

# “GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD...” (Jn. 3:16)

Walking the narrow path  
into Life

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## INTRODUCTION

- ◆ How might the Christocentric vision of Friar John Duns Scotus help us enter into the Gospels from a new doorway?
- ◆ How does Scotus’s Franciscan vocation inform our understanding of Jesus, ourselves and our vocation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## SCOTUS'S CHRISTOLOGY

- ◆ HIGH CHRISTOLOGY:
- ◆ Johannine: "He first loved us..." (1Jn. 4:19)
- ◆ Ephesians hymn: "Chosen before the world began..." (Eph. 1:4)
- ◆ Colossians hymn: "First-born of all creation..." (Col. 1: 15)

## SCOTUS'S CHRISTOLOGY

- ◆ MYSTICAL CHRISTOLOGY
- ◆ Christ appears in and through all reality:
  - The beauty of the created order
  - The harmony of human desires
  - The inspiration of the Spirit

## SCOTUS'S CHRISTOLOGY

- ◆ A CHRISTOLOGY OF DIVINE PRESENCE
- ◆ The centrality of the Incarnation
- ◆ "And my delight is to be with the children of men..." (Prv. 8:30)
- ◆ "I have long desired to eat this meal with you..." (Lk. 22:15)

## WHAT IS THE DIVINE PLAN?

- ◆ "TO BRING ALL THINGS TOGETHER INTO ONE, IN AND THROUGH CHRIST JESUS."
- ◆ THE CENTRALITY OF THE INCARNATION

## “IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD...”

### ◆ THE INCARNATIONAL DYNAMIC ACCORDING TO JOHN’S PROLOGUE:

1. DIVINE INITIATIVE
2. HUMAN RESISTANCE
3. DIVINE ABUNDANT LOVE

## 1. “AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH”: DIVINE INITIATIVE

- ◆ God’s purpose for the Incarnation: to dwell with us
  - A) the small reveals divine presence
  - B) God calls the unexpected
  - C) the broken and wounded are where the Incarnation takes place

## “AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH”: DIVINE INITIATIVE

- ◆ The small/insignificant ones reveal God’s presence:
  - 1. Luke 1: 29: “Rejoice so highly favored”
  - 2. Luke 12: 27: “Consider the lilies of the field...”
  - 3. Luke 15: 9: “I have found the coin I lost”

## “AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH”: DIVINE INITIATIVE

- ◆ God calls/invites those we do not expect
  - 1. Mt. 9:9-13: Tax collectors and sinners
  - 2. Lk. 19:1-10: Zacchaeus
  - 3. Jn. 4:1-42: The Samaritan woman

## CONSIDER THIS

- ◆ “Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached that spot, he looked up and spoke to him: Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today. And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully.”

◆ Luke 19: 1-7

## WHAT HAPPENED???

- ◆ Who took initiative?
  - Zacchaeus?
  - Jesus?
  - Both?
- ◆ What did it take?
- ◆ How did Jesus invite Zacchaeus to imitate him?
  - Come down/hurry/be the host

## “AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH”: DIVINE INITIATIVE

- The little ones
- The outcast
- The broken...
  
- What the world does not value, God values above all else
  
- Why?

## AN INCARNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- ◆ 1. How does Jesus look at me?
- ◆ 2. What have been the moments of Incarnational “epiphanies” in my own life? In my ministry?
- ◆ 3. How do I see myself uniquely called to enter into the Incarnational dynamic?

# AN INCARNATIONAL OUTLOOK

1. What in my own life is broken? Outcast? Insignificant?
2. Who in my own life is broken? Outcast? Insignificant?
3. How have I grown in my compassion for myself? For Others? For the stranger?



## 2. “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN...”(Jn. 1: 11)

- ◆ Human resistance

- Our side of the Incarnational dynamic

- ◆ Resistance
- ◆ Denial
- ◆ Possessiveness
- ◆ Self-doubt

## 2. “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN...”(Jn. 1: 11)

- ◆ Human resistance according to Scotus

- Lack of appropriate balance of the two metaphysical affections:

- ◆ Affection for happiness: a self-directed concern (holy and wholesome)
- ◆ Affection for justice: an other-directed concern (rational and free)

## 2. “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN...”(Jn. 1: 11)

- ◆ Human resistance

- When the two are out of balance...
  - I do not love rightly
  - I resist divine initiative
  - I cannot see God’s design

## CONSIDER THIS

- ◆ Self-protective deflection:

“I see you are a prophet, sir,” said the woman. “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place one ought to worship.”

– John 4: 19-20

## 2. "HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN..."(Jn. 1: 11)

### ◆ Denial and self-doubt

- 1. Mt. 14: 17: "All we have are five loaves and two fishes..."
  - 2. Luke 5:9: "Leave me, Lord, for I am sinful..."
  - 3. Luke 1:18: "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man..."
- = it's really all about me!

## 2. "HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN..."(Jn. 1: 11)

### ◆ Jealousy and rejection

- Luke 19:7-9: "They all complained... 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house...'"
  - John 11:53: "From that day on they were determined to kill him."
  - Luke 7:34: "You say, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners."
- = God can't love them!

## 2. "HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN..."(Jn. 1: 11)

- ◆ Expectations and righteousness
    - Mark 10:22: "But his face fell and he went away sad..."
    - John 1:46: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"
    - Matthew 20:13: "We have done a heavy day's work in all this heat!"
- =why can't God think like I do?

## CONSIDER THIS

- ◆ "Going from that district, he went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished with they heard him. They said, 'where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him? These miracles worked through him?... And they would not accept him.... He could work no miracle there... He was amazed at their lack of faith."  
– Mark 6: 1-6

## GOD'S RELIANCE ON OUR FREEDOM

- ◆ For Scotus, God waits for us...
- ◆ God wants to act with us, not beyond us or in spite of us...
- ◆ Our "yes" makes a very big difference...
- ◆ Our freedom matters!

## A CALL TO CONVERSION

- ◆ 1. Do I really believe in my own giftedness?
- ◆ 2. Do I really believe in the gifts of others?
- ◆ 3. How have I put my gifts at the service of God's plan? How have I allowed God to work through others?

## A CALL TO FAITH

- ◆ 1. How have I been able to let go of my own self-doubts?
- ◆ 2. How have I been able to set aside my expectations of God or of others?
- ◆ 3. How might I grow in my ability to let go of my own plans and expectations?

## A CALL TO LOVE

- ◆ 1. What sort of resistance do I discover in myself?
- ◆ 2. How have I been able to maintain appropriate oversight over my own areas of resistance?
- ◆ 3. What in my life helps me relax and 'let God be God'?



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**THE INCARNATIONAL DYNAMIC OF FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY**

- ♥ GOD'S ABUNDANT LOVE FOR US
- ♥ OUR RESISTANCE AND REJECTION
- ♥ DIVINE ABUNDANT LOVE IN RESPONSE

**"AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH..."**

- ♥ God longs to dwell with us
- ♥ The small/insignificant reveals God presence each day
- ♥ God invites those we do not expect

**"HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN..." (Jn. 1: 11)**

1. Human resistance according to Scotus
2. Lack of appropriate balance of the two metaphysical affections:
  - Affection for happiness: a self-directed concern (holy and wholesome)
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3. When the two are out of balance...
  - I do not love rightly
  - I resist divine initiative
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**CONSIDER THESE MODES OF RESISTANCE:**

***Self-protective deflection:***

"I see you are a prophet, sir," said the woman. "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place one ought to worship." (John 4: 19-20)

***Denial and self-doubt:***

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