

# ON RESTLESSNESS

• Antonio López •

“Restlessness is the ‘movement’ of abiding in a relation with the divine communion, a relation that constantly enlarges the human being so that he may grow ever more, from glory to glory.”



Scripture tells us that upon finishing his creation, God rested to take delight in it (Gn 2:2–3; Ps 149). It also tells us that he commanded man to rest (Ex 16:29–30; 20:8–11), so that he might consider the greatness of the nuptial vocation to which he is called (Hos 2:18–20; Eph 5:32). This command contains, too, the promise that man may finally enter into God’s own rest (Ex 33:14; Dt 3:20; Josh 21:44) and find his peace (*quies*) remaining in God’s love (Jn 15:1–17).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it could also be said that God himself knows no rest. God accompanies man, asking him to follow to an unknown place (Is 55:8–11; Lk 16:22–23; Jn 21:18). As we see in the lives of Abraham and Moses, God gradually but unceasingly pulls man out of his own homeland, out of his own well-established worldview, and fulfills before his eyes the promise made when, in the Son, the Father called every creature to existence: the promise to reconcile all things in the Son (Eph 2:16; Col 1:20). God, then, is always present and engaged with man. He is always “at work” (Jn 5:17). This coexistence of rest and restlessness in God is nevertheless not an eternal succession of moments of action and idleness. Because Christ has revealed God to be absolute love (1 Jn 4:8), restlessness cannot

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<sup>1</sup>John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, 11–12.

be the absolute's "restless process of superseding itself."<sup>2</sup> Rather, restlessness indicates God's own being-love, in himself (begetting, spirating) and for man (creating, redeeming).<sup>3</sup> Man's being, created *ex nihilo* in God's own image (Gn 1:27; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16), reflects the ontological structure of rest and restlessness that belongs to triune love. It does so, however, in an analogical way.

The following pages offer an account of how human existence reflects the presence of restlessness in rest. The call to incorporation into Christ is, in fact, an ever-restless, ever-resting growth within man of Christ—who comes to indwell with the Father and the Holy Spirit—and, through the Holy Spirit, of man in Christ, the one sent by the Father. The present article, divided into three parts, begins with an examination of the negative sense of restlessness, and proposes reading it instead in light of the theological virtues. Since entering into the Father's eternal rest is made possible for us only through Christ's obedience, the second part, aided by Maximus the Confessor's account of Christ's agony, shows how Christ opens this access in a fully human and fully divine way. This will help us to understand how God's restless anxiety over man's salvation may be interpreted. The final section offers an elucidation, with Gregory of Nyssa, of the sense in which a theological anthropology that wishes to offer an adequate account of man's being might appropriate the positive sense of movement contained in "restlessness."

### 1. Finally orphans

With a work ethic that assumes worldly success as the governing principle of life, and an increased sense of scientific progress claiming significant mastery over the beginning and end of human existence, the Western world has come to cultivate a

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<sup>2</sup>Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), no. 805; Jean-Luc Nancy, *Hegel, The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup>Mt 11:27; Jn 17:24–26; Jn 3:16. If, as Aquinas contends, the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit coincide with the divine, eternal processions, then the work of the Father to which Christ alludes has to do both with himself and with creation and the economy of salvation. See *ST*, I, q. 43; *DPD*, q. 10, a. 1; *ST*, I, qq. 44–45.

seemingly positive, though superficial, concept of restlessness. Work, valued almost exclusively for the sake of income, claims all of man's energies. Culturally speaking, it gives man's time and space their form. Man is ever more tantalized by the idea of moving ahead and upwards, keeping the door open to any change of job, city, country, or interest that may be required. To keep the same occupation for life, as our parents or grandparents were accustomed to do, is now considered stultifying, immobile. Change is good; it signals a permanence of youth. One has to keep going, transforming "old age" into a sort of adolescence that is blind to its mortality. This restless, spasmodic search for an increasingly exciting novelty, however, is an appalling index of man's absence from himself.<sup>4</sup> Having vacated his own self, man can no longer find a dwelling place in which time and meaning are reconciled, a place, that is, in which he can be fully present to himself and to others and thus rest. As Pieper explains so clearly, this conception of restlessness, which is dominant in the postmodern world, not only prevents the formation of culture and of humane living, but, more importantly, originates in a human existence that is radically disengaged from itself and from history.<sup>5</sup> To say that one is disengaged from oneself, however, means that this restlessness results above all from having abdicated one's sonship.

The human being, seen in this light as ultimately an orphan, seeks either to possess without measure, or to wander in willful ignorance of his own paternal origin. Restlessness, Aquinas tells us, is in fact one of the rotten fruits of a capital vice: covetousness (*avaritia*), that "immoderate love for possessing (*amor habendi*)."<sup>6</sup> Avarice is a disorder that prevents man from being at rest (*quies*) in that it makes him over-concerned with superfluous matters.<sup>7</sup> Man's restless heart is excessively anxious over "external goods," taking "concupiscent delight in the senses," and does not permit his will to

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<sup>4</sup>See, among others, Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Stephen Kalber (Chicago, Ill.: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001); Doug Bandow and David L. Schindler, eds., *Wealth, Poverty, and Human Destiny* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2003); Luigi Giussani, *L'io, il potere, e le opere* (Genova: Marietti, 2000).

<sup>5</sup>Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup>*ST*, II-II, q. 118, a. 1; *De Malo*, q. 13, a. 3.

<sup>7</sup>*ST*, II-II, q. 118, a. 7.

follow any external order.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, Aquinas sees the life of the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience as the exact opposite of the restless attitude. With this, he is not advocating against loving the world or possessions, for despising the bodily senses, or for becoming the slave of another. He rather suggests that human existence needs to be taken up into and gradually transformed by divine love. We could say in this sense that human existence becomes itself when it embraces the filial form proper to its own having-been-created in the Son. The contrast between the restless, anxious heart and the heart that is informed by love clarifies why *inquietudo* can also be related to sloth (*acedia*). In this sense, restlessness is born from *acedia*, that “aggravating, depressing sadness” which, unlike charity (*caritas*), is unable to rejoice over the good that God is.<sup>9</sup> Aquinas tells us that this type of sadness is a rejection of the love that God is, and of one’s own and others’ participation in that love. The refusal to love the other’s good generates, among other things, an “*evagatio mentis*” (wandering of the mind), because “no one can dwell in sadness” for too long.<sup>10</sup> In this second sense, as we mentioned, restlessness is an “anxiety over” things because man continues to look, away from himself and from the real nature of what attracts him, for that Origin he does not really want to find. Restlessness, then, becomes the existential search for nothing other than sheer novelty for novelty’s sake. Unfortunately, the inability to see that one’s own filial relationship with the provident Father is the very source of newness leads to the anxious need to possess ever more new goods in order not to remember the one who is really longed for in each of those finite goods.<sup>11</sup> The restless man here runs away from that Beauty from which “being comes to all existing things,” and insatiably seeks

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<sup>8</sup>*ST*, II-II, q. 186, 7.

<sup>9</sup>*ST*, II-II, q. 35, aa. 1–2. Although Aquinas enumerates only *inquietudo* among the fruits of *avaritia*, this sense is also legitimate, as Pieper has shown.

<sup>10</sup>Aquinas, *De Malo*, q. 11, a. 4; Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, 27–36.

<sup>11</sup>The longing for eternal Beauty is what determines Augustine’s religious understanding of restlessness. See Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1. See also Alberto di Giovanni, *L’inquietudine dell’anima. La dottrina dell’amore nelle Confessioni di Sant’Agostino* (Rome: Abete, 1964); Daniel-Rops, *Notre Inquiétude. Essais* (Paris: Perrin, 1953); Jean Guitton, *Perspectives sur l’inquiétude religieuse* (Aix-en-Provence: Editions Provençales, 1947); Felice Nuvoli, *Il mistero della persona e l’esperienza cristiana. Saggio sulla teologia di Jean Mouroux* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1989), 113–155.

the “new.”<sup>12</sup> Man treasures novelty because, as Ratzinger explains, it is “a replacement for the loss of divine love’s inexhaustible wonder (*surprise*).”<sup>13</sup>

The negative concept of restlessness, then, has to do with the perception of self and world that is proper to a person who is disengaged from both self and world. This disengagement is the result of a rejection of the primordial goodness of creation, and, hence, of its source, the Father. The restless heart, which does not wish to see or acknowledge its own sonship, becomes unable to work and to use reality for what it is, and seeks in a disordered way to possess finite goods in the hope of securing its own idea of peace. That restlessness discloses a lack of faith is confirmed by Christ’s correction of his apostles’ concerns for the future.<sup>14</sup> Christ invites them to dispense with all anxiety (μεριμνάω) about what they will eat, drink, or wear the next day (Mt 6:25–34). They should not worry about what and how they will answer when they are called upon to give reasons for their faith (Mt 10:19; Lk 12:11). As he tells Martha, we should not be anxious about many things (Lk 10:41); or, positively stated, we should look at the cares of the world from the perspective of “the most important thing.” More radically, Christ warns that his followers should not permit anxiety over the cares of the world (μεριμνῶν) to choke them (Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19; Lk 21:34).<sup>15</sup> Christ, of course, does not invite man to live without any

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<sup>12</sup>Pseudo-Dionysius continues, affirming that “by reason of this beauty is every friendship, every communion. The Beautiful is origin of all things, as a creating Cause, both by moving the whole and holding it together by the love of its own peculiar Beauty; and end of all things, and beloved, as final cause—for all things exist for the sake of the Beautiful—and exemplary cause, because all things are determined according to It” (*Divine Names*, IV, 7 [PG 3, 701]). See Plotinus, *Ennead* I, 6, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>13</sup>Joseph Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ. Exercises in Faith, Hope, and Love*, trans. Robert Nowell (New York: Crossroads, 1991), 74.

<sup>14</sup>It is important to see that, in this light, “restlessness” is not a psychological sickness (although it could become one): it is a vice, and hence a rejection of a good. The term “restless” (ἀκατάστατον) appears in Jas 1:8; 3:8 to say that “the tongue is a restless evil no human being can tame.” It also means disorder or insurrection (ἀκαταστασίας) as in Lk 21:9; 2 Cor 6:5. The sense of wandering or idleness (ἀτάκτως), *evagatio mentis*, alluded to by St. Thomas can be found in 2 Thess 3:7 and 1 Thess 5:14.

<sup>15</sup>This is the negative sense of care (μεριμνάω); see also Lk 12:22–26. We shall

thought of the future or to disregard the world. His claim is rather that concern for oneself, which always has an eye to one's own future, lacks authenticity if it is unaware that the origin of man's life and of reality is a provident and benevolent Father, and not a hostile, jealous divinity.<sup>16</sup> In other words, Christ clarifies that regard for the future must also retain the memory of the Father's delight in man's created existence and of the eschatological promise of eternal fulfillment made to man through the patriarchs, kings, and prophets of Israel. Christ, then, wishes man to learn to look at the world and at himself with Christ's own eyes. Only in this way will man be able, as Christ is, to see in all things that the Father is the consistency of all that is real (1 Cor 2:16; Jn 1:3). It is when his concern for the future neglects or denies the concrete, eternal concern that the Father has for him that man becomes restless, seeks to possess in a disordered way, confuses pleasure with dwelling in beauty, and transforms the affirmation of self into nihilistic instinctivity. This is because, in his concern for himself and for his own life in the world, man is still inclined to believe that God is out to deceive him (Gn 3:1). Man suspects and fears that God ultimately does not desire his good. It is up to himself, then, to manage his existence, to plan ahead and make sure of things, so that whatever the future holds will not turn out to be against him.

In talking about the "cares of the world," Christ corrects a perception of self and of history according to which man considers himself an orphan. To speak in terms of Greek mythology, we could say that Christ overturns the notion that Zeus had to become an orphan by killing his father Chronos in order to secure his own immortality. Instead, it is God the Father who desires man to be part of his own eternity. Christ, then, urges man to relinquish his false understanding of God as an a-personal, immobile solitude. He destroys the idea that God is a solitary One who neither needs nor wishes to deal with man's affairs, and whose eternity, unlike man's time, is perfect stillness.<sup>17</sup> God, instead, is a triune communion of

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turn to the positive sense in the final section.

<sup>16</sup>See Bultmann's account of  $\mu\epsilon\rho\mu\nu\acute{\alpha}\omega$  in Gerhard Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1932–1979), 593–598.

<sup>17</sup>See Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Plotinus, *Ennead* III, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Aristotle, *Physics*, IV, 10–14, trans. Philip H.

love, the filial acceptance of which alone allows man to see clearly.<sup>18</sup> Made possible and elicited by the divine incarnate love, this seeing (faith) gives rise in man to a new sense of expectation with regard to the future, a hope that is not simply a wish for good things to come. This hope, instead, is a certainty for the future, a certainty stemming from the presence of the Father, who allows his glory to be seen in Christ (Heb 1:3).<sup>19</sup> Christ's presence does not detach man from time or from his concern for the world. It rather purifies man's feeble gaze of the mistaken fear that God has either forgotten him or has decided no longer to call him into the eternal love that God is. What Christ achieves then, from this point of view, is the restoration in man of the faith that recognizes the greatness of his own sonship, and the hope that knows how to receive everything from the ever-surprising love of the Father. It is here that the positive sense of restlessness begins to appear. Christ teaches man that man may rest, as Christ himself does, in the bosom of the Father. Nevertheless, as it is for him who proceeds eternally from the Father—the unity with whom is yet a third person—so man's "rest" is, at the same time, a restless relation of love according to which the more is given, the more one desires to receive and reciprocate (Lk 3:22; Jn 10:17; 14:31).

There can be no entrance into the Father's rest (Ps 95; Heb 4:6), however, unless man's "no" to God (Jn 1:10–11), that is, his affirmation of orphancy over sonship, is undone from within. Man's "no" to the nuptial dialogue that God wished to establish with him from the beginning is what gives him the illusion of being orphaned and casts him into restless anxiety about the beauty of his present existence and about his own eternal salvation. Hope cannot transform

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Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); and my "Restoration of Sonship: Reflections on Time and Eternity," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 32 (2005): 682–704.

<sup>18</sup>In his *Tractatus de gradibus caritatis*, Richard of Saint Victor contends, following Augustine, that "Love must see what it loves, since love is like an eye, and to love is to see (*amor oculus est, et amare videre est*)" (PL 196:1203b).

<sup>19</sup>For faith as encounter, see Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, 1, 28; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord. A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1: *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 219–425; Jean Mouroux, *I Believe. The Personal Structure of Faith*, trans. Michael Turner (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959). For a further reflection on this definition of hope, see Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*; Luigi Giussani, *Si può vivere così? Un strano approccio all'esistenza cristiana* (Milan: BUR, 1994), 147–212.

man's restlessness from desperate anxiety into an indwelling in the eternal love that gratuitously seeks an ever-new response of love—and hence, it is not really hope—unless man's sins and death are divested of their power to govern both his present situation and his destiny. Thus, ultimately, to say that the root of man's sinful restlessness is a distortion and a rejection of love—and ultimately of the Father's love—also has to do with fear of death. This is not a fear of bodily physical dissolution. Rather, it is fear of death understood as the lie lurking behind the deceitful promise in the disavowal of sonship: definitive rupture of communion with the heavenly Father.<sup>20</sup> It is only Christ's human and divine obedience, his filial and historical “yes” to the Father (Heb 6:19–20), that can transform man's fearful, restless, and calculating gaze at himself, at God, and at the world—from which spring his lack of faith and his hopeless rejection of charity—into the restless response of the beloved who desires to dwell ever more truly in the one who loves him; it can do this because it is confirmation that man's past sins and future death do not decide his doom (Jer 14:7–8). In order to bring man into his own eternal rest, the God of love who created him needs to “forgive” him, that is to say, to “rest” in him, in such a way that God may enable man freely to reciprocate his eternal love.<sup>21</sup> We now need to look at this mutual indwelling more closely.

## 2. *The Father's unfailing love*

Christ's human existence is from beginning to end a “yes” to the Father (Jn 6:38). He, whose own eternal being is relation to

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<sup>20</sup>See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Christian and Anxiety*, trans. Dennis D. Martin and Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000); Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, trans. Reidar Thomte (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980).

<sup>21</sup>“I give thanks to our Lord God, who made a work of such a nature that He could find rest therein. He made the heavens. I do not read that he rested. He made the earth. I do not read that he rested. He made the sun, moon, and stars. I do not read that he found rest there. But I do read that He made man and then found rest in one whose sins he would remit” (St. Ambrose, *Hexameron*, VI 10, 76, trans. John J. Savage [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1961]).

the Father, lives his being from, with, and for the Father in every moment of his human history.<sup>22</sup> In living this dialogue of love with the Father, in the Holy Spirit, in history, Jesus Christ, with every word and deed, teaches man to retrieve his own true center in the Father, and to find in what pleases the Father the super-fulfillment of his own desires (Jn 15:11; 16:24). Christ's obedience can be so complete because it is a historical expression of his eternal being. When he, disclosing his own self-awareness, presents himself as the one sent by the Father (Jn 6:57) and invites man to relate to the Father as he does (Mt 5:45; 6:9ff.), Jesus echoes the Father's eternal words to him: "this is my beloved Son in whom I take delight" (Mt 3:17; 17:5; Lk 20:13). Christ's only concern, then, is to be with man for the Father. Being one like us, he reveals that the greatness of man, as we also see in Mary, is to receive everything from him, to be for the Father, for the one from whom all light and understanding proceed. This is why, instead of looking ahead as men tend to do, Jesus reveals himself fully human in that he waits for the Father to disclose to him when his hour has come (Jn 2:4; Mt 24:36; Jn 12:23).<sup>23</sup>

Jesus' humanity can be seen in many different moments, most especially when his gaze reveals to man the substance of man's own heart (Mk 8:37; Lk 24:32), what lies within it (Lk 19:5–8; Jn 12:20–23; Jn 8:44–45), and with what unspeakable, firm tenderness the Father treasures it (Jn 17:3; Lk 22:15; Jn 14:16–20) and waits for it (Mt 26:69–75; Jn 21:15–19). In addition to the occasions when he marvels at people's faith (Mt 8:10; Lk 7:9), is angry at their unbelief (Mk 6:6), or when their rejection moves him to tears (Lk 19:41), there is one moment that is most revealing of his humanity and divinity. Christ's final offer of himself to the Father at Gethsemane and Calvary is able to transform man's restless existence into grateful reciprocation of the Father's love because it is both a divine and a human "yes." The study of this moment is a great vantage point, then, for grasping the positive sense of restlessness. Scripture tells us

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<sup>22</sup>This is perhaps the main idea of Ratzinger's Christology. See his *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990); id., *Behold the Pierced One. An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986); id., *To Look on Christ*.

<sup>23</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theology of History* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 29–50; Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, trans. John Zucchi (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 100–109.

that when at last the hour came, “he began to be sorrowful and troubled, . . . even to death” (Mt 26:36–38), and that he “offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death” (Heb 5:7). Christ experienced a radical interior agony. “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Mt 26:39; Lk 22:43–44; Jn 12:27). Contrary to what it may seem, Christ’s interior passion at Gethsemane, prompted by his impending death, is a confirmation that true restlessness is love’s ever-new reciprocity: God’s restless love for man, and man’s love for God.

Maximus the Confessor’s beautiful meditations on the mystery of Jesus’ agony clarify that Jesus’ request that the Father “take the cup away” from him and, immediately following, that it be done to him as the Father wished, indicate neither a divine will overpowering Jesus’ human request nor an internal disagreement. Jesus’ human drama at Gethsemane can be understood only in light of the Trinity, that is, in his relation with the Father.<sup>24</sup> In Christ, Maximus contends, there is a divine and a human will and they are harmoniously united without confusion or separation in the person of the Incarnate Logos; they both utter one “yes” to the Father.<sup>25</sup> There is no call for scandal if Christ, who “came mainly to redeem and not to suffer,” suffered terrible anxiety before his own death.<sup>26</sup> Why this agony, then? “It is proper of the human nature” to shudder before approaching death. It was crucial that Jesus reveal this weakness because, in so doing, he shows us that his Passion was no mere semblance, that “his sufferings were not apparent.”<sup>27</sup> He also reveals that man may not view his sufferings as an objection to the promise of eternity and fruitfulness made by the Father (Gn 3:15; Ez

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<sup>24</sup>Along with the vertical axis Father-Incarnate Logos, there is also, of course, the horizontal axis represented by Jesus’ relation to his disciples, who are unable to accompany him at this time.

<sup>25</sup>Maximus the Confessor, “*Opusculum 6: On the Two Wills of Christ in the Agony of Gethsemane*,” in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert L. Wilken (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 173–176 (PG 91, 65–70).

<sup>26</sup>Maximus the Confessor, *Opusculum 3*, in Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 192–198, 194 (PG 91, 45–56). The translation for *Opusculum 7* is also taken from this volume, 180–191.

<sup>27</sup>Maximus, *Opusculum 3*, 194; see also *Opusculum 15* (PG 91, 153–184) and *Opusculum 16* (PG 91, 183–212).

37:1–14). Thus, by disclosing his weakness, “he shows the reality of his human nature.” Yet, unlike ours, Jesus’ weakness is not a sign of sinfulness. One cannot lose sight of the fact that because of the hypostatic union Jesus’ human will was perfectly attuned to his divine will. His natural will (*physiche thélema*) “has been completely deified” and, as such, is not opposed to the Father’s will.<sup>28</sup> This, of course, does not mean that it is no longer human. Rather, it means that human freedom is no longer able to flee from the beauty it really desires; it is freely bound to the truth.<sup>29</sup> We do not see Christ opposing the Father’s will after a calculating deliberation regarding his imminent death. There is no opposition between the divine will of the Father and the Son, which, if so, would amount to saying that God is no longer God.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, his natural, human will subsists in the person of the Logos and hence, without violence, his human willing concurs with the Father’s will.<sup>31</sup> Christ’s human will, then, is neither overpowered nor annihilated by his divine will. This is why, says Maximus, once his anxiety has shown the reality of his humanity, he declares with all his human freedom “your will be done.” Had Christ not possessed a human will, he would not have humanly wanted man’s salvation. The beautiful suggestion of Maximus is that “even as a man was [Jesus’] will to fulfill the will of the Father.”<sup>32</sup> At Gethsemane, the person of the Logos utters a

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<sup>28</sup>Maximus, *Opusculum* 3, 195; see also *Opusculum* 24 (PG 91, 267–270).

<sup>29</sup>Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* XII, 11, in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5: *Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. H. A. Wilson (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 399.

<sup>30</sup>Maximus, *Opusculum* 6.

<sup>31</sup>In *Opusculum* 7, Maximus says that Jesus “possesses a human will, according to this divine teacher [Gregory Nazianzen], only it was not opposed to God. But this will is not at all deliberative (*gnōmikon*), but properly natural, eternally formed and moved by its essential Godhead to the fulfillment of the economy. And it is wholly and thoroughly deified by its agreement and concord with the Father’s will, and can properly be said to have truly become divine in virtue of the union but not by nature” (187). The “gnomic” *thélema* (will) is, for Maximus, identical to the *liberum arbitrium*. It belongs to the person and not to the nature, as the *thélema physikón* does. Since the human nature subsists in the person of the Logos there can be only one gnomic will. Because of this, the deliberation does not take place between the human and the divine wills in Christ. Gethsemane is a trinitarian dialogue between Christ and the Father.

<sup>32</sup>Maximus, *Opusculum* 6, 176.

human “yes” to the Father and thus both find “rest” in each other. As history witnesses, this rest, however, is nothing but the occasion for a further giving and receiving of God to man, and man to God.

Maximus’s reflections, which defend the distinctness and inseparability of divine and human freedom in Christ, enable us to see that the “restless rest” of divine love for man and man’s love for God is a mutual indwelling. Human nature is truly itself when it recognizes that it is created and that it remains created, that is, always coming from God and hence “filial” in nature. At the same time, what most corresponds to it, as Christ shows in Gethsemane, is to be “for” the Father. Yet this being-for is the expression of God’s free indwelling in man who welcomes him freely, even if in utter darkness. This means, then, that to be human has to do, first and foremost, with mutual indwelling: first of God in man and then of man in God. “Abide in me and I in you” (Jn 15:4) defines what it means to be a person. The classical understanding of the meaning of person as relation, and a relation of love, reaches its proper depth when this relation, “being from and for the other,” is seen as abiding, which is absolute in God, and participatory for man.<sup>33</sup> In this regard, human spousal love witnesses to the fact that unity, much more than mere physical contiguity, is the reciprocal presence of the beloved in the lover. As their offspring indicates, this reciprocal presence is a form greater than the two of them; it is another. That God desired to save man as man means, on the one hand, that, as Ratzinger comments, “the Logos so humbles himself that he adopts a man’s will as his own and addresses the Father with the I of this human being; he transfers his own I to this man and thus transforms human speech into the eternal Word, into his blessed ‘Yes, Father.’”<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, it also means that man’s dignity is to indwell in God by allowing the triune God to abide in him. Seen in this light, restlessness, then, is not so much either anxiety for the cares of the world or fear before a death that seems to be the final separation from the Father. It is the indwelling and reciprocity proper to love; that virginal “yes” to the other that is ever-new and eager to let the other be and to welcome him within oneself. A

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<sup>33</sup>This participation is to be understood both ontologically, and sacramentally: baptism is indeed the generation of a new creature (Gal 2:20). More on this in the next section.

<sup>34</sup>Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 41.

reciprocity, then, that always hopes for a greater, more intense participation in God's love.

Maximus's contribution can be carried a little farther. If we view Christ's life as a whole, it is clear that he had come for this hour. He foretold it to his disciples (Mk 9:31; 10:32–34), and helped them to accept it (Lk 22:32; Jn 17) and to live accordingly (Lk 14:27; Mk 13:9–13; Mt 10:29–30). Moreover, he also explained its meaning. He, who always understood his earthly existence as the Father's gift for man (Mk 10:45; Jn 13:1–11), explains at the Last Supper that his own death is the culmination of his love for them: his body and blood will be offered "for you" (Lk 22:19–20; Mt 26:28). After the Resurrection, he explains to them that all this had to come to pass so that they might have life in him (Lk 24:32), the same life he enjoys with the Father (Jn 3:16; 20:30). How, then, are we to understand what he means by "cup" at Gethsemane?

If we are to take the kenosis of the Logos seriously in terms of the foregoing, that is, the fact that Christ understood himself as the one who is for the Father and for man, and that he explained the paschal mystery as an act of unconditional love, then the "cup" also means that his suffering was for man's sake in relation to the Father. Christ's agony has to be understood within a trinitarian and christological framework. The one who suffers is not only human: Jesus of Nazareth is a human being in the person of the Logos. Mysteriously, then, this anguish is the expression of God's grief.<sup>35</sup> Not a suffering of God himself, but a divine suffering in relation to humankind. What we see here is a mysterious and real involvement of God in the history of salvation.<sup>36</sup> This involvement is that of the incarnate Son, in the Spirit (Heb 9:14) with the Father, for man. That Christ suffers "for man" could be interpreted in two ways. First, Christ's anguish expresses his concern that man seems to be condemning himself eternally by refusing the Father's love.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, V, 7. Undoubtedly, the cup also represents God's wrath. This meaning is presupposed and not developed here. See, among others, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 4: *The Action*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 338–351.

<sup>36</sup>See Marcello Bordon, *Gesù di Nazaret. Signore e Cristo*, vol. 2: *Gesù al fondamento della Cristologia* (Rome: Herder-PUL, 1985), 458–464; Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Life and Death in the New Testament. The Teaching of Jesus and Paul*, trans. Terrence Prendergast (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986).

<sup>37</sup>This is, for example, the interpretation of Pius XII in his *Miserentissimus*

Second, and more importantly for our investigation, Jesus' agony at Gethsemane is also, in a certain sense, a trial of hope. He knows that although everyone will be scattered, he is not alone, because the Father is with him (Jn 16:32).<sup>38</sup> Yet, through suffering (Heb 5:8–9), Christ must let his own sacrificial death be used by the Father to fulfill the promise of man's salvation. In this sense, the sacrifice Jesus accepts is to let the Father determine the time and the way his death is to be fruitful. Christ's "yes" to the Father is fully divine and human, not only because he, the Incarnate Logos, utters it as man, but also because he utters it gratuitously; that is, respecting the freedom of those to whom he was sent. More precisely, Christ entrusts to the Father his ardent desire for man to share in the joy he has with the Father, a desire for which he allowed himself to be put to death, so that this desire may be fulfilled as the Father wishes. Christ's trustful embrace of the cup reveals that Jesus' sacrifice of entrusting himself and his mission to the Father—and hence every previous and subsequent human sacrifice as well, since they all find their truth in the paschal mystery—is not a denial of life but rather the way that love for another leads to resurrection, i.e., the final, ever-new confirmation of love. Only in this way, as John Paul II says, is justice brought about by the Cross, a justice that comes from and returns to the Father who is rich in mercy. Christ's utter trust in his communion with the Father—even when, from the Cross, it seems that he has been abandoned by the Father (Mt 27:46)—allows him to undergo both agonies (Gethsemane and the Cross), and to be obedient and free, to desire (*eros*) man's salvation and to permit this to be at the same time gratuitous (*agape*).

To fulfill the Father's wish to save mankind does not only mean that Christ allows him to determine the form and time of man's salvation. Christ's gratuitous, ardently desired human and divine "yes" also means his return to the Father and the sending of the Spirit. In this way, the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son, can give to man the gift of the divine communion itself, and the triune God can indwell in man and allow him to possess his ineffable divine life freely. Christ's "yes" includes, then, an un-

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*Redemptor*, AAS, XX, 1928.

<sup>38</sup>It is in this light that we read Lk 22:43–44, a text that Maximus does not use in his reflections on Jesus' agony.

quenchable “thirst” for man to participate in his divine life.<sup>39</sup> On the Cross, once everything was accomplished, Jesus says: “I thirst” (Jn 19:28). In addition to the material meaning of this thirst, which, as the Fathers explained, demonstrates the reality of the Incarnation, it is possible to discover a deeper, spiritual meaning. Among the many interpretations of this locution, Ignace de la Potterie’s seems to be particularly helpful here. In saying that he “thirsts,” Christ is indeed asking for man’s salvation. However, de la Potterie clarifies that, as in other passages of John’s Gospel (Jn 4:14; 7:37–38), when Christ declares his thirst he also indicates his desire to give his Spirit, the Spirit of the Father, the Holy Spirit, so that man may see and welcome the love of the Father bestowed through Christ (Jn 14:26; 16:7). Since the one who thirsts is the one who is eager to give the Spirit, after having declared his wish—a wish misunderstood by the soldiers—Christ hands over the Spirit.<sup>40</sup>

Christ sends the Spirit from the Cross, not only so that faith in him may be possible, but also so that man’s hope may flourish out of the encounter with the crucified risen Lord.<sup>41</sup> In this light, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit, hope represents the introduction of man’s historical, linear time into the eternal, circular movement of divine love. Hope then is to look at oneself, the world, and God as God himself does, and to dwell, thanks to the Holy Spirit, within the communion of love that has come to dwell in the believer. Hope thus represents man’s entrance into God’s katalogic movement, by which God gathers up man’s life and leads it back to himself. Through the Holy Spirit, man learns that indwelling and reciprocating divine love—what we are defining here as restlessness—is a never-ending readiness to receive fulfillment in Christ from the free, sovereign, and always surprising love of the Father. If our christological and trinitarian exploration is accurate, then man’s “fulfillment” cannot be understood as the attainment of absolute stillness—this would be a relapse into the wrong sense of restlessness according to which one wishes to be alone with the Alone. The fulfillment that

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<sup>39</sup>Mary’s *fiat* is a sign of God’s thirst for man’s involvement in his own salvation that is, at the same time, an absolute divine initiative. See Balthasar, *The Action*, 351–361.

<sup>40</sup>Ignace de la Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus. The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus According to John*, trans. Dom G. Murray (New York: Alba House, 1989), 125–133.

<sup>41</sup>In this regard, it is always valuable to read Augustine’s *The Spirit and the Letter*.

Christ brings is the joy of ever-greater love, that trinitarian life according to which the more is given, the more one wishes to reciprocate freely and gratuitously.

### 3. *Fulfilled yet never satiated*

We began our exploration of a positive understanding of restlessness by correcting a common misconception of this term: it is often used to describe what we might better call the state in which man finds himself when he has rejected his own sonship. We suggested instead an examination of restlessness in terms of the theological virtues. We next saw how, in order to bring man back to a true way of seeing, desiring, and loving, the Father sent his beloved Son so that through his sacrificial death the radiant, beautiful glory of the Father's infinite mercy would be revealed within history. The Son, then, accepted the agony in order to restore man to the communion of love with the Father, and sent the Spirit from the Cross so that the personal, triune love might come to indwell the believer. In this way, God gradually generates within man the certainty that he will not be abandoned by the eternal. Human restlessness is thus transformed from a gaze that is tormented by thoughts of death or oppressed by the presence of an unsought, unwelcomed good, into a never-ending growth in the beloved: a growth that hopes, desires, and waits to receive the gratuitous and ever-new presence of this beloved. "What can be more sublime," asks Gregory of Nyssa, "than being in the beloved and welcoming him whom one desires in oneself?"<sup>42</sup> What seemed to be the arrival point (*telos*) is always a new beginning (*arché*); one never ceases to move "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18).<sup>43</sup> Restlessness, then, is for man the life of hope prompted by faith and informed by charity. The claim presented here, however, seems to give undue

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<sup>42</sup>Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, VI, trans. Casimir McCambly (Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1987), 130. Hereafter CSS.

<sup>43</sup>"He who looks at the divine, invisible beauty will always discover it anew since he will see it as something newer and more wondrous than what he had already grasped. He continues to wonder at God's continuous revelation; he never exhausts his desire to see more because what he awaits is always more magnificent and more divine than anything he has seen . . . she [the soul] never ceases to long for further vision" (Gregory of Nyssa, CSS, XI, 201–202).

weight to the concept of movement and *ekstasis* and to neglect that of rest and *enstasis*. Have we discarded “rest” too hastily? Are we not collapsing substance into change? A brief consideration of one of Gregory of Nyssa’s most fundamental insights—his conception of change (*tropé*)—will allow us to see that this is not the case and that the twofold rhythm of *enstasis* and *ekstasis* is the ontological expression of love that has revealed itself to be abiding gift.<sup>44</sup> This will provide the basis for us to conclude by showing that the form this positive concept of restlessness determines is, first and foremost, eucharistic.

The Platonism that dominated Nyssa’s world looked with suspicion on worldly change (*alloiosis*) and considered it an imperfection. That which remains, the intelligible, is its exact opposite: truthful and eternal. Seen in this light, man’s existence appears to be the result of some sort of fall from perfection. He then faces the task of a painstaking return to the unknown origin, an origin that is not perceived as a “thou” for man. Once the conversion to the origin is complete, man may resume perfect peace and rest, so foreign to finite existence. If Christianity follows this pattern, it leads to an interpretation of the beatific vision as sheer immobility, as the radical negation of time.<sup>45</sup> In this way, one unwittingly affirms the Platonic idea that change is a degradation, and hence a sort of evil, and that immobility and satiety are the only good. Gregory, too, acknowledges that change is part of finite existence. Nevertheless, Christian revelation teaches that the finite world is created rather than simply a fallen fragment of a perfect infinite. Thus, change (*tropé*), Nyssa contends, must be a perfection of created being, one that is called to endure. If creation is not in fact a degradation, its coming into existence from nothingness is a movement (*kínesis*) and a change

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<sup>44</sup>The following reflections benefit from the classic works of Daniélou and Balthasar. See Jean Daniélou, *L’être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970); id., *Platonisme et théologie mystique. Doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Aubier, 1944); id., “The Dove and the Darkness in Ancient Byzantine Mysticism,” in *Man and Transformation. Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), 270–296; id. (ed.), *From Glory to Glory. Texts From Gregory of Nyssa’s Mystical Writings*, trans. Herbert Musurillo (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Presence and Thought. An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. Marc Sebanc (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

<sup>45</sup>Daniélou, “The Dove and the Darkness,” 280.

(*alloiosis*) whose positivity is preserved in the mutability (*tropé*) that is akin to the movement of creation.<sup>46</sup> If created being loses this movement, “it will assuredly have cessation of its being.”<sup>47</sup> It is precisely this mobility that indicates the ontological difference between God and the creature. Whereas the Creator never changes, the remaining-in-being of finite beings is a perpetual birth.<sup>48</sup>

According to Gregory, however, movement is not an abstract, absolute category. Nyssa is not Heraclitus. The movement begins with, is always prompted by, and tends toward beauty. The movement of being Gregory is speaking of here is the movement of a spiritual, finite being whose most important attribute is freedom. It is important to see that for Nyssa this examination of movement is ontological and not simply “spiritual.” Human existence, indeed, seeks the perfect virtue, which is both a “moral” endeavor and, more importantly, the definition of God and Christ himself. The “theological virtues” are, then, the way of being proper to a spiritual being.<sup>49</sup> As free, finite spirit, the human being can then move toward the good or toward evil. In one of his most mature and beautiful works, *The Life of Moses*, Gregory explains that “we are in some manner our own parents, giving birth to ourselves by our own free choice in accordance with whatever we wish to be.”<sup>50</sup> Man, who, unlike an animal, is free, can become like an animal by following the evil passions, or he can become like God if he looks to the divine

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<sup>46</sup>SCC, VI, 123.

<sup>47</sup>Nyssa, *The Making of Man*, XIII, 1; id., *Against Eunomius* III, 6 in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5: *Gregory of Nyssa*, trans. H. A. Wilson (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 147–149.

<sup>48</sup>“The uncreated or Creator of beings always remains what it is. And always being itself, it does not admit an increase or diminution with respect to the good. The second aspect comes into existence through creation and always looks back to its first cause. By participation in the transcendent, it continually remains stable in the good; in a certain sense, it is always being created while ever changing for the better in its growth in perfection” (CSS, VI, 127); See also Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II, 25, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York: Paulist Press, 1978). Hereafter cited as *LM*.

<sup>49</sup>For a deeper reflection on the coalescence of being and spirit, see Claude Bruaire, *L'être et l'esprit* (Paris: PUF, 1983). See also my *Spirit's Gift. The Metaphysical Insight of Claude Bruaire* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

<sup>50</sup>*LM*, II, 3; II, 86.

beauty in which he already participates by virtue of having been created in it. If he chooses the latter he will be continuously transfigured in the good. Man's freedom does not stand before a choice between two equi-primordial possibilities. Since creation is a participation in divine beauty, evil is a denial of the original positivity that communicates itself to the finite being. Indeed, evil can look very much like movement. The Psalms are a striking witness to the unfair fact that the wicked seem often to flourish more than the just. In reality, Gregory says, evil is like walking on quicksand. "Movement" toward evil is immobility, an arid stillness that is a rejection of both God's and one's own being. God's mercy prevented man from being united to evil forever, and hence from sliding ever more into nothingness, by clothing Adam and Eve in skins borrowed from the animal world, that is, sexuality, mortality, and the passions.<sup>51</sup> The opposite of this negative movement is the most beautiful manifestation of change: growth in the good, the continuous transfiguration in the virtues by participating ever more in God who is the infinite, perfect virtue. "The perfection of human nature consists perhaps in its very growth in goodness."<sup>52</sup> According to Nyssa, then, one should not oppose movement to *enstasis*, desire to satiety, but movement to movement, desire to desire. The movement of created being is, then, progress in and toward the good, and its perfection is not uncreated immobility but rather ever-greater transfiguration in the good.

Philippians 3:13–14 is perhaps the scriptural passage that Gregory quotes most often. It may help us to recall the larger context of this passage in order to grasp Gregory's understanding of spiritual growth. In this chapter Paul first boasts of his own birth, education, and position within the people of Israel. After his encounter with Christ (Acts 9:5), however, there is nothing more precious for Paul than to "know him," to know the "power of his resurrection," "to share in his sufferings," and to "be found in him" (Phil 3:9). The things held so dearly before, which objectively were considered the highest graces anyone could claim, are now "counted

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<sup>51</sup> SCC, XII, 215–216; Daniélou, "The Dove and the Darkness," 272.

<sup>52</sup> LM, I, 10; I, 7. As the soul progresses in virtue, and thus is gradually purified of its sins, freedom becomes less active, due to the greater clarity with which the soul perceives divine beauty, which always remains a "luminous darkness." See Daniélou, *Platonisme*, 175–307.

as a loss for the sake of Christ” (Phil 3:7). Nevertheless, the encounter with Christ, which seemed to be the *telos* that would put an end to his human itinerary, is only the beginning: “Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward (ἐπεκτεινόμενος) to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13–14). The encounter with the love of Christ holds Paul in its grip, controls him (2 Cor 5:14–15), and originates in him an inexorable twofold concern: to run toward the one who has already reached him (Gal 2:20), and to manifest to the churches the love of Christ, which is now reaching others through Paul’s sinful flesh (2 Cor 11:28). The most perfect soul is the one that, like St. Paul’s, continuously tends toward that which has already reached it.<sup>53</sup> “Even now the soul united to God is never satiated of enjoying. The more it enjoys and is filled by his beauty, the more it burns in the desire for him.”<sup>54</sup>

How could a *finite* creature know no rest? Nyssa, obviously, does not consider the sensuous desires to be “infinite.” The satiation and subsequent resumption of these desires witness to human finitude. The “desire” (*eros*) properly called infinite is that spiritual, permanent tension toward the beloved: it is love (*agape*) in its greatest tension toward the one who takes delight in the soul and never ceases to seek it.<sup>55</sup> The union proper to love (*agape*) has its truth in a greater, truer indwelling of one in the other. The finite creature cannot rest because God’s goodness is infinite and his being is incomprehensible—God is a “luminous darkness”; that is, familiar, enlightening, and yet always other, ungraspable. These two characteristics of God’s being cause the infinite growth of the soul that looks for him: “This truly is the vision of God: never to be satisfied in the desire to see him; and it is inevitable that who sees, by the simple reason of his being able to see, burn in the desire to see more. Thus no limit would interrupt growth in the ascent to God, since no limit to the Good can be found nor is the increasing of desire for the Good brought to an end by any satiety.”<sup>56</sup> The soul that has been

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<sup>53</sup>Daniélou, *Platonisme*, 291–307.

<sup>54</sup>SCC, I, 51; VI, 127–129; XII, 217–218.

<sup>55</sup>SCC, XIII, 234.

<sup>56</sup>LM, II, 239.

grasped by Christ's love, while remaining finite, "becomes perpetually greater than itself" if it remains faithful to the hope elicited in him by contemplation of the good.<sup>57</sup>

Surprisingly, Gregory claims that this utter mobility is at the same time immobility. At the end of his commentary on *The Life of Moses*, Gregory explains that God fulfills without satiating Moses' desire to see him. He asks Moses to stand in a cleft of a rock, that is, Christ, who is the perfect virtue. In that way, Moses will be able to see not the face of God, but his back. Nyssa explains that Moses is not simply to "watch" God's back. God is asking Moses to follow him to the place where God wishes to guide him. Moses is not to invert the movement and attempt to reach God from the front, to transform his desire for the vision of God into a claim, or to suppose that his intellect can fully grasp God's mystery. Moses is not God, and as a creature he must follow him. Now, Gregory continues, the one who answered Moses is the one who came to fulfill the law that he gave him. The incarnate Logos is the one who asks those who want to be with him to follow him (Jn 1:38). And those who follow him will see his back (Jn 1:37–39).<sup>58</sup> Contrary to someone walking on quicksand, the one who remains "immobile" in the rock, in the perfect virtue, is the one who truly walks, that is, who grows into a stature ever greater than himself (*theosis*). Whoever welcomes Christ in faith and allows the triune love to dwell in him is anchored in the truth and will know a desire that is both always fulfilled and never satiated by divine love.

To give a full account of what Gregory means by "growth" would require an examination of what he means by *eros* and *agape*,

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<sup>57</sup>LM, II, 225. This is Gregory's commentary on Moses' question: "He still thirsts for that with which he constantly filled himself to capacity, and he asks to attain as if he had never partaken, beseeching God to appear to him, not according to his capacity to partake, but according to God's true being. [231] Such an experience seems to me to belong to the soul which loves (*erotikè tìni diathèsei*) what is beautiful by nature (*to kalón tē physei*). Hope always draws the soul from the beauty which is seen to what is beyond, always kindles the desire for the hidden through what is constantly perceived. Therefore, the ardent lover of beauty, although receiving what is always visible as an image of what he desires, yet longs to be satiated (*emphoretēnai*) with the very stamp of the archetype. [232] And the bold request which goes up the mountains of desire asks this: to enjoy the Beauty not in mirrors and reflections but face to face" [LM, II, 230–232].

<sup>58</sup>LM, II, 243–252.

something we unfortunately cannot do here.<sup>59</sup> For our purposes, it suffices to say that this restless growth does not indicate a quantitative increase, but rather a nuptial relation between the triune God and the human person. For Nyssa, as Daniélou explains, “the created spirit, not possessing being by its essence but rather as a gift, does not possess the good by essence, but as a gift, and hence can lose it.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, it is given to the finite spirit to participate really in God. At the same time, as we saw, being a gift, it must perpetually go out of itself in and toward God—the “ek” of St. Paul’s *epektasis* mentioned earlier (Phil 3:13). Obviously, God possesses his being by essence and not as a gift from another. Yet, if it is true that the divine processions are immanent operations in God and that God is love, it becomes possible to see that the difference between the Creator and the creature is not so much the difference between immobility and eternal growth in the good, but rather an analogical and real distinction in the being-given proper to love—which would be absolute in God (generation, spiration), and finite in man (creation).<sup>61</sup> With this, we do not mean to say that there is “change” or “growth” in God, as if God needed to become himself, à la Hegel. More simply, as Balthasar suggests, “through the incarnation we learn that all the unsatisfied movement of becoming itself is only repose and fixity when compared to that immense movement of love inside God: being is a Super-Becoming. In constantly surpassing ourselves, therefore, by means of our love, we assimilate ourselves to God much more intimately than we could have suspected.”<sup>62</sup> This eternal, always identical and always new movement of love is the “not yet” of Jesus’ eschatological discourses. In this sense, the “not yet” does not refer to new things, as worldly restlessness might imagine, but to the ever-more of the already. The Spirit of truth will come and lead man to the fullness of truth (Jn 16:13), the truth that Christ is (Jn 14:6), a truth that he received from the Father (Jn 3:35).

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<sup>59</sup>For more on this see Daniélou, *Platonisme*, specially 199–209. Also see Paolo Prosperi, “Può l’uomo vedere Dio?” (STL diss., Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2004).

<sup>60</sup>Daniélou, *L’être et le temps*, 103.

<sup>61</sup>See López, *Spirit’s Gift*, 152–183; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic History*, vol. 5: *The Last Act*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 61–109; Aquinas, *DPD*, q. 9, a. 5 and q. 10, a. 1.

<sup>62</sup>Balthasar, *Presence and Thought*, 153.

The “truth” then is the relation between the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit that is an absolute, personal, circumincessive love. The Father, then, wants to give this love that is God’s tri-personal being to man through Christ in the Holy Spirit so that man may enjoy God’s own friendship.<sup>63</sup> If this is the case, then, restlessness is the “movement” of abiding in a relation with the divine communion, a relation that constantly enlarges the human being so that he may grow ever more, from glory to glory.

To conclude these reflections I would like to indicate that when restlessness is viewed in light of the life of hope for an ever-greater participation in the divine love, which the encounter with Christ (faith) through his sacramental body has gratuitously generated (a life that is therefore a reciprocal indwelling), then it is possible to see that true human restlessness has a eucharistic form. Of this form, I would like to specify just two aspects.

The first aspect is that this new restlessness presupposes the replacement of any dualistic juxtaposition of work and rest with St. Benedict’s axiom, “*ora et labora.*” Work is not simply interrupted by moments of prayer, and prayer is not simply interspersed with moments of work. If this were the case, each would remain ultimately extrinsic to the other and both would be emptied of any real meaning. Prayer would be reduced to an intimistic, immobile, speechless silence, unable to welcome or to beget a word. Work, deprived of its aesthetic dimension, would become sheer, self-affirming activity. Certainly, it is impossible always to be dedicated exclusively to prayer. Nevertheless, if the foregoing treatment of “restlessness” is accurate, prayer becomes interior to man’s working. Moreover, prayer represents work’s permanent dimension (Lk 18:1), because it is the transfiguration of the desire, guided by love and faith, to behold the face of the one in whom all things consist (Col 1:16) and to offer the cosmos, transformed by human work, to him. Contemplation and asking, then, form the interior structure of man’s work; that is,

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<sup>63</sup>It is not by chance that Nyssa finishes his commentary on the life of Moses by saying what true perfection is: “not to avoid a wicked life because like slaves we servilely fear punishment, nor to do good because we hope for rewards, as if cashing in on the virtuous life by some business-like and contractual arrangement. On the contrary, disregarding all those things for which we hope and which have been reserved by promise, we regard falling from God’s friendship as the only thing dreadful and we consider becoming God’s friend the only thing worthy of honor and desire” (*LM*, II, 320).

the memory and offering that make human activity into a grateful participation in the charity whose infinite fruitfulness created the cosmos.

Second, as Paul's existence witnesses, the life of the Christian is taken up in Christ and given the same mission, the same thirst.<sup>64</sup> The fact that one has become (Gal 2:20) and is becoming (Phil 3:10) one with Christ means, on the one hand, the inexhaustible certainty that "whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's" (Rom 14:8) and hence willingly share in his sufferings (2 Cor 1:5; Col 1:24). One desires to rejoice in and to be found in Christ's victorious wounds (1 Pt 2:24) with the hope of experiencing the final victory of his resurrection (Rom 8:18)—a resurrection whose foretaste is the gladness and the freedom that comes from indwelling in Christ. On the other hand, being one with Christ—understood as we explained in the previous section as reciprocal indwelling—life's main urgency, its driving concern, is "that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor 5:15). One is called to take care of others (1 Cor 12:25; Mt 25:14–30) with the merciful patience and gratuitous freedom of Christ, who gave all of himself so that his Spirit, the Spirit of the Father, might conquer in man the evil that leads to death (Rom 7:24–25). For this reason, "knowing that we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor 4:7), life is governed by the logic of the resurrection, according to which what seems a loss, even an abjection, to the "restless" eyes of the world, is in reality man's "interior nature" that "is being renewed every day" (2 Cor 4:16). The world (Jn 17:9) considers this life that Paul (and the Christian) strives to live as the life of impostors, of punished, sorrowful, poor, and dying men (2 Cor 6:3–10). Instead, as it was with Christ at Gethsemane and on the Cross, this life is "given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:11). Bearing this contradiction is part of carrying the hope that Christ's restless, triune love offers, and the suffering it inflicts, as with his own, is not emptied out or neutralized by the certainty of belonging to God. As it was for him, the work of love can only be done through suffering; a suffering that is caused by the world's and one's own need for transfiguration. The indwelling and reciprocity proper to love allows us to embrace time and to recog-

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<sup>64</sup>SCC, XIII, 233–236; Daniélou, *Platonisme*, 252–258.

nize it as the place of the continuous, ever-surprising, and transfiguring eruption of the eternal. Time (*kronos*) is no longer the linear reiteration of moments that are unable to evade a feared or dreaded end, but rather the favorable, acceptable time (*kairos*) in which all things are used by the Father to confirm his unfailing love. Thus, the complete form of true restlessness, which is the true peace and rest, is eucharistic, filial existence: man's life is taken up by Christ and brought into communion with the divine triune love; it is broken, so that it can be continuously transfigured; and it is given away for the sake of others, so their lives, gathered in the *Christus totus*, may grow ever more in his beauty while resting in him who finds delight and seeks to rest in them. □

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