# The Spirit of the Risen Lord

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### *What's happened to Pentecost?*

THE FOURTH WEEK OF THE EXERCISES IS DOMINATED by the resurrection of Christ and the Contemplation to Obtain Divine Love. The biblical texts included by Ignatius end with the account in Acts of the Ascension. Why does Ignatius stop there? Why only a brief reference to the promise of the Holy Spirit, without a contemplation on Pentecost itself? The paschal mystery reaches its climax and consummation, not in the resurrection, but in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The liturgical calendar makes this clear. The same Spirit that filled Jesus is meant to fill each of us and all of God's creation. At first glance, this might seem to be another example of an outdated christocentrism that fails to take seriously the mission of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, there may have been good reasons why Ignatius did not suggest specific contemplations on the Spirit. Ever since the thirteenth century, when controversies surrounding Joachim of Fiore's teaching concerning the Spirit arose, suspicions about 'spiritual movements' and new doctrines about the Spirit had again been in the air.[1] This might be a reasonable explanation for an otherwise curious omission. In fact, a closer look at the Fourth Week reveals a keen sensibility to the presence and action of the Spirit, even if the Spirit is not explicitly mentioned. The purpose of this article, then, is to suggest how the Exercises do speak of the Spirit in the Fourth Week and how this might be relevant for our own times.

### *A closer look at the Fourth Week*

Ignatius suggests a series of thirteen contemplations on the appearances of the Risen Lord. When we look at the preludes and notes, we are struck at once by two things: a focus on joy and the image of Christ as consoler. In its simplest form, the grace of this week – 'What I desire' – is expressed as 'the grace to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy and the glory of Christ our Lord' (Exx 221). In the notes, we find echoes of this: feeling the joy and happiness of Christ, savouring what causes pleasure, happiness and spiritual joy (Exx 229). In the application of the senses, more time and attention is to be given to that which more deeply moves and brings greater relish

(Exx 227). For anyone familiar with Paul, this is the language of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). Ignatius is encouraging the retreatant to taste and savour the fruits of the Spirit.

When we turn to the contemplations themselves, we quickly discover what became of Pentecost. The sixth apparition (Exx 304), portrayed in John 20:19–25 is, in fact, the Johannine equivalent of the more familiar scene recounted by Luke in Acts 2. The risen Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on Easter night. Ignatius guides the retreatant's gaze through the third point. The text is quite compact. It makes an explicit connection between the experience of forgiveness and the commissioning of the disciples. Other elements present include the greeting of peace and a subsequent movement from fear to joy. We consider how the Risen Lord now hands over the very Spirit who has empowered his own life and mission in the service of God's Kingdom.

The contemplation thus brings the retreatant back to the central themes of the first two weeks: her own experience of God's gracious love, the consolation of feeling God's healing love precisely as a sinner, and the desire it has elicited to respond generously to the call of the Kingdom. As the Exercises draw to an end, Ignatius again places the retreatant's experience in the apostolic context of the continuing presence and action of the Spirit.

***Christ the consoler and the Holy Spirit***

In all thirteen contemplations, Ignatius focuses our attention on Christ the consoler, by considering 'the way in which friends are wont to console each other' (Exx 223). This evokes the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus calls the disciples his friends (Jn 15:14ff) and promises that he will send (Jn 15:26), or that the Father will send in his name (Jn 15:26; 16:7), another Paraclete,[2] who is called the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17) or the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26). Among the many possible meanings of the term Paraclete is 'consoler'. The Spirit will console the disciples by teaching and bringing to remembrance all that Jesus had said (Jn 14:26). This will bestow a peace that the world cannot give, a peace that is meant to encourage their troubled hearts (Jn 14:27f). Jesus declares his love and enjoins the disciples to abide in that love so that they may be fruitful in him and that their joy in him may be full (Jn 15:1–12). They have been chosen and appointed to bear much fruit (Jn 15:12–17). His words anticipate times of great persecution and are meant to help them persevere (Jn 16:1–4). The consoler will lead the disciples into the fullness of the truth of the paschal mystery (Jn 16:12ff). One with Jesus

in his death and filled with his Spirit, they are sent by Jesus into the world, just as he has been sent into the world by the Father (Jn 17:17-19).

Thus, it is precisely in and through the Spirit that the Risen Christ exercises his ministry of consolation. The Holy Spirit *is* the personal presence of Jesus in the Christian while Jesus is with the Father. The Risen Christ as a consoler is a central image of the Fourth Week. Indeed, Ignatius would come to envision all the many works of the Society as ministries of consolation. Whether or not Ignatius intends it, the Fourth Gospel offers a way of understanding this central image of the Risen Christ in the Fourth Week *pneumatologically*, that is quite congenial with the Ignatian spirit and the basic dynamics of the Exercises.

***The Contemplation to Attain the Love of God***

When we turn to the other great part of the Fourth Week, the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God, we find the appropriateness of such an interpretation confirmed. Again, the heart of the contemplation is contained in the *id quod volo*, 'What I desire', of the second point. In this case, it is an 'intimate knowledge of the many blessings received, that, filled with gratitude for all, I may in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty' (Exx 233). This desire is expressed in the *Suscipe*. Of particular importance for our reflections are the four points that enshrine this prayer. In the first, one is asked to ponder with great affection one's blessings and gifts, how much God has given one of what God possesses, and how much God desires to *bestow God's own self* (Exx 234). In the second, one is to reflect on how God *dwells* in all creatures, especially in human beings, who are created in God's image (Exx 235). In the third, Ignatius asks us to consider how God acts as one who *labours* (Exx 236). Finally, we are to consider how *every blessing and gift descends from above*, especially one's own limited powers and the blessings and gifts one has personally received (Exx 237). In all of these considerations, I am to reflect on myself, pondering with affection how generous God has been in sharing all God has and is with me.

***God's self-communication in the Spirit***

Although the Spirit is never mentioned explicitly, even brief reflection reveals that it is the reality of the Spirit to which Ignatius refers. He asks the retreatant, who is approaching the end of the Exercises, to reflect on the blessings or, as some say, 'graces', he has received from God. But he gently reminds us in the first point that in the

end, God does not give us simply things: God gives God's own self. That, for Ignatius, is the essence of loving someone: sharing everything you have and everything you are with the other. Love may be expressed in word and deed, as circumstances allow and demand. One who loves is ready to share her possessions, her time and her aid. But in its heart and soul, true love is and requires something deeper, the gift of one's very self. Love entails real *self*-communication. Only in this way can persons really be in communion. Only in the loving gift of self do we experience a real inner transformation of self. As Ignatius already intimated in the contemplations on Christ the Consoler, we can be deeply touched and changed by our friends, by those who are willing to risk giving themselves.

Theologically, the shorthand formula we give to the mystery of God's loving self-communication to the world is Trinity and the name we give to the divine gift of self as truly communicated to us is Holy Spirit. Fundamentally, grace (in the singular) is itself the Holy Spirit, God precisely as given and shared. When we speak of particular graces (in the plural), we are referring to the effects that we may experience because of God's saving presence and action in the Spirit. Ignatius' simple and yet profound point reminds us of a central element of our faith. For Christians, salvation is not simply a benefit that we are entitled to enjoy because of the redemptive action of Christ. Salvation is sharing the divine life, becoming one with God, being divinized, as the patristic theologians were fond of saying.

In Christ, God does not merely do something 'for us', but more radically, something 'to us', in our very being. In the humanity of Jesus, the revelation of God's divine *self*-communication, God makes manifest what God's self-gift is doing to humanity itself, to *our* humanity, to the whole creation, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's gift of self means to transform us and our world as the place of God's reign. Here, perhaps, we can look for a more profound appreciation in the retreatant of the meaning of Christ's Kingdom.

How does this happen? It happens personally, that is, in the way that persons touch and change each other. One way of understanding traditional language about the Spirit is to think of personal presence. The retreatant should consider how God as Holy Spirit, as the gift of God's own self, is a personal presence whose touch and whose transforming power she has felt and recognized within. She can acknowledge that this gift of personal presence does not result in a different personality, a higher IQ, mystical visions, or, for that matter, the disappearance of health problems, natural limitations or those pesky

idiosyncrasies that others find so annoying at times. But she may well rely on the same Holy Spirit that filled and empowered Jesus, and that Christ the Consoler continues to send, to keep her and all her doings in God's love and empower her for service to the Divine Majesty, just as it did Jesus, her Lord. Gerard Manley Hopkins, who, like Ignatius, is speaking the language of the Spirit without ever mentioning the name, has expressed this beautifully:

> I say more: the just man justices;
> Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is –
> Christ. For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of men's faces.[3]

At its best, traditional language about the Holy Spirit and about the 'spiritual' life helps to capture at least a bit of the great mystery that God's presence is not simply one of transcendent otherness. It is a reality that really touches us from within, and, therefore, in a way that is truly transformative. It does not make us into carbon copies of Jesus, Ignatius, or any other saint, but rather liberates and calls forth our own truest, most authentic and creative selves. As the end of the Exercises approaches, Ignatius wants the retreatant to be confident of what has happened to her and to place the confidence where it belongs, *in the Spirit* who has been given, rather than in a number of well-intentioned resolutions, or in a naïve belief in the continuation of particular feelings experienced during the retreat.

***The Spirit who dwells within creation***

In the second point this vision of God's presence and action is broadened. Ignatius turns our gaze to the world and invites us to see it with eyes made new by the loving presence of God. Creation is not merely God's 'product' but God's 'place'. Ignatius had a keen, perhaps mystical, sensibility for God's *indwelling* presence, not only in human beings but in all creatures.[4] This corresponds well with central biblical themes concerning the Spirit as the creative presence and action of God in the world, vividly expressed in such metaphors as fire, wind, water, cloud and light. It finds echoes in the familiar titles *Spiritus Creator* and Lord and Giver of Life.

Holy Spirit is also the traditional way in which the special presence of God within the human person is spoken of, particularly in the light of

the unique role of humans in the created order. Here, Ignatius follows Paul (1 Cor 6:19) and a long theological tradition, when he says that God makes a temple of us as those creatures who are made 'in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty' (Exx 235).

The end result is a curious combination. On the one hand, we find a thoroughly traditional acknowledgement of the unique place and role that human beings have within the cosmos. On the other hand, we find a rather radical, pan*en*theistic vision of the whole of creation, and every creature within it, as indwelt by God, who constantly sustains it in being and fills it with life.

In the second point, therefore, we see the truly *cosmic* scope of the divine presence as Holy Spirit. Good theology of the Spirit has always kept two dimensions together, the transcendent and the immanent. Because God is Spirit, *Deus semper major*, God is not reducible to any one or thing in creation or to creation as a whole. Quite the contrary. God is the very 'place' for creation, the one in whom we live, and move, and have our being. On the other hand, because God is Spirit, God is able to be present as the deepest reality of creation, from the tiniest atom to the farthest star, and most particularly in loving human communion. As such, with Ignatius, we may hope to seek and find, love and serve God in all things. There is nothing that is not sacred. There is nothing that is not touched and borne by God's own Spirit. This is certainly consonant with the spirit of the famous epithet attributed to Ignatius, *non coerceri maximo, contineri tamen a minimo, divinum est* (unrestricted by even the greatest of things and yet contained in the smallest – that is divine).

Such a vision moves beyond the opposition between nature and grace that has usually characterized Christian theology. We are invited to consider how God already indwells all creatures, both human and non-human, quite apart from the great events of 'salvation history'. Does this diminish the importance of God's self-communication in Christ? Not at all. The very fact that we find this contemplation at the end of the Exercises, rather than at the beginning, suggests that, while our ordinary experience of the world is already at least implicitly a grace-filled encounter with God, it is precisely the encounter with Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One, that opens our eyes to the extraordinary, divine depth of the 'ordinary' in a decisive and transforming way. The risen humanity of Christ requires that we adopt a new understanding and estimation of the capacity of the finite, created world for the infinite and eternal. This capacity is not a mere potentiality that will become actual only in some other realm. It is real and actual, here and now, even

if it still lives in hope of final realization and fulfilment. This is one way of understanding the work of God as Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life. The Spirit in whom Jesus has been raised from the dead is the same Spirit who has always indwelt creation and who brings it to its eschatological perfection. Thus, to see all of creation as the world of God's grace is, perhaps, one of the 'true and most sacred effects' of Christ's resurrection (Exx 223). Two important implications of this perspective follow for us today.

***The Spirit and the environment***

Today we live in a world whose ecological systems are seriously threatened, and in some respects already compromised or destroyed. One reason why we fail to heed the voices that warn us of ecological disaster, is that most of us in the industrialized world have forgotten how to see and to appreciate nature as anything more than a storehouse of resources and supplies, ready to exploit for our own projects and purposes. How many of us are capable of being awed by it or being genuinely moved to reverence it? In the second point, Ignatius exhibits a perspective that is not foreshortened by the anthropocentrism of the Principle and Foundation (or in the third point to come). The goodness and glory of nature do not consist in its usefulness to the human creatures. Every creature, in its own way, is the dwelling place of God; therefore every creature has a dignity and a value irrespective of its utility to the human race.

This is a deeply sacramental vision of creation; we are invited to see the world as the place where we encounter and serve God.[5] In more traditional language, we might say that the Holy Spirit enables us to see the world with the 'eyes of faith', that is, with a kind of Christian imagination that views the world and its many creatures as God's dwelling place and recognizes God as the power of being and life deep within it. The Fourth Week presents the retreatant with an opportunity to grow in a new vision of reality and to let God's Spirit transform her basic attitudes towards nature, engendering a more contemplative appreciation and respect for all of God's creatures. In this way, Ignatius' second point is strikingly consistent with recent developments in Catholic social teaching, that have moved away from an earlier anthropocentric perspective and begun to stress the integrity of creation and the intrinsic value of all creatures. It can nourish and support an authentic Christian spirituality in an age more critically aware of the ecological challenges facing us.[6]

***The Spirit and other religious traditions***

Ignatius proposes to the retreatant that God dwells in all human beings. I am invited to see myself, and presumably every person, as God's temple. Such language is traditionally associated with the indwelling, sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit. It is curious that the reason for such a view does not have any explicit connection to the redemptive action of Christ. It seems, rather, to be grounded in God's creative action, which has made me and all human beings in the image and likeness of God (Exx 235). One may conclude that every person, regardless of religious belief or affiliation, is a temple of God and, therefore, a locus of the Holy Spirit in this world.

My intention is not to make an assertion about Ignatius' own understanding. But I do wish to suggest that the text may be construed in a way that is coherent with developments in Catholic doctrine since Vatican II concerning the saving presence of God outside the Catholic Church. Affirming that all are saved in Christ, *Lumen gentium* 15 and 16 spoke clearly of the saving work of Christ's Spirit, not only in the Church but beyond it, in other religions, and in the hearts of all men and women. Since the Council, theologians have been plumbing the depths of this astounding shift in the Church's consciousness about God's saving presence.[7] It is no longer possible to view other religious traditions as merely partial, propaedeutic or peripheral in relationship to God's self-communication in Christ and its mediation in the Church. In some sense, we must view them, and the authentic experience and wisdom that they embody, as sources of divine revelation, positively willed by God and enlivened by the Holy Spirit. If this is so, it is reasonable to believe that Christians can and should learn from them. Respectful encounter enables one to come to a deeper understanding of one's own tradition. And it is quite possible that there are insights and truths in other traditions that have been forgotten or have never achieved explicit consciousness in Christianity.

This clearly has important implications for how Christians view the spiritual wisdom and practices of other religions and how the Church reconceives the goals, challenges and opportunities of evangelization in the new millennium. Ignatian spirituality, with its own particular kind of optimism about the universal presence and action of God's Spirit, can play an important role.

***The Spirit who labours***

Ignatius asks us to consider how God works and labours for us in all creatures. While a certain anthropocentric narrowness is evident, it is

not the focus. The focus is on God, who acts as one who labours. The divine presence indwelling all creatures is not merely an impersonal force that structures reality, giving being, life and sustenance. It is personal agency: action in the deepest sense of the word.

To view God as one who is labouring in creation and in all creatures seems quite foreign to the modern, scientific mentality. Science does not postulate a God who is present and active in the universe but rather a universe that has a structure that is susceptible of disciplined, methodical investigation and description, which can, therefore, give rise to knowledge. Even believers generally tend to think of creation as the product of what God did 'in the beginning' rather than as an activity of God in the present and into the future.

Recovering a sensibility for God's ongoing action in the world in a way that is compatible with current scientific knowledge and the evolutionary paradigm that rightly enjoys credence today remains one of the most urgent tasks of a renewed theology of providence. But it is beyond the scope of these reflections. However, the Fourth Week of the Exercises does offer an opportunity for those so inspired to make an explicit connection between the personal and the cosmic dimensions of God's ongoing presence and action as Holy Spirit and to adopt a more integrated vision of God as creator, redeemer and transformer.

We may envision our world, even as we do our own lives in it, as God's work-in-progress.[8] Moving beyond an anthropocentric perspective, we can begin to overcome traditional dualistic oppositions between person and nature, spirit and matter, and heaven and earth. God does not wish to save us *from* this world, *for* or *into* another world. God wishes to save *this world* and all its creatures from every form of sin and death that threatens it. In Christ, we see what God is doing and what God intends to do. That is why Paul says that in Christ we are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and that we possess the first fruits of a Spirit who will bring the whole creation to the salvation we hope for (Rom 8:18–25).[9]

The image of God as the divine Spirit who is ever labouring in creation, or, to put it another way, to view creation as God's ongoing action, resonates with fundamental biblical perspectives and themes. When most Christians think about God the creator, they refer to the cosmogony of Genesis 1, in which God creates the world in six days and rests on the seventh, precisely because the work of creation is finished. Nonetheless, for all its prominence, it is only one of many biblical texts that speak of God's creative action.

Another story of creation in the Old Testament is told in Exodus, which recounts how God created a people by liberating them from bondage. Slaves, who shared little more than the oppression of the Egyptians, were formed into a nation, constituted by God's own pledge of fidelity, realized especially in the land and the abundant life they could hope for in it. What at first appears to be a story of liberation and redemption is also a story of creation. Seen from this perspective, Genesis 1 can also be read as a tale of liberation and redemption, the story of God's cosmic victory over the watery chaos and the well-ordered world that emerged. This is a clue that, for the Bible, God's creative action cannot be isolated to some point 'back' at the beginning of time.[10]

Wisdom literature, the Prophets, and especially the Psalms, offer us a variety of different perspectives on God's continuing creative agency.[11] The cosmic events of 'creation' are frequently recalled in parallel with the 'saving' acts of God for Israel, manifesting a keen sensitivity for the interrelationship and fundamental unity between the cosmic and historical dimensions.[12] The decisive feature in all these texts and the distinctive characteristic of Israel's faith in the creating and saving God is the utter gratuity and constant fidelity of God's single creative/redemptive action. From the very beginning, God's delight in creating is utterly non-utilitarian. God's desire is that its goodness flourish abundantly; God's determination is to overcome everything that threatens this loving plan. This conviction forms the heart of Israel's faith-filled understanding of all God's subsequent actions on behalf of Israel and, through Israel, for all the nations. This is the divine labour that will one day be finished, when God and all of creation will enter into sabbath rest.

In the New Testament, this divine project is called God's reign and is announced by and embodied in Jesus Christ. Through his words and deeds, empowered by God's Holy Spirit, Jesus invites, and even demands, his listeners to view this world as the place where God wishes to establish the rule of divine life, love and justice.[13] Those who open themselves to him and to his message will have eyes to see this world in a new way. For those with ears to hear, the call to discipleship sounds as an invitation to join in Jesus' mission, empowered by the same Spirit and filled with the sure hope that God's victorious labour in Jesus bestows (Mt 13:15f). In faith and hope they look towards the final completion of all the labours of God's love, both human and divine, in the New Creation.

This final contemplation can, therefore, nourish in us a profound biblical vision of the world. Creation is not simply God's product but God's place and project, God's home and hope. In faith and hope, the retreatant may view this world as the ongoing labour of divine love and seek in all his labours to join himself more wholeheartedly to the Spirit who labours in him and has laboured in all creation from the very beginning.

***The Spirit on high, from whom all blessings flow***

In the fourth point, Ignatius shifts the perspective. Having asked the retreatant to consider how God dwells and labours in all creatures, he now recalls that all blessings and gifts descend from above. He uses the images of light and water so reminiscent of the biblical metaphors for God's Spirit. He singles out the divine gifts of justice, goodness and mercy, which echo strongly the words of Israel's prophets (Isai 61:1-11) and of Jesus himself, when speaking of the mission of the Spirit and those anointed by it (Lk 4:16–19). In these ways, the fourth point also evokes Luke's description of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in tongues as of fire (Acts 2:3–4).

The immanent presence of God's Spirit, which the retreatant has experienced so intimately both within herself and in the world, has a transcendent source and foundation. Returning to the metaphor of sunlight, we might consider a plant. The sun shines down upon it as a power and source of energy and life. And yet it seems that the plant itself reaches upward towards the sun. The Holy Spirit is a power that both pulls from on high and pushes from deep within.[14]

Ignatius is reminding us once more that the new life that we experience so deeply and intimately is not our own creation or accomplishment. It comes from God. Life in the Spirit is profoundly relational. I am who I am precisely because of the loving, indwelling presence of the divine Other. Underneath all our own deepest desires, the very desires that Ignatius has asked us to attend to during the Exercises, is the Desire of God, whom we call the Holy Spirit. This simple and all-important truth is crucial at the end of the Exercises, as the retreatant prepares to return to 'ordinary time'. Ignatius insists upon a truly liberating Christian realism in the spiritual life. The retreatant considers her limited power and, presumably, the finite and fallible ways in which her life has embodied and will embody the divine justice, goodness and mercy that are the works of the Spirit. And yet, in this very imperfect incarnation is to be found nothing less than the infinite presence and action of God the Holy Spirit.

### *Conclusion*

We have seen that even though Ignatius barely mentions the Spirit by name, the Fourth Week is strikingly permeated by a sensibility for the Spirit. First, we noticed the contemplation upon the 'Johannine Pentecost' among the biblical texts concerning the Risen Lord. Then we considered how the image of Christ the Consoler can be understood as a way of speaking about the mission of the Spirit. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we reflected upon the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God and saw how the points proposed by Ignatius can lead us to a profound theology of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

This, then, is how I am invited to reflect upon myself at the end of the Fourth Week: as one who is limited and sinful and yet loved and empowered for the Kingdom by the God whose Spirit dwells and labours within me, in others, and in all creation. This is the Good News that brings consolation and courage as one prays the *Suscipe*. Seen from one's own perspective it appears completely unrealistic and foolish. Yes, like all declarations of love, it is reckless and exaggerated. It is the language of a love that depends utterly on the graceful love that dwells within, the love that has always loved us first (1 Jn 4:10), and that alone shall always be sufficient.

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NOTES

1 The problems that Ignatius himself had in the context of the Alumbrados in sixteenth-century Spain are well known. In Alcalá, Ignatius found himself in prison by order of the Inquisition, who suspected him of the 'illuminism' they were concerned to stamp out. Having left in 1527 for Salamanca, he found himself imprisoned again in less than two weeks. For about three weeks he was questioned about his doctrine and manner of life. In particular, the Spiritual Exercises were examined for orthodoxy. Finally, of course, he was exonerated. He and his companions were allowed to continue their spiritual ministries.

2 In speaking of *another* consoler whom he will send, Jesus himself is implicitly portrayed as a consoler (Jn 14:16). Elsewhere we find the glorified Jesus explicitly called 'Paraclete' or Consoler (1 Jn 2:1).

3 W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (eds), *The poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p 90.

4 In his biography of Ignatius, Ribadeneyra recounts how even the smallest and most unlikely creatures, plants, flowers, fruits – even a worm or any other animal – could make God present to him. See his *Vita Ignatii Loyolae* in MHSJ, *FN*, IV, p 742.

5 See Michael Himes and Kenneth Himes OFM, 'The sacrament of creation: toward an environmental theology', *Commonweal* (26 January 1990) pp 42–49, and Richard J. Clifford SJ, 'The Bible and the environment' in *Preserving the creation: environmental theology and ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994), pp 1–32.

6 I have sketched out some basic principles and perspectives in '"And God saw it was good": spirituality for an ecological age' in Robert J Wicks (ed), *Handbook of spirituality for ministers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), pp 421–441.

7 A good sense of the debate may be gotten from John Hick and Paul Knitter (eds), *The myth of Christian uniqueness: toward a pluralistic theology of religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987); Gavin d'Costa, *Theology and religious pluralism: the challenge of other religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Gavin d'Costa (ed), *Christian uniqueness reconsidered: the myth of a pluralistic theology of religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990); and Roger Haight, *Jesus, symbol of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999).

8 For an extended development of this notion, see John MacMurray, *The form of the personal. I: The self as agent. II: Persons in relation* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1978–79), originally given as the Gifford Lectures (1953–54) in the University of Glasgow.

9 In this text, Paul's reference (Gk. *ktisis*) is specifically to the non-human creation, which together with humanity is still groaning and labouring in pain as it awaits the glory that will be revealed.

10 This is why attempts to make the Big Bang theory a scientific equivalent of Genesis 1 are fundamentally misguided.

11 See, for example: Pss 44; 93; 104; Prov 3:13–26; 8:22–31; Job 38—41; Sir 24.

12 See, for example: Pss 74; 77; 89; 136; Isai 43:16–21; 44:24—45:13; 60; 65.

13 Luke 4 is illustrative. Jesus, full of the Spirit, understands his proclamation of the reign of God (Lk 4:43) as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy (Lk 4:18–21).

14 See Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'Geist und Zukunft' in *Spiritus Creator* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1967), p 153f.