

Who Are You O Lord?

A Franciscan View of God

The Experience of Francis

God is outward-moving love,
deeply in love
with creation.



The Mystery of God

The Most High and Supreme Eternal God

Trinity and Unity,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

. . . [who] is

Without beginning and end,

Is unchangeable, invisible

Indescribable, ineffable,

Incomprehensible, unfathomable. . .

gentle, lovable and totally desirable. . .

“Earlier Rule” 23.11



The Trinity is a communion of persons-in-love.

The God Francis is:

Relational

Highest Good or love

Humility

**“You are Love, charity . . .
You are humility.”**

“Praises of God” 2.4



“The eternal God has humbly bent down and lifted the dust of our nature into unity with his own person.”

Bonaventure

Bonaventure

God is to be considered altissime et piissime, that is, God is to be considered “most lofty and most intimately” related to us.

To live in the mystery of God is to live in between God’s utter transcendence and God’s personal embrace. Brev. 1.2 (V, 211).

God bends over in love to embrace this tiny fragile creation and to bring it into unity with his divine nature in and through the humanity of Christ.

Incarnation is God's *involved goodness*.

“O sublime humility!
O humble sublimity!
The Lord of the universe,
God and the Son of God,
So humbles himself
That for our salvation
He hides himself
Under and ordinary piece of bread!
Brothers, look at the humility of God
and pour out your hearts before him!”

Letter to the Entire Order 26-28

To see the humility of God in the world is to live in the mystery of Christ.

Christ is the sacrament of God. We live in Christ in and through the “Spirit of the Lord.”

The Spirit of the Lord enables us to penetrate the depths of created reality in which God is hidden.

“The God of Francis was a God who delights to be with the simple and those rejected by the world.”

Thomas of Celano



Incarnation:

- ⌘ The key to God's humility lies in the relationship between the Father and Son...
- ⌘ ...as Word and Image the Son expresses everything the Father is in one other than the Father.

Humility here is not designated by the poverty of the earthly life of Jesus; rather, it is simply another name for the divine love for humankind, a love which always has its source in the Father Most High.

Humility of Incarnate Word reveals an antecedant humility in the heart of God.

Humility is *love bending low*



Jesus is:

- ▶ The humility of God
- ▶ The beloved Son of the Father
- ▶ The image and likeness of God



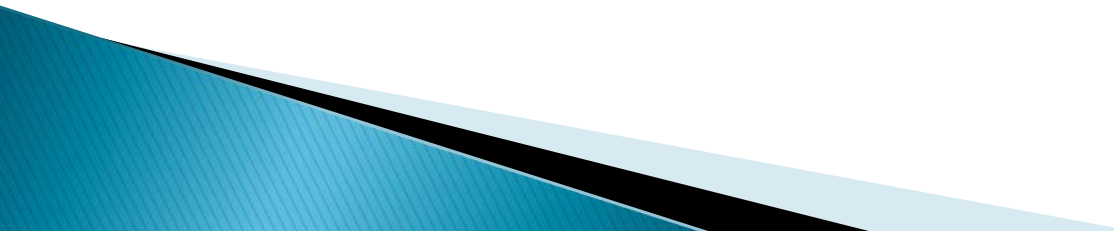
Humility is not an attitude or virtue. It is what God is by which he gives his very self in the incarnation of his Son.

“The humility of the incarnation and the charity of the passion occupied his memory particularly, to the extent that he wanted to think of hardly anything else.” (1Cel 84)

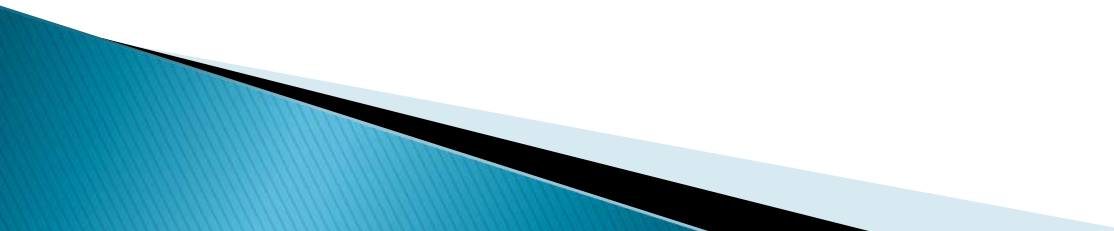
Revelation is the movement of God to us. It proceeds in hiddenness and is grasped only in faith.

...from the one who is Son we come to know the Father and Spirit in a specifically Christian sense.

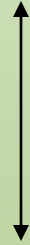
“We discover in Jesus the divine clue as to the structure and meaning not only of humanity but of the entire universe.”



TRINITY – CREATION – INCARNATION

- ▶ Creation shares in the mystery of generation of Word from the Father
 - ▶ Creation and Incarnation are same act of God's self-giving love. The God who creates is the God who saves.
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Father - Word - Spirit



Incarnate



World

**God is not an isolated
autonomous independent being
but rather:**

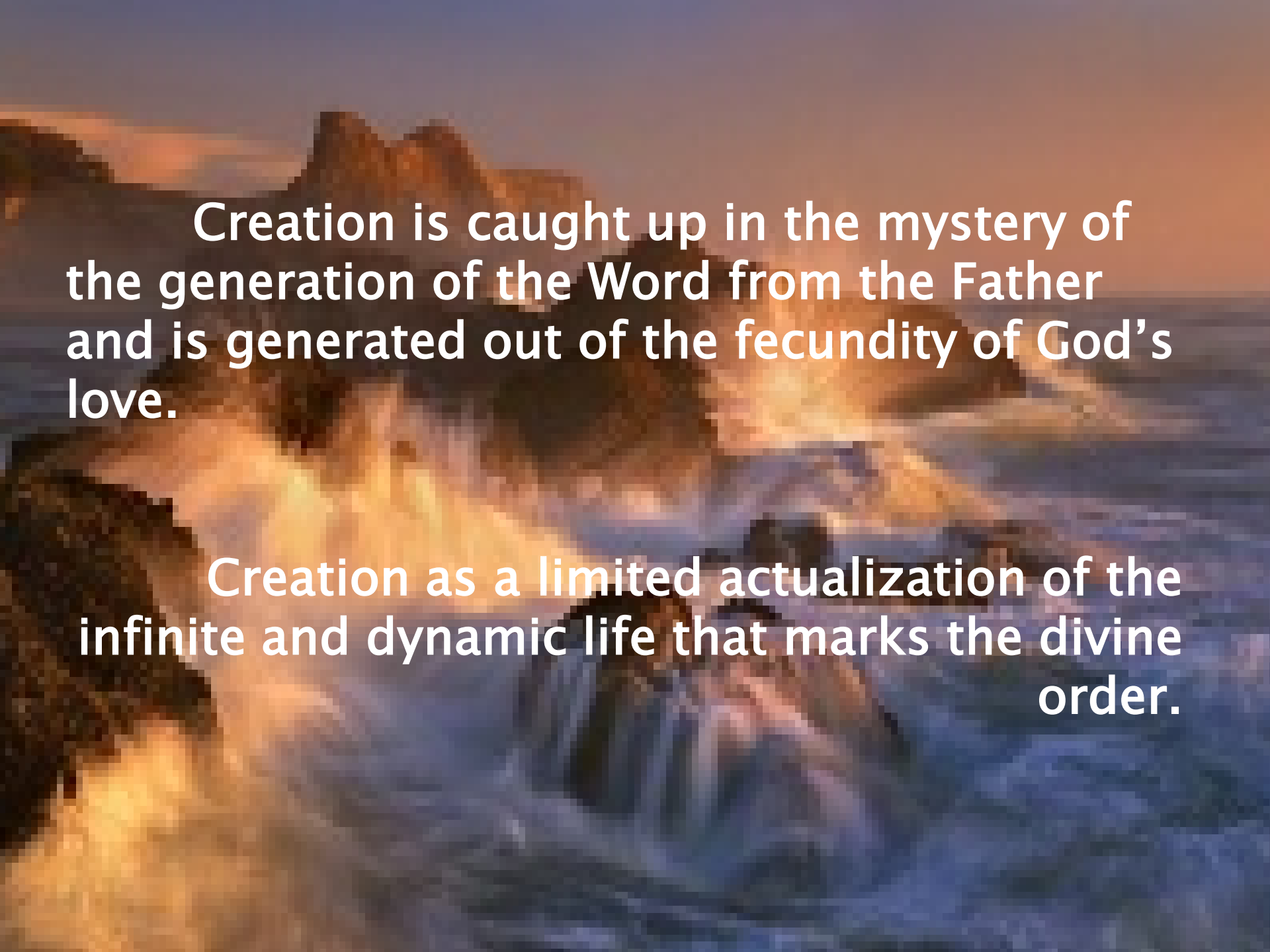
 **outward moving**

 **other-centered**

 **self-communicative love**

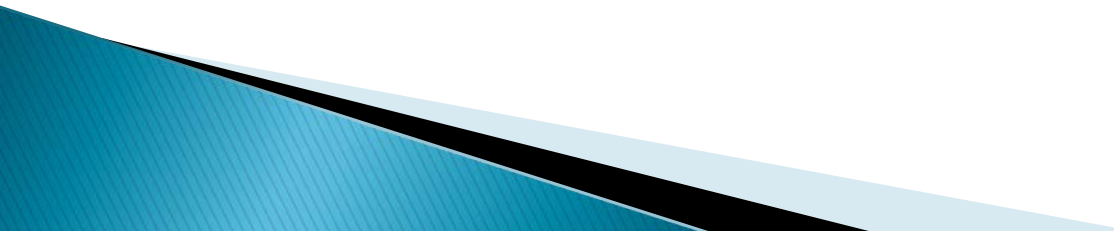
 **whose essential life is**

 **marked by personal gift.**



Creation is caught up in the mystery of the generation of the Word from the Father and is generated out of the fecundity of God's love.

Creation as a limited actualization of the infinite and dynamic life that marks the divine order.

- ▶ Creation is co-spoken with the eternal Word and bears within it a drive towards the spiritual: matter tends toward spirit.
 - ▶ It is ordered to the emergence of the human person in which the drive of the whole of nature is brought to its inner-worldly end.
 - ▶ The human represents the most noble potency of the created order, since he/she is capable of receiving the deepest, personal self-communication of God.
- 

Big Bang

15 thousand million years

1 thousand million years

300 thousand years

3 minutes

1 second

10^{-10} seconds

10^{-34} seconds

10^{-43} seconds

10^{32} degrees

10^{27} degrees

10^{15} degrees

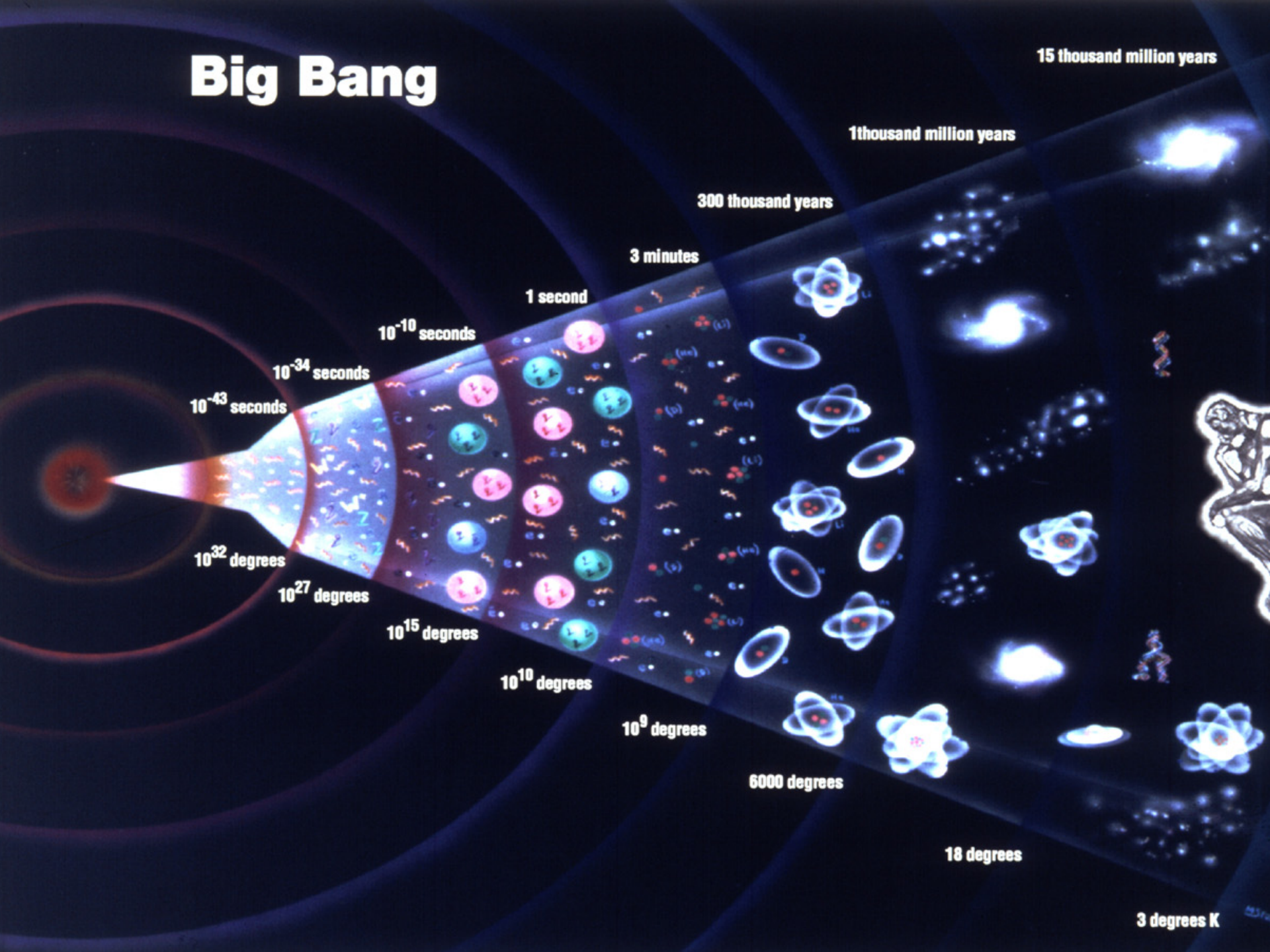
10^{10} degrees

10^9 degrees

6000 degrees

18 degrees

3 degrees K





**Creation is directed
toward Christ**

**Fullness of Christ
includes human
and
non-human creation**

A Christic Universe

Two Reasons for Christ

SIN

Fall

Human corruption

Need for Redemption

Mythic Consciousness

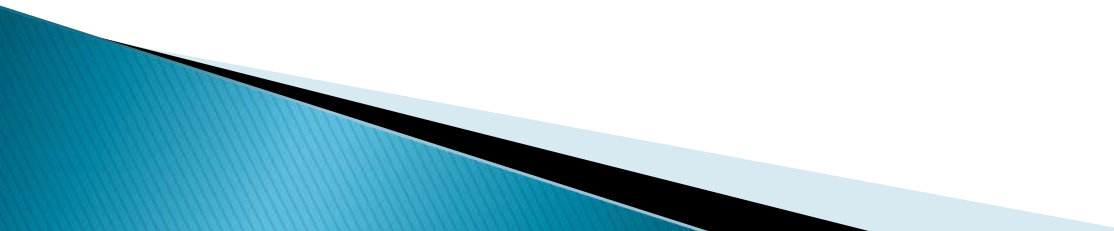
LOVE

Christ is first in God's
intention to Love

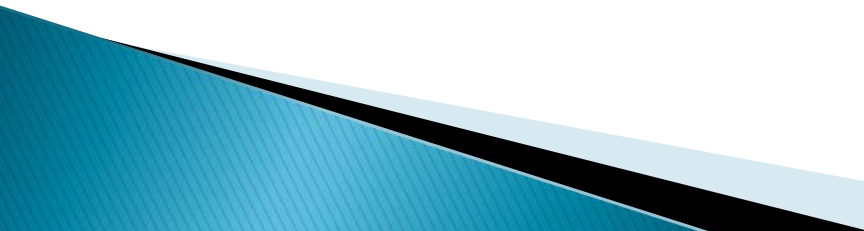
Christ symbolizes unity
in Love

Redemption

Mystic Consciousness

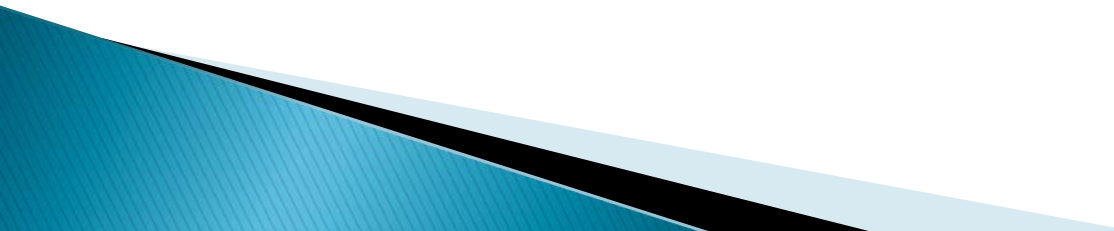
- ▶ The Incarnation is willed for its own sake and not because of a lesser good. The reason for the Incarnation is the excess love and mercy of God.
 - ▶ Christ is not ordained to us but we are ordained to Christ. Col 1:15; Eph 1
 - ▶ Christ is first in God's intention to love.
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Incarnation – Creation

- Cosmic order is a vast symbol in which God speaks his own mystery into that which is not himself. Material reality does not exist as a self-contained order but bears within it a drive toward the spiritual.
 - *All of creation is incarnation*
 - The world receives the self-gift of God into its inner depth. This gift of God does not destroy creation but perfects it and brings it to completion.
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The Primacy of Christ

- ▶ Christ is first in God's intention to love.
- ▶ The world is like a crystal lamp illumined by the light of Christ from within.
- ▶ Everything is a "little word" of God.
- ▶ God "speaks" the depths of his heart in the rich diversity of creation.

- ▶ Creation is not mere physical matter; rather, it expresses God's infinite love.
 - ▶ God "speaks" the depths of his heart in the rich diversity of creation.
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All Creation Belongs To Christ

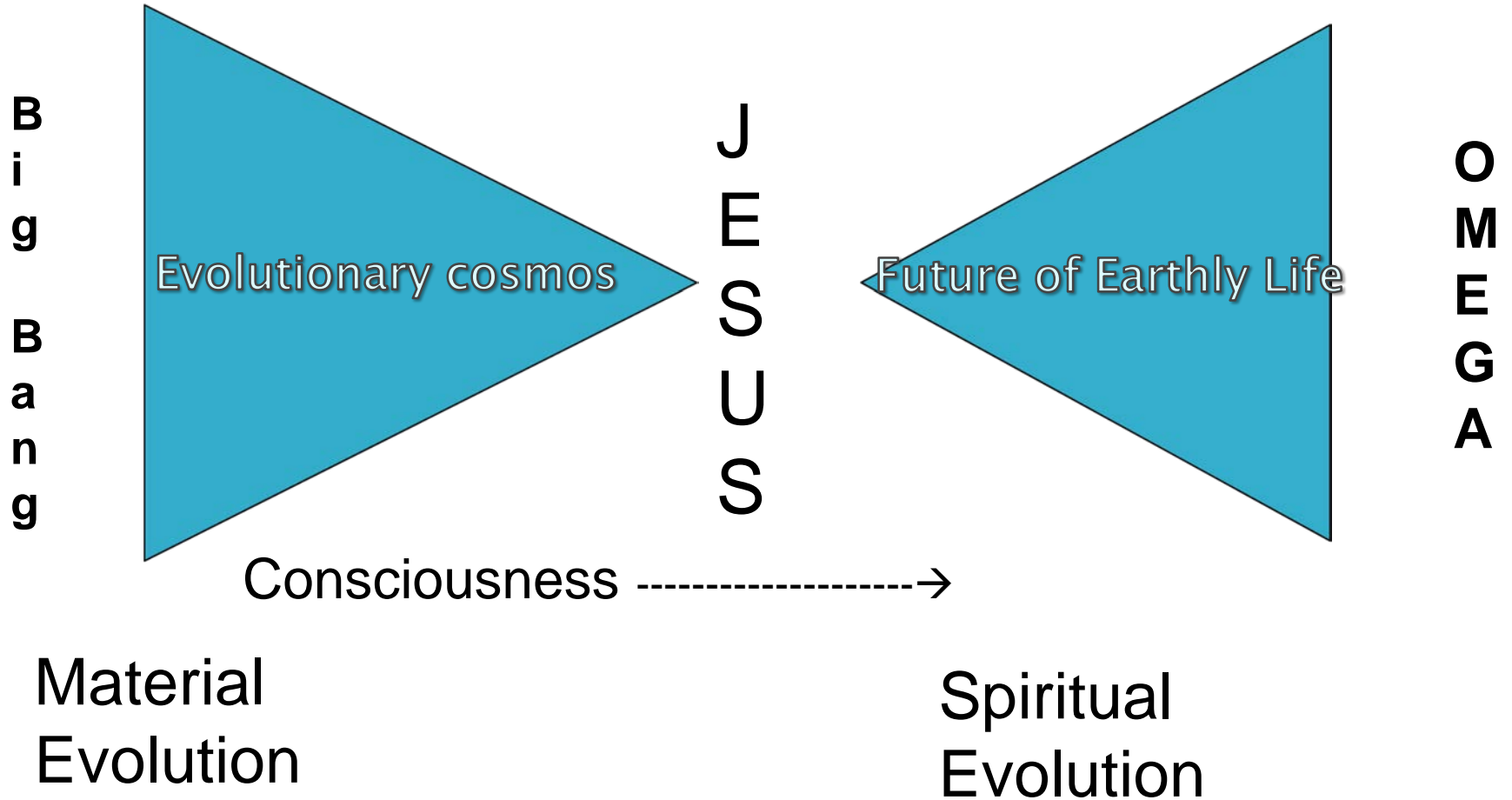


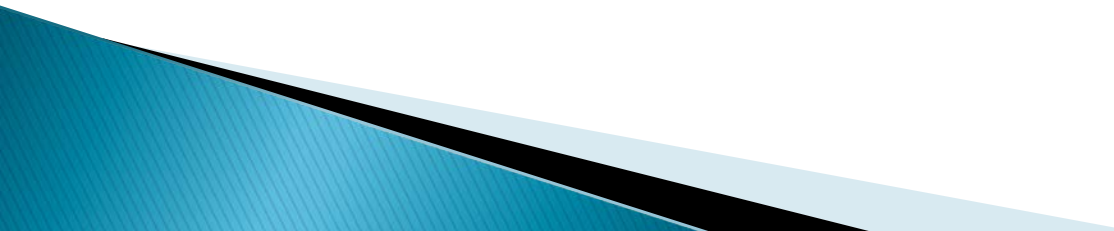
INCARNATION

As the Word is the self-expression of the Father within the Godhead,

the humanity of Jesus is the fullest objectification of that self-utterance within the created world.

CHRISTOGENESIS



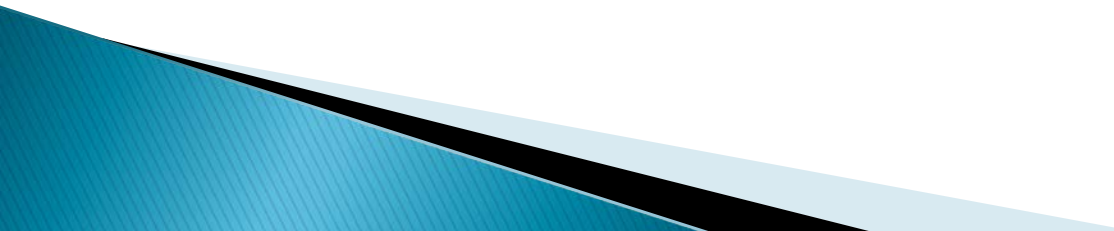
- The historical life of Jesus is, in time, the **eternal mystery** in which all created reality is grounded.
 - Humanity of Christ unlocks to us the **meaning of all reality** -- created and uncreated.
- 



“Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate.”

Teilhard de Chardin

Incarnation = act of cosmic completion.

- ▶ **Christ is not ordered to us but we to Christ.**
 - ▶ **The whole creation is made for Christ**
 - ▶ **Christ does not save us *from* the world.**
 - ▶ **Rather, Christ is the reason *for* the world.**
- 

The deepest truth about the created world is that it has the potential to become, through God's grace, something of what has already come to be in the mystery of Christ.

What has happened between God and the world in Christ points to the future of the cosmos.

It is a future that involves the **radical transformation of created reality** thru the unitive power of God's creative love.



The issue of overcoming sin is a matter of overcoming all obstacles that stand in the way of the accomplishment of God's creative aim -

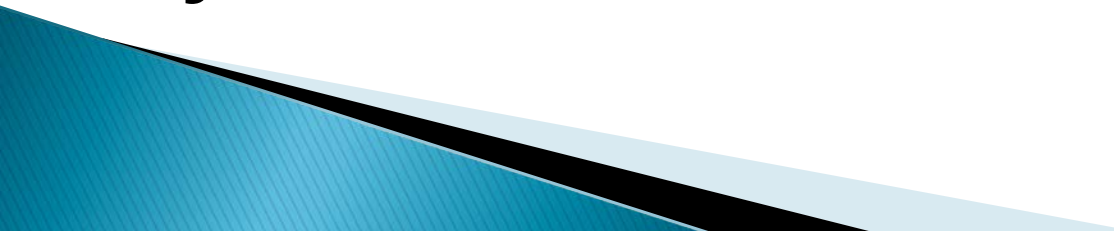
which is the fullest possible sharing of life and love between God and creation.



A world without an incarnation is an incomplete world.

***GOD IS NOT AN ABSTRACT
CONCEPT BUT A LIVING
REALITY OF LOVE.***

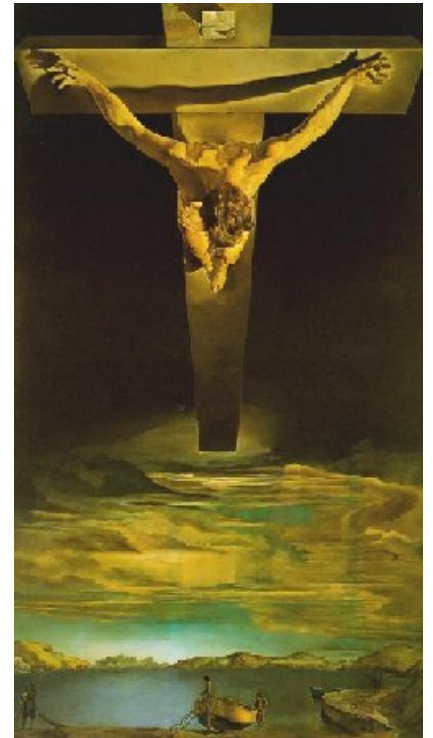
***Franciscan Life:
Living in the Spirit of the Lord***

- ▶ Following Jesus, the Way, means to embrace the world in humility as God embraced the world in the incarnation.
 - ▶ Not so much a static model of an ideal Jesus, as it is a pattern, the dynamic form of the Gospel which is shown to us by Jesus' life.
 - ▶ To go about this world and embrace it as Jesus did.
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Francis met the God of ecstatic love in the humble figure of the crucified Christ.

This meeting became the basis of encountering God in the particularity of every other where the humility of God is hidden.

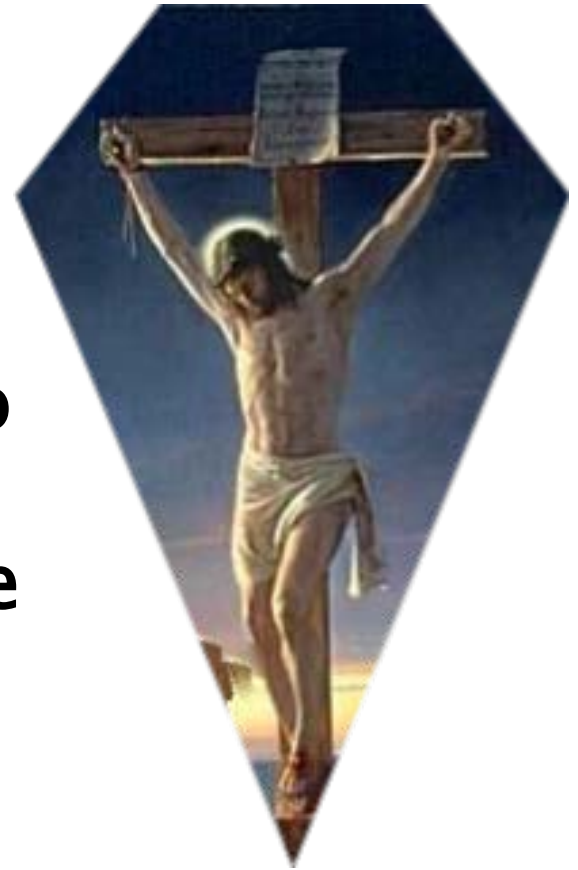
**God bend's down in love
for every single person
and creature and,
through suffering and
death, brings each one
into the loving embrace
of the Trinity.**



Bonaventure emphasizes the cross as the humility of divine love and the way to human love.

✧ **...the cross is the most intense revelation of divine humility.**

✧ **...the piercing of the human heart of Christ is the opening to humanity of the depth of divine love embodied in the love of the Incarnate Son.**

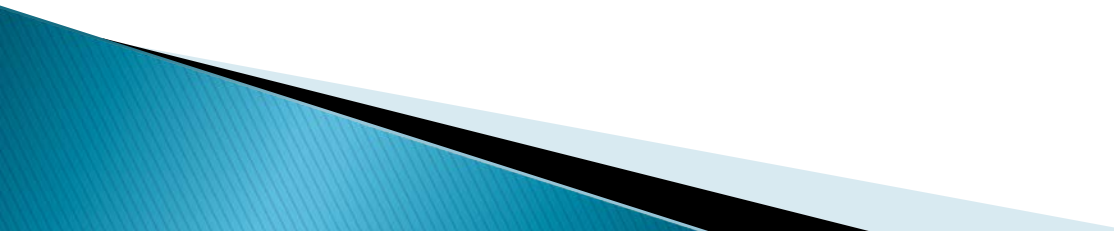


The mystery of the cross is the mystery of God fully communicating the mystery of love in his radical openness to and acceptance of the human person

**We are called to live in cruciform love—
to be vessels of compassionate love.**

The more Francis entered into the mystery of Christ in his own life, the more he recognized Christ in the people and creatures around him.

Each person and creature led him to embrace Christ.



“Even for worms he had a warm love, since he had read this text about the Savior: *I am a worm and not a man.*” That is why he used to pick them up from the road and put them in a safe place so that they would not be crushed by the footsteps of passersby. . . .Whenever he found an abundance of flowers, he used to preach to them and invite them to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason.”

Thomas of Celano

In Bonaventure's view, one who knows Christ knows God's love, and one who knows God's love knows each thing of creation as the expression of this love.



The word “God” denotes inexhaustible love in which love of the other is love of God.

This love is God’s goodness shining through everything that exists, including the fragile things of creation.

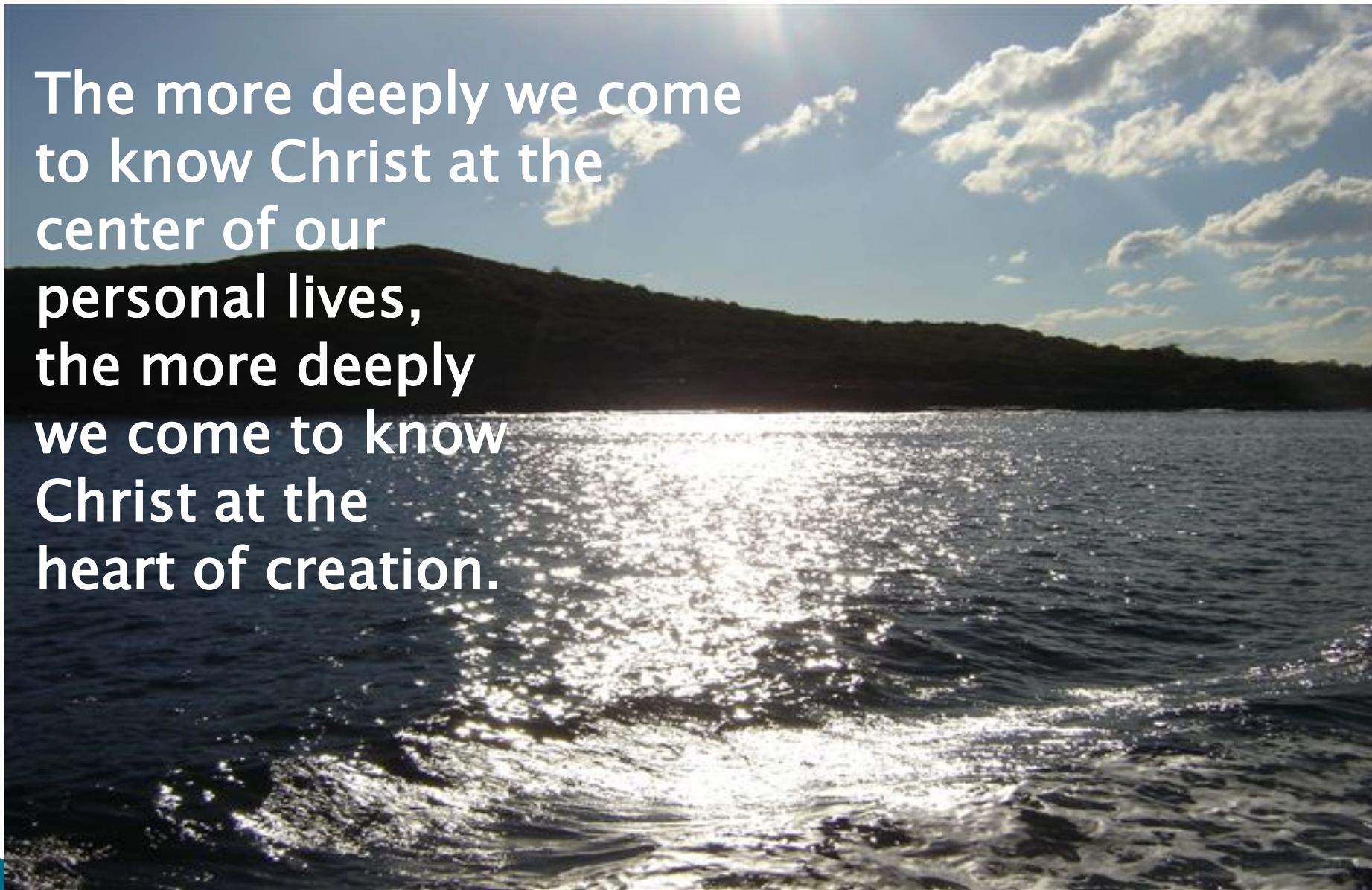


☪ ...each person images God precisely in the expression of goodness.

☪ ...each person or creature is a little “word” of the Word of God, and expresses the goodness of God.

☪ God “speaks” his love in the manifold variety of creation

The more deeply we come
to know Christ at the
center of our
personal lives,
the more deeply
we come to know
Christ at the
heart of creation.



Cooperative Co-Creators

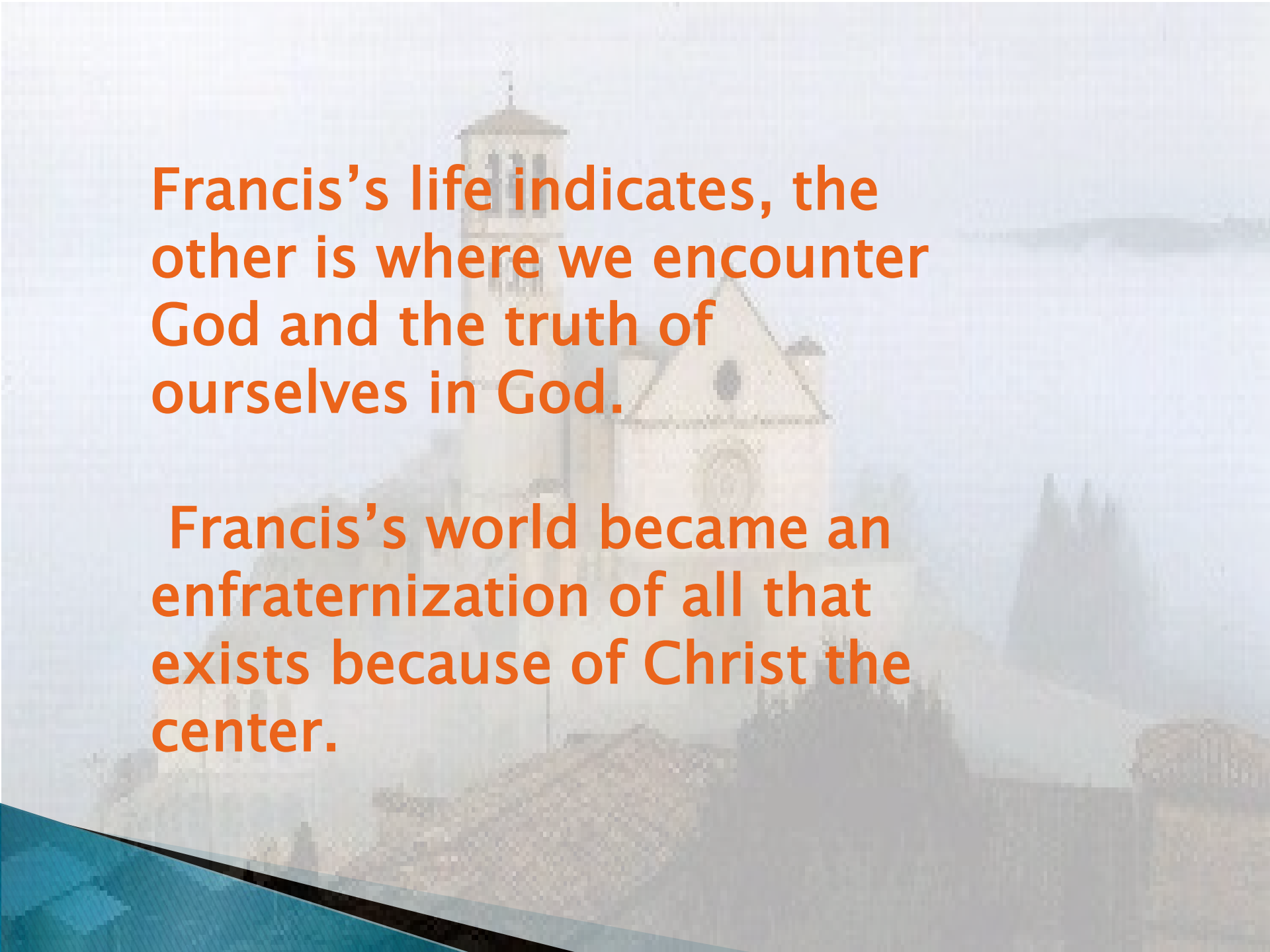
The mystery of Christ and our human lives are intertwined.

We are part of an ongoing cosmic process that demands our commitment to it.

The fullness of the Incarnation depends on our cooperation to “christify” the world.”

To be “in Christ” is to abandon thinking of oneself only in terms of categories and abstractions by which one may be externally related to others and to coincide with oneself as a transcendent center of energy that lives in God and in one’s neighbors—because that is where the Christ lives, in God and in us.

Beatrice Bruteau



Francis's life indicates, the other is where we encounter God and the truth of ourselves in God.

Francis's world became an enfraternization of all that exists because of Christ the center.

"Canticle of Brother Sun" (1225)

Francis's world was bathed in light.
He lived from the depths of a transformed
consciousness:

"Praised be You, my lord, with all your creatures,
especially Brother Sun,

Who is the day and through whom You give us
light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great
splendor; and bears a likeness of You,
Most High One."

Living in relation to a humble God should cause us to look more deeply at concrete reality ...that is where the goodness of God is hidden.

We are called to contemplate the goodness of God in our world.

Only through the mystery of our lives does Christ become the center of the universe.



A God-centered life that makes space within oneself to receive the other and to go out and embrace the other in love, even our enemies.

We are to see God's goodness shining forth in the other and to unite ourselves with what we see; to love by way of compassion.



One who lives in Christ knows the humility of God, and one who knows God's humble love knows the power of love which can heal a broken world.

