

# Creator Spirit, Giver of Life





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‘In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters. God said: Let there be light! And light was. God saw that the light was good’(Genesis 1:1-4).

John 1:1-2

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was towards God, and the Word was God.

[ = enjoys intimate communion with God and participates in God’s being]

‘Big Bang’



c.14 billion years



‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky’(Genesis 1:15)

our solar system



c. 5 billion years



In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people (John 1:4).



‘God said: Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures,

life: c. 3.8 billion years



and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky’(Genesis 1:20).



God's creating, life-giving **Spirit** is a **Spirit** of infinite self-giving love.

God's **Spirit** is working within creation, holding every creature in existence, enabling it to be, and to transcend itself: to evolve in the direction of increasing complexity.

Creation is a continuous receiving of the **Spirit** of God, who gives to creation all that it is and all that it has, including the impulse to transcend itself.



‘Whenever something new arises, whenever life is awakened and reality reaches ecstatically beyond itself, in all seeking and striving, in every ferment and birth, and even more in the beauty of creation, something of the being and activity of God’s Spirit is manifested’(Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 227).



‘God gives to creatures themselves the capacity for the new. Because of God’s creative and redeeming presence to creatures, they can become something they were not. When matter comes to life on earth, when life becomes self-conscious and personal, this occurs through God enabling creation to transcend itself and become something new’(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 158).



‘The Indwelling Creator **Spirit** is present in each creature enabling it to be and to become in a world of interconnected relationships’(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 6).

God does not act from the outside. God does not break in upon creation, because God is at creation’s ‘heart’.

God does not overturn or bypass the laws of nature. ‘God’s creative action enables the whole interacting network of creaturely causes and processes to exist and interact’(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 46).



‘Then God said: Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness ... So God created humankind in his image. Male and female he made them’(Genesis 1:26-27).

humans



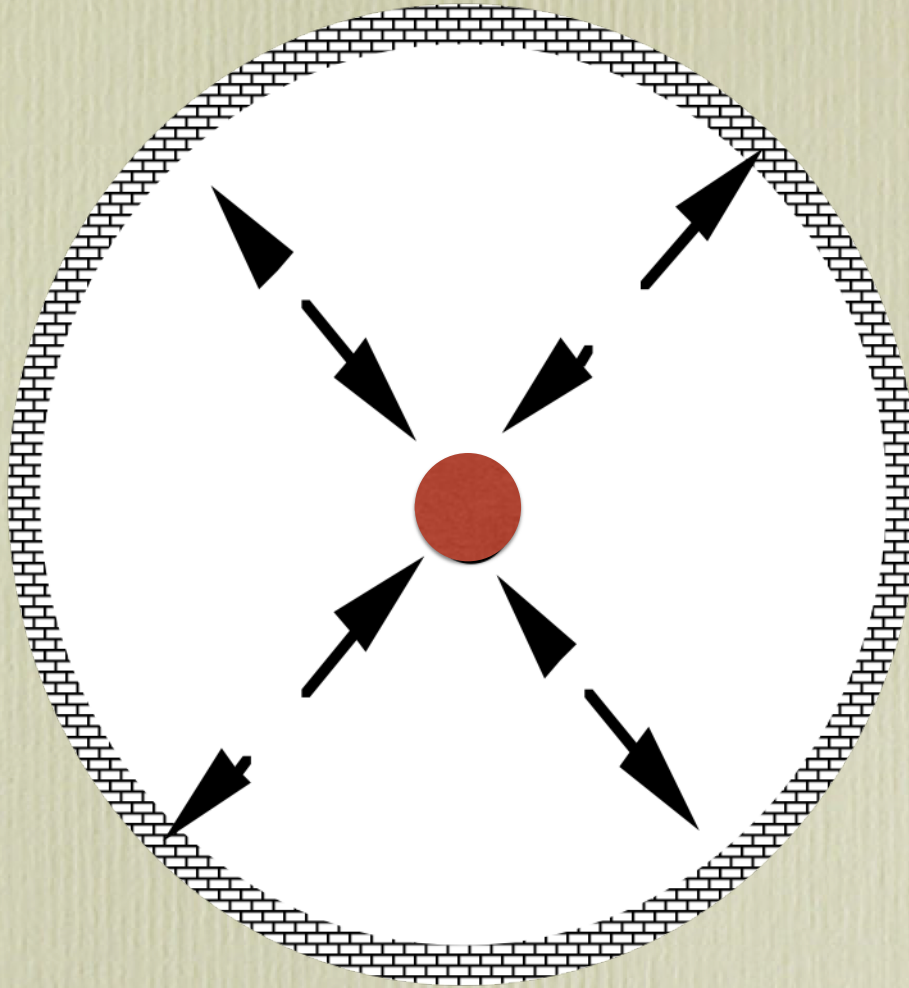
200,000 years

‘Yahweh God formed human beings from the dust of the ground, and breathed into their nostrils the **spirit** [‘breath’] of life; and they became living beings.’(Genesis 2:7).



Religious

Experience



Religion   Re + ligare   To bind back



# The **Numinous** dimension of religious experience

## **Word**



‘The world is full of God’s glory’(Isaiah 6:3)



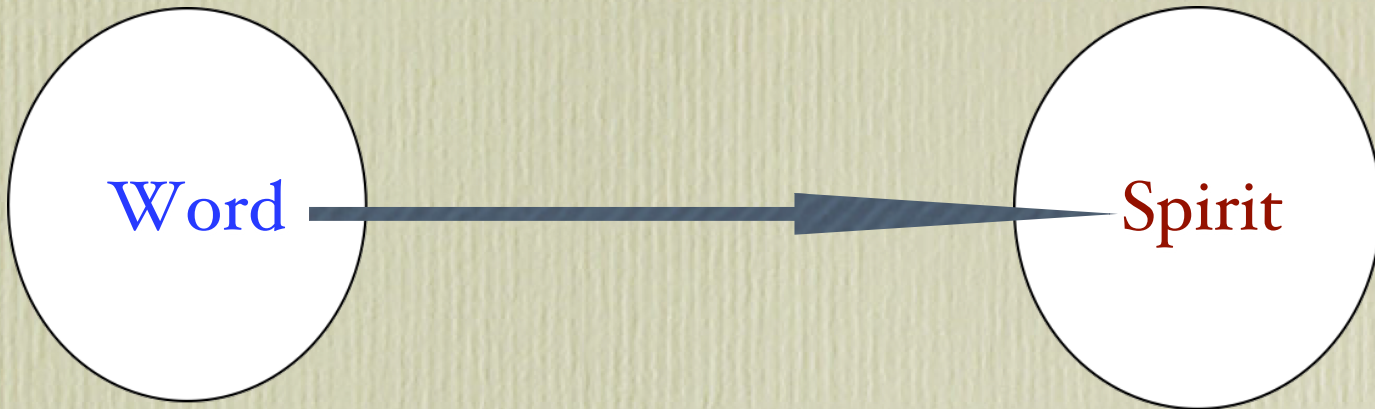
# The **Mystical** dimension of religious experience



‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit  
who has been given to us’(Romans 5:5)



Revelation



Numinous

Mystical

Heart

speaks to

Heart



## We encounter God

- in nature
- in people & events
- in movements of thought & feeling
- in words spoken & written
- in works of art

They reveal something of the truth, beauty & goodness of the transcendent & mysterious God



## We encounter God

- in the Vedas & Upanishads
- in the sayings of Confucius
- in the sayings of Gautama the Buddha
- in the oracles of the Hebrew Scriptures
- in the Moslem Qur'an
- in the mystics, poets, artists of all cultures



Every person is made from love and for love.  
Everyone is called to enjoy divine communion  
and everyone has a word to say and a spirit to share.

There is darkness and sin and dysfunction  
and so there is need for conversion.

Joseph Bernardin reminds us:

‘The Incarnation means that nothing of our humanity  
is alien to God or untouched by divine power ...  
All of our human experience becomes in principle  
a route of access to the divine.’



God is not an OBJECT of sense perception  
or of intellectual inquiry.

God is experienced and known as a SUBJECT, from  
within. We experience ourselves as gift, as given, and we  
use the word 'God' to refer to the giver.



John-Paul II, Mission of the Redeemer (55-56)

- ‘God does not fail to make himself present in many ways, not only to individuals but also to entire peoples through their spiritual riches, of which their religions are the main and essential expression, even when they contain gaps, insufficiencies and errors ... The fact that the followers of other religions can receive God’s grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people.’
- ‘Dialogue with those of other religions is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills.’



- ‘We must have respect for human beings in their quest for answers to the deepest questions of life, and respect for the action of the Holy Spirit in people ... Every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit who is mysteriously present in every human heart.’





John 1:14

The Word became flesh  
and lived among us

Colossians 1:14

‘In Christ the whole  
fullness of God was  
pleased to dwell.’





‘God gives to creatures themselves the capacity for the new. Because of God’s creative and redeeming presence to creatures, they can become something they were not. When matter comes to life on earth, when life becomes self-conscious and personal, this occurs through God enabling creation to transcend itself and become something new. Above all when one of us in the human and creaturely community, Jesus of Nazareth, is so radically open to God, so one with God, that we rightly see him as God-with-us, then we can say that in this person creation transcends itself into God’(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 158).





John 1:14

and we have seen his glory,  
the glory as of a father's  
only son,  
full of the gift of truth  
[grace and truth].



The risen Christ is the goal of evolution.



‘The Cross and Resurrection reveal the true nature of divine power, as the infinite capacity for self-bestowing love. This is love that does not overpower, but works in and through creaturely processes to bring life’(Denis Edwards, How God Acts, 33).





‘It is the very nature of God to be self-bestowing love. It is the very nature of divine power to enable the other to flourish in all the other’s integrity and proper autonomy ... What is true of divine action in the cross and resurrection of Jesus can be thought of as governing the other forms of divine action’(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 33).





‘Self-bestowing love is what characterises the divine act of creation, and it is this same self-bestowing love that is revealed with the fullness of its promise in the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection is not an intervention of God from without, but the central revelation in our history of the act by which God creates, saves, and brings all to fulfilment’ (Edwards, 94).



‘What is needed is a theology of divine action that understands God as the one who achieves the divine purposes in and through created causes, who delights in and respects human freedom and the integrity of the natural world. By God’s choice, divine action has a radically participatory character’(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 24).

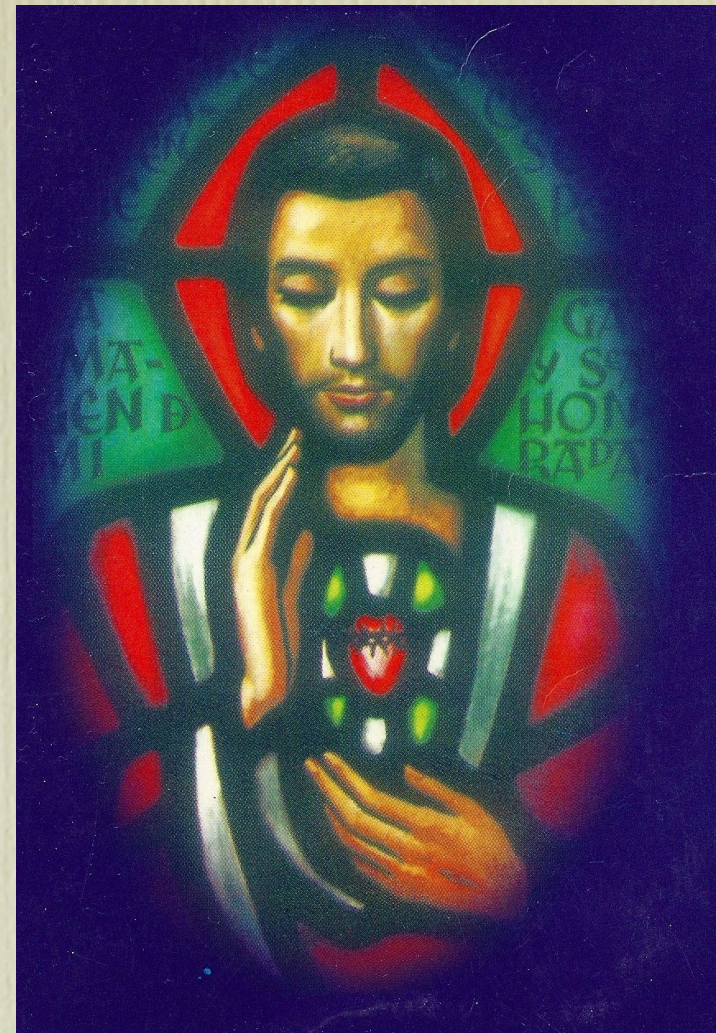


‘The heart of God descends in haste  
to his creation,  
with the weight of an infinite love,

and the heart of creation rises towards God,  
drawn by an attraction  
that dominates all others in it.

It is in Jesus that these two hearts meet,  
and they unite so profoundly  
that the two hearts become one.’

(Jules Chevalier, ‘The Heart of Jesus, page 76.





# John 1:16

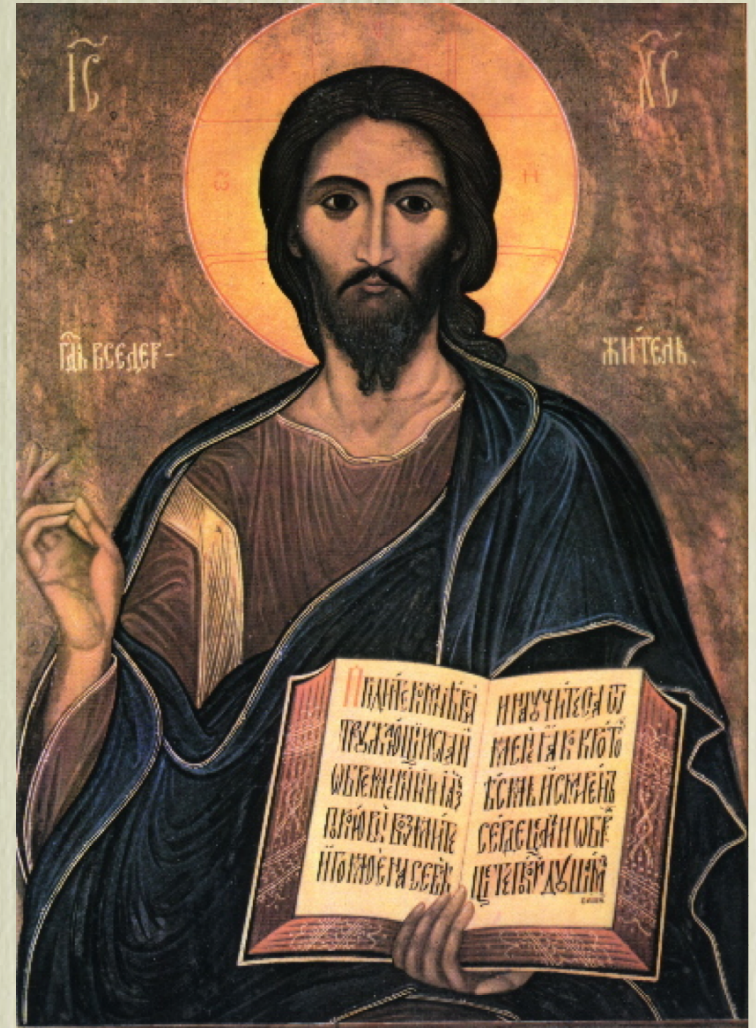
From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.





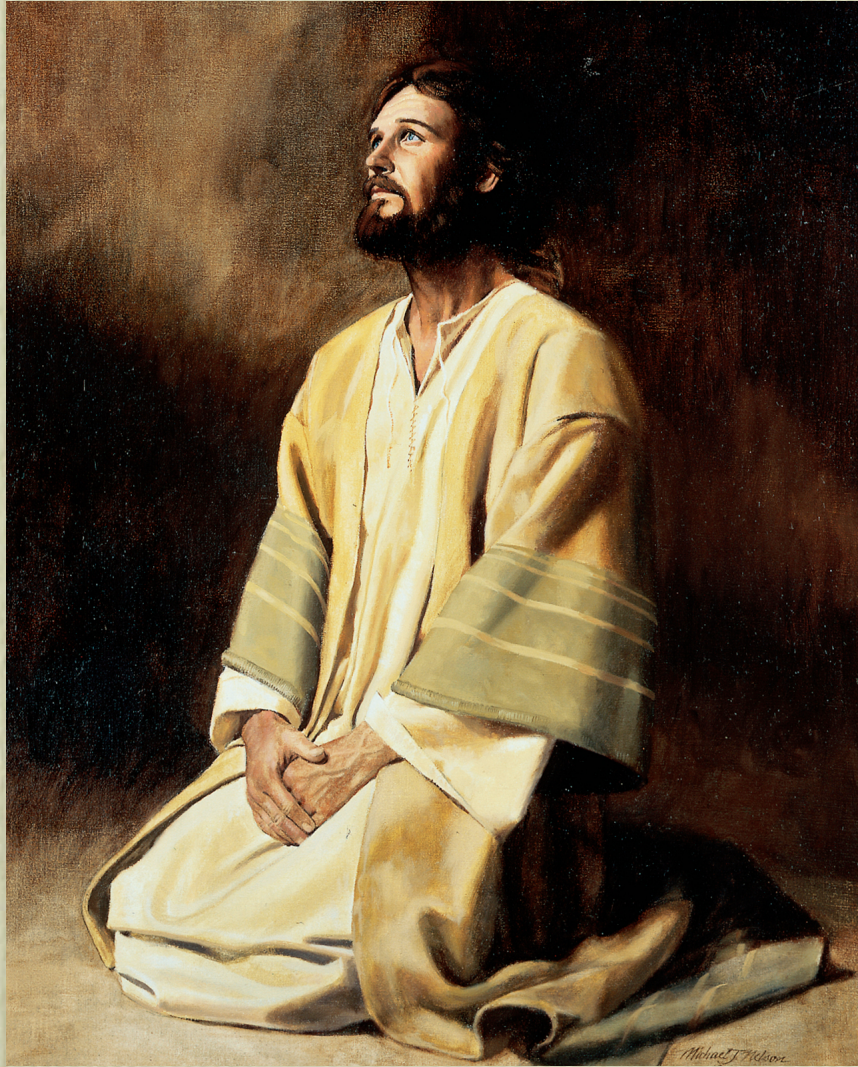
## John 1:17

‘The Law [Torah] indeed was given through Moses;  
the gift of Truth came through Jesus the Messiah.’





## John 1:18



‘No one has ever seen God.  
It is the only Son,  
who is in the bosom of the Father,  
who has made God known.’





Jesus

God's perfect  
human Word,  
symbol of the  
Divine Word  
of the Self-giving  
Transcendent  
God



Our calling  
Communion in the  
Love-Spirit that  
unites Jesus and God,  
symbol of the  
Divine Love-communion  
of the Transcendent  
God



To investigate how the Spirit of God acts in creation, we should watch how the Spirit acts in Jesus, for he welcomed the inspiration of the Spirit without reserve in all the circumstances of his life.

In Jesus we see the Spirit respecting people's freedom, healing where healing was welcomed (faith), forgiving where forgiveness was welcomed (faith), inviting everyone into communion ('bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame', Luke 14:21-23), inviting everyone to cooperate in bringing about the 'reign of God' (the reign of love).





John 4:14

‘The water that I will give will become in you a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’



The more we welcome and cooperate with the **Spirit** that is enabling us to be and to become, the more we become what we are created to be. The more we 'participate in divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4).

Jesus reveals God as Love, as Self-giving. The more we live in communion with God the more we love, the more we transcend ourselves in self-giving.



## Acts 2:2-4

‘Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the **Holy Spirit**’





Galatians 4:6

‘God has sent the **Spirit of his Son** into our hearts,  
crying “Abba!”(Father).’

Romans 8:9

‘The **Spirit of God** dwells in you.’



## Ephesians 3:16-17

‘I pray that the Father may grant that you be strengthened in your inner being with power through **the Holy Spirit**, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith as you are being rooted and grounded in love.’



‘Thanks be to God, who ... through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing Christ’ (2 Corinthians 2:14).



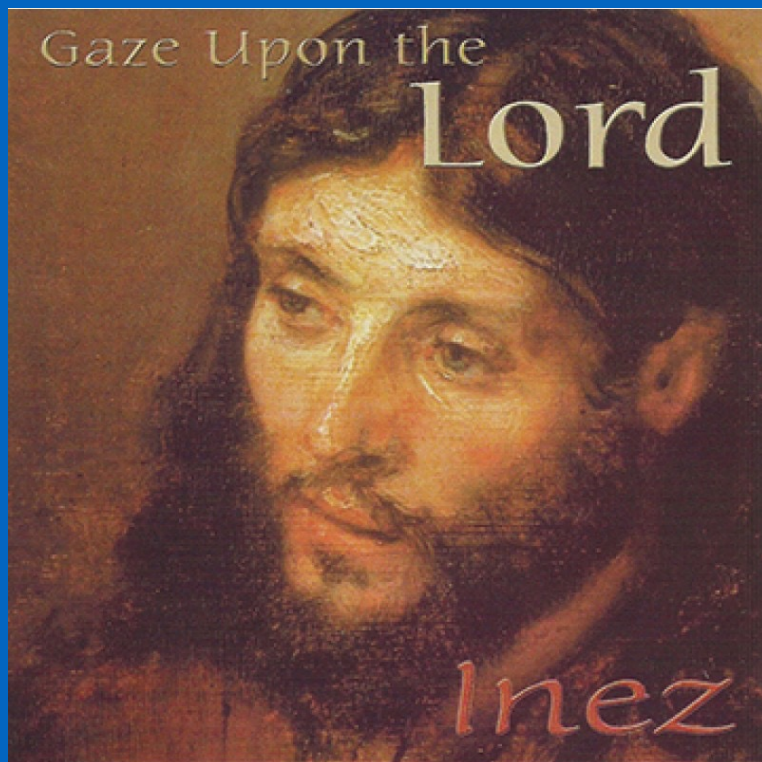
‘I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead’ (Philippians 3:8-11).





Gaze upon the Lord





Gaze upon the Lord  
Clare of Assisi

*Woman's Song of God*  
*Songs inspired by the writings*  
*of Women Mystics*

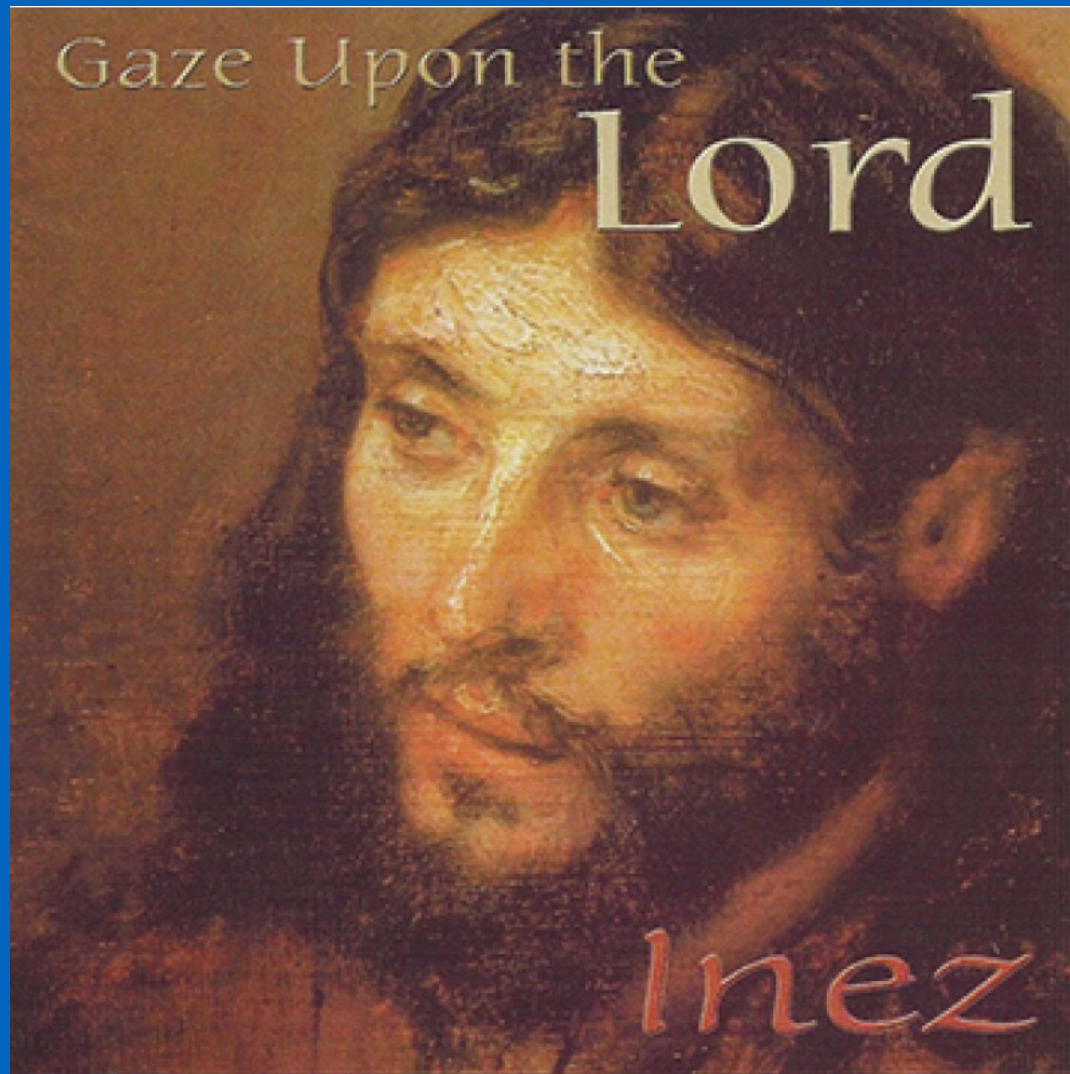
Briege O'Hare osc and Marie Cox rsm

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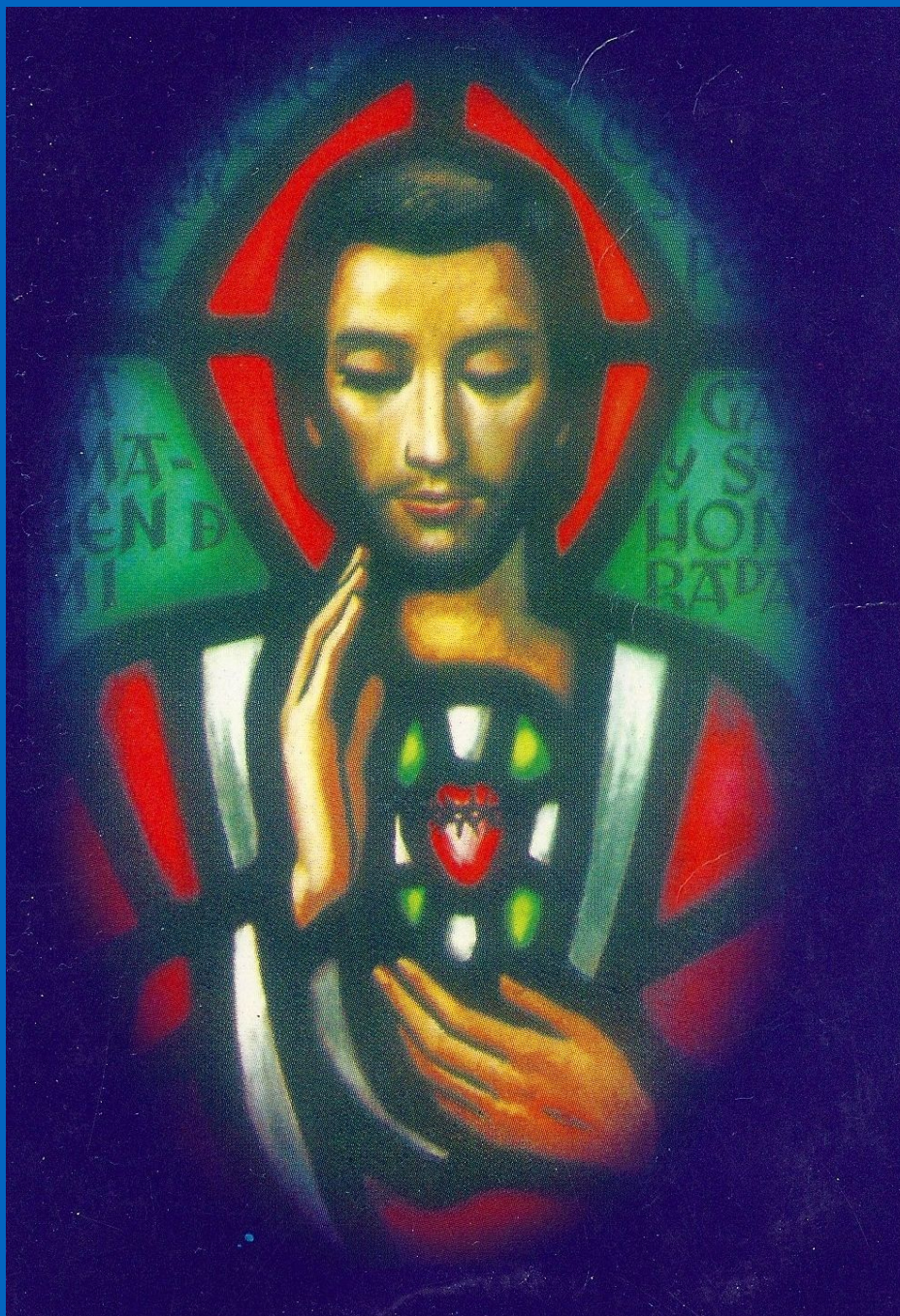




Gaze upon the Lord.  
Gaze upon his face.  
Gaze upon the One  
who holds you in his embrace.

Gaze upon his life.  
Gaze upon his love.  
Gaze upon his coming forth  
from heaven above.





Look upon the Lord.  
Look upon his way.  
Look upon his heart.  
It opens to each day.





Though he was despised,  
the lowest of all men,  
look upon his sacred cross  
which brings life again.

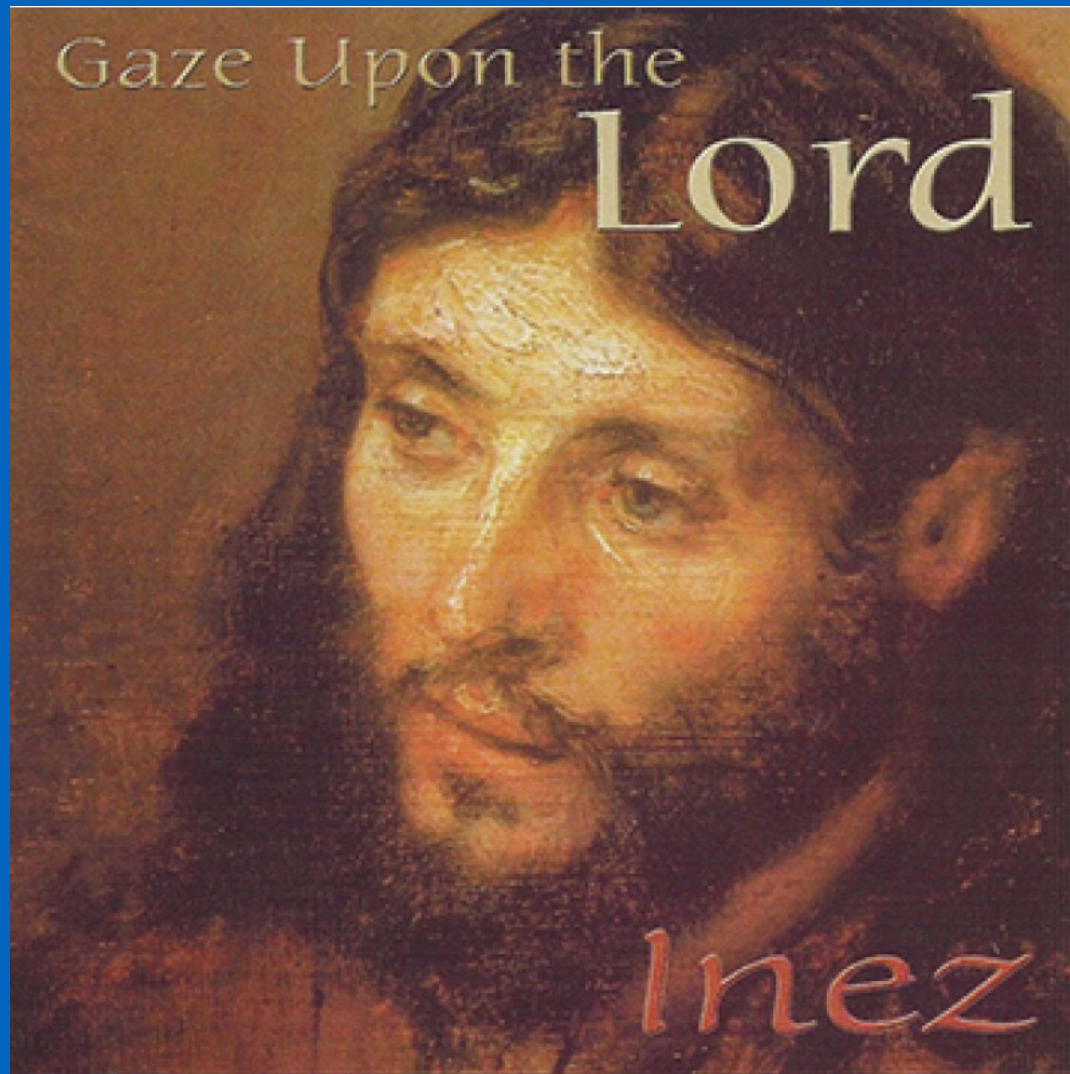




If you open to life's pain,  
then with him you shall reign;  
and allow your heart to hear,  
then with him you'll rejoice.

Open to his cross  
the wounds of each day's love.  
Then you'll know the splendour  
of his kingdom above.





Gaze upon his life.  
Gaze upon his love.  
Gaze upon his coming forth  
from heaven above,  
from heaven above.