

02. The Importance of Knowing the Real Jesus



‘We declare to you what we have heard,
what we have seen with our eyes,
what we have looked at and touched with
our hands, concerning the word of life —
this life was revealed, and we have seen it
and testify to it, and declare to you the
eternal life that was with the Father and
was revealed to us.

We declare to you what we have seen and
heard so that you may have communion
with us;

and truly our communion is with the
Father and with his Son Jesus the Messiah.’

1John 1:1-3

Portrait of Jesus given us by Paul

Portraits in the Four Gospels.

Presentation of Jesus' words and actions
plus an interpretative commentary.



Vincent Van Gogh 1889

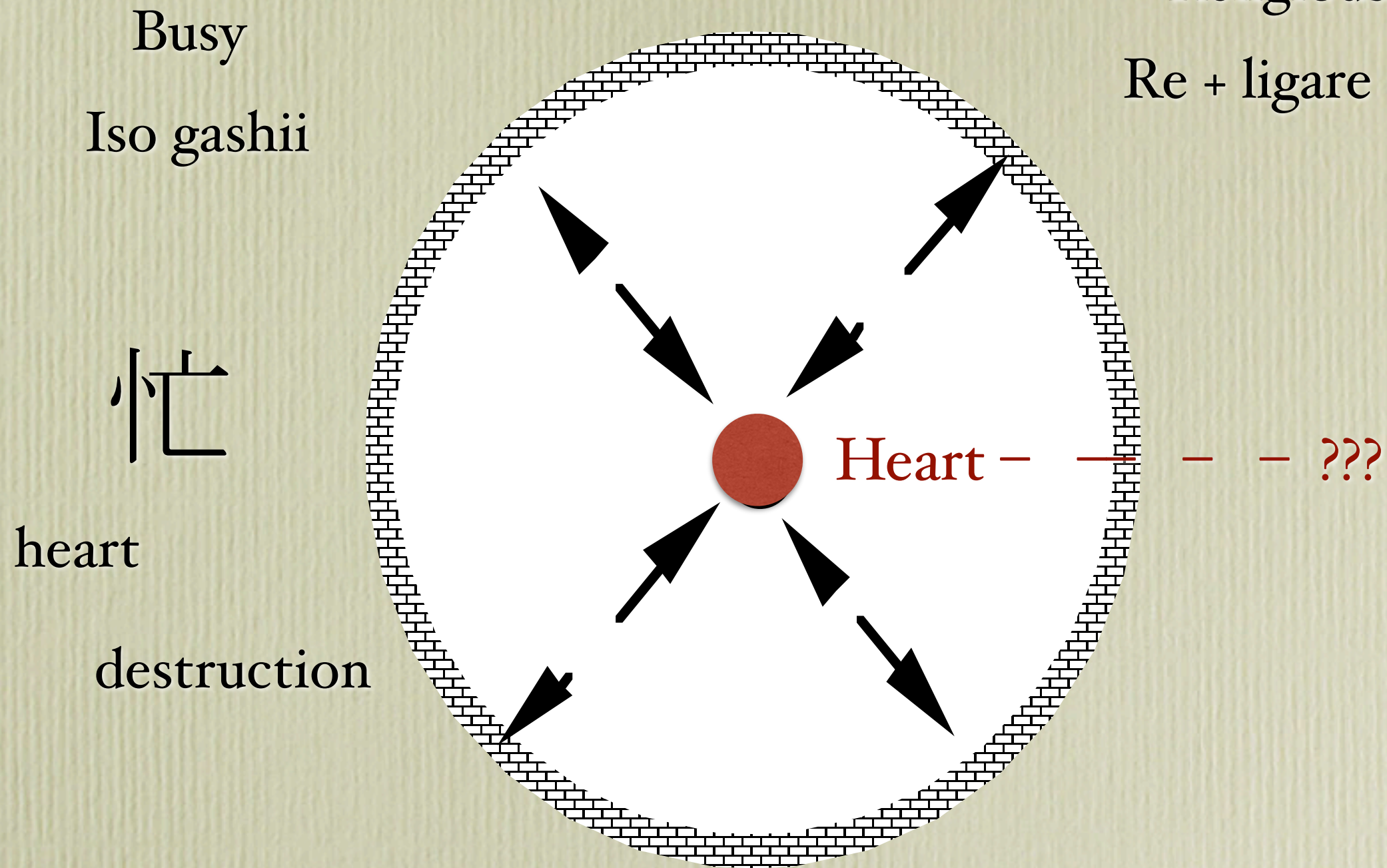
Don McLean

Starry, Starry night
Paint your palette blue and grey
Look out on a summer's day
With eyes that know the
Darkness in my soul.

The fact that the four Gospels were treasured, copied, and read in the Christian assemblies in the East, in Egypt, in Asia Minor, in Greece and in Rome, is the source of our confidence that in each of the Gospels and in the four together we are seeing and hearing the real Jesus.

Religious Experience

Re + ligare To bind back



Sanskrit **Ghu** ('called' 'calling') + **To** ('The one')

God

Religious
Experience is

God
Centre – Heart

Experience of
Communion with 'God'

God 'The Heart and the Beyond of Everything' (Teilhard de Chardin)

Holy

God's **WORD** (expresses God's self-gift) is experienced

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



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

Gerard Manley Hopkins : God's Grandeur (1877)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod? [reck = reckon on]

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and ah! bright wings.

God's **WORD** (expresses God's self-gift) is experienced

- the Vedas & Upanishads
- the sayings of K'ung-fu-tzu (Confucius)
- the sayings of Gautama the Buddha
- the oracles of the Hebrew Scriptures
- the New Testament
- the Moslem Qur'an
- the mystics, poets, artists of all cultures



Danger

Projecting a 'God' limited by our human experiences

Creating a 'God' in our own image

This spawns

atheism: the rejection of a limited God

agnosticism: failure to explore the implications of our experience

Dangers in Institutionalised Religion

Judaism

- Prophet - Moses
- Book - Torah
- Obedience

Islam

- Prophet - Muhammad
- Book - Qur'an
- Submission



Fundamentalist 'Christianity'

- Book - New Testament
- Obedience
- Book - Catechism
- Submission

The *Mystical* Dimension of Religious Experience

Buddhism points us to the heart





I will betroth you
to myself
with tenderness

Christianity: Word & Spirit

Numinous & Mystical

John 3:34

‘He whom God has sent speaks the **words** of God, for he gives the **Spirit** without measure.’

Romans 5:5

‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy **Spirit** who has been given to us.’



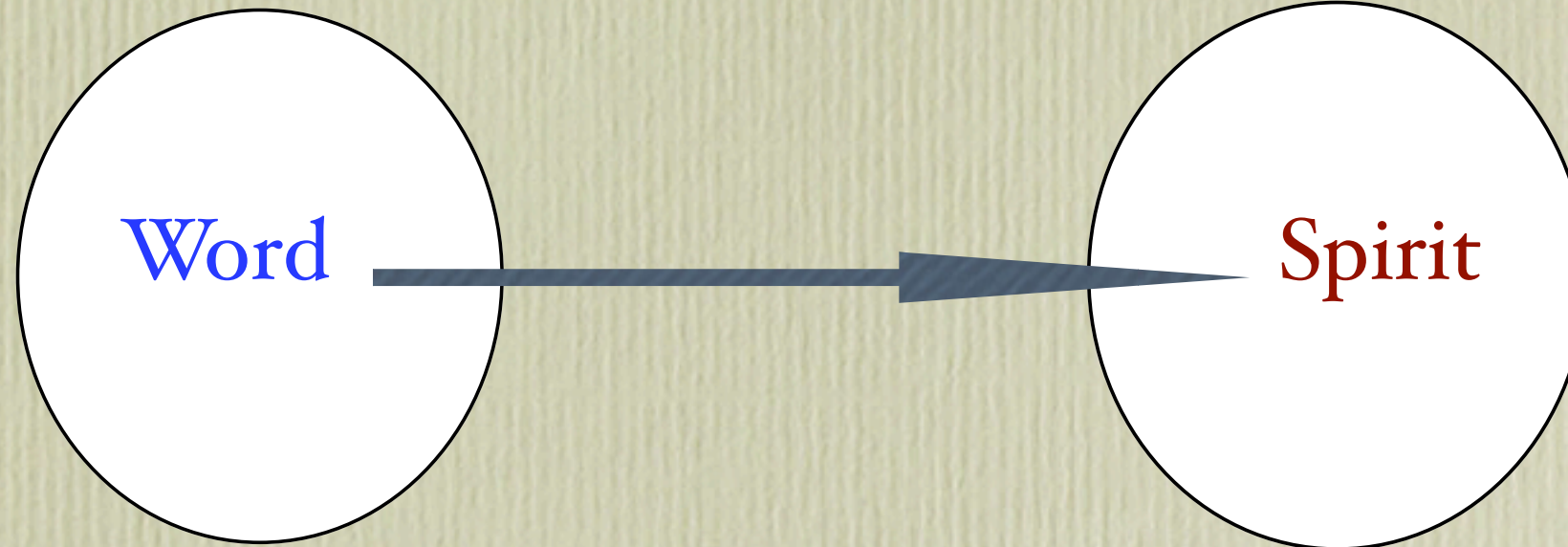
Transcendent ('holy') God



Revelation

Numinous

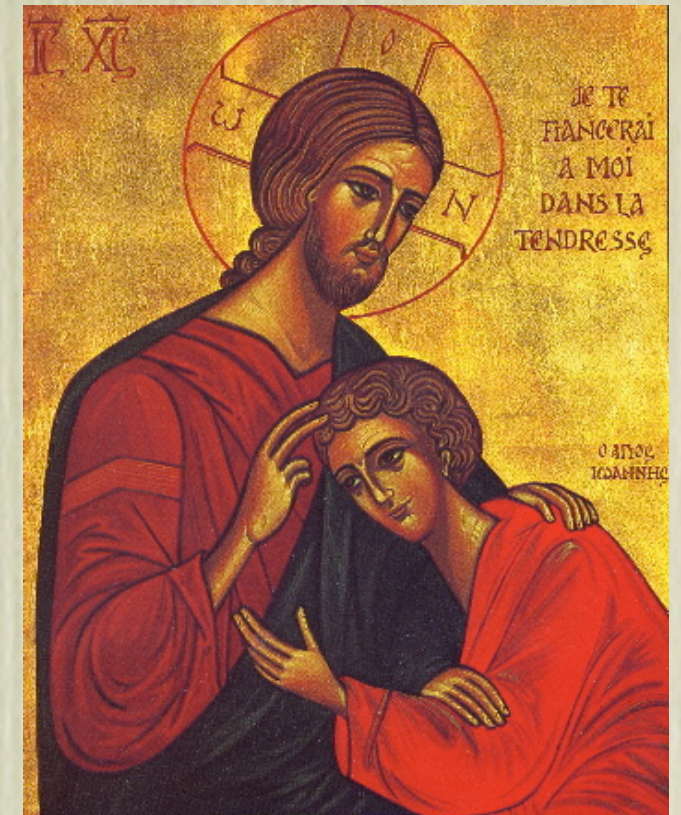
Mystical

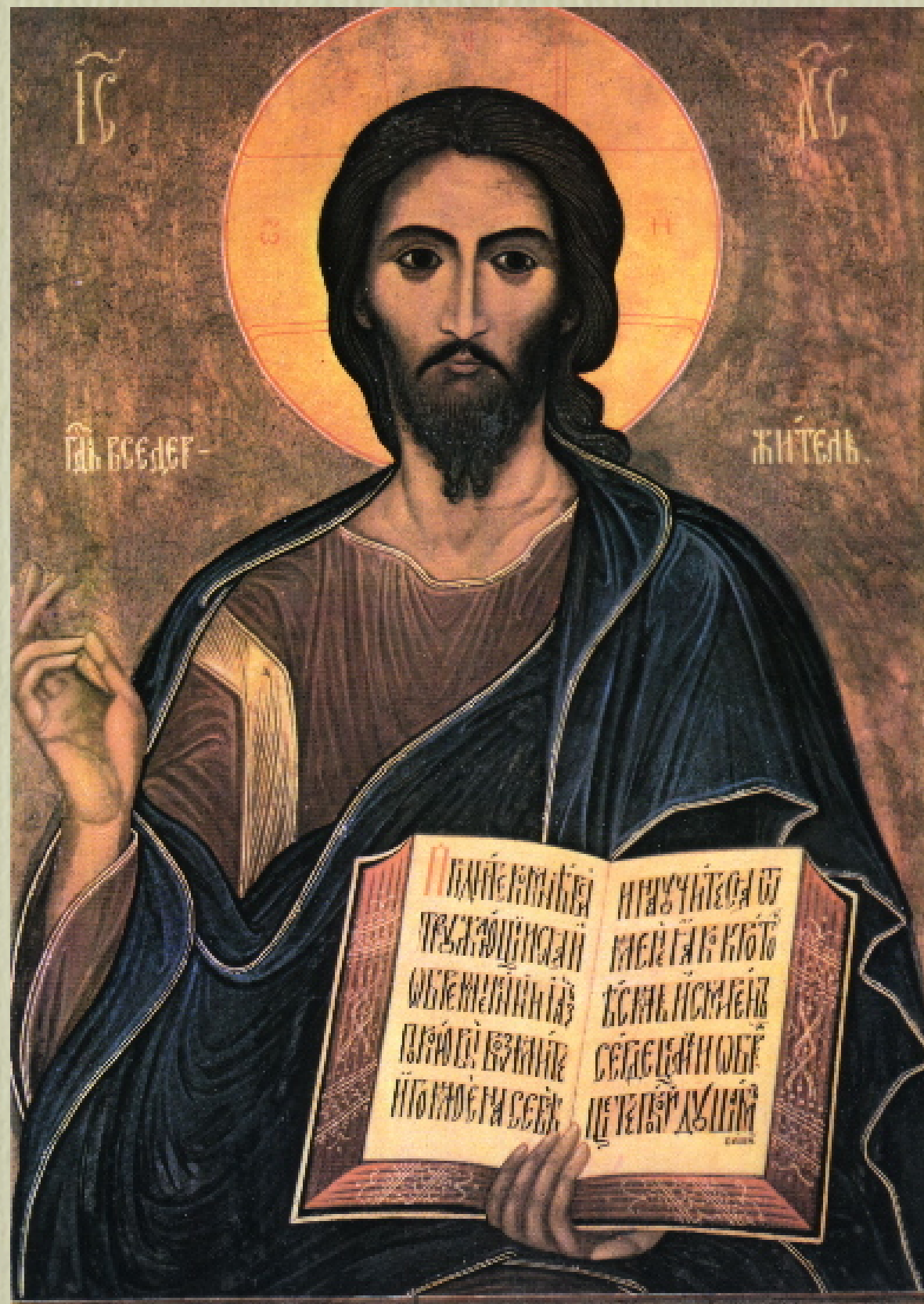


Heart

speaks to

Heart





Matthew 11:28-29



- ‘I am in the Father and you are in me and I in you’ (John 14:20).
- ‘I pray that they will be one as we are one, with me in them and you in me’ (John 17:21).



Jesus is looking to God, his Father



God is looking
towards the Spirit

The Spirit is
looking at the
Eucharistic gifts
on the table.

Rublev

The one looking at the icon is
invited to join them at the table.



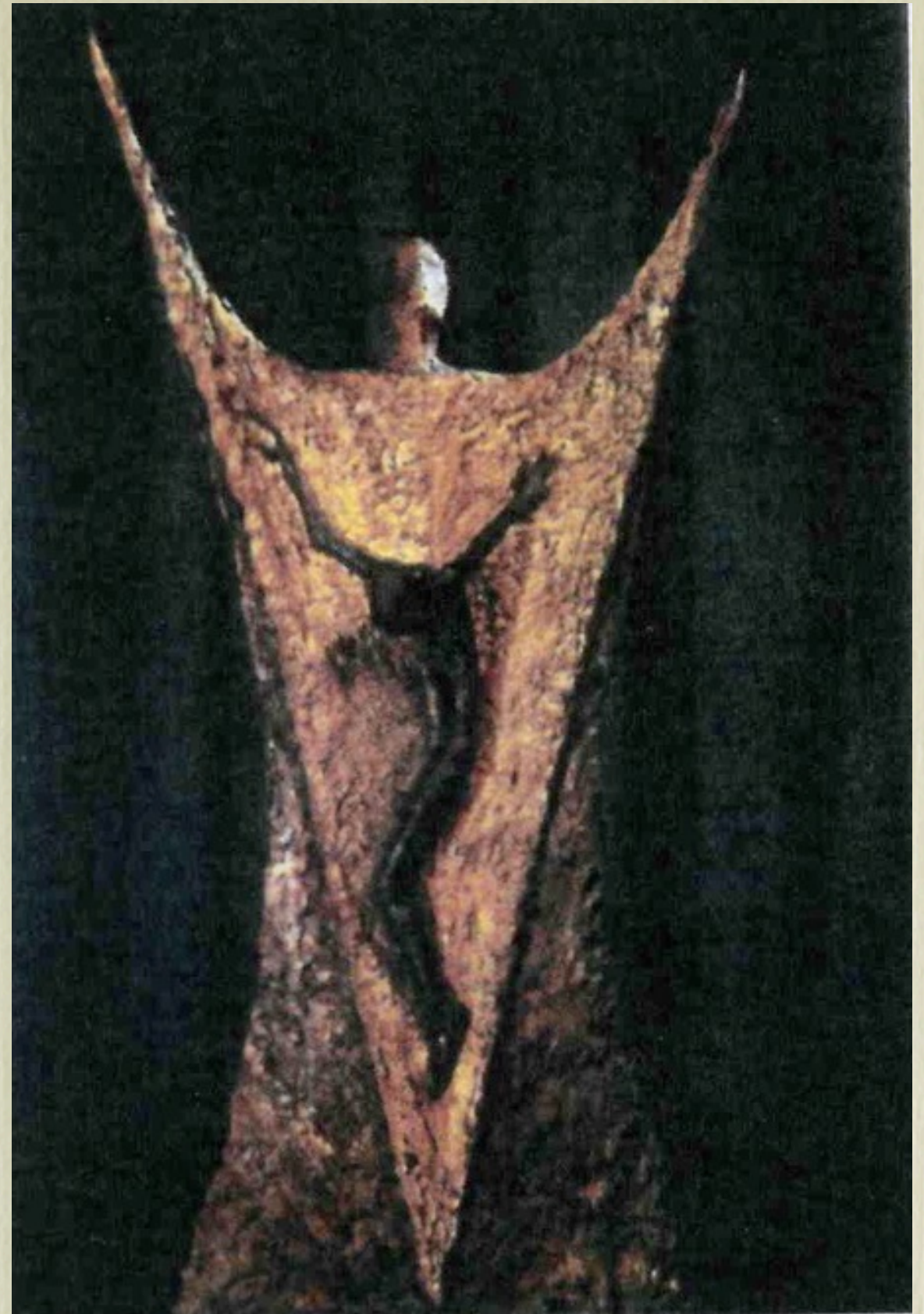
It was Jesus' communion with God that was the source of his life.

At the Last Supper, with a broken heart, he said: 'You will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone'(John 16:32). He went straight on to add: 'Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.'



Everything Jesus said or did came from this special communion. John writes: 'The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands'(John 3:35).

His special communion did not protect him from the suffering that is part of the human experience, but it sustained him, and the fruit of this communion was a loving that his disciples had never previously experienced: a love for them, indeed for the world, that flowed from his loving communion with God.



Jesus' humanity, but also his faith in God are, perhaps, nowhere shown more poignantly than in his cry from the cross: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

It is his faith in God that Luke highlights when he records Jesus' prayer from the cross: 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit' (23:46).



Roman Catechism, Council of Trent, 1545-1563, Preface 10.

‘The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching
must be directed to the love that never ends.

Whether something is proposed for belief,
for hope or for action,
the love of our Lord must always be made accessible,
so that anyone can see
that all the works of perfect Christian virtue
spring from love
and have no other objective
than to arrive at love.’

‘I have come to cast fire upon the earth
and how I wish it were blazing already’ (Luke 12:49)

Teilhard de Chardin 1934

‘Some day,
after harnessing space,
the winds,
the tides
and gravitation,

We shall harness for God
the energies of Love.

And then,
for the second time in the history of the
world,
we shall have discovered fire.’



‘From the Heart of Jesus
pierced on Calvary,
I see a new world coming forth –
a great and life-giving world,
inspired by love and mercy:
a world which the Church must
perpetuate on the whole earth.’
(Jules Chevalier, Sacred Heart 1900)