



The Association of Hebrew Catholics Lecture
Series 2021-2022

The Messiah of Israel

**Talk 16. Christ's Human Will
and Fullness of Grace**

Christ's Human Will and Fullness of Grace

- The **divine and human operations in Christ** are infinitely distinct but operate together in the unity of one Person.
- Christ's **human nature, intellect, and will** need to be supremely elevated to make this intimate communion possible.
- A maximum degree of sanctifying grace perfects His **human nature**.
- The vision of God perfects His **human intellect** to supremely allow it to participate in the divine knowledge.
- His will is perfected by supreme charity and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which impart to His **will** docility to divine inspirations.

Christ's Human Will and Fullness of Grace

- Christ in His **divine nature** is the source of grace. In His **human nature** Christ needed to receive grace so as to be the perfect Mediator **and to be the source of all grace for all people.**
- In His **divine nature** the Son of God with the Father breathes forth the Holy Spirit. In His human nature Christ is supremely anointed by the Holy Spirit through His grace and gifts.

Christ's Human Will and Fullness of Grace

- There are two kinds of grace in Christ: *the hypostatic union*, and *sanctifying grace*.
- The **hypostatic union** is the gratuitous gift by which Christ's human nature is assumed by the Person of the Son. This grace is infinite, unique, and never to be revoked.
- **John 1:14** refers to the hypostatic union and to sanctifying grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, *full of grace* and truth."
- The highest form of sanctification does not dispense from the lower forms but presupposes and perfects them.

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St. Thomas says that Christ's soul was enriched by sanctifying grace for three reasons:

“First, on account of the union of His soul with the Word of God. For the nearer any recipient is to an inflowing cause, the more does it partake of its influence. . . . And hence it was most fitting that His soul should receive the influx of Divine grace. Secondly, on account of the dignity of this soul, whose operations were to attain so closely to God by knowledge and love, to which it is necessary for human nature to be raised by grace. Thirdly, on account of the relation of Christ to the human race. For Christ, as man, is the ‘Mediator of God and men,’ as is written, 1 Timothy 2:5; and hence it was **fitting for Him to have grace which would overflow upon others**, according to John 1:16: ‘And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.’”

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- Christ needed the perfection of sanctifying grace because of 1) the union of Christ's soul with the Word, 2) the dignity of Christ's human soul, and 3) Christ's headship over the human race.
- The sanctifying grace in Christ's soul could not increase but had an absolute fullness from the moment of the Incarnation, flowing from the grace of the hypostatic union, which likewise was perfect and immutable.
- Christ possessed sanctifying grace as a font from which all human beings would participate, according to John 1:16–17: “And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

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- Christ's sanctifying grace was increasingly manifested as Christ matured and accomplished His public ministry. **Luke 2:52**: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man."

- **St. Thomas:**

"Anyone may increase in wisdom and grace in two ways. First inasmuch as the habits themselves of wisdom and grace are increased; and in this way Christ did not increase. Secondly, as regards the effects, i.e. inasmuch as they do wiser and greater works; and in this way Christ increased in wisdom and grace even as in age, since in the course of time He did more perfect works, to prove Himself true man, both in the things of God, and in the things of man."

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Mary grew in grace at every moment through a perfect correspondence with God's will. Her grace is full in a relative, not absolute, sense. She was full as befitted the Mother of God:

“The **Blessed Virgin** is said to be full of grace, not on the part of grace itself—since she had not grace in its greatest possible excellence—nor for all the effects of grace; but she is said to be full of grace in reference to herself, i.e. inasmuch as she had sufficient grace for the state to which God had chosen her, i.e. to be the mother of His Only-begotten. So, too, Stephen is said to be full of grace, since he had sufficient grace to be a fit minister and witness of God, to which office he had been called. And the same must be said of others. Of these fulnesses one is greater than another, according as one is divinely pre-ordained to a higher or lower state.”

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- Christ's fullness was proper to His state as the Word incarnate and the Head of the Mystical Body. For this reason it was fitting that it be maximum from the beginning.
- All the members (actual or potential) can receive sanctifying grace, which in them is a treasure to be increased through their cooperation with that grace.
- Christ alone possessed grace not as a treasure to be increased but to be imparted to others.

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- All the habitual graces distributed to the members of the Church were first received by Christ's human soul and are communicated to His Mystical Body ordinarily through the sacraments of the Church, in which Christ in His humanity is actively involved as our eternal High Priest through the sacramental actions of His ministers.
- Christ's humanity is the exemplar cause of all sacramental grace and an *instrumental* efficient cause of that likeness. Christ's divinity is the *principal* efficient cause that moves His humanity as His perfect living and holy instrument to imprint His likeness progressively upon us.

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- Thus Christ is fittingly called the *Head* of the Church. As the head rules over all the other members of the body, so Christ rules over the entire Body.
- Because all grace comes to the Church through Christ, He alone is Head of the Church in the proper sense.
- He has given a certain participation of His Headship to Peter and the other Apostles and their successors.
- The Pope is head of the universal Church and every bishop is the head of his diocese. They have an exterior power of government and sacramental sanctification.
- The interior government over souls is done by Christ alone.

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How is Christ the Head of all mankind?

- Men must cooperate in some way.
- St. Thomas distinguishes five grades of His Headship:
 - 1) by glory;
 - 2) by charity;
 - 3) by faith;
 - 4) in potentiality not yet reduced to act but will be in the future;
 - 5) in potentiality that will never be reduced to act. The damned wholly cease to be members of Christ.

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Because Christ's Headship extends over all humanity, He is said to be the new Adam.

St. Paul:

“Adam . . . was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. . . . For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.”

- **Adam** was head of the human race by receiving gifts from God to pass on to all his descendants.
- **Christ** received higher gifts of grace and glory to be passed on **to the members of His Body and to all mankind.**

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Christ's mission as the new Adam was to merit grace and the forgiveness of sins **for all mankind**.

St. Thomas:

“Grace was in Christ not merely as in an individual, but also as in the Head of the whole Church, to Whom all are united, as members to a head, who constitute one mystical person. And hence it is that Christ's merit extends to others inasmuch as they are His members; even as in a man the action of the head reaches in a manner to all his members, since it perceives not merely for itself alone, but for all the members.”

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- Christ experienced all passions of the sense appetite that are not intrinsically disordered (such as envy).
- He had the gift of **integrity**, so His passions were dominated by reason and thus could not hinder right deliberation.
- His passions also could not seduce His will to consent to something disordered.

“Nevertheless we must know that the passions were in Christ otherwise than in us, in three ways. First, as regards the object, since in us these passions very **often tend towards what is unlawful, but not so in Christ.**

Secondly, as regards the principle, since these passions in us frequently forestall the judgment of reason;

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but in Christ all movements of the sensitive appetite sprang from the disposition of the reason. Hence Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* 14), that “Christ assumed these movements, in His human soul, by an unfailing dispensation, when He wished; even as He became man when He wished.”

Thirdly, as regards the effect, because in us these motions, at times, do not remain in the sensitive appetite, but deflect the reason; but not so in Christ, since by His disposition they so remained in the sensitive appetite that the reason was nowise hindered in doing what was right.”

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- Jesus experienced emotions profoundly, as we see in His weeping at the death of His friend, Lazarus; in His anger at the money-changers in the Temple and those whom He judged hypocritical; in admiration of the faith of the centurion (Matt 8:10); and in His most intense sorrow in Gethsemane.
- Christ suffered more in sensible pain and in interior sorrow than any other human being because of the causes of His suffering and the perfection and sensitivity of His emotions.

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St. Thomas:

“The magnitude of His suffering may be considered, second, from the susceptibility of the sufferer as to both soul and body. For His body was endowed with a most perfect constitution. . . . And, consequently, Christ’s sense of touch, the sensitiveness of which is the reason for our feeling pain, was most acute. His soul likewise, from its interior powers, apprehended most vehemently all the causes of sadness.”

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- It is a dogma of faith that **Christ has a free human will** and that **it is in intimate communion with His divine will.**
- **Constantinople III:**

“Each of the two natures wills and performs what is proper to it in communion with the other. Thus, we glory in proclaiming two natural wills and actions concurring together for the salvation of the human race.”
- The distinction of wills is seen in Christ's prayer in agony in Gethsemane: **“Not my will, but your will be done.”** There is:
 - 1) a **natural human desire**
 - 2) **the divine will**
 - 3) a **deliberated choice of His human will** to follow the divine will.

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- Christ has a free human will distinct from the divine will.
- He redeems us *through acts of His human nature*.
- Christ assumed what He came to redeem, and the principal thing to redeem in man is his will.
- Christ humanly consented to the Incarnation. **Hebrews 10:5–7**: “Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, “Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,”’ as it is written of me in the roll of the book.”””

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Could Christ sin?

- **Hebrews 4:15:** “we have ... a high priest who ... has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”
- **2 Corinthians 5:21:** “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- **1 Peter 2:22:** “He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips.”
- **1 John 3:5:** “in him there is no sin.”
- **Council of Chalcedon:** Christ was “like unto us in all things but sin.”

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- **Leo the Great:** “[Christ] assumed the form of a servant without the defilement of sin.”
- Theologians hold that Christ was incapable of sinning.
- A sin of Christ the man would be a sin of a divine Person, which is incompatible with the divine sanctity and would involve a contradiction between the natures.
- Christ is impeccable because of His absolute fullness of grace and the beatific vision. No one who sees the glory of God face to face can sin.
- How else could the human will of Christ always be in harmony with His divine will?

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- Christ's human will was free to choose between all possible goods to glorify His Father.
- His freedom always chose what was in conformity with the divine will. **John 8:29**: "And He who sent me is with me...I always do what is pleasing to him."
- The capacity to sin is a defect of freedom in the state of trial.
- Free will is the capacity to choose between goods.
- When we choose to sin, we restrict our freedom to choose the true good and make ourselves slaves to sin.

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- God is supremely free in everything that regards creation.
- The blessed in heaven are free because they are free to choose among all the ways of praising God.
- The human will of Christ was free to choose among all the good acts by which He could fulfill His mission. His will was supremely free because it was in no way bound by sin.
- **St. Thomas:** “The will of Christ, though determined to good, is not determined to this or that good. Hence it pertains to Christ, even as to the blessed, to choose with a free-will confirmed in good.”

- Christ's human will was **not** free **not** to love God because Christ fully saw the infinite divine goodness.
- Christ's human will *freely chose to* die on the Cross, in obedience to God.
- Dying on the Cross was not irresistibly attractive to His will so as to take away His freedom. He deliberated and freely chose to be “obedient unto death, even death on a cross.”
- **John 10:17–18:** “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father.”

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- To lay down His life does not mean suicide.
- The direct agents of Christ's death were those who planned and executed His death.
- An indirect agent declines to impede an event. Christ can be said to be the *indirect* cause of His own death, for He could have impeded it in many ways.
- **Matthew 26:53-54:** “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

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- Christ's free choice of His Passion was done in obedience to His Father for the redemption of the human race.
- **John 10:18**: “this charge I have received from my Father.”
- **Philippians 2:8**: “being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.”
- **John 18:11**: “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?”
- **Matt 26:53**: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

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- The command of His Father is the supreme realization of the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbor.
- **Romans 8:32:** “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all...”
- It was extremely fitting for Christ to choose to die for us out of obedience to the divine plan, for man's fall came through disobedience to the will of God.
- To repair sin, the reparation most fittingly had to come through a *supreme act of obedience*.

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- Since Christ freely chose to suffer for the sins of the whole world, every sinner is responsible for the death of Christ.
- **1 Tim 1:15:** “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”
- The ***Catechism of the Council of Trent***: “sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured.”
- The ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: “Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ Himself, the Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus...”

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- **Vatican II:** “True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. . . . Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church’s preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God’s all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- **Isaiah 11:1–2:** “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.”
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are messianic gifts. Since they filled the soul of Jesus Christ, they also are meant to fill the souls of all the members of His Mystical Body by their assimilation with the Head. The messianic kingdom, which is the Catholic Church, is the place where the faithful can be filled with the Holy Spirit and His sevenfold gifts.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The purpose of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit is to **enable us to be docile to the inspirations** of the Holy Spirit.
- The ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: “[The gifts are] permanent dispositions which **make man docile** in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”
- These dispositions are like the sails of a ship that are sensitive to movements of actual grace.
- The faithful need these special insights and strengths that lead them directly and securely to do God’s will.
- The gifts are in all who are in a state of grace and they grow with the increase of sanctifying grace.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- St. Augustine makes a connection between the seven **beatitudes** in Matthew 5:3–9 and the seven **gifts of the Holy Spirit** in Isaiah 11:2.
- The beatitudes promote heroic ideals that can only be achieved by docility to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are realized in Christ in the greatest possible measure.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The fear of the Lord makes us docile to the graces to fear to offend God through sin, to avoid the near occasions of sin, and to cling to God and His commandments because He is so good.
- **Isaiah 53:6:** “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.” Christ’s Passion was the supreme recognition of the Lordship of God.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- **Fear of the Lord** is associated with the beatitude of **poverty of spirit**.
- Fear of the Lord leads one to not be led into sin because of temporal goods. Christ in Gethsemane and on Calvary, obedient unto death for the sins of mankind, is the perfect archetype of filial fear of the Lord.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- Piety is the gift of reverence for God as our Father. It is expressed in prayer and in fraternal charity towards God's children.
- The close relation between piety and filial fear is seen in the fact that the Hebrew text of Isaiah 11:1–2 lists the fear of the Lord twice and the Septuagint refers to the second as piety.
- **Mark 14:36:** “Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt.”
- The gift of piety is to enter into this filial sense of Jesus.

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- The **gift of piety** is connected to the beatitude: “**Blessed are the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.”
- **Meekness** is submission to men out of reverence for God. **Piety** helps us to reverence authority as coming from God and to recognize others as sons of the Father.
- Moses was called the meekest of men because he was not puffed up by the height of his revelation.
- Christ was silent and allowed Himself to be sent to the slaughter for the sins of His brethren and the glory of His Father’s name.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- **Fortitude** is a **virtue** and a **gift** of the Holy Spirit.
- As a **virtue**, it is the perfect mean established by reason between fear and audacity.
- The **gift** is from the Holy Spirit and involves standing firm in the face of seemingly insuperable difficulties.
- **Luke 4:1**: “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,” went to the desert to fast and pray for forty days and be tempted by the devil.
- Jesus chose to submit to the deepest suffering in His Passion. “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- **Fortitude** is associated with **the beatitude of those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness.”**
- **St. Teresa of Avila:** “Those who want to journey on this road and continue until they reach the end, which is to drink from this water of life, . . . must have a *great and very determined determination to persevere until reaching the end, come what may, happen what may, whatever work is involved, whatever criticism arises, whether they arrive or whether they die on the road, or even if they don’t have courage for the trials that are met, or if the whole world collapses.*”
- **Jesus’ last words:** “I thirst!” followed by “It is finished.”
Fortitude brings the thirst for doing God’s will to the end.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The **gift of knowledge** helps to judge with regard to creatures, especially the human heart. **Jeremiah 17:9**: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?”
- To see that “**all is vanity**” (**Qohelet**) is from the gift of knowledge, as is the ability **to see all created realities as images of God**.
- **St. Francis of Assisi**: “Praised be You my Lord **with all Your creatures**, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor, of You Most High, he bears the likeness. . . . Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste. . . . Praised be You, my Lord, through our sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- Christ excelled in the gift of knowledge, by which He knew all the secrets of hearts. As St. John says (John 2:25), “He knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for *he himself knew what was in man.*”
- Christ during His temptations in the desert knew the importance of preferring supernatural goods to bread, vainglory, and temporal power.
- Christ shows the beauty of the material world above all in the institution of the sacraments, in which He endowed material and sensible things with a supernatural power.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The **gift of knowledge** is associated with the **beatitude of those who mourn**, especially for sin.
- The greatest act of mourning was Christ in Gethsemane, where He sweat blood because of this most heroic exercise of the gift of knowledge, seeing the “deceit” of the heart in all human sin throughout history.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The **gift of counsel** helps the soul to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the actions of life, especially in important decisions.
- For example, after the Baptism He is impelled by the Spirit to go to the desert to be tempted. He thus shows Himself supremely docile to the promptings of the Spirit. We see this docility to the Spirit above all in Christ's "hour," when, "through the eternal Spirit," He "offered himself without blemish to God" (Heb 9:14).

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The gift of counsel is related to the **beatitude of the merciful**: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”
- Counsel helps the saints to direct their works of mercy in accordance with God’s hidden plan.
- The greatest work of mercy in the history of the world is Christ’s oblation of Himself in His Passion, from the institution of the Eucharist to His dying on the Cross.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The **gift of understanding** deepens our penetration of the truths of faith. It enables us to savor and deeply grasp the mystery, illuminating the darkness of faith.
- This gift enables simple and yet holy souls to have a deeper sense of the truths of faith than theologians who are less holy.
- The saints are best able to detect heresies by a kind of spiritual smell—the “Catholic nose.”

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- The prophets are the great exemplars of the gift of understanding.
- St. Paul speaks of his gift of understanding of the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:4). He urged the faithful to aspire to the fullness of understanding in Christ.
- Jesus has the absolute fullness of the gift of understanding. Already when He was twelve, “all who heard him were amazed at his understanding” (Luke 2:47).
- This gift is connected with the **beatitude of the pure of heart**: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Purity of heart consists of seeking God’s glory above all and in everything through charity.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- The greatest of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is wisdom, which is the ability to judge and order all things rightly.
- Aristotle says that the wise man habitually judges all things in the light of first principles, and **ultimately in the light of God.**
- It gives us a supernatural understanding of human suffering and sin.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- **Wisdom** is brought to its culmination by the Incarnation and Passion of Christ.
- After the Incarnation, wisdom is the ability to see all things in the light of the revelation of the Messiah, and especially His Paschal mystery.
- The gift of wisdom enables its recipients to see a participation of the Cross of Christ in every human suffering.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

1 Cor 1:21–24: “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

1 Cor 1:26–2:16: “For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. . . Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not

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have crucified the Lord of glory. . . . And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.’”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

- **Wisdom** is connected with the **beatitude of the peacemakers**: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Wisdom helps **to order all things rightly**, and thus to make peace.
- **Moses** intercedes for sinners: “O Lord, why does thy wrath burn hot against thy people, whom thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants. . . . And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written”.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christ

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- **Abraham** interceded for the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah.
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Peace between man and God is established by the Cross of the Messiah, and so Jesus incarnates this beatitude in an absolute manner.

2 Cor 5:18–20: “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”