## CONTEMPLATING CHRIST

## By JOSEPH P. WHELAN

HROUGHOUT this issue of THE WAY we are asking, from several points of view, about the one mysterious reality which is prayer. In this initial article – on contemplating Christ – we are at once in the quite specific area of christian prayer and, even more exactly and concretely, we are concerned with the prayer of a christian.

There is no quarrel among historians and theologians of prayer but that prayer is the central reality and act of all religion.1 Christianity is a religion. However, christianity is also, and with no less importance, an historical religion, a religion which comes into existence and has its shape from a God who speaks and acts in history. As religious and not merely psychological or humanist, therefore, the prayer of a christian will affirm the mystical - in the broad but strongly realist sense of a direct and immediate presence to, and invasion by, the utterly objective and wholly personal reality of a free and infinite God.2 When prayer as the central and essential religious act is completely itself, therefore, it exists entirely in 'the realm of the vocative'. It speaks to 'a sphere of interpersonal relations in the solicitation of two liberties'.3 And as a specifically christian religious act, this prayer of a christian will affirm the absolutely divine and therefore definitive character of that quite precise, particular and definite, human history which is Jesus of Nazareth both in himself and in his, the Son's, continuing, developing incarnation as the one fleshed word and deed of his Father: scripture, eucharist, and the community of his body, the Church, his Father's sons.

Our title itself - contemplating Christ - is therefore ambiguous, and properly so. For it suggests an historical subject-matter (the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf Heiler, F.: Prayer (Oxford, 1932), and Bernard, C.; La Prière Chrétienne (Bruges, 1967).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf Whelan, J.; 'Religion and Prayer', in THE WAY Vol 9 no 3 (July, 1969), pp

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Bernard, op. cit. and Nédoncelle, M.; God's Encounter With Man (New York, 1964). For Bernard, pp. 34-35 and passim, all prayer is 'une mise en présence', and 'relations interpersonnelles' are the 'élément décisif' – the one common denominator of all forms of prayer, which underlies and outstrips all language and every concept.

life, death and example of Jesus of Nazareth) at the same time that it affirms a presence to, and an inter-personal communication with, a divine Person (the present, eternal, quite objective reality of Jesus as victoriously risen Lord and Christ). And whatever the difficulties involved, any theoretical view – whether exegetical, theological or pragmatic – which would effectively object to, and any actual experience which would significantly neglect or fail to encounter, either or both of these undoubtedly distinct but wholly inseparable and factual aspects of the matter, would be outside our declared subject of christian prayer taken as the contemplation of Christ.

Further, and not as an alternative, but as a real addition to and penetration of the twofold consideration we have made, our title leaves itself open to a third, still more fundamental understanding and experience of christian prayer, where 'contemplating Christ' speaks not only and not finally, either to a consideration of the historical mysteries of the life of Iesus of Nazareth, or (in and through such consideration) to a mystical, responding encounter with the risen Lord of history. But our title also speaks (and in and through both these two concrete encounters: therefore incarnationally and as an always christologically structured theocentrism) to a direct and immediate experience of the God of Jesus of Nazareth's and the risen Christ's own contemplative prayer: the Father. His Father, the Father of Jesus Christ. We are not sidestepping Jesus, therefore, in our insistence on this point. Rather we are merely penetrating to the central reality and mission of Jesus - and of ourselves too in our present, and not merely future, situation as adopted sons - his mission as revelation of, and ours as response to, the Father. For Christ's whole reality, as Son, as man, as scripture and as eucharist and the christian's whole reality also, insofar as he is a christian. that is, has his entire existence as a new creation in Christ - is from and towards the Father. It will be our point to develop this situation of christianity as preoccupation with the Father in our movement now to describe the two terms of our subject: contemplating Christ.

Contemplation, for an article as basic as this, will have a broad, hopefully quite definite, but no very technical meaning. It will not be our purpose at all, therefore, to distinguish contemplation from meditation, vocal prayer, corporate worship, etc. in any precise way. Further, our treatment here will not speak to many other quite legitimate questions that concern both the history of contemplative prayer and that more immediately interesting reality

which is the individual histories of men who contemplate: the stages of prayer; whether and when prayer is acquired, infused; ligature, etc. In by-passing such questions, however, it is perhaps useful to be clear that where vocal prayer, liturgy, etc. are not at least incipiently and, at moments quite formally, also contemplative, they are not prayer at all. For to our mind, contemplation – in the sense intended here – is but the explicitation, the development and the driving home of what is primary and what is radically essential as at least minimally present in *all* prayer that is itself, that is, authentic, at all.

All prayer is the attending of the mind and heart to God. If it is to be christian prayer, this response will be massively qualified, of course, as a response to God in Christ. At the moment, however, it is to prayer as response that we are looking, and we are wholeheartedly assuming the several religious presuppositions of this radically inter-personal situation: 1. The utter priority of God as gracious freedom: he loves us first, and that love remains primary and altogether initiating throughout the conversation and those perhaps further, speechless unions which may existentialize themselves as contemplative prayer. 2. The divine love and freedom as creative of truly other loves and freedoms. God gives himself to man the contemplative insofar as he gives to the contemplative a truly free and really other-self. Gift is the fundamental truth, of course. All is grace. But the gift is so totally given that man's truly autonomous freedom and deeply significant capacity for loving response occurs increasingly, indeed in direct proportion, to the presence and self-donation of the God of grace. (We may find this situation humbly yet nobly verified and shadowed in our best love of one another - as in successful friendship and marriage: in that loss of self in the other which constitutes our true coming to self in and through the other, that receiving of ourselves from another, which is not infatuation, surely, but the austere, responsible integrity of human love.1 Our human loves are the shadows, and they may even be the sacraments, of contemplation. The inner-trinitarian love of Father and of Son - where the gift of self is so total and the receiving of the other so unimpaired that it constitutes the entire reality of the Lovers - is the analogue and the destiny of both.)

Contemplation as a term attempts to seize upon this naked,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This character of prayer as inter-personal relationship is, of course, much discussed and questioned today, and its importance for the very existence of prayer cannot be overstressed (cf references in notes 1 and 3, supra, p 187).

primary reality of man as personal receptivity and response, as a conscious and free, as a human yes to God. In its purity as a term, it in no way rejects or precludes, rather it transmits consideration of, the materials, vehicles and gestures of its own communication — be they vocal or interior words, scenes of Christ's life, or the daily round of the contemplative's fidelity or apostasy toward his brother. To emphasize further, this response which is prayer is the response of a man. Prayer as the attending of the mind and heart is therefore the whole man — fleshed spirit in the world, with intellect and will and imagination and emotions ruthlessly, joyfully, painfully collected¹ (through whatever mortification, organization, simplification, death of the petty and scattered self may be required) — collected in arduous freedom for that meeting in the still-point of spirit where the Lover waits, whether in thunder, whisper, or in silence.

Where such contemplation presses towards itself as wholly realized, actualized, there will occur what may usefully be called ecstasy, if this term can be soberly understood: as that loss, not of consciousness, but of the consciousness of self; and that total abeyance, not of choice, but of the choice of self.2 Here contemplation opens up on that union which pauline mysticism knows as transformation into Christ,3 and which the whole mystical tradition struggles to formulate, without pantheism, as an encountering of God 'without intermediary', 'without modes' - where the contemplative 'becomes one spirit with God'. Where orthodox and valid, all this will emerge, not in the loss of personality, but rather in that terrifying and holy experience of the self and of the world evaluated entirely from God's point of view. The contemplative becomes aware of himself at this point only as known through and through by God. He views the world now, himself, and his brothers - and he loves them - as they are known and loved by God. There will be no solipsism, but rather a detachment from and a zeal for man and the world which may well look fanatic to the man who does not pray well or who does not pray at all. For the apostolic action of the contemplative will increasingly have the direct, uninhibited

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Guardini, R.: Prayer in Practice (New York, 1963), is excellent on this question of recollection, of 'collectedness'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf Whelan, art. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cf von Balthasar, H.: 'Theology and Sanctity', in Word and Redemption (New York, 1965).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ruysbroeck, The Adornment of Spiritual Marriage, II, cited in Merton, T., Contemplative Prayer (New York, 1969), p 102.

and notably unfashionable quality of the creating, redeeming God himself. The terrible purity of God's holiness and truth may well make a desert of terror and absence at this juncture. Or again, whether rhythmically or concomitantly with this, the divine love may fashion of the contemplative and his world a silent and hidden transfiguration. Finally (in so brief a sketch of an unplumbable adventure and mystery), seeing all creation and himself through God, the christian contemplative discovers here in God his own and the world's total identity in Christ, whom alone the Father knows and loves.<sup>1</sup>

Such contemplation is a journey, and this journey into God, or - more properly - this invasion by him, will be no matter of a magic moment. Contemplative prayer is a history that must recapitulate and existentialize (give a new historical existence to) both the destructive and the creative dynamisms of Exodus, Sinai, Babylon and, pre-eminently, the Lord's own and our baptismal plunge into his pasch: that long march of Israel as harlot and bride.2 and the journey of Jesus as bridegroom, scapegoat and servant - to Jerusalem and the Father, through death and resurrection. What is being suggested here is that, for a christian, contemplative grace (encounter with the Father) has a most specific and definite, indeed a scandalously precise, structure.3 It has the structure of the history of a particular nation and, especially and primordially, the structure of the particular jew who was Jesus of Nazareth and who is now the risen Lord of glory: the slain Lamb who stands.4 Contemplative grace is the grace of Christ. For God has visited his people, speaking through his prophets and his own saving acts. And in these last, quite definitive times he has personally and as Word taken flesh as Jesus of Nazareth, and that Word forever now in victory stands as slain: fleshed forever with, and Lord

<sup>1</sup> Cf Merton, ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf especially Hosea and Ezekiel 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Yet this eternal structure (which is the one revelation), in gaining a new historical existence, also achieves a quite novel conformation each time this sacred history encounters, shapes, and gets shaped by, the individual and communal psychology, culture, body, etc. of the contemplative himself and of the larger community with whom he interacts. It acquires, of course, its most significant continuing incarnation, not in the determinisms of psychology, environment etc., but in the *freedom* and *love* with which the contemplative utilizes these materials in entering the paschal darkness and light of his own faith experience and that of his fellow men.

<sup>4</sup> Apoc 5, 6.

precisely in terms of, all the details of his history.¹ Contemplation is communication in love with the Father. But from all eternity, through the days of his flesh, until now, this Jesus is the one Word of this God the Father. Christ is everything and the only thing the Father has to say. Contemplative prayer, therefore, as response to, as union with, as transformation into, the loving, that is, proferred reality of the Father, formally brings us to the second term of our one subject: contemplating *Christ*.

Contemplative prayer has singly to do with man's human response, his conscious and free saying yes, to the love of God. Within a christian and social, thoroughly apostolic, perspective, this existential yes with one's whole person and history – which is what contemplative prayer wants to be – will become an 'adhesion to the saving design of God': that pauline mysterion's and lucan salvation history which, especially in the johannine theology, is revealed to be the Person of the Word, Jesus Christ himself. For the christian, then, who believes that God has revealed himself in the particular history of Jesus, contemplation of God is, without remainder, contemplation of Christ.

However, as we said earlier, this contemplation of Christ may be viewed in at least three ways. It may signify the contemplation of the historical life and death of Jesus as presented in scripture; or it may point to that contemplation which is personal presence to and communication with the risen Christ now reigning with his Father as first fruit of the eschatological kingdom; or it may suggest a contemplation and service of the God beyond the world and beyond the humanity of Christ too – Christ's Father – a contemplation which may be thought to structure Christ's own historical prayerful existence and which, for us, would occur only in and through the humanity of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

For many – and among them are serious modern men of prayer – the contemplation of Christ in the gospels raises some difficulty. Perhaps the central problem for some concerns the historical character of the portraits of Christ – a problem stimulated by the modern, quite legitimate criticism of scripture as a human, cultural

I have been helped in this point by Stanley, D.: 'Contemplation of the Gospels and the Contemporary Christian', in *Prayer: the Problem of Dialogue with God*, Mooney, C., ed. (New Jersey, 1969), and also printed in *Theological Studies* (September, 1968).

Bernard, op. cit., passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cf e.g. Eph I.

<sup>4</sup> A point vigorously made by Teresa of Avila.

document. This criticism has discovered at least three strata in our gospels: 1. The actual life and actual words of the historical Jesus (Sitz im Leben Jesu); 2. This life and those words as reflected and formulated in the experience and the needs of the early christian community - a community founded upon its easter, that is, resurrection faith in Jesus and upon pentecost (Sitz im Leben der Kirche); 3. Finally, the level of the gospel itself as the literary document we now have, wherein a single evangelist, or a school, selects, interprets and organizes the material of the previous two levels from a particular perspective or theological point of view (Sitz im Evangelium). For the christian as exegete and scientific historian, a whole range of problems are in view here. And for the christian as a man coming to prayer, the solution of some of these problems is of immense advantage. For the more deeply and accurately he grasps the dynamisms, content and intentions of this organic event and word which is the gospel, and the more fully he understands the interaction especially between the first two levels and the third, the more exactly will he know and be able to hear (and therefore properly respond to) what is being said to him on this third level, that is, the gospel of God which is Christ as he is now being proclaimed to us in the preaching community of the Church.

But for the christian man of faith as contemplative, as precisely and formally man of prayer, it is only this last, this third level, which is of concern. At this level only are the gospels a prayer-book in which one listens and replies to the self-revealing God speaking and acting in history. For it is at this level alone that the gospels are inspired, are word of God in a quite serious sense (through that furthest kenosis of the eternal Word, humbling himself to flesh as Jesus and, here, to the written syllable as Scripture). Here God the Father directly confronts man, through the instrumentality and sacramentality at once of Jesus, of the faith of the easter community, and of the psychology and theology of the evangelist. And so the christian contemplative contemplates the gospel on his knees, in adoration and unconditional obedience.

There is a second difficulty connected with the christian's contemplation of the gospel text, a difficulty which arises from the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Fitzmyer, J., handles this whole question masterfully in 'The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius and Recent Gospel Study', in *Woodstock Letters* (Woodstock, Maryland, vol 91, no 3) and reprinted in *Jesuit Spirit in a Time of Change*, Schroth, R., ed. (Westminster, Maryland, 1968).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf von Balthasar, 'The Place of Theology', op. cit.

fact that all contemplative prayer (as we have seen now) moves to, and is not completely itself except as, an inter-personal relationship between two liberties present to one another. Christian contemplative prayer, then, is union with the living, risen Lord, actively present now as Master of contemporary history. He is not a child, he does not suffer or die or walk the roads of Galilee, and he never will again. What has the past enshrined in the gospels to do with the living relationship of contemplation?

Yet just who is this victoriously risen Lord the christian contemplates? The 'risen' alone reminds us of his history and recalls to us all the details – especially the death – of his flesh. He is, as we saw, 'the Lamb standing as though slain'.¹ The eternal Christ is not just the product or the aftermath of his thirty years at Nazareth and his paschal adventure into God. He is this history, now. Just as he was God as Jesus of Nazareth, so now he has all the particularity and density of this Jesus in his present existence as Lord and Christ. Indeed he is eternally constituted Lord and Christ² by his Father precisely in terms of his human history. He is one 'Jesus Christ, yesterday and today the same – and so forever'.³

Therefore the contemplation of the Jesus of the gospels is not an act of imagination - in the sense of the construction of a fiction, of someone who never existed, or who no longer exists, in his earthly states (as would be the case with Socrates). These earthly mysteries of Jesus of Nazareth exist now in the risen Lord. They have achieved a new existence and contemporaneity in his resurrection, he who is now Master of history. The literary documents which are the gospels - if and where taken with utter seriousness as word of God are thus the Father revealing to me who his Son is today. Such contemplative, that is, experienced, faith enables the christian man of prayer radically to hope in history (especially the novel segment of it that is his own). For it existentially notifies the contemplative of his association in the paschal mystery of Christ through his own passion, death and resurrection. Some contemplation is absolutely essential, therefore, if christian man is to appropriate and assist in his own redemption and humanization - which he must do, if his redemption, his holiness, his humanity, are to be personal at all (that is, conscious and free).

Heb 13, 8.

Once again, on this whole point, I am immensely indebted to David Stanley, art. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf Rom 1, 4 and Acts 2, 36.

Where such contemplation of Jesus presses to its mystical splendour as transformation of the christian into Christ and of Christ into the christian, exciting possibilities occur both for life and for theology. Hans Urs von Balthasar makes the point:

Though objective revelation was concluded with the death of the last apostle, it does not follow that, in the Church of saints, nothing further happens that touches on revelation. After all, the miracles of absolution and the consecration are continually repeated, and they bring about, again and again, a new presence of the events of Good Friday and Easter within the Church. Why should it not be the same with the constant repetition of the . . . existence of the Lord in the life (that is, not just the doctrine, but the actual dark nights and the joys) of his faithful and saints?<sup>2</sup>

And conversely, for theology – in its perennial and ever re-beginning attempts to understand and to declare for successive cultures and experience the one eternal revelation which is the mystery of Christ – why should theology not ponder, for example, the contemporary passion and darkness of Christ as found throughout the faithful, but especially in the 'dark nights' of the great saints (whose experiences are ecclesial and for the sake of the whole people of God) in its effort to understand and declare, for our time, the one continuing paschal enterprise which is human history as revealed and hoped for in christian faith? And this approach could be broadened to a whole range of social and political, as well as the more hidden and personal, experience of God's people.<sup>3</sup>

Our final consideration on the contemplation of Christ concerns that third implication of our title where the contemplative prayer of the christian receives its structure and impulse, not so much from Christ himself as object of prayer, as from Christ's own contemplation of God. Some modern theology is not without a certain careless christocentrism – almost a christism – which risks subsuming all transcendence either in humanity as such, or at least in the humanity of Christ. This, of course, is death to the specifically religious impulse (though not necessarily the ethical impulse – a related but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is a staple of pauline contemplative prayer. Cf. e.g. 2 Cor 5, 17, Phil 3, 7-9 and Gal 2, 19-20. The whole question is well treated in Wikenhauser, A., *Pauline Mysticism* (New York, 1960).

In 'Theology and Sanctity', op. cit, p 80. Emphasis added.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid. It should be noticed, however, that belief and holiness are presuppositions, just here, of such material's being available to theology.

very different thing). Indeed the humanity of Christ is relevant as religious, and is therefore the permanently proper concern of contemplative prayer, precisely because it is revelatory of the Godhead which alone is proportioned to the graced desires of man's heart. The contemplation of Christ - therefore our contemplation of him as well as his own contemplation - is not fully itself as a religious and human act until, in and through Christ, it opens out on God (as an always incarnational preoccupation, therefore, with precisely discarnate transcendence).2 And it is just here that the apparent similarity and even identity of all religious contemplation - christian and non-christian - appears initially suasive, 3 as if Christ were a symbol or story one outgrows or a grossness which mature contemplation outstrips. And yet it is also at just this point that the radical and permanent difference of christian contemplation from all other kinds remains an altogether demonstrable fact - though a fact of faith alone, to be sure. And the difference is Christ, and in his full density as history. For the God beyond Christ of christian contemplative prayer is the precise God of Christ. And we would not know his name - it is Father - except it were revealed to us in Christ. And we only know what he has to say and what, as a matter of fact, he has cared to do, because this word to us and this deed for us is Christ - and nothing else.

Father Rahner has seen this clearly in the distinctions he draws between nature mysticism, metaphysical or philosophical mysticism, and christian mysticism.<sup>4</sup> In nature mysticism the contemplative existentializes – experiences – the truth of his acknowledgement of God 'as the ground of the world' and as 'the ultimate background of everything we meet as man and world in its own reality'. Here it may even seem as though man and the world are 'the raison d'être of God, at least of the God who shows himself and insofar as he can show himself in the world'. However, where metaphysics is not only theoretically allowed but also existentializes itself as religious experience, 'at the same time' as the fact that God

<sup>1</sup> Cf Whelan, art. cit.

Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This very common position gets well stated in its general form by Huxley, A., *The Doors of Perception* (New York, 1963). Huxley is directly replied to in Zaehner, R., *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* (New York, 1967).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Rahner, K., 'The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World', in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. III (Baltimore, 1967).

appears to us as the ground of the world and the world as the meaning of God, we come to know him as the free, personal, in himself eternal being and thereby as the God beyond the world and all finitude, so that the world does not properly express what he is and may be as the personal and free and eternal being. The world does not reveal to us the raison d'être of God.

## And then Rahner moves on to our point:

But with that, the human... question of God has already terminated in an essential failure: it is faced with a free Person closed in on himself, the God who covers himself in silence... And what this infinite God is in himself, and how this free personal God wants perhaps, as is possible, to deal with us, this question which for all its obscurity is decisive for our existence cannot be illuminated by the natural light of reason (or by nature mysticism or metaphysical mysticism either). Whether he wants to meet us immediately and personally, whether he wants to remain silent, what he will say to us if he does want to speak – all this is an essential mystery... for every impetus of man's passionate desire to know, which originates in the world. So in itself... (the human) would have to conclude in an eternally watchful readiness of man to keep his ear cocked in case this distant, silent He should will to speak, in a readiness for the perhaps possible possibility of a revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Revelation: 'the living personal God has spoken to man in christianity, that is in Jesus Christ'.2 The silent God has spoken, radically distinguishing christian mysticism from every other kind. The contemplative prayer of a christian indeed moves beyond - in and through, to beyond - the humanity of Christ. But always to the God of Jesus Christ. Christian contemplation is adoration and obedience only as a reply to revelation: a reply to an eternal Word who is Son, now spoken, for our time, as history - and to the written, the scriptural words that emerge as integrally one with the event of his flesh. And the word is Christ: this is my Son. And if it is God who gives us Christ in the shattering terror and hope of the paschal drama, it is Christ who gives us God. We shall never know what he is. But however dark and deserted, or however blazing with light and consolation the crucifying splendours of contemplative prayer may be, we do know very well who he is: the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'So when you pray, say Our Father. . .'

*Ibid.*, p 284.

Christ is the Word of God. And scripture, in a different but equally serious sense, is also the word of God.¹ Scripture is the Father, telling us the story of his Son – the story of his sons! It is his own story too, and neither the gardens of contemplative prayer nor the deserts of its naked faith have either the need or the possibility of anything or anyone less or other than the God and Father whom Christ reveals. It is in Christ alone and 'in the sacred books (that) the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them'.² And it is in Christ alone, through the gospel and eucharist of his continuing ecclesial flesh, that the christian contemplative replies.

We conclude these few thoughts with the remembrance of what we said at the beginning: that in treating of the contemplation of Christ, we are dealing with the prayer of a christian. And a christian, Paul has superbly told us, is a life lived in the Spirit of Father and of Son – the Spirit whom the johannine Christ was glorified in death to give. All is this gift who is Spirit. It is the Spirit in us who prays: for it is by the Spirit of God alone that a man says Jesus is Lord – and it is by the Spirit of Christ alone that a man cries 'Abba, Father!' Contemplation actualizes this trinitarian love-life, which God is, and for which man was made, gives it a contemporary history and flesh, and a world to love. That world and its mankind are loved by man with God's urgency through the conscious and free appropriation of the Spirit which is man's contemplation of the Father in Christ.

There is without question today a problem — which is not this article's subject — about scripture as the word of God in a serious, unique, quite non-metaphorical sense. Naivete is never in order. But simplicity in the face of one's own present exegetical, form-critical, cultural knowledge etc., and a deep faith in the incarnational possibility and suitability of God the Father's employment of the psychology and pluralist experience both of the primitive community and of the several evangelists to declare as his own the story of his Son (just as he made and makes his own the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth and the eucharistic bread) is a sine qua non of any success. At any rate, it may be thought that, however different in other ways, the structure and possibility of scripture as word of God is not different from that of the divinity of Jesus or the Real Presence in the Eucharist.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Dei Verbum (Constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II), 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cf Jn 14 and 16.

<sup>4</sup> Cf I Cor 12, Gal 4 and Rom 8.