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Marek Jagodziński

God, Man and World

Creation and Ecology
in the Perspective of Communion



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Marek Jagodziński

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Creation and Ecology
in the Perspective of Communion

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Introduction

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger once expressed himself very succinctly: “In reality, the Christian message is very simple: We speak about God and man, and this way we say everything.”¹ The Christian profession of faith does not actually focus on creation as a process and action, but on the Creator carrying out the work of creation. This means that this work cannot be understood without an absolute Creator, and at the same time the creation – as an action and its effect – is so closely connected to its personal basis in God that this connection can never be removed from sight, and any attempt to understand or explain created reality is impossible without reference to the Creator. This Creator, on the other hand, is a three-person God, and therefore the Trinity must be recognized and accepted as the divine basis of creation.² This truth has a very solid source in the Bible, the testimony of Christian tradition and the teaching of the Church.

It is only possible to speak of a trinitarian basis for creation in the Old Testament if there are traces and beginnings of a trinitarian or triadic understanding of divine action. This cannot be denied with the assumption of a historical and salvific understanding of Revelation – its gradual development while preserving its basic motives and structures. Therefore, through presenting the dynamic and world-directed understanding of God in Old Testament, it is pointed out that His action was shown through various mediating forms, among them “Word”, “Wisdom” and “Spirit.”³

“The word of the Lord” was the vehicle of revelation in Israel (cf. Ps 33:6) and the power to shape the nation’s history (cf. 1 Sam 9:27; 2 Sam 7:4). Wisdom literature placed great emphasis on “Wisdom” as the mediator of creation that was present “when he established the heavens [...] when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; When he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth; When he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command” (Prov 8:27–29; cf. Wis 7:2ff.; 8:1; 9:18). The participation of the “Spirit” in creation is mentioned already at the very beginning of the description of creation (Gen 1:2), and especially at the creation of living beings (Gen 2:7; Ps 104:29–30).

1 Josef Ratzinger, “Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers Jubilee of Catechists, 12 December 2000”, <https://parish.saintbrendan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ratzinger-address-to-catechists-on-new-evangelization-december-2000.rgb.jpg> [accessed 27.05.2024].

2 Cf. Leo Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung als Heilseröffnung. Schöpfungslehre* (Aachen: MM Verlag, 1997), 114–5; Marek Jagodziński, “Bóg Ojciec w trynitarno-komunijnej teologii stworzenia”, *Communio. Międzynarodowy Przegląd Teologiczny* 1 (2015), 31–4.

3 Cf. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung als Heilseröffnung*, 115.

Although more recent exegesis criticizes the explicit reference of these statements to the Spirit of God and prefers others (“wind of God,” “breath of life”), their meaning is not too far off. It cannot be denied that this Spirit can be understood as the creative power of God that grants physical life (Gen 6:3; Ezek 37:9; Ps 33:6) or spiritual abilities (Deut 34:9; Dan 5:14), however, it will act as God’s power primarily in an eschatological context: “A clean heart create for me, God; renew within me a steadfast spirit” (Ps 51:12; cf. Isa 44,3; Joel 3,1–2). As a creative power, the Spirit “fills the earth” (Wis 1:7) and makes the living (cf. Eccl 12:7; Job 27:3; 34:14). In the Book of Wisdom, “word” and “Wisdom” are almost synonymous: “God of my fathers, Lord of mercy you who have made all things by your word and in your wisdom have established man to rule the creatures produced by you...” (9:1–2). Therefore, although all these mediating forms do not yet appear as hypostases or persons, it is possible to recognize in them trace elements of the triadic-trinitarian creative action⁴.

In the Christian tradition, it is possible to discern a slow development of the trinitarian understanding of God’s creative work. It is understood that the creative role of the Logos came into view earlier than the creative interaction of the Holy Spirit. The first clear indication of the trinitarian nature of creation is found in St. Irenaeus of Lyons (died ca. 202) who depicted the Son and the Spirit as the “two hands” of the Father working in creation. To understand the connection between Christology and Trinitology in the doctrine of creation, we need to go back to the fourth century. St. Athanasius (died in 373) provides insight by defining the entire Trinity as a unified and creative force, emphasizing its indivisibility and inherent oneness. According to Athanasius, this Trinity functions as both the creator and shaper of existence. Athanasius goes on to highlight the interconnectedness of the order of creation and the order of redemption. He views them as a unified whole, suggesting that the Trinity is not only responsible for the act of creation but also plays a role in the redemption of humanity. In expressing this idea, Athanasius asserts that the Trinity is the source of various gifts of grace, stating that “Grace and gift, given in the Trinity, come from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.” This implies that the Trinity, as an inseparable entity, is the origin of the diverse blessings and graces bestowed upon individuals, with the Father acting through the Son and the Holy Spirit. St. Basil (died in 379) expresses a similar idea, highlighting that the Father has no beginning, the Son carries out the Father’s will, and the Spirit finishes and reinforces the Son’s work. Despite their distinct roles, the three of them act as one, just as their existence is a unified being. Gregory of Nazianzus (died ca. 390) articulates the concept of the triune nature of action within the unity of God’s creative act. In his framework, he assigns the disposition to the Father,

4 Cf. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung als Heilseröffnung. Schöpfungslehre*, 115–6; Marek Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2016), 9–10.

the interaction to the Son, and the animation to the Spirit. This perspective aligns with the thinking of St. Gregory of Nyssa (died in 394). According to Gregory of Nyssa, “Neither does the supreme God create the universe through the Son because he needs some co-operation, nor does the only-begotten Son cause everything in the Holy Spirit because his power is not sufficient for his disposition”. St. Cyril of Alexandria (died in 444) summarizes the understanding of the Early Church Fathers regarding the creation by the divine Trinity as follows: “The Father acts by using the Son as his own power, which is alive and not something distinct from himself, since he is after all God of God, essentially in God...”. This doctrine of the Church Fathers, particularly articulated by St. John of Damascus (died ca. 750), is outlined in his work “De fide orthodoxa”.⁵ St. Augustine derived the world from a beginning in the Father through the Word-Son and the Holy Spirit as a good that became a Person. The memory of creation’s connection to the Trinity still endured in scholasticism. For Rupert of Deutz (died in 1135), creation emerged from the Father, had its basis in the Son and was formed in the Holy Spirit. In the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas (died in 1274), the truth of the trinitarian dimension of creation has lost its full significance.⁶

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed sees creation as the distinct work of the Triune God. The first article, speaking of God as the source of creation, included the phrase about Christ, “by whom all things were made”.⁷ This gave expression to the doctrine of His intermediating agency. The Creator Word (*Logos*), who in Jesus became man, is from the very beginning the Mediator between God and the world, and the attributes of “Lord” (*Kyrios*) and “Vivifier” were also granted to the Holy Spirit,⁸ which confirms God’s creative presence in His creation, which has found an area of life in Him (“In him we live and move and have our being” – Acts 17:28). This is a reflection of the trinitarian formula of creation common in the ancient Church: The world was created by the Father (as its transcendent source) through the Son (the Mediator) in the Holy Spirit (the mutual immanence of God and the world).⁹ This formula has also found resonance in the classic ascending

5 Cf. Harald Wagner, *Dogmatyka* (Kraków: WAM, 2007), 390–1.

6 Cf. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung als Heilseröffnung. Schöpfungslehre*, 119–120; Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 12.

7 First Council of Constantinople, *The Holy Creed which the 150 Holy Fathers Set Forth, which is Consonant with the Holy and Great Synod of Nice* (381).

8 First Council of Constantinople, *The Holy Creed*.

9 Cf. Medard Kehl, *Und Gott sah, dass es gut war. Eine Theologie der Schöpfung* (Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder, 2005), 166, 172–3.

dynamic of human prayer in the Holy Spirit through (and with) the Son to the Father.¹⁰

The Fourth Lateran Council formulated this faith in the following words:

We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immeasurable, almighty, unchangeable, incomprehensible and ineffable, Father, Son and holy Spirit, three persons but one absolutely simple essence, substance or nature. The Father is from none, the Son from the Father alone, and the holy Spirit from both equally, eternally without beginning or end; the Father generating, the Son being born, and the holy Spirit proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, coomnipotent and coeternal; one principle of all things, creator of all things invisible and visible, spiritual and corporeal; who by his almighty power at the beginning of time created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal creatures, that is to say angelic and earthly, and then created human beings composed as it were of both spirit and body in common.¹¹

The wording of the current Catechism of the Catholic Church is unambiguous:

the eternal God gave a beginning to all that exists outside of himself; he alone is Creator [...] The New Testament reveals that God created everything by the eternal Word, his beloved Son. [...] The Church's faith likewise confesses the creative action of the Holy Spirit [...] The Old Testament suggests and the New Covenant reveals the creative action of the Son and the Spirit, inseparably one with that of the Father. This creative co-operation is clearly affirmed in the Church's rule of faith [...] Creation is the common work of the Holy Trinity (CCC 290–292).¹²

10 Cf. Kehl, *Und Gott sah, dass es gut war*, 73–4. Kehl writes that in the documents of the Second Vatican Council one can see a new orientation in theology, referring to the biblical and patristic tradition, linking creation with the history of revelation and salvation (cf. *ibid.*, 96). “Today [...] it is clear how much in its reflection on the world the Council limits itself to showing the world as shaped by man. He consciously refrains from statements going in the other direction. For example, it does not deal with theological cosmology, which attempts to include the reality of the cosmos, nature and the natural human environment, which is devoid of references to humans, and explain it on the basis of the premises of creation theology and Christology. [...] From today's perspective, this restraint of the Council with regard to theological cosmology turns out to be clearly conditioned by that era. While it affirms the reconciliation of the Catholic Church with modern thought, that is, centred on the subject and the person, at the same time it pays the price of an anthropological reduction of the notion of creation and the world, which has only been overcome thanks to the ecological debates carried out also in the Church” (*ibid.*, 98–99). Cf. Jagodziński, “Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia,” *Roczniki Teologiczne* 62 (2015), no. 2, 137–8.

11 Fourth Lateran Council, *Constitutiones*. 1. *De fide catholica* (1215).

12 International Theological Commission, *In Search of Universal Ethic: A New Look at the Natural Law* (2009), 62–3: “In fact metaphysics allows for understanding that the universe does not have in itself its own ultimate reason for being, and manifests the fundamental structure of the real: the

This monograph addresses – in the perspective of embracing all of creation in the Trinitarian Communion and, based on it, all of created reality – the God-Creator and the world He created, including man as the crown of His creation, and ecology.

Chapter One presents various aspects of the relationship between God and the act of creation. In particular, the chapter delves into the Trinitarian nature of God and its connection to the plurality found in creation. Creation is portrayed as an expression of divine love, existing both because of love and for the purpose of love. The dialectic of creation is examined, emphasizing the existence of being before God in the Son and in God in the Holy Spirit. Creation itself is seen as an image reflecting the Holy Trinity, with a specific focus on the trinitarian structure inherent in created beings. Additionally, the concept of man as an image of the Triune God is explored, along with trinitarian analogies within the realms of sex and family. The evolutionary fulfilment of creation is discussed in terms of its trinitarian aspects, including features of the evolutionary process, dimensions of time and space, and theological considerations related to the evolving universe. The freedom of creation is examined within a trinitarian context, emphasizing the communion of creation from a divine perspective. The chapter also highlights the idea of constant creation as a constitutive relationship and explores the personal specificity of the creative actions of the different persons of the Trinity. The roles of the Father, the Christological aspect, and the pneumatological aspect in the work of creation are all considered. Finally, the chapter concludes with an exploration of the eschatological perspective on creation, looking at the eschatological view of matter and history. Overall, the chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the theological aspects of God's relationship with creation, encompassing its past, present, and future dimensions.

distinction between God, subsistent being himself, and the other beings placed by him in existence. God is the Creator, the free and transcendent source of all other beings. From him, these beings receive, «with measure, number and weight» (Wis 11:20), existence according to a nature that defines them. Creatures are therefore the epiphany of a personal creative wisdom, of an originating Logos who expresses and manifests himself in them. «Every creature is a divine word, because it speaks of God», writes St. Bonaventure. The Creator is not only the principle of creatures but also the transcendent end towards which they tend by nature. Thus creatures are animated by a dynamism that carries them to fulfil themselves, each in its own way, in the union with God. This dynamism is transcendent, to the extent to which it proceeds from the eternal law, i. e., from the plan of divine providence that exists in the mind of the Creator. But it is also immanent, because it is not imposed on creatures from without, but is inscribed in their very nature. Purely material creatures realize spontaneously the law of their being, while spiritual creatures realize it in a personal manner. In fact, they interiorize the dynamisms that define them and freely orient them towards their own complete realization.” Cf. Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 13–4; Jagodziński, “Trójjedyny Bóg jako Stwórca świata,” *Teologia w Polsce* 9 (2015), no. 1, 57–69.

Chapter Two discusses the creation and nature of man, covering various dimensions of the human person, integrity, sexual and social aspects, as well as transcendental openness. It delves into the concepts of sin, salvation, and the realization of salvation, emphasizing the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The chapter also explores the place of man in the Church, the Kingdom of God, and the significance of the Word of God, sacraments, and saints. Additionally, it addresses Marian anthropology and concludes with reflections on man in eschatological communion.

Chapter Three explores various aspects related to the relationship between humanity and the natural world. The chapter is divided into several sections, each delving into different dimensions of this relationship. In the section about eco-theology the focus is placed on theological perspectives related to ecology. The discussion then moves to examining the understanding of humanity in relation to the broader world. The next section examines the theological interpretation of the fall of humanity and its implications. Following this, different frameworks for understanding the connection between humans and the environment are explored. Under this overarching model, three specific approaches are discussed: man as master, servant and priest of creation. By addressing a less known model of man as a priest of creation, the work explains how a person can serve the liberation and survival of the creation, what is the function of man as a priest of creation and what are the implications of this function for creation. The chapter concludes with a discussion on environmental ethos, culture and the ecumenical perspective of environmental concerns from a broad, inclusive standpoint.

I. God and Creation

Essentially, the Christian profession of faith does not focus in a factual and objective way on creation as a process and action, but on the Creator who carries out the work of creation.

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature”, for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion” (LS 76).

This means that this work cannot be understood without an absolute Creator, and at the same time creation, as an action and its effect, is so intimately connected with its personal basis in God that this connection can never be removed from view, and any attempt to understand or explain created reality is impossible to realize without reference to the Creator. This Creator is a triune God, and therefore the Holy Trinity must be recognized and accepted as the divine basis of creation. “For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation” (LS 239).

The words of Pope Francis are very significant:

The Father is the ultimate source of everything, the loving and self-communicating foundation of all that exists. The Son, his reflection, through whom all things were created, united himself to this earth when he was formed in the womb of Mary. The Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways. The world was created by the three Persons acting as a single divine principle, but each one of them performed this common work in accordance with his own personal property. Consequently, “when we contemplate with wonder the universe in all its grandeur and beauty, we must praise the whole Trinity” (LS 238).

In other place the Pope wrote that “rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise” (LS 12), and each even the smallest creation speaks of the greatness and love of the Creator (cf. LS 33, 69, 72, 84–85, 97).

The created things of this world are not free of ownership: “For they are yours, O Lord, who love the living” (Wis 11:26). This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect” (LS 89).

The Father is the beginning of everything, the Holy Spirit completes everything, and the Son presents everything in a threefold sense: as *Verbum incarnatum*, the Logos is the primordial agent of all reality, and in Him all things were created; on the basis of His universal relation to the world, He embraces all modes of existence and thus produces the universal reconciliation and completion of creation – in the incarnation He manifests himself as the primordial and most perfect reflection; He definitively remains permanently incarnated in the speaking of God, through which everything that illuminates the centre of history has been revealed to men. This is what Pope Francis referred to:

For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation. Saint Bonaventure went so far as to say that human beings, before sin, were able to see how each creature “testifies that God is three”. The reflection of the Trinity was there to be recognized in nature “when that book was open to man and our eyes had not yet become darkened”. The Franciscan saint teaches us that *each creature bears in itself a specifically Trinitarian structure*, so real that it could be readily contemplated if only the human gaze were not so partial, dark and fragile. In this way, he points out to us the challenge of trying to read reality in a Trinitarian key.¹

It is necessary to add at the beginning of this study that Christianity has always professed that the human world is not the only personal creation, but there is also an “angelic world”, which acts as a “medium” between the human world and the world of God.² An angel is a created entity, spiritual, personal and supernatural in relation to man. Since the Gnostics considered angels to be co-creators of the world, inferior divine beings, the Church Fathers emphasized their creatureliness. The Scriptures show their role of social ministry in the field of salvation, so they have a mediating, personalistic character – mainly between God and humans, but sometimes also vice versa, and through man they are also related to the world, recapitulate in themselves the entirety of spiritual creation.³ The Bible also speaks

1 LS 239. This, of course, has consequences for human life: cf. LS 240.

2 Cf. Czesław Stanisław Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2000) 1: 450–6.

3 Cf. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka* 1: 459–60.

of Satan and other demons, but they are a group of creatures with a decidedly anti-communional character.⁴

According to St. Augustine, since the world owes its existence to the triune Creator, man can discover in it, and especially in the spiritual reality of man, *vestigia Trinitatis* – traces of the Holy Trinity.⁵ The “psychological” analogy of spiritual achievements and the Trinity, however, has recently been criticized by some theologians as being too one-sidedly based on the model of the inner workings of the soul, rather than on the model of inter-subject relations.⁶ This, of course, has implications for human life:

The divine Persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things, so that throughout the universe we can find any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships. This leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections existing among creatures, but also to discover a key to our own fulfilment. The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity (LS 240).

4 See Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka* 1: 465–94. The Catechism states that “Christ is the center of the angelic world” (CCC 331). If angels are intermediaries, then only in close connection with Christ (cf. Col 1:15–17). Can we talk about *communio angelorum*? What would be its relation to the communion of the Church? Most of the Church Fathers argued that angels belong to the heavenly Church, and even to the earthly Church, and share in the liturgy of the Church of the world. Since the Middle Ages, there has been a realization that they are not, however, members of the Church in the strict sense – since the pilgrim Church is the “Church of sinners” (*Ecclesia peccatorum*) – even the “sinning Church” (*Ecclesia peccatrix*) – and above all the “Church of the redeemed” (*Ecclesia redemptorum*). It is now recognized that angels belong to the Church in a broader sense. Cf. Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka* 1: 462–63. Does the communion of creation run out in the ranges of things, people and angels? Contemporary theologians often express the belief that other rational beings also exist in the universe. Cf. *ibid.* 465; Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 131–6. The term “communional” comes from “communion” which belongs to the most central ideas of Christianity. The idea of communion refers to the Trinitarian nature of God and the relationship of people to God, and to the development of interpersonal relationships; it touches the personal dimensions of religious experience and reaches out to the institutional structures of the society. *Communio* is extremely intense form of reference, love, community, most commonly associated with the “communion” – that is, being close to each other, the unification of life, interpenetration.

5 Cf. Alexandre Ganoczy, *Nauka o stworzeniu* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 1991), 86–7.

6 Cf. Kehl, *Und Gott sah, dass es gut war*, 194–6; Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 19.

In another place, the Pope wrote:

God has written a precious book, “whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe”. [...] no creature is excluded from this manifestation of God: “From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine” (LS 85).

Unfortunately, as the International Theological Commission states in a document *The Reciprocity between Faith and Sacraments in the Sacramental Economy* (2020), 4:

A widespread line of thinking, which began in the Middle Ages (nominalism) and extended into Modernity, is characterized by an anti-metaphysical dualism that dissociates thinking from being and categorically rejects any kind of representative thinking, as is the case today with postmodernism. This perspective rejects the Creator’s imprint in creation, that is, that creation is a mirror (sacramental image) of the Creator’s own thought.⁷

Eberhard Jüngel believed that neither creation nor history could be understood sacramentally. According to the Lutheran theology creation proves to be corrupted by sin, while history is merely the history of the denial of God. “The Catholic tradition – Karl-Heinz Menke observes – sees the issue quite differently, since everything created is brought into existence by the Word, who in Jesus became man and thus

⁷ Cf. International Theological Commission, *The Reciprocity between Faith and Sacraments in the Sacramental Economy* (2020), 5: “scientific and technological knowledge, which is so highly esteemed today, tends to be imposed as the only model for all fields of knowledge and for all kinds of objects. Its radical orientation towards an empirical and naturalistic certainty is not only opposed to metaphysical knowledge, but also to knowledge of a symbolic nature. While scientific knowledge emphasizes the capacity of human reason, it does not exhaust all dimensions of reason or knowledge, nor does it cover all cognitive needs for a full human life. Symbolic thinking, with its richness and plasticity, collects and reflectively develops the ethical affective dimensions of experience; and on the other hand, it touches and transforms the spiritual and cognitive structure of the subject. That is why the transmission of revelation, with its concomitant cognitive content, lies in the symbolic sphere alongside all of humanity’s religious traditions, and not in the empirical and naturalistic sphere. The sacramental reality of participation in the mystery of grace can only be understood in the unity of this double dimension of the symbolic experience: cognitive and performative. Where the scientific paradigm reigns, with its blindness to symbolic thought, sacramental thought is impeded.” “The Father carries out His creative design through the Word and the Spirit. For this reason, creation itself contains the trace of having been shaped by the Word and having been directed by the Spirit towards its completion in the same God. Since God imprints His mark on creation, theology speaks of a certain «sacramentality of creation,» in an analogical sense, inasmuch as, in itself, in its own constitutive creaturely being, there is a reference to its Creator (cf. Wis 13:1–9; Rom 1:19–20; Acts 14:15–17; 17:27–28), which allows it to later be elevated and consummated in the redemptive work with no extrinsic compulsion. In this sense we have spoken of the *liber naturae*” (ibid., 23).

already ‘through creation, and especially through the biblically attested history of the covenant, God has prepared his self-revelation in Christ in such a way that one can speak of the sacramental quality of everything real.’⁸

1.1 Trinitarian Multiplicity and Pluralism of Creation

The trinitarian understanding of God presupposes that in Him, as the supreme and full form of being, there is unity and multiplicity, identity and difference, positivity and negation, which are given in an essential and primordial way in interpersonal references.⁹ Multiplicity and difference, heterogeneity and negation are therefore not examples of degeneration or decay below the divine level, but by virtue of their realization in God they have a similar originality and dignity, power and strength of being as unity, identity and positivity. This means that creation – marked by multiplicity, difference, pluriformity, and negation (in the sense that something is not the other) – cannot be judged negatively, as if its fullness depends on the return of differentiated multiplicity to primordially. It turns out that the multiplicity and diversity of creation is a fully positive image of its trinitarian origin:

unity and created multiplicity are equally a reflection and participation in the divine. Not only is unity divine, multiplicity is also something primordial and has its intrinsic basis in God himself. Multiplicity is not only a disintegration that takes place outside the deity, it does not arise from the fact that there is a “dyad”, a split, it is not the result of the duality of two opposing forces, but corresponds to the creative fullness of God who, standing above unity and multiplicity, embraces both.¹⁰

If otherness belongs to the triune God, is originally another divine subject, the Son, then creation is transiently inserted into this “otherness” of the Son. As its “extension” or “development,” creation does not simply exist “outside of God,” but is the transient and transient-multiplied way in which God realizes Himself, and this is so that, in this freely established finiteness and multiplicity, creation has its independence in God and even before God. It turns out, then, that only the truth

8 Krzysztof Porosło, “Sacramentality in the Perspective of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI,” *Collectanea Theologica* 93 (2023), no. 4, 62. The author quotes Karl-Heinz Menke, *Sakramentalität. Wesen und Wunde des Katholizismus* (3rd ed. Regensburg: Pustet, 2012), 68.

9 Waclaw Hryniewicz, *Pascha Chrystusa w dziejach człowieka i wszechświata. Zarys chrześcijańskiej teologii paschalnej – tom 3* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1991), 448.

10 Joseph Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum. Vorlesungen über das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (München: Kösel, 1994), 139–40.

about the Trinitarian Creator God can lead to an understanding of multiplicity in the world.¹¹

1.2 Creation out of Love and for Love

There have always been views that God had to create the world out of necessity, either because of His unlimited depth of life – which must pour into nothingness (emanation), or because of His “loneliness” – without the ability to love and be loved, He would not be love (abolition of loneliness). But could there then be true love between God and creation? Would God remain a perfect God if He needed creation to constitute Himself as love? In fact, freedom and sovereignty (that is, being God) can only be perceived by creation if He is love in Himself – a personal exchange, mutual giving, and taking in His triuneness.¹²

Confessing God-Love is equivalent to understanding Him as a life of relationship, friendship and dialogue, communication and communion.¹³ If God is already in itself a Trinitarian Communion of love, creation is not a necessary self-construct of God for love. He does not need man to “become.” Creation is a free participant in His life, accepted into the personal communication that characterizes Him as always loving – and called to live out of the most free, selfless, purest and most sincere love.¹⁴

The correlative motive of creation is the mystery of the personal world. Without a relation to the person, an extrapersonal creation would be a negation of reality and absolute nothingness. Creation reaches its meaning when it becomes a kind of communication, a universal language through which God reveals Himself to man. God creates us and communicates Himself to us through the world, and this is the beginning of the history of salvation and of our communion with the Holy

11 Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, 199–200. Cf. Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 22–3: “Christians are convinced that God has given himself to the world. Jesus of Nazareth became the center of this self-giving of God, communicating with us always in the Holy Spirit and living in us. The Deity is the source and the beginning in its eccentricity and concentration, in its centrifugal and centripetal power. It is a communicative Being that is directed to grant itself to something other than itself (that which is not divine – a creation created and affirmed by it), and in this granting of itself it comes to itself again. Jesus Christ corresponds to a concentric and centripetal movement in the One God dynamic, while the Holy Spirit corresponds to an eccentric and centrifugal movement” (with reference to Bernd Jochen Hilberath and Matthias Scharer, *Kommunikative Theologie. Grundlagen – Erfahrungen – Klärungen* [Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2012], 158–9).

12 Cf. Gisbert Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott. Eine trinitarische Theologie* (Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder, 1997), 225–6.

13 Kehl, *Und Gott sah, dass es gut war*, 243.

14 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 226–7.

Trinity.¹⁵ Ultimately, only faith in one God, who is Himself interpersonal love, can explain man as created in freedom out of love and destined for love.¹⁶ “Since we were made for love, in each one of us ‘a law of *ekstasis*’ seems to operate: ‘the lover «goes outside» the self to find a fuller existence in another.”¹⁷ (Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 88).¹⁸

1.3 The Dialectic of Creation: Being Before God in the Son and Being in God in the Holy Spirit

The basic biblical message is that creation itself is not divine, but stands before God, and there is no more fundamental difference than the difference between creation and the Creator. Unlike its cultural environment, where creation was sacralized in various ways (the worship of Baal, astral worship, sacred prostitution, the cult of the dead), Israel proclaimed its positive appreciation of creation and its complete distinctness of being God.¹⁹ Furthermore, the early Church rejected the Platonic-Neoplatonic belittling of creation as (only) emanating from God. God is God, and the world is the world. Between them there is an abyss that cannot be crossed – God is a being in himself (*ens a se*), and creation is a being towards another (*ens ad alio*). Scholasticism emphasized this difference by means of the category of causality adopted from Aristotle – God makes something radically different in creation and incorporates it into what is His own.²⁰

Emphasizing this difference is important, because only where there is a difference can there be dialogue and love, and an emphatic emphasis on the difference between

15 Cf. Czesław Stanisław Bartnik, *Dogmatyka katolicka* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2003) 2: 938.

16 Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 228.

17 Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility* (London: Ignatius Press, 1982), 126.

18 Cf. Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 23–6.

19 Pablo Blanco-Sarto, “(Um)welt-ethos. Creation, ecology and environment in ecumenical perspective”, *Studia Oecumenica* 22 (2022), 61–2: “for Christians there is a link, a connection between natural and supernatural, evolution and creation, science and religion. When we reread the first verse of the Bible, it speaks about the origin of the universe, but what does this exactly mean? a) ‘In the beginning...’ the transcendent intervention of God takes place in the world, in the history which gives rise to all the elements; the universe is not therefore eternal and has not been created by itself. b) ‘... God created ...’, ‘left out’ himself and created the world out of love and sense; then the world has a personal origin in him. By having a personal origin – conscious and beloved –, nature does not depend solely on chaos, chance or need, because it comes from reason, freedom and love. c) ‘... Heaven and earth,’ that is the whole, all the universe, so there is a difference between the Creator and the creatures, God and nature. Christians reject either idolatry or worship of any creature, i. e., the pantheism or the confusion between nature and God.”

20 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 238.

God and the world is extremely necessary in the context of the danger of forgetting the essential transcendence of God. However, creation is not only caused by the transcendent God and endowed with being itself, but it is also (in this difference) preserved in its freedom. On the other hand, the concept of creation, which speaks only of God's radical otherness and His absolute transcendence from the world, consistently leads to deism and, in the extreme case, to a world devoid of God. Therefore, it is not enough to define creation only as radically opposed to God.²¹ This is also indicated by the ancient experience of man, reflected not only in the deformed figures of sacralizing and pantheistic concepts, but also in the Sacred Scripture. Creation is the space of God's presence, the medium of His expression and granting of Himself to man. Psalm 19:2–5 states: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the works of his hands. Day unto day pours forth speech; night unto night whispers knowledge. There is no speech, no words; their voice is not heard; A report goes forth through all the earth, their messages, to the ends of the world.” God's voice becomes audible in the events of nature, His power and depth of life become visible (Ps 29; 50; 97), His wisdom is called “the refulgence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God, the image of his goodness” (Wis 7:26). The whole earth is filled with the glory of the Lord (cf. Num 14:21), it “is full of the mercy of the Lord” (Ps 33:5). In the Old Testament and Judaism, the idea of the *shekinah* was also developed – the indwelling of the wisdom of God in His creation.²²

In the New Testament, too, Jesus emphasises creation. In the parables it becomes clear that creation is creative, that the promise and anticipation of the Kingdom of God shine in it – and therefore it shares in Divine Communion. The world as a whole, every being and every truth in it, is the authentic appearance of God. An expressive sign does not prevent one from saying what God wants to say. That is why the essence of God can shine through creation – and in fact, it does so brightly that when looking at earthly things, one can see the primordial image through the image and forget that one does not see Him directly, but in the mirror of creation. The imagery of earthly things becomes so much their true essence, and the image itself is so transparent that God as if directly “shines” through them. Charm, spread by creation on the basis of the immanence of God's magnificence, puts into it a promise that is a foreshadowing of God. God speaks through earthly things, draws to Himself through them, leans out of them to be glimpsed by earthly eyes, as if He wanted man to be fascinated by the beauty of created things.²³

21 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 238–9.

22 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 239.

23 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik*, vol. 1: *Wahrheit der Welt* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), 265–8; cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 240. Cf. Blanco-Sarto, “(Um)welt-ethos. Creation, Ecology and Environment in Ecumenical Perspective”, 65–6: “Jesus of Nazareth was a *techtón*, an artisan, a

Speaking of the radical otherness of God and creation still needs to be supplemented. Not only is He different (*aliud*) from creation, but He is also not different (*non aliud*) from it (Nicholas of Cusa). For if God were completely different from His creation, He would not be an all-encompassing and all-being God. It is precisely because of this that he distinguishes Himself infinitely from His creation, that, unlike the discerning world, He is no different from anything.²⁴ On the other hand, speaking of the infinite distance of creation from God is intended to point out its radical “temporality only” and its present particular distinction.²⁵

How to combine these dialectically opposing definitions of creation: it is opposite God and at the same time a space of His presence and self-revelation, it is independent before God and a medium in being God, it is *aliud* and *non aliud*? Is this not a hopeless attempt to combine the “worldliness” and “holiness” of creation? This cannot be the ultimate alternative, because both poles point to something

travelling tradesman: neither a mystic nor a monk (in the usual understanding of this term), but more a country peasant who combined marginal farming with village crafts. He used frequently the natural images in his parables with a universal meaning: there «is not only human life that is observed, but nature as well, man in nature». For example, the parables of the soil (Mk 4:1–9), the self-producing earth (Mk 4:26–29) and the transforming earth (Mk 4:30–32) have a spiritual meaning. Sowing and reaping, harvests and vineyards, births and flowers, plows and yokes are frequent symbols that Jesus employs. These Parables «constantly surprised and frequently shocked his audience». The symbol usually translates a human situation into cosmological terms, and also Funk has made a suggestive comparison: «The world of the parable is like Alice’s looking glass world: all is familiar, yet all is strange, and the one illuminates the other». In these parables, Jesus speaks about the process of agriculture as an ecological activity calling for human cooperation with the role of nature, and we can learn from a) the patience of the peasant (passive element), the humility of humanity as part of nature, the providential care of God that makes nature not wild and cruel but rather something like our sister, a daughter of God; b) work and effort of the peasant (active element) about the frugality, the care, the respect, the beauty, and the ecological sensitivity. So the process of agriculture and the growing of plants is a reversal of human experience, like the patience in the parable of the sower (Mt 13:1–23; Mk 4:1–20; Lk 8:1–15), where the main character is a Galilean peasant, a day laborer and not an elite and anxious urbanite. In the seed there is an action of the sower and the cooperation of the seed (as God with our freedom), and the peasant goes to sleep. The arrival of the kingdom of God is like this sowing: made by both God through freedom and time, and the patience, which is given 30, 60, 100 percent as fruit, as in the parable of the mustard seed states (cf. Mt 13:31–32): «grain is a representation of plenty». Nature, therefore, is to be looked upon as sacred, rather than as a mere agent of utility for human needs. At the same time Jesus compared himself with the wheat seed that must be buried and dies for giving eternal life (cf. Jn 14:24).”

24 The biblical account of man as the image of God allows for the development of the doctrine of analogy, whereby modern personalist theology has developed two great analogies: the divine Person is the model and point of reference for the human person (it is all about relationality), and the concept of the Trinity as a Communion of Persons is a model and reference point for the communion of human persons. Cf. Juan Luis Lorda and Alfredo Álvarez Lacruz, *Antropologia teologiczna* (Kielce: Jedność, 2023), 84–8, 113–4.

25 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 240–1.

indispensably important and await some mediation that the trinitarian faith offers. Just as being a creature opposite, otherness, shares in the Son's being opposite the Father, thus creature's being in God (and vice versa) has its basis in the binding and unifying presence of the Holy Spirit – through Him as present in creation (“the Spirit of the Lord fills the earth [...] is all-embracing...” – Wis 1:7), the Father constantly binds in a Filial way the “otherness” of creation to Himself and draws it to Himself. According to the Scriptures, the Spirit fills creation with life – powers and possibilities – through which it is held inwardly, bound to God, and led above itself – to full communion with God. In short, the Spirit (*ruah Yahweh*) is the divine, immanent presence in creation and participates in its fate. He also shares in the sufferings of creation, groans for salvation and freedom, can be “quenched” (cf. 1 Thess 5:19) and “grieved” (cf. Eph 4:30),²⁶ and He “groans” (cf. Rom 8:22) with incomprehensible words from the confusion of the present time towards God. This participation of the Holy Spirit is at the same time – according to His nature – directed “beyond-above” and appears both in the evolutionary development of creation and in the dynamic transcendence of the human spirit.²⁷

The dialectic of creation is explained in its specific participation in the trinitarian difference of Persons. God creates “opposite” for Himself in the world (in the Person of the Son), enters into it (in the Holy Spirit) and remains exalted above it (as the Father).²⁸ Through the constitution of creation in the space of life of the Trinitarian God, it also participates in the trinitarian network of relations and reproduces this in its various references. Without such an explanation, the dialectic of creation would be merely an alternative of opposing terms. Thus, the trinitarian concept of creation combines the conviction of a profound difference between the Creator and creation with a view to the participation of creation in the trinitarian life of God, the independence and definiteness of creation before God (secularism) with its being in God (sacredness), the transcendence of God from the world and His immanence in the world.²⁹ This is very important because the one-sided emphasis on God's transcendence over the world has led to deism in history, and the one-sided emphasis on God's immanence in the world has led to pantheism. In the trinitarian concept of creation, two moments of truth integrate: monotheism and pantheism. Panentheism – towards the reality of God who created the world and

26 Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *Gott in der Schöpfung* (München: Kaiser, 1985), 108.

27 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 242.

28 Greshake (*Der dreieine Gott*, 242) points out that Leonardo Boff presents the diverse references of creation to God differently: he speaks of the transcendence of creation (as seen by the Father), its immanence (as seen by the Son) and its transparency (as seen by the Holy Spirit). Cf. Leonardo Boff, *Der dreieinige Gott* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1987), 38–9.

29 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 242–3.

dwells in the world, and vice versa: the world that He created and which at the same time exists in God can only be considered and proposed in the trinitarian way.³⁰

1.4 Creation as Image of the Holy Trinity

Creation has its place in the exchange of the life of the triune God's love, and as His temporal image it receives from Him the pledge of its existence. The trinitarian faith of the Church, however, does not only provide a model for understanding the problems of the coexistence of finite and infinite being, but also explains why on all levels of the reality available to us we find the basic rhythms and triadic structures and encourages us to discover in them the traces of the triune God.³¹ A being created in the image of God is both one and complex – it was an unsolvable problem for Greek philosophy, and it still remains as such in contemporary philosophy. However, this is not a contradiction, but a correlation. These apparent disharmonies are a reflection of the Trinity, or more precisely of the Holy Spirit, who is the Love of the Father and the Son. This Revelation is mysterious, but its meaning is clear: the absolute unity of the three Persons is fulfilled in the supreme Love, the Holy Spirit, in whom total reciprocity takes place. Their perfect Communion is an eternal community of life. The divine life of the three Persons is not only Communion and Communication, but the unity of being and action.³² Pope Francis wrote that “every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26). This shows us the immense dignity of each person, ‘who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons’ (CCC 357)” (LS 65).

1.4.1 Trinitarian Structure of Created Being

Many thinkers associated with the tradition of classical metaphysics perceive the real distinction between being and essence as the starting point for the recognition that the whole of creation is characterized by trinitarian imagery. The essence differentiates, while being unifies – in such a way that “is” is present only in different beings, while beings “are” thanks to this unifying and connecting act of reality. Each essence realizes the same being in its own way each time, so that no being is

30 Cf. Moltmann, *Gott in der Schöpfung*, 108; Jagodziński, “Trójjedyny Bóg jako Stwórca świata,” 65–8; Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 30–4.

31 Cf. Greshake, *Der dreieine Gott*, 244.

32 René Laurentin, *Nieznany Duch Święty. Odkrywanie Jego doświadczenia i Jego Osoby* (Kraków: Znak, 1998), 37–8; cf. Jagodziński, *Trynitarno-komunijna teologia stworzenia*, 35–6.