

## **INSCAPE October 2015**

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**Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:**

**May you always be consciously aware of the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love and mercy of God the Father, and the communion of the Life-Giving Holy Spirit dwelling within your heart!**

### **THE HEART OF JESUS**

In the powerful play about Helen Keller there is a climactic scene that heralds a breakthrough in communication between her faithful teacher, Annie Sullivan, and the child, Helen. Over and over with immense patience, the teacher had signed the simple word “water” in the hand of the child. But one day she signed it and placed Helen’s hand under the outdoor water pump’s spout. As the water flowed over her hand, a new world named “water” and a human person, Helen, were born as the communicating word from out of God’s mind leapt from the child’s hand to her mind and then out to a new world of reality. God’s reality—through a single word.

All human beings are capable of knowing and loving God. We have been made for this potential only because we are capable of receiving God’s communication in knowledge and love, in and through the Word of God in whom the world around us has its being.

### **GOD’S WORD IN CREATION**

If God’s essence is love, as Judaeo-Christianity reveals to us, then he is always seeking to share his being by communicating his presence to us, whom he creates according to his image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27), through his Word. God becomes a God-toward-others by communicating himself in the gifts of creation through his Word and his Spirit of Love. The entire world around us is being created in an ongoing process of God’s symbol of his burning desire to give himself in faithful communication to us through his Word.

The world at its interior is filled with the self-communicating Trinity. God is filling the universe with his loving Self. His uncreated energies swirl through and fill all creatures with his loving, creative presence. “Yahweh’s love fills the earth. By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, their whole array by the breath of his mouth” (Psalms 33:5-6).

Not only does God communicate himself in creation, but he is sustaining, directing through his Word that is continually being communicated over millions of years. Not one of us human beings can complain that God has never spoken his word to him or her. Saint Paul clearly shows the universality to all human beings of God’s revelation of himself in all of creation: “For what can be known about God is perfectly plain to them since God himself has made it plain. Ever since God created the world his everlasting power and deity—however invisible—have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made. That is why such people are without excuse: they knew God and yet refused to honor him as God or to thank him; instead, they made nonsense out of logic and their empty minds were darkened” (Romans 1:19-21).

### **AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH**

Saint John in his Gospel *Prologue* establishes a breathtaking perspective that covers the whole universe that ever was, is, or ever will be. It is in the presence of the perfect possessor of all being that we watch the created world slowly begin to move under the dynamic power of God’s Word from the coldness of nothingness into the warmth of being. It is the Word that brings the universe from its existence in the mind of God into actual existence. It is not a static

role that began and is now finished. Whatever created beings are coming into existence or moving to a greater degree of existence, there the *Logos* is operative. For there can be no progression in being except through the *Logos* who is the source of all being.

And then Saint John wrote the words that constitute the Good News of how great is God's love for us: "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Saint John is telling us that the progressive dwelling of God in his powerful glory in all of creation and in the tent of the meeting among his chosen people and in Solomon's temple and in his prophets is now fully present. He fully communicates the invisible God to human beings who accept this Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ. Everything Jesus Christ now says or does is the word of God. God no longer needs to speak through his prophets (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus speaks God's complete presence to his people. Whether he touches the leper and heals him or claims absolute authority to forgive sins, Jesus is God communicating his Word to us human beings.

### **GOD NOW HAS A HEART**

The incredible good news is that in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, God is human. He is one just like you and me! He has taken on our "flesh." He is a whole person, an embodied being, an ensouled being, an inspirited being. Now God has a human heart! God has a human center and enjoys the freedom all of us have, not merely to avoid evil and do good, but to take his divine-human life and to return completely in total self-surrender back to his Father.

In this months *Inscape* we can now more perfectly understand what the human heart means by understanding what the heart of Christ means. We will understand what it means, then, to be made "according to the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26). We will better understand the true purpose of our life by discovering in the context of our daily existence on this earth how we can find our unique and true self in the "heart" of Jesus Christ. Thus we can fulfill in an ever-increasing awareness through faith, hope, and love of the Spirit the great commandments of God brought together in a unity-with-difference: to love God with our whole heart and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Thus it was important in the earlier months of *Inscape* to have first explored what our human heart means in terms of what basic cultures throughout all of human history and the main religious and, above all, what the Old and New Testaments have described *heart* to be. This has made it possible now to talk about the universal understanding of the symbol of heart to symbolize ourselves living at the core or center of our being. In our deepest self we begin to live in transcendence or complete openness and receptivity to the mystery of God's revelation in continued conversion away from our hardened heart of selfishness and pride. We find healing and newness of life that sends us forth in "mission" as living and active members of the Body of Christ in humble service to our neighbors.

### **UNDERSTANDING PRIMORDIAL SYMBOLS**

We can apply the symbol of heart to the heart of Christ as God's primordial *Logos* or Word from all eternity, enfleshed in the unity-in-difference, the Word made flesh, divinity and humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ. He makes it possible for us to understand how his physical heart, which was pierced on the cross and emptied out completely for love of us human beings (John 19:34), becomes the physico-psychic symbol of divine and human love totally poured out for love of each of us individual human being (personhood). As the divine *Logos* made flesh, Jesus shows us how to love God with our whole heart as he does. Jesus shows us how to love our neighbor as he loves us as his neighbors with his human heart.

We human beings are by nature “symbolic”—we speak words that are symbols that not only signify what we mean to communicate in speech or other concrete, material uses of symbols but effect an entrance into the mystery of who we are and what we wish to become through such a communication. (Karl Rahner description of symbols and words).

“Utility” words are words that we invent to name things, as did Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:19). We name the things we experience in our relationships with the material world around us. Such words have usually only one meaning, are univocal, and their meaning is exhausted by the thing they define.

“Primordial” words, however, by their intrinsic nature, name a reality that can never be exhausted by a definition that “defines” conceptually the nature of the signified. According to Rahner, such primordial words express things or relationships that are universal and are not limited by culture or technological development. Such words usually evoke subjective reactions from the human person. Primordial words name objective realities but are never limited to such objective realities. Within the context of subjective reactions and objectivity, a fundamental unity is never lost. Finally, the most important, the person naming a reality with a primordial word not only experiences the dynamic between the unity and multiplicity captured in the reality so named, but the individual person also experiences within her/himself a basic unity through the multiplicity of the created world other than what the subject is. Primordial words give birth to an unlimited sense of a rich mystery that unfolds in the dialectic of “unity-in-difference.”

## **A COSMIC HEART**

As modern citizens of the universe, with a nervous, often frantic, physical reality—at times bordering on the brutal—we nevertheless betray our ancestral hunger for a life that no finite creature can finally satisfy. We stalk about our universe teeming with possibilities of greater life-experiences, with promises and prospects of fuller life and happiness. We are constantly reaching out for new thrills, yet we drop our hands empty at our sides. We gaze into seemingly infinite expanses of future possibilities. We are basically homeless, as we wander through a void that yields nothing of its dark secrets to us.

In our modern age, scientific discoveries have opened to us a world of almost infinite complexity. As we face an ever-expanding universe, we fear that which we cannot dominate. We feel that we are swimming desperately in an ocean of opposing forces that we cannot dominate. We feel our own inability to make out of the amorphous mass of created beings around us an integral part of our own reality.

For those of us who believe in a God who transcends this sense world, or for the confused and frustrated of us who would like to believe in something or someone bigger or more enduring than this fleeting pleasure or that past joy, there is a desire or an unexpressed hope to approach such a transcendent Being immediately. Rituals and rites, symbols and priests, have apparently lost most of their usefulness for the younger generation.

The modern Christian experiences a greater conflict, perhaps, than the non-Christian in her/his conscience. The nihilistic void of modern existence contradicts the basic beliefs of one’s Christian faith. We are not necessarily aided by our creed in solving everyday problems. In our customary devotional practices, God seems so far away and the world so close! So many of us are caught in a religious view that had been given to us in our younger years that presents itself to us as a flight into another world. It is difficult to reconcile such a view with our strong attraction to the world that fills us with a tense love-hate attitude to the world and to God, which we believe to be in complete contradiction to each other.

## IS JESUS CHRIST STILL RELEVANT?

Our age presents modern Christians with a religious crisis that ultimately centers on the person of Jesus Christ. Does the Christ traditionally presented to us in religion classes and Sunday homilies have relevance for us, absorbed as we are in fashioning a new and exciting world? How can we find him, the Source of all life, in this complex, ever-changing world? Can we touch the heart of Christ in our cosmos today?

Surly as Christians we must reject any view of Christianity as based on an “other-worldly” spirituality. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran minister put to death by the Nazis at the age of thirty-nine in 1945, captured the modern attitude toward a religion of flight: “Other-worldliness affords a splendid environment in which to live. Whenever life begins to become oppressive and troublesome, a person just leaps into the air with a bold kick and soars relieved and unencumbered into so-called eternal fields. He leaps over the present. He disdains the earth; he is better than it. After all, besides the temporal defeats he still has eternal victories, and they are so easily achieved. Other-worldliness also makes it easy to preach and to speak words of comfort. An other-worldly Church can be certain that it will in no time win over all the weaklings, all who are only too glad to be deceived and deluded, all utopianists...Man is weak, that’s just the way he is; and this weakling man is open to the religion of other-worldliness. Should it be denied him? Should the weakling remain without help?...No, the weak man should receive help. He does not lead man in a religious flight from this world to other worlds beyond; rather, he gives him back to the earth as its loyal son.”

## SECULARISM

The opposite reaction that we see all about us in our modern culture, equally arising from a distrust that God’s kingdom could be really relevant to this world, is a complete immersion in this world as the total *milieu* of our human existence. Such a belief includes an extreme optimism that trusts solely in human resourcefulness to create by our human efforts a “lasting city” on this earth. The promise of such utopian “secularism” is that all religions, including Christianity, are irrelevant for the only “world” that there is.

Yet Christian thought reveals a reaction both to other-worldly spirituality and to utopian secularism. Christian theologians stress the unity between God and his world, between grace and nature. Starting with an optimistic vision of God’s dominion over his created world and a trust that he could and would attain the end that he intended in creating the world, these thinkers have insisted that God was to be encountered precisely in and through the world—the world God has always looked at and seen as “very good” (Genesis 1:31).

God so loved this world as to give his Only Begotten Son who came to establish his kingdom on this earth. This kingdom, wherein Christ becomes present to his creatures, is hidden within the material world, like leaven in a mass of dough. The Father shows us Christ immanently working to transform and complete God’s creation. Instead of fleeing the material world, we are to encounter Christ there. All created beings exist through Christ and are sustained in their being by Christ’s activity.

He is the Logos (Prologue of Saint John’s Gospel), the image according to which not only man and woman are made, but all creation is fashioned. Through him all creatures will attain their completion and perfection. “All things came into being through him, and without him there came to be not one thing that has come to be” (John 1:3). “In him were created all creatures in the heavens and on the earth...all have been created through him and for him” (Colossians 1:16-17).

Saint Paul more than any other early sacred writer beheld Christ immersed in and energizing the created, material world. In his captivity letters, Christ is shown as the center of

unity for all that has been created. Saint Paul would wish to lead us high up on the mountain of faith to gaze over the whole universe below. If we share his faith, we shall see Christ as the center and focal point toward whom and from whom all beings flow. Christ is not to be separated from material reality. All reality is already Christologically structured by the incarnation whereby God has inserted himself into his creation.

### **GOD'S PERFECT SELF-GIVING TO US IN CHRIST**

The historical Christ is more than the apogee of humanity. This truth, if pressed too far, could circle back to the Arian heresy, which so exalted the humanity of Christ that it denied his divinity. Christ is the goal toward which the whole cosmos is moving and in whom the cosmos will find its completion. In Christ we have God's gift of himself to us, irreversible given. God can never withdraw his self-giving because he is incarnated in the living person, Jesus Christ.

God has given himself to us through other finite creatures by giving extrinsically of his perfections in a finite, imperfect, participated mode of existence. But now God has a human heart! It is the heart of the God-man, Jesus Christ, who loves both the Father and us with the same heart.

The mystery of the incarnation reveals God's intrinsic giving of himself, the gift of his very inner Life, his divine-human heart, to us human beings in a visible, human form, an autonomous, human consciousness, that can never be reversed or extinguished.

Briefly stated, therefore, through the hypostatic union, in an historical event that unfolded in space and time in the Incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, God has given himself totally to us. If God has given himself irreversible to us through Christ, then Christ must be, not only God's instrument, but God himself. The promise of God to give himself to us absolutely is realized completely and irreversibly in the hypostatic union.

### **CALL TO RESPOND TO GOD'S OUTPOURED LOVE IN CHRIST**

Thus, we see that we human beings and the whole concrete world are dependent on Christ for our fullness of actuated beings. The world has been given to us as a manifestation of the love that God has for each of us. This does not mean that we are to regard the material things of this world only as "instruments" for the spread of the kingdom of God. We have seen already that each material creature has its own intrinsic value and proper relationship to Christ, its own finality. But its full completion cannot be attained unless we, made to God's own image and likeness, inasmuch as we possess an intellect to know God's love and will to respond, unite our heart with the heart of Christ through our creative powers to fashion this universe into a conscious reflection of God's inner beauty. As co-creator with the immanent divine Logos-made-flesh, Jesus Christ, present within the cosmos, we are to achieve the fullness of our true being in him. Christ is still loving and cooperating with us in the restoration of communion, first over ourselves and then over the non-human cosmos, a truth often forgotten by many theologians and spiritual writers today. But this was the most evident and viable truth grasped by the early Christians, and it led to the Chalcedonian definition that provided the basic teaching for an integral Christology.

To believe that we can find God only in retreat from modern society is to disbelieve that God is All-Loving and All-Powerful. He does want to reveal himself to us through his living Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ, as we find Christ inserted actively inside every part of our present world.

## **DISCOVERING THE COSMIC CHRIST**

But how does a Christian find Jesus Christ shining “diaphanously” through our material world today? The architects of a theology of the cosmic Christ that contemplated the Risen Lord inside of the material world, exerting his power of reconciling all things back to the Father by bringing the whole created order into its fullness through his living members of his Body, the Church, can be found in the writings of Saints Paul and John of the New Testament and of the early Eastern Fathers of the Church as Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, and Maximus the Confessor.

Such an early vision of Christ’s cosmic presence faded away through the Middle Ages, especially in the writings of the Western Scholastic theologians.

## **LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOR**

To discover the cosmic heart of Christ and to surrender to his loving, creative Spirit dwelling within us as we live and work in and with Christ to fashion the universe into the total Christ, “and through him to reconcile all things to him” (Colossians 1:20), let us begin on the unity between the love of God and neighbor. Previously we have dwelt upon the deeper meaning of heart as the unity-in-difference of all our created humanity on body, soul, and spirit levels where we are freest to surrender our life in all our choices according to the mind or heart of Christ. We then developed how we can live at the center of our true self in Christ by praying always in our heart.

We must not succumb to the temptation of centering into an affective union between ourselves and the indwelling Christ on an exclusive vertical relationship whereby we disregard the horizontal, social dimension of loving in action also our neighbors. Let us see this social dimension of ourselves in union with the heart of Christ turned toward other human beings and in the entire created world. To speak of the human person is to speak of God and vice versa. To speak of the human person is already to learn something about God, since all of us are oriented by our nature to the absolute mystery, who is God.

By the Incarnation, God’s transcendence and absolute mystery has become immanent and his unconditional love can now be experienced through the heart of Christ, who brings a unity-in-difference to his perfect love of the Father and his image of God’s perfect and eternal love for his children in his complete self-sacrificing love for his neighbor, which means all to us.

In our daily living out of the two great commandments, what has separated our love for God from our love for our neighbor has been our failure to accept the unity of love of God and neighbor to which the heart of Christ opens us to receive and be transformed. As he loves us at the core of our deepest consciousness, infused by the Spirit’s faith, hope, and love, he effects by his Spirit the divinization (theosis) or transformation of ourselves into loving children of God, brothers and sisters to our Brother and Neighbor, Jesus Christ.

## **BE LOVE**

As Jesus has loved his neighbors, who came into his earthly life, including his enemies, through the unity-in-difference of his burning love for his Father, so we, too, can love God in and with Jesus Christ with our “whole heart, soul, mind and strength” (Deuteronomy 6:7; Matthew 22:34-40). But we also, as a result of our transformation by the Spirit’s love, love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Love of neighbor must not be regarded as a virtue among other virtues that we are obligated to perform in order to attain a heavenly reward. It is rather the state of being transformed by the love of God that abounds in our hearts through the Spirit (Romans 5:5). We can see love of neighbor as the principle of the act of love of God. This Jesus proved in his human relations to God and neighbor in the Gospels.

## **INVOLVING LOVE**

As you touch God more intimately, see him as immediately present and indwelling within your very being, you are more intimately drawn to a union of love toward your neighbor through active, loving service. Saint Dorotheus of the sixth century used the example of a wheel. The closer the spokes of the wheel move toward the center, the closer they come to each other. The farther they move out from the center, the more distance separates one spoke from another. Therefore, you consciously and actively move toward Christ, the absolute center.

Today more than ever with the vast communication media allowing us to be “present” to billions of people around the world, no Christian can avoid concern with the rampant poverty—physical, psychic, and spiritual—that covers most human beings like a suffocating black cloud. We cannot muffle our ears and block out the cries of our suffering brothers and sisters, wherever in the world there may be victims of oppression, wars, or natural calamities.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer said repeatedly that so long as there was a single person in the world who was hungry, sick, lonely, or living in fear, that person was his responsibility. This is to live out what Jesus taught his disciples: “I tell you solemnly, insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

As Christians, we know that our faith in God’s love for us and our “affective” return of that love to God by words alone are dead without an effective involvement in manifesting unselfish love to others in need. This was the constant persuasion among the early Christian communities as Saint James wrote in his epistle: “If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to him, ‘I wish you well, keep yourself warm and eat plenty,’ without giving him these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that; if good works do not go out with it, it is quite dead” (James 2:15-17).

## **A LOVING CONCERN FOR OTHERS**

Through our deep, involving love shown toward one other person, be it God or neighbor, we come to learn that true, agapic love cannot be turned inward in an exclusive way. It breaks out toward a larger community where we find our love growing as we assume responsibility for the happiness of our brothers and sisters. If our prayer is authentic and deeply transforming, if we are truly living in the presence of God’s intimate, unselfish love for us, we will be turned toward others, especially those who have the greatest need—physical, psychic, and spiritual.

The Christian principle is always: “No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us” (1 John 4:12). Yet how we will release God’s love, as an intimately concerned God for his children, will depend greatly on our individual talents and state of life. But openness to the world community is the sign of love as a growing process of our leading others to find their true identity as beautiful, worthwhile persons.

## **A COSMIC HUMAN HEART**

Our charity toward our neighbors becomes energized by our oneness with the cosmic heart of Christ into an active love proved by deeds. No longer content with a glance of commiseration or a vague desire to reduce evil in the world, we are now activated to bring the whole of humanity to a greater consciousness. We approach Christ and grasp him in our efforts to perfect and unify all in him. To help form Christ in others is the greatest act of charity that we can do.

Finally, our charity becomes unified or synthesized. A great part of our life lacks true charity as its impelling motive for action. So often our contact with material creatures or with our fellow human beings is motivated by self-interest or utility. But when, through conscious reflection, we center ourselves and all our activities on the central reality of Christ, the Evolver of the universe toward whom and in whom the whole universe is converging, then the mass of our activities becomes synthesized.

Theologians insist that only when we give to all of our disparate actions a “psychic” character, a person-to-person, center-to-center, an intimate heart-to-heart relationship between ourselves and the depths of the cosmic Christ as risen and inserted into the universe, will our lives be meaningful. Our innermost energies are transformed and sublimated within the Body of Christ.

Christ alone is the center and the goal of our universe. The more we become conscious of Christ’s presence at the very heart of the earth, as we have become also conscious primarily of his presence in the depths of our heart, at the core of our being, in affective surrender to him as Lord (Kyrios), the more beautiful creation becomes. This is the preparation with our cooperative creativity permeated by Grace, God’s uncreated energies of divine love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of the mystical body worthy of resurrection into a full participation of the life that is already his at the center of our created world.

### **HASTENING THE PAROUSIA OF CHRIST**

The process of the evolving universe goes *forward* and *upward* at the same time. And inserted within this total process, guided always by Christ to the fullness that will presage his *parousia*, is the phylum of salvation, the Church, those members of Christ who, through detachment, exenteration, embracing the cross by loving self-sacrifice toward others, have rendered themselves “passionately indifferent” to everything but Christ. Then Saint Paul’s prophetic statement will be fulfilled: “There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything” (Colossians 3:11).

Christ is being formed in us. His cosmic heart is becoming one with our human heart in a very real, ontological way as we yield ourselves more perfectly to his direction. Charged with the living presence of Christ within us, we christified human beings, living within an expanding universe, extend the process of christification to hasten the day when the lines of the evolving universe and the evolving Christ in his members will converge in the fullness of the Body of Christ. Then we will understand Saint Paul’s summation of the universe and God’s eternal plan in Christ Jesus: “For it pleased God the Father that in him all fullness should dwell, and that through him God should reconcile to himself every being, and make peace both on earth and in heaven through the blood shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:19-20).

Our heart truly becomes one with the heart of Christ.

### **CONCLUSION**

Science can offer to us a world of great potentiality, surging forward in a dynamic movement to greater complexity in unity. It can present to us an objective world of reflected beauty and quasi-order that allows us by faith to come to know much that is objective about the infinite and inexhaustible power and perfect love we call God.

Yet the aim we have proposed to offer in these recent months of *Inscape* is to develop, as a complement to science and a speculative theology of clear and distinct ideas about God, another true and more sublime knowledge: that of the *heart*. Such a knowledge is given to the “pure of heart,” who, purified from the illusions of their independence of God and separation from other creatures, open up to God’s self-emptying (*kenotic*) love, the Holy Spirit. It is the

Spirit who reveals immediately to the “poor in spirit” the very heart of God by knowing the mind and heart of the Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ.

To those human beings who walk with humility of heart and integration before God-Trinity, the heart of Christ is discovered as an open, pierced heart of Jesus on the cross “He has showed you, O man, what is good and what the LORD requires of you, that you should do justice and love mercy and be ready to walk after the LORD your GOD” (Micah 6:8). It is through this emptied heart on the cross that the small bank of: “little people,” God’s *Anawim*, can find an entrance into the depths of God’s very being as emptied love for each of us, his children.

In that pierced heart we can also discover the perfect and eternal love of God for all of his creation in and through his Logos-made-flesh and his Spirit. We can touch the cosmic heart of Christ, but only as we live in the depths of our true being, our heart, in a unity-in-difference with the heart of Christ. Deep calls to deep. Heart calls to heart. How deeply your heart has entered into the heart of Christ, how much of God’s fire of love you have allowed to touch yourself is measured by how much fiery love you show in service to others.

We are called by God-Trinity to be cooperators to explicitly draw out the core of inner fire, of God’s love at the heart of all matter. The more we can act with full consciousness and reflection, the more we humanize ourselves, and the more we unleash the spiritual powers that enable us to transcend the material, the limited, the particular, and pass over to the realm of enduring and limitless spirit.

We are privileged by God’s call to manifest his heart of healing love to the broken and downhearted. This can come about by living in our heart within the heart of Christ as we bring his flaming heart into this cosmos by unveiling the cosmic heart of Christ in our oneness with him to make it possible that he might enfold, like a nurturing mother, the universe God has created as a mirror reflecting a perfect, humble, All-Powerful Love. This love is experienced as a pierced heart, poured out, that we human beings may also be a heart pierced by divine love to be love for each other and all of God’s cosmos as we assist in the birthing of the universe into the total, cosmic Christ, and help to reconcile the universe to the Father through his Son and his Spirit.

## **THE PRAYER OF THE PROSKOMEDIA**

(Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom)

O Lord God Almighty, Who alone are holy and receive the sacrifice of praise from those who call upon You **WITH ALL THEIR HEART**, accept the prayer of us sinners also; bring us to Your holy altar, enable us to offer gifts and spiritual sacrifices for our sins, and for the transgressions of all Your people; allow us also to be worthy to find favor in Your sight, that our sacrifice may be pleasing to You, and that the Good Spirit of Your grace may rest upon us and upon these gifts lying before us, and upon all of Your people.

## **PRIEST PRAYER BEFORE COMMUNION, ELEVATING HIS HANDS**

(Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom)

Hear us, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, from Your holy dwelling-place and from the throne of glory of Your Kingdom, and come and sanctify us, You Who are seated on high with the Father, and Who are invisibly present here among us, and deem it proper to impart to us with Your mighty hand, Your spotless Body and precious Blood, and through us...

**TO ALL YOUR PEOPLE!**

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

*Father John Michael Zboyovski*