

INTRODUCTION:  
*IN MEMORIAM*: BENEDICT XVI,  
DAVID L. SCHINDLER, ROCH  
KERESZTY



The Winter 2023 issue of *Communio* is dedicated to the theme “*In Memoriam*: Benedict XVI, David L. Schindler, Roch Kereszty.” These three figures offered complementary contributions to the Church’s theology and have profoundly guided the vision of *Communio*. Pope Benedict XVI (1927–2022) was a seeker after the face of God who reaffirmed for the Church the indispensability of the Incarnation for interpreting the mystery of the human person, who for his part finds himself by sharing, above all through the liturgy, in Christ’s return of love to the Father. David L. Schindler (1943–2022) faithfully committed his thought to defending the primacy of creaturely receptivity in filial and nuptial relation to the triune God in a way that could integrate and renew the many domains of human experience and knowing. Fr. Roch Kereszty (1933–2022) consistently witnessed to prayer as an embodied participation in Jesus Christ that perfects life in the world and indeed the life of the world. The essays collected here shed light on how these three stood together for Christ-centered holiness as obedient cooperation with God’s own redemptive love for the created order in its wholeness.

**Tracey Rowland** examines the opposition between sociological and genuinely theological understandings of the Church in “Joseph Ratzinger on Democracy within the Church.”

The former favors a re-envisioning of authority in the Church according to the management structures, procedures, and standards of liberalist bureaucracy. Following Ratzinger, Rowland traces how the anthropology embedded in such a view depends upon an account of freedom closed to grace, which entails instead a sacred ecclesiology where hierarchy is held to radiate charismatically from Christ's saving headship. Moreover, the good of diversified responsibility for the Church that advocates for bureaucratization can, Rowland argues, be more adequately satisfied by confessing that the institution belongs within Christ's mystical Body. "For those who accept such concepts as the powers of the Petrine and episcopal offices being circumscribed by Scripture and tradition . . . the most important issue becomes not that of the democratization of the Church but the bond of trust between clerical leaders and the laity."

**Uwe Michael Lang** ponders the centrality of Christ's Paschal, eucharistic sacrifice for creation and history in "Transforming the World into Communion with God: The Sacred Liturgy in the Thought of Joseph Ratzinger." According to Ratzinger, in fulfilling the cult of Israel, the Christian liturgy also recapitulates and purifies all human religion, and through this realizes man's ordination to consecrate the cosmos within his own communion with God. The Eucharist therefore encompasses all of being and the whole life of each person united to Christ through participation in the liturgy. Lang clarifies, in accordance with Ratzinger's lifelong testimony, that this "ecclesial and sacramental *communio* is not just something that can be created by a particular community . . . but it is the gift of a greater reality Christ entrusted to the universal Church."

**Scott W. Hahn**, in "Normative and Performative: The Authority of Scripture for Theology and Worship in the Thought of Benedict XVI," upholds the principle that "theology is 'ecclesial' by nature because this was the original structure of God's revelation." Drawing on Benedict XVI's reception of Vatican II's *Dei Verbum*, Hahn explains that the theologian contemplates the Incarnate Word through receiving Scripture in its unity from the heart of the Church and, therefore, in relation to the eucharistic liturgy. Pope Benedict's approach both restores the study of Scripture to its rightful primacy in the theological task and maintains that one who is called to interpret Scripture

must receive it as a Christ-assimilated participant in the Church's worship.

In "Regensburg Revisited: Faith, Culture, and Mission in the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger," **Hugh O'Donnell** attends to Pope Benedict XVI's argument, notably articulated in his Regensburg Address, that it was providential for Christian doctrine that its early development took place in the Greco-Roman world. For this reason, the Church's elevating integration of that culture and its thought remains decisive for her perennial confession and her ongoing mission. Because culture is relative to truth, the Church can transform the cultures she gathers up and benefits from, thereby bringing them into community with one another. "[T]he shared truth in the different culture is the very medium by which they encounter one another, and their openness to truth is what measures their capacity to do so."

In "America! America! May God Thy Gold Refine": David L. Schindler's Praise for the United States," **Reuben Slife** unfolds the significance of America in Schindler's thought. On the one hand, America's institutions are conceived as unrelated to truth, including that of divine love, and so embody a disincarnate denial of the very ontology of generosity that stands behind the Church's Christ-given, world-saving mission. On the other hand, Slife argues, Schindler's critical sifting of America offers a judgment placed at the service of a gradual and dramatic transformation of her deformed goods in accord with the whole Christ. In this regard, his critique rests upon a profound affirmation of the nation in her providential role and expresses loving and sacrificial responsibility *for* her. "*Being* holy—dwelling in the inner life of God, the trinitarian exchange of love—must take up the *being* of the world."

In "Going to the Heart: An Interview," originally published in 1998, **David L. Schindler** evaluates the meaning of the Catholic university and the conception of being it implies. Schindler addresses how the revelation of the trinitarian God in Jesus Christ born of Mary bears upon the whole order of intelligence, so that the reality of love remains pervasively operative in each of the disciplines housed by the academy. He urges a patient, contemplative, and ever-to-be-renewed discovery of what the call to holiness in Christ means for the exercise of reason in the disciplines, each of which, he holds, possesses its own integrity

most fully, and is most intimately integrated with every other, through being tacitly but radically illuminated by the mystery of salvation. “[W]hat Catholics need above all today is to retrieve acproper sense of the priority of ‘Catholic’ in the epithet ‘Catholic university,’ and this means showing how the very substance of the university, the logic of its mind, is born from the heart of the Church.”

“The recognition of the love of God in the soul brings not only the possibility of mutuality but also delight in the beauty and truth of God.” In “Roch Kereszty: Master of Cistercian *Ressourcement*,” **Peter Casarella** remembers the life and charts the legacy of the Cistercian monk, professor, and theologian. Casarella recounts Fr. Kereszty’s experiences in youth under the communist regime in Hungary, including his underground priestly formation and flight under persecution, and articulates how these truths informed his appropriation and espousal of St. Bernard’s Christology in a contemporary context. Having accentuated across his writing and teaching St. Bernard’s sensitivity to the Word’s descent into the flesh, Kereszty endures as a resolute witness to the ecclesial, social, and cosmic dimensions of the soul’s sapiential formation in union with Christ the bridegroom.

**Roch Kereszty** presents the Mellifluous Doctor’s reflections on Christ’s interior pedagogy in “St. Bernard’s School of Spirituality.” Speaking within the heart, Christ frees the disciple for the humility through which he can receive his God-beloved worthiness, since man is consummately dignified through his connubial bond with Christ by membership in his bridal Church and can cooperate most magnanimously thereby in God’s own giving. Even as God alone accomplishes this glory in the saint, a figure like St. Bernard himself could incarnate such teaching in his example and his ministry. As Kereszty says of him, “[h]e was perceived both as a demanding father whose inner strength inspires awe and a loving mother who nurses his children with the pure milk of spiritual doctrine.”

In “‘Charity Builds Up’ (1 Cor 8:1)—but Which Charity? On Víctor Manuel Fernández’s Theological Proposal,” **José Granados** assesses the present prefect for the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith’s understanding of the place of charity within Christian doctrine and life. He especially weighs Fernández’s claims that the wisdom of the faithful people is the

context for theological reception of revelation, and that charity consummated in the works of mercy is the source of interpreting moral dilemmas. In response, Granados contends that these points can only be rightly affirmed if we hold that charity is first communicated by God in the incarnation and the sacramental economy, that charity is ultimately given for the sake of a communion with God that takes up and fulfills each person's whole creaturehood, and that the Church's first responsibility is to build up such communion, which includes faithfully preserving doctrine and calling all people to conversion. As Granados puts it, "The common confession of faith and the sacraments are not only paths to a charity that goes beyond them, but they constitute the architecture or structure of charity, without which charity is formless and disembodied."

In *Notes & Comments*, we reprint **David L. Schindler's** 1980 piece "On Coming to the Program," in which the author reflects on the emergence in his youth of the primary questions that occupied his mature thought and led him to teach for a time in the Program of Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Schindler attends especially to his gradual realization that the theological and ethical convictions he received in his family home had fundamental ontological grounds and implications, both of which called for lifelong investigation. "Religious commitment, properly understood, precisely opened one to all dimensions of experience, to truth and value wherever they might emerge." □

—The Editors