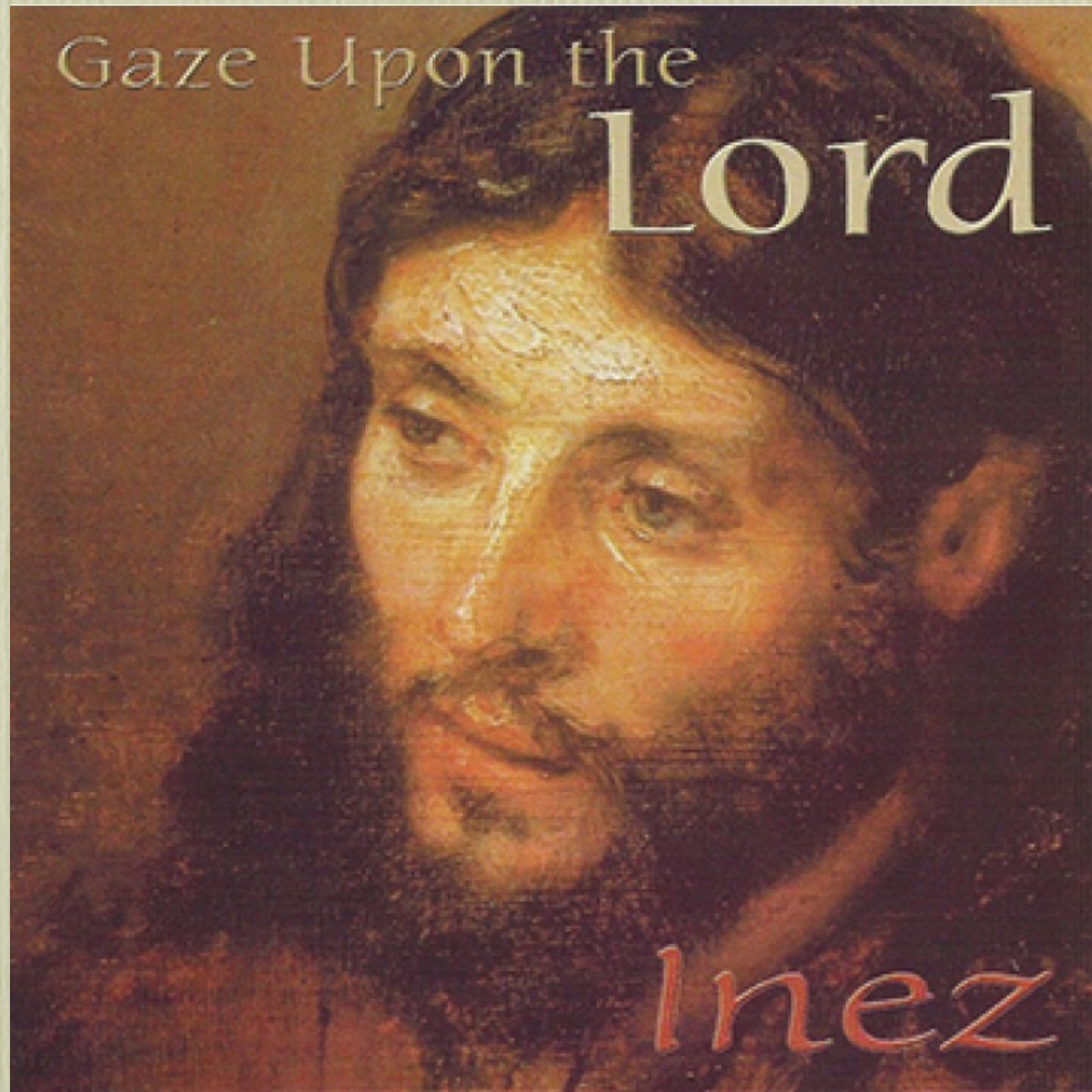


Church in Ephesians



Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, blessing us in Christ with every spiritual blessing ... for he chose us in Christ ... to be holy and blameless before him in love, destining us for adoption as 'sons' for himself through Jesus Christ ... to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will ... to gather up all things in Christ ...

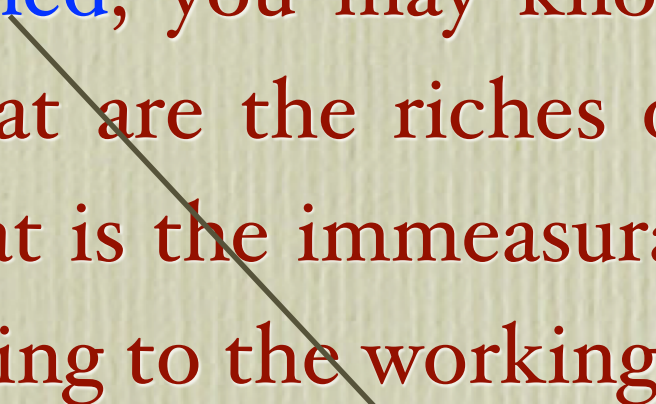
Ephesians 1:3-14

so that we ... might live for the praise of his glory.

In him you also, hearing the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation, and believing in him,
were marked with the seal of the promised Holy
Spirit ... as those who are God's possession,
to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:15-19

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart **enlightened**, you may know what is the **hope** to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.



We will come to this **enlightenment** by reflecting on Christ and his relationship with the Church.

Ephesians 1:20-23

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand ... and put all things under his feet

- and has given him who is head of all things
- to the church which is his body, the fullness of him
- who is in everything and fills everything.

In Christ we find the fullness of God. Furthermore, while everything shares in the grace of Christ and reflects something of his fullness, it is to the church that we must look if we wish to see his fullness, for he fills the church with his Spirit (it can be called, therefore, his 'body') and pours out the fullness of grace into her. The church is the body which he fills with his life, which radiates his glory throughout the cosmos, and which draws the whole of humankind and all creation into his fullness as it is built up and grows into him.

Paul's prayer for the communities to whom he is writing is that they may know all this, and knowing it believe in Christ. Being filled with the power of God, they will be enabled to carry out their mission in the world according to God's magnificent design, until the fullness of time.

The Church as the Body of Christ

‘God has put all things under the feet of Christ and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all’(Ephesians 1:22-23).

1. When Paul speaks of the church as the body of Christ, he is thinking, first and foremost, of Jesus in his human condition, and especially in his self-offering for us on the cross.

‘He has now reconciled you in his body of flesh by his death’(Col. 1:22).

‘We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all’(Hebrews 10:10).

He recalls the words of Jesus at the last supper: ‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’(1Corinthians 11:24).

We are to do what Jesus did. We are to offer ourselves for others in love

2. The community of those who commit themselves to Jesus and to his self-offering, do so because they are empowered by his Spirit. Since it is the Spirit that gives life to the community, it is called his 'body'.

‘We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’(1Corinthians 10:17).

‘By one Spirit we were all baptised into one body’(1Corinthians 12:13).

‘Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of his body, that is, the church’(Colossians 1:24).

‘Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body’(Colossians 3:15).

3. It is the Spirit of God that fills all things. Now, raised to the fullness of life by his Father, it is the Spirit of God in Jesus - the Spirit of love which binds him to the Father - that fills all things, giving life wherever it is welcome.

The sacrament of this Spirit, the place where Jesus' Spirit is powerfully effective is the community of the Church, an extension in the world of Jesus' body, carrying out the will of God and bringing about on earth the reign of God's love.

‘He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell’(Colossians 1:18-19).

‘In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him’(Colossians 2:9-10).

Ephesians 3:14-16

For this reason I go down on my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit

‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us’(Romans 5:5). It is this Spirit alone who can transform our hearts into the heart of Christ as we ‘are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit’(2Corinthians 3:18).

3:17

and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love

Ephesians 3:18-19

that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth – to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge

‘With all the saints’, that is to say, as members of ‘the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all’(1:22-23), there is no limit to the ‘riches of grace that God lavishes upon us’(1:8), or to ‘the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe’(1:19). There is no limit to ‘the great love with which God loves us’(2:4), or to ‘the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus’(2:7).

– so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

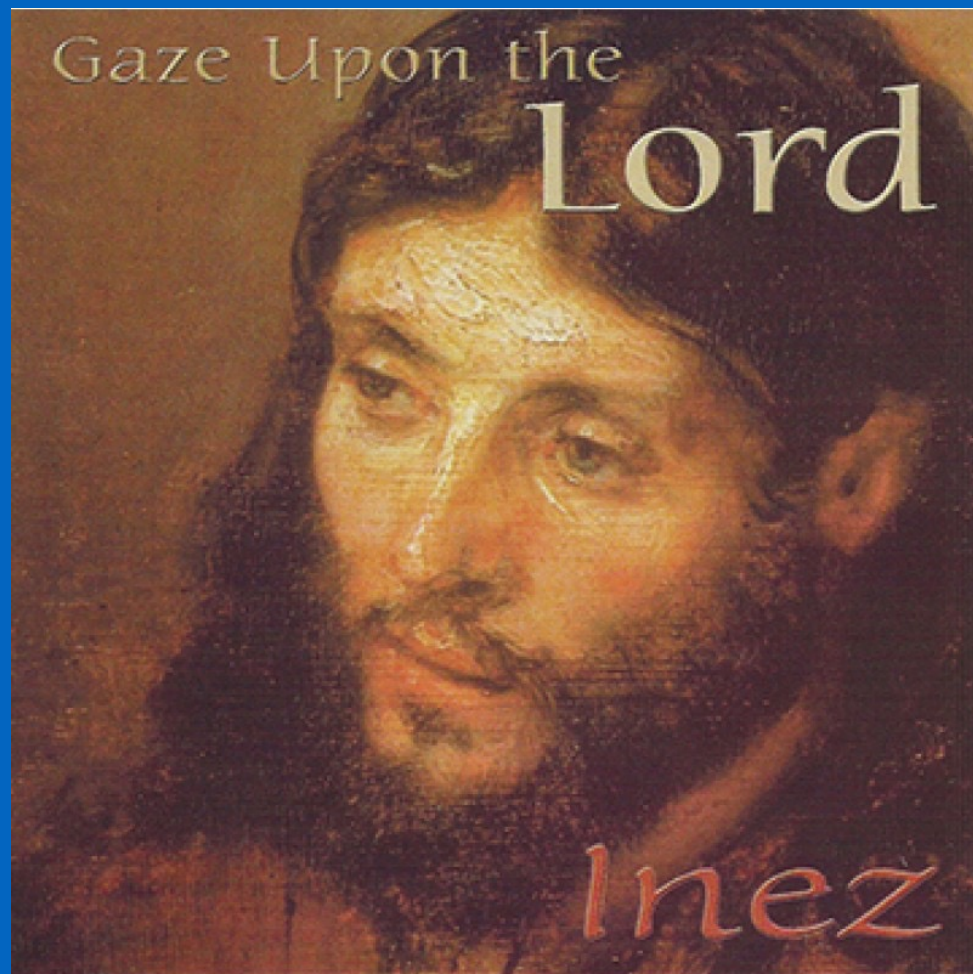
– another way of praying that our whole life will be filled with Christ, ‘for in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’(Colossians 2:9).

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.
Amen.

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body
and one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord,
one faith,
one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

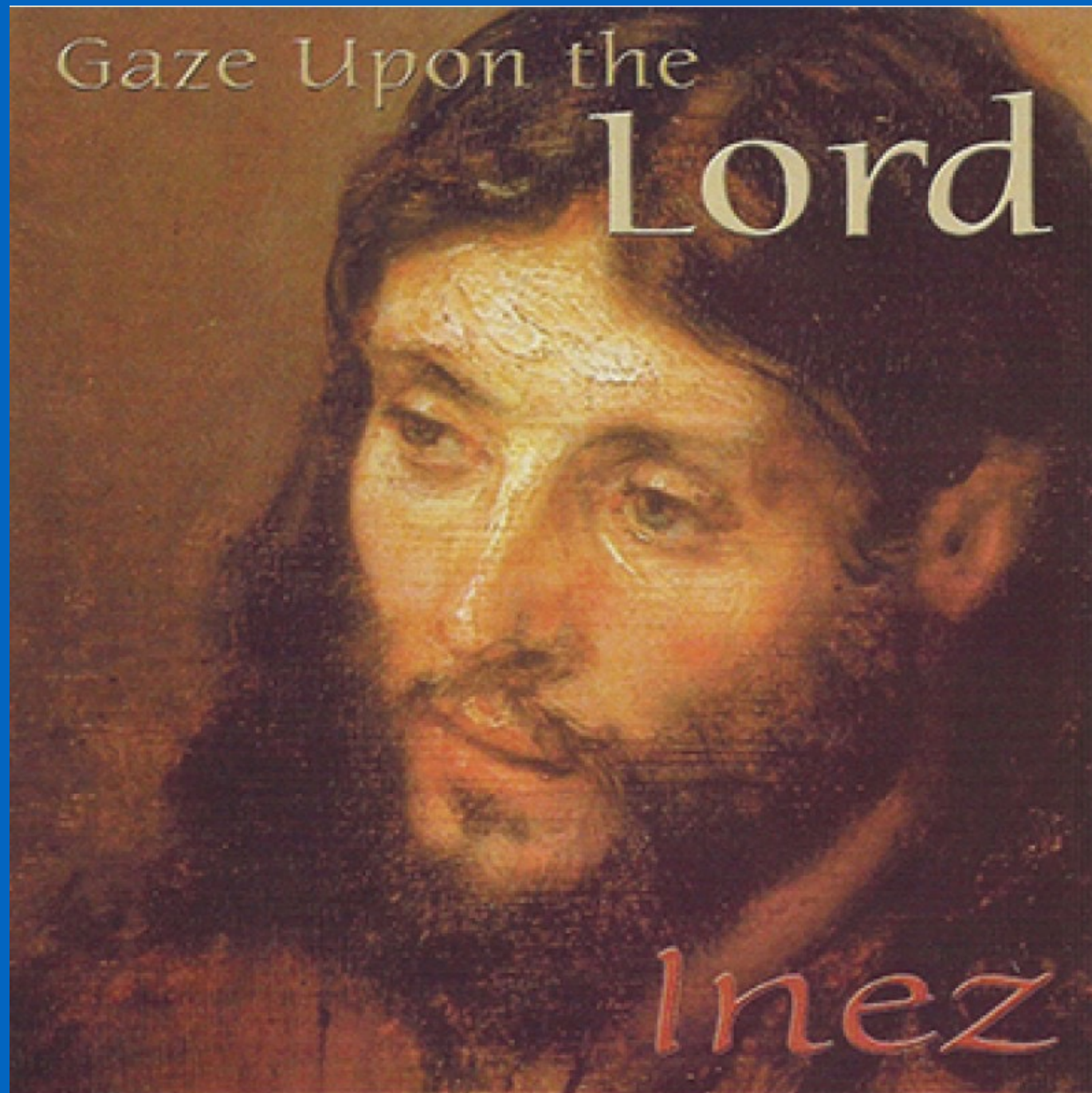


Gaze upon the Lord Clare of Assisi

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

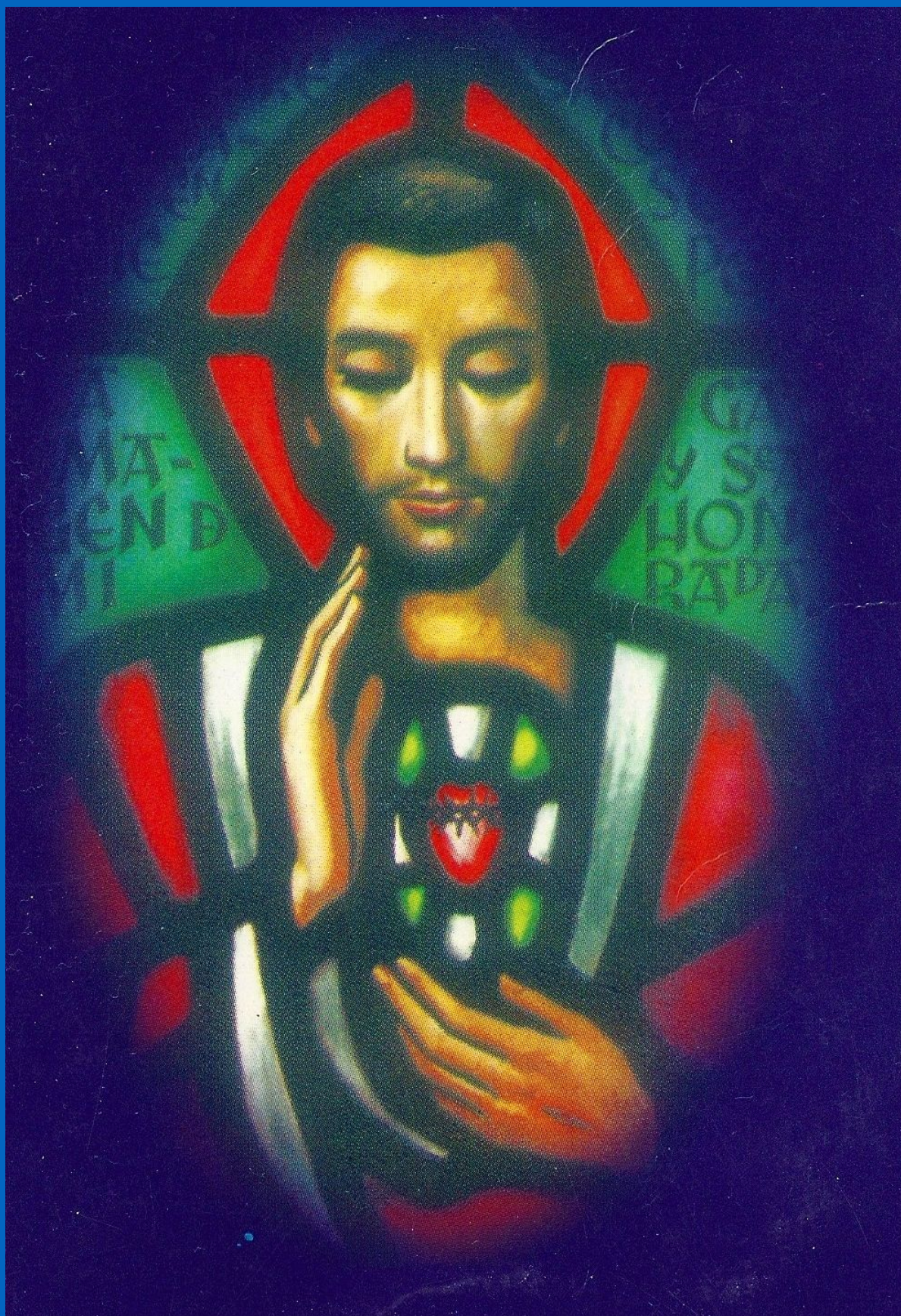
Briege O'Hare osc and Marie Cox rsm

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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.

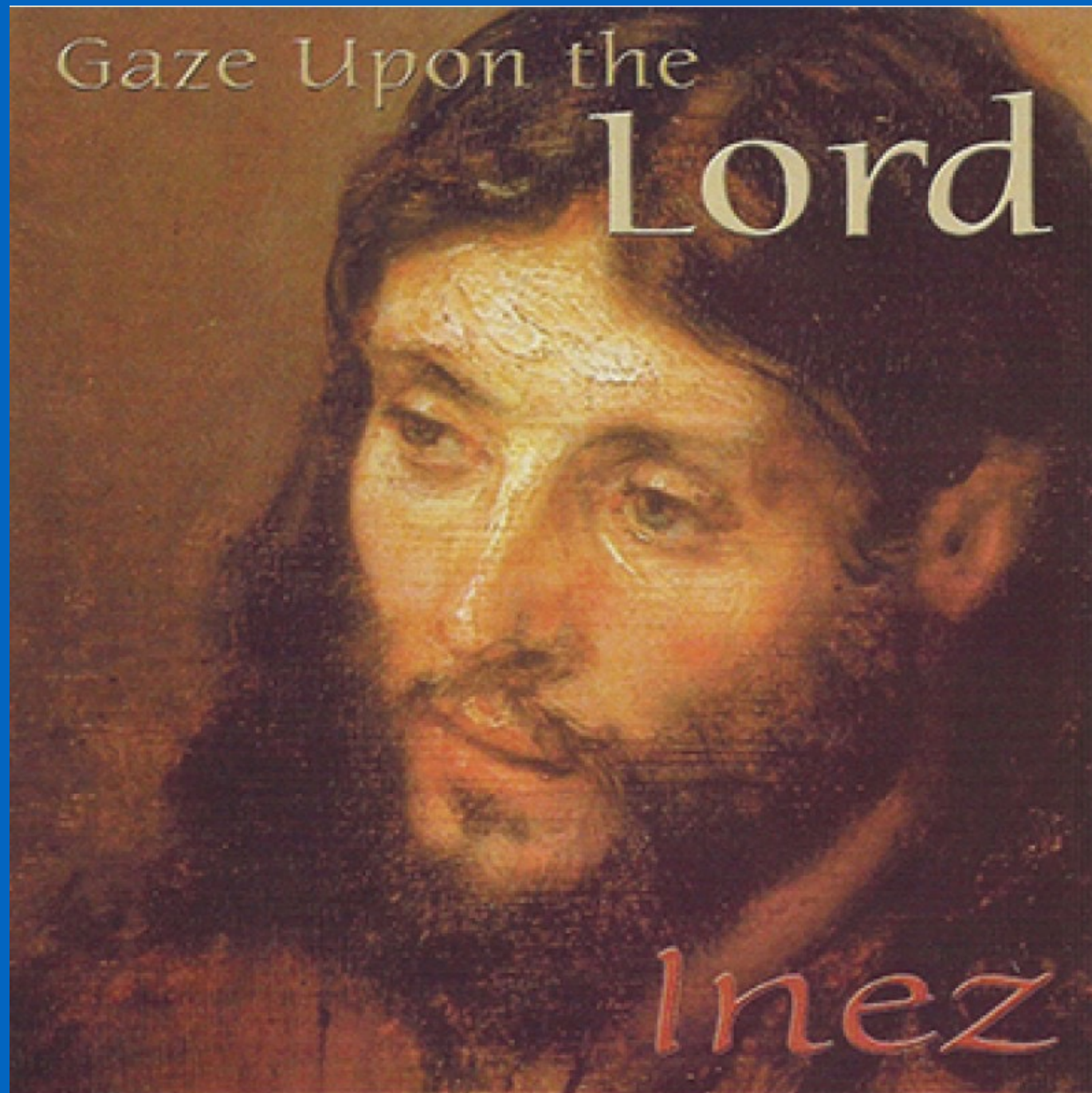


Though he was despised,
the lowest of all men,
look upon his sacred cross
which brings life again.



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.