

The Beauty of the Mystical Body
Christ the King Parish
3 June, Sunday Evening



FR. DAVID VINCENT MECONI, S.J.
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

"Love you? I am you!"

—Letter from Charles Williams

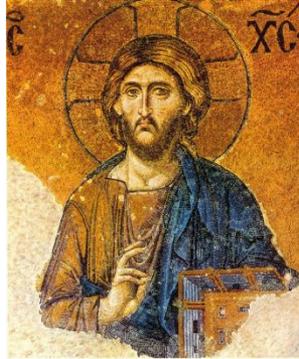
By prayer the soul is united with God, following in the footsteps of Christ crucified, and through desire and affection and the union of love he makes of her another himself. So Christ seems to have meant when he said, "If you will love me and keep my word, I will show myself to you, and you will be one thing with me and I with you (Jn 14:21-23). And we find similar words in other places from which we can see it is the truth that by love's affection the soul becomes another himself.

—Catherine of Siena, *Dialogues*, "Prologue"

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world, Yours are the feet with
which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the
world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.



CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH §460

The Word became flesh to make us "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pet 1:4): "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine [adoption], might become a son or daughter of God" (St. Irenaeus). "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" (St. Athanasius). "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

From an Anonymous 2nd century Homily on Holy Saturday: Jesus descends in search of our first parents. At the sight of the Lord, Adam, cries, “The Lord be with you.” Christ answers, “And with your spirit.” The Lord then took him by the hand and raised him up, saying, “Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and I will give you light. I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and your descendants I by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth...all who are sleeping: Arise! I order you, O sleeper, awake! I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell... Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you, and together we form only one person and we can never again be separated.



Come with me, where I am, in yourself, and I will give you the key to life. Where I am, there eternally is the secret of your origin...

Where are your hands that are not mine? And your feet that are not nailed to the same cross? I died and rose once and for all! We are very close to one another...How can you separate yourself from me without breaking my heart?

—John Paul II, *The Trinity's Embrace*

Self-Centered Reality

I initiate, God responds, rewarding me for my reaching out

I work to secure God's reward, experienced often as anxiety regarding how this is going

My sins push God further away and each time I must work harder to prove my love for him

I measure my Christian life on what I do: what good I have done and what sins I have avoided

I envision a God who is rarely happy with me and always wanting more

God-Centered Reality

God initiates, I respond, realizing God's love for me (Jn 15:16)

I pray to receive more love, experienced as a radical filial trust in God's care for me (Rom 8:14-17)

My sins *can* actually bring God closer in his love and mercy, removing my illusions of self-sufficiency (Mk 2:17, Jn 5:32)

I measure my Christian life by God's gaze on me, indicated by my desire to love him in return (1 Jn 4:16-19)

I envision how it "pleases the Father to give me the Kingdom" (Lk 12:32)