in some small way, find that fulfillment that Christ showed the way to.

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81 ST III, q.7, a.9; see also ST III, q.7, a.7, ad.2.
Bibliography


