

Rafferty on the Human Person

The human person cannot be located within or be a part of the human soul, for then Jesus Christ of Nazareth would have had to have been, and still be, a human person (because the Church teaches that the human soul in Jesus of Nazareth is identical to or is the same as ours). The Church teaches also that the Son God (Jesus of Nazareth) did not cease being God at his Incarnation and, by definition of person, there cannot be two (2) persons in one (1).

I'm far from knowing or grasping what it means to be a (human) person in the Catholic tradition. But I don't think it's an attribute of a human being for otherwise God would be an attribute of himself (which is crazy). And I have no insight into the contention that the human person is an attribute of or is part of his human soul. I want to believe that personhood is as real as, say, the human body or human soul. What might be helpful here is whether it is true that all human beings or human persons share a common or singular (human) nature analogous to the three Trinitarian Persons sharing the singular Nature of God. But the Nature of God is, I think, God himself, whereas the nature of man is not, say Anne Gardiner, Stevo, or HG-Hanink, which is to say that human nature has no independent existence (ie., apart from really existing in human beings).

Please carefully read the attached pages. (They are also reproduced in this website below this piece and are titled "Aquinas on Jesus Christ Being a Human Being, but Not a Human Person"). I maintain that not one dot of what I say here, is in any way inconsistent with Aquinas' thought on the same.

As I understand it, before the advent of the revelation of the Incarnation and of the Trinity, the concept of "person" remained "un-thought of period" (not even, by say, and for e.g., Aristotle, Plato or Socrates, or even by the person who initially related in Scripture that God made man "in His own image". I take this to mean that God made man a person, and that he is so "no less" than is Jesus Christ a person (with the only difference being that Jesus Christ is an "uncreated, divine" person). And since the Father (and, therefore, also the Son) are persons, and being God, are also "non-reducible as persons", then it should follow that each human person (say, you or me) is also non-reducible – not even to his or her human soul or to the union of his soul and physical body. The human person has those things, but he is "not" those things. He only receives them so that he can act as a true person – one who knows that he is a (free) person and therefore exists, not to be autonomous, but rather to be "relational". God, the Father, is "not" autonomous because being autonomous is foreign to being a person. God is relational as the Trinity makes so clear. The only thing that the Father did not, and could not, give to his Son was his own Person. Even the Father cannot cease being the person who he is. So, I maintain that the human person (which, by the way, is the only true "non-universal" – meaning there can be no idea or concept of person – detached from "a particular" person – say you or me, and whereas, and for e.g., the concept of tree-ness exists "independently" of any or all particular trees) is reducible to nothing less than to a creative act of the Trinity in the very act of loving.

So, what does all this mean? Several things; and here are but three (3) of them: 1) The call to new Christian evangelization should not be "that Jesus loves you and wants to save you", but rather the Christian evangelizer should go out and proclaim to the whole world what it means to be a person. A person, is by definition free, meaning that God will never manipulate him or her, and relates to, and cares for him or her precisely as he relates so (loves so) his own Son-and maybe even more so in that we are so lost due to the vice grip of original sin bearing down on the human heart. 2) If what it means to be a person is understood truly, then there is no need to tell the person, who understands so, that he should love his enemies as he loves himself – that would already be written on his heart. And three (3): There would be no need to squabble over whether the unborn human conceptus, zygote, embryo or

fetus is an intact human being/ person, because all we need to know here is that doubtless it is assuredly on its way to becoming so. Only a financial idiot would argue that an uncut, unpolished diamond has no inherent value. Just so, only a moral idiot would argue that the fetus in the womb of his mother, not yet being an [intact](#) human being or person, has no inherent human integrity, and no infinite value-for what it is on its way to becoming.

I leave the reader with this observation of Michael Casey in his [Fully Human Fully Divine](#) (2013), p,196: “ The [Transfiguration]...dramatically demonstrates...that, [Original Sin aside], there is nothing essentially incompatible between humanity and Divinity.” Why is this so? Because, like God, each human being is also a person. So, think about this: All that God is (and He is the source of all that is, was, will-be, or will be once more) can fit into a human being (and as demonstrated as so by Jesus of Nazareth, the Divine Person of the Son of God, who is one with his Father and with our Father) without in any manner, whatsoever, diminishing the particular human being/person; rather, here, only enhancing it. Yes, this is true really: The Trinity, itself, can fit itself into a human person without diminishing it; rather only enhancing it by adopting it Divinely.

What mirrors God more than anything else in corporeal creation-the human person, of course. If God could see himself in a mirror-he would not see only himself-but would see himself in “intimate” (in the Biblical sense of “knowing”) relationship with all of both created and uncreated existence. When we become divine (are able to participate in Trinitarian Love) and could look in a mirror we would see ourselves as God sees himself-and that is how we will see God “ face to face”. You know who you are; but you haven’t a clue as to the “what” of the who. And so goes the world’s most wondrous mystery in all of existence: what is a person in the context of the truth of the Incarnation.