

## *The Texts of the Convivium*

### TAKING STOCK OF OUR RESEARCH

Dear friends of the Convivium,

I have the clear impression that the time is near, at least for me, to get to the destination I have been heading for, together with you, in several years of meditation and research.

It has become ever more necessary to *take stock* of such a long sailing voyage.

The first question I feel like asking can be expressed in the following words: *Who am I?*

And, basically, *What am I?*

The answer is complex and must be set out clearly.

First of all it would be good to establish *what I am not*.

First question: *am I my physical body?*

I think we can infer: the cells that make up my body undergo continuous change, they are born and they die, the body develops, grows and sooner or later dies, too; what survives is the mind, assuming one can define it as immortal, or at least as surviving physical death.

But isn't the mind, too, bound to vary, to change depending on its experiences? One may thus come to what seems to be – in experiences that evolve – the constant and immutable source. It offers itself as *the pure Self* of each of the innumerable beings that inhabit and will inhabit the Earth after physical death (assuming that the spiritual part of each one of us will survive).

One may say that the pure Self, even if it is the spiritual core of each personality, does not coincide with the whole personality in all its modes of being. What distinguishes Joe Bloke from John Doe is personality in all its expressions, whether spiritual, psychic and physical.

So far, we have outlined a pattern of man's personality. What we have to do now is make an even awkward attempt at describing in a similar outline what could be defined as God's personality, distinguishing three different persons, as they appear in the light of three different theological approaches:

1) the *Father* in Christian theology  
or the *One* in Neoplatonism  
or the *Brahman* in Hindu philosophy

2) the *Son* asserted in the Credo of Christianity  
or the *Nous* in Neoplatonism  
or the *So it is* that is to say *This*,  
a dimension in which God offers itself as  
an absolute One-Whole that is eternal and is  
not becoming

3) the *Holy Spirit* of Christianity  
or the *World Soul* of Neoplatonism  
or *Lord Ishvara* of Hinduism  
and similar gods, even though they are called with different names.

God, as the absolute pure Self, affects individual pure selves with the pure nature of its conscience as an ocean where all seas and rivers converge and mix and become united and where every distinction is abolished.

God as eternal consciousness without any more change is the point where all experiences converge.

God as the creative Being is the totality of points where primeval energy radiates into many forms of energy resulting from it.

Each one of them develops relatively independently and may also deviate from its course. God, however, acts to recover deviating energies and gradually promotes perfecting in all energies, regardless of what they are.

Ultimately such perfecting aims at achieving God's perfection.

All human beings are called upon to make their contribution to the divine work, according to the two aspects in this work that have just been mentioned.

First of all God stimulates in us humans the willingness to cooperate with Him.

Second, this willingness to cooperate needs to become active in the most effective way. In order to unconditionally adhere to divine will we have to silence what Kant calls the "sensible inclinations" within ourselves.

Ethics, according to the notion Kant developed, radically changes the motivations of our actions: it wants us to act solely in compliance with the moral law".

This means turning the moral law into an absolute, but disavowing that only God is the true absolute.

Compared to God, the moral law is just a means, a way to reach Him.

Ethics, which we rightly trace back to religion, wants us humans to be all inspired by divine Love, that creates us, supports us, leads our steps, makes us better at every step, develops our personality.

A true religious person, a mystic, a saint is a man who is in love with God.

Great saints, which hagiography is full of, could not understand how so many human beings did not love God ardently, did not devote their most passionate, unconditional, insane and frenzied love to Him.

Whoever truly loves a person longs to know everything about and concerning that person, seeks everything the loved person seeks.

In order to rid himself of any different and opposite tendency, man avails himself of asceticism. Thus he learns to control himself.

In order to avoid sin, i.e. acting differently from divine will, man can benefit from isolating himself where he can devote himself to study, work, meditation and prayer.

There are men and women who devote their whole existence to prayer and meditation; and they can do so only in solitude or by joining communities gathered in hermitages or monasteries.

Human love offers outstanding examples of attention spontaneously turned to the loved one, who becomes the object of exclusive thought, of continuous adoration.

Now we need to take a step forward in our discourse. In very few words we can say that *everyone's Self is actually a We*.

In actual fact no-one could develop their full potential if not in cooperation with others

I need these others to be myself fully.

Living is reciting a part and for this recital to have a meaning there must be an audience.

Emperor Augustus shortly before his death asked his friends: “Did you like how I recited my part?”

“Yes, yes” they replied all together.

“Well, then applaud”.

It is a practice followed by actors.”

Augustus is a character with quite a few questionable aspects. Regardless of the many possible reservations on that individual, it is beautiful to be able to say to oneself at the end of one’s worldly life that one has fulfilled one’s role well, just like a part in a play that must be recited well.

A similar success needs the approval of an audience. Imagine an actor playing without an audience, a preacher speaking obscurely in the darkness of a Church without believers, a teacher teaching no-one, a lover addressing his sweetest and most poetic words unable to recall even the haziest idea of a lover, a prisoner marooned in a dungeon where he can’t even hear the voices and steps of his jailers. Elsewhere I told the (true) story of two wretched old women who lived together. The older was renting a basement flat with two small beds, one of which she sublet to the other. Unlike the sublessee, the lessee was not a bad woman, even though I’d say she was extremely rough and uncouth. It was natural to refer to her as a “coarse peasant woman” (with all due respect for those who work the land). In any case, she trusted me and I inherited a small sum of money from her to keep her cat.

The other woman, a former showgirl – was a sort of remnant of the Belle Epoque. She must have been a beautiful and refined woman in her day. Unlike her friend, she expressed herself in a very refined and overelaborate, slightly Dannunzian language.

They had to live together to save money, but they hated each other deeply.

The “coarse peasant woman” was the first one to die. And after a few days I met the other one who came over to fetch an old iron that belonged to her. She was in a state of utter sadness. Even before I asked her why, she summed up her situation in a wonderful hende-sillabyc line which D’Annunzio himself would not hesitate to acknowledge as his own:

“I haven’t got anything left – not even hate!”

It would not be inaccurate to say that a human relationship may develop between the persecutor and the persecuted, between the torturer and his victim.

Basically I am a “We”. I split myself into a “me” and an “alter ego”, but also into a “me” and the totality of interlocutors with whom I forge some kind of relationship – regardless of whether it is a relationship of fondness, friendship, love, competition, rivalry, or, in the worst of cases a conflictual relationship, or in the absolute worst case in feelings of hate that wish to be fed like plants by rainwater.

One can be thirsty for hate, too, not solely for love and it might even be thirst that is not easy to quench. One at least finds some company by sharing hate, whereas loneliness is the saddest condition.

The cooperation we offer our Creator is all the more effective the more it works as cooperation amongst us creatures, as dynamic solidarity of each creature with all the other creatures.

In a similar situation what can each individual do to improve? I’d say: intensify the religious relationship with God, pursuing sanctification.

Also: cooperate with God himself in accomplishing the creation of the universe. This, too, is a religious task, which we can pursue together for the love of God and out of interest for everything God loves.

Interest in creation is aimed at individual creatures, each one of them pursuing their own perfection.

Love for God includes love for each creature, for each manifestation of beauty, for each value, for each aspiration or even frustration, for each interesting thing or anything of negligible interest or only seemingly so, for each expression of life, for matter itself, for anything having a body at the most various level.

We may judge all these facts as being either good or bad, but it is through all this that God makes its way.

The final destination is where the Kingdom of God triumphs over all things. It extends “in heaven as it is on earth” and becomes “of this world”. Here God replies to the invocations in the Lord’s prayer “Hallowed be your name, your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”.

The total triumph of the Kingdom of God can in no way be defined as a mere acquisition of power and supremacy. The kingdom of God is a Kingdom of love. Love is self-giving. God conquers all things giving himself to them, and becoming a gift without limits.

We can identify a number of acts or stages in this self-giving. Act I is the fundamental one in which God, being pure spirit, becomes pure corporeity.

This corporeity evolves and God intervenes at each stage in this evolution to realize ever newer syntheses, ever newer creatures.

These should be more evolved and ascending when they do not take the form and energy of opposite forces, that thwart or are falsely receptive and actually stifling, and in any case deviant and which can be defined as negative.

Thus one moves from an evolution scale, which from the subatomic realm gradually goes up to the realm of atoms and molecules and matter, and then on to that of human beings, of the plant and animal kingdom, and on to anthropoid animals and finally to man.

In human beings there is a spirituality which is both open to the religious relationship with God and engaged in humanism. In the term “humanism” we can include research in the most diverse forms of spiritual quest; we can also include all forms of poetry and art, as well as any technique and work sector, any constructive action and every good policy.

Religious perfection can be found in total submission to divine will. Humanistic perfection can be achieved when one associates in the most effective way to that divine initiative that wants to bring about a better world and is aimed at achieving a perfect creation.

Human beings cooperate with God, who acts by giving Himself to them to an extent which in the end becomes whole and absolute. The cooperation of human beings consists in becoming receptive to God’s self-giving as much as possible. I am saying “as much as possible” because it does not seem possible at all to describe what will be the ultimate condition, of humans achieving full and perfect union with God.

It takes some daring to get to and stop at what may be defined as intermediate situations.

Letting imagination go we may picture men and women endowed with psychic power that allow them to know facts and events that are remote both in time and space, which would be impossible to know through normal means, through ears and eyes, even if the power of our ears and eyes were enhanced through special means.

We can imagine machines that can engrave matter with extremely rare and unprecedented strength.

We can imagine those powers that emerge from a spiritual life of extreme concentration, that is enhanced beyond limits.

Here the miracles conveyed by saints would be increased almost to the point of being unthinkable”.

Let’s now try to imagine what the positive impacts of *parousia* could be: that is, in our view, the final return to earth of Christ accompanied by all his angels and saints and all the souls that have become sanctified in heaven. They will come to form a power, such an unprecedented and formidable capacity that is able to renew human beings living on earth and able to change them physically, too, to the extent that they approach not only the fullness of sanctity, but also comprehensive, total and absolute perfection.

In these signs we can discern the step of a stairway that in the end will allow us to ascend to infinite perfection, to boundless happiness that never wanes.