Descent and Ascent in Augustine's *De Trinitate*: Prayer as a Way of Being in the Trinity

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

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This thesis uses an Augustinian model of participation, derived from Augustine's *De Trinitate*, to examine how human prayer participates in something of God's own self and action. I argue that intercession is an especially helpful category for understanding the participatory shape of human prayer.

A number of recent scholars have commented on the roots of human prayer in the triune life. This study contributes an analysis of this idea using Augustine of Hippo's *De Trinitate*. The text's chiastic structure, in which the account of the descent of the Son and Holy Spirit (Books II-VII) enables the human person's ascent to God (Books IX-XIV), results in a treatise in which Augustine maps a spiritual progression. In particular, he describes how the activity of the Son 'for us' and the Spirit 'in us' perfects our imaging of the Trinity, such that we are increasingly shaped to remember, understand and love God. This perfecting happens, Augustine argues, as we are found *in* Christ as members of the *totus Christus.*

In Part I, I offer broad introductions to both participation and prayer, with particular reference to Kathryn Tanner's work on participation and Sarah Coakley's work on desire. In Part II, this thesis then explores principles of prayer and participation in Augustine's work with a particular focus on *De Trinitate'*s account of divine descent and human ascent, and consideration of Augustine's broader interest in the concept of the *totus Christus.* Having discerned an Augustinian model of participation at the end of Part II, I use this in Part III to examine how human prayer might be described as an act of participation in God, indeed as a way of being in the Trinity, whose own way of being in creation - the divine missions - are themselves an act of divine intercession.

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Introduction

Prayer and theology are intricately linked: theology begins and ends in prayer, and prayer is shaped by theology. Indeed, prayer and theology, our conversation to God and about God, are both aspects of that which is at the core of the Christian life: the relationship between humanity and God.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in talking of this relationship in terms of 'participation' and it is in this context that this thesis situates itself. Theologies of participation observe that God is the source and end of all creation, the one of whom Romans 11.36 proclaims: 'from him and through him and to him are all things'. Within this context we can speak of humans exhibiting a particular participatory relationship with God (compared to the rest of creation), and inquire as to the participatory shape of human actions, including the act of human prayer. It is with this in mind that this thesis will ask *how it is that human prayer participates in something of God's own self and action*.

In order to explore how human prayer participates in God we must attend to the fact that God reveals himself to us as Trinity. The Christian tradition asserts that the God in whom humans participate is none other than the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is as the Father sends the Son and the Spirit in the divine missions that we are enabled to participate in God, above all in the Incarnation of the Son who participates in our human nature so that in him we might receive the gift of a share in his divine life. And this share in the divine life is received precisely as we are united in Christ, the incarnate Son, by the indwelling of the Spirit. Thus, human participation in God is trinitarian in shape: our participation is enabled by the Trinity and is experienced as trinitarian. It is for both of these reasons – the enabling work of the Trinity and the triune shape of our subsequent participation in God – that our thesis title speaks of human participation in God as a 'way of being in the Trinity'.

This thesis will claim that 'desire' is a helpful tool for observing the interconnectedness of the divine missions and human prayer. We will observe that human prayer is an articulation of desire for other created things, which must be realigned and conformed in the school of prayer, but which ultimately has its end in our desire for God.

Similarly, we will observe that the divine missions are themselves an articulation of desire, namely a divine desire for the reconciliation of humans to God. It is in this shared articulation and enactment of desire that we will discover human prayer's relationship of participation to the God who first desires us, and in whom our desires find their fulfilment.

In particular, in its examination of the participatory shape of prayer, this thesis addresses a dual weakness in recent scholarship exploring the intersection between the Trinity and prayer. In particular it addresses both the danger and fruitfulness of the claim made by many such scholars, that God himself 'prays'. First, assertions that speak of prayer as something founded in the triune life are often underdeveloped, betraying a need for prayer to be considered in closer conversation with the riches of the trinitarian tradition. Second, when it is claimed that prayer is something that can be attributed to the divine life, often there is limited attention to the different types of prayer, and it is regularly only contemplative prayer under discussion. This thesis seeks to address both weaknesses by locating its participatory account of prayer in the context of a careful account of the doctrine of the Trinity, and by addressing an underexploited type of prayer in such scholarship: intercession. It is Augustine of Hippo whom this thesis engages to provide such trinitarian theology. Using Augustine's *De Trinitate*, I seek to discern an Augustinian model of participation with which to address the concept of prayer, so that in conversation with Augustine's trinitarian theology we can ask how it is that human prayer participates in something of God's own self and action.

1. Setting the Context: Prayer and the Trinity in Recent Scholarship

First, it is helpful to give a brief overview of some of the recent scholarship on prayer within which this thesis is situated (and to identify the gaps to which I am hoping to attend). Here I focus in particular on the work of Adrienne von Speyr, Sarah Coakley, Ashley Cocksworth and Andrew Prevot.

Speyr argues in her book *The World of Prayer*, that prayer is rooted in the divine life. She argues that the divine persons 'carry a conversation among themselves', at the core of which is divine vision: 'a silent listening, a reciprocal beholding, being led, adjusting to the

other and getting to know him [God] more, a reciprocal expectation and response'.[1] Speyr's focus on the divine vision is matched by a clear interest in contemplative prayer, but she also understands prayer in a broader sense as an expression of expectation answered in fulfilment.[2] It is this movement of expectation and response in human prayer that she finds derived from the life of the Trinity: 'prayer has no beginning because Father, Son and Spirit have been in conversation from all eternity, united in an eternal expectation and an eternal decision'.[3] Whilst she rightly recognises that 'everything we can say about divine prayer is only as intimation', Speyr's account of prayer lacks the careful trinitarian grammar needed to speak with proper care of the connections between prayer and the Trinity. For instance, whist she does address the question of Christ at prayer, she does not set this discussion within a thorough examination of the divine missions. Where she does mention the sending of the Son explicitly, she unhelpfully introduces petition (which I associate with need) into the life of God: 'his [the Son's] mission as a whole has the appearance of granting a request of the Father's'.[4] All this reveals a tendency in Speyr to speak too readily of the divine processions without proper heed to the only context in which we can dare to speak of these processions: the missions. As such, in this thesis we will only address the place of prayer in the divine processions from the perspective of our encounter with the divine missions, which reveal the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit to us.

More recently, Coakley's *God, Sexuality and the Self* appeals to the patristic tradition, (including Augustine) with the aim of reorienting the doctrine of the Trinity around our encounter with God in prayer. This leads her to an emphasis on the Holy Spirit as our primary point of encounter with the Trinity and thereafter to a reordering of trinitarian grammar, which seeks to avoid a linear ordering of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, preferring to offer an 'incorporative' or 'reflexive' model of the Trinity which starts with the Spirit.[5] There is much to both congratulate and be cautious of in this approach. However, this thesis is primarily

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[1] Adrienne von Speyr, *The World of Prayer*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 31, 32.

[2] Speyr, 28.

[3] Speyr, 28.

[4] Speyr, 88.

[5] Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 100–115.

concerned with an observation Coakley makes repeatedly in her footnotes: the differences demanded in our theology as regards the divine missions on the one hand and the inner life, or processions, of God on the other.[6] As she introduces her Spirit-led model of the Trinity Coakley is rightly insistent that she is speaking of human encounter with the Spirit in prayer and thus of the divine missions. She claims to resolve these questions in reference to the inner life of the Trinity in chapter seven of her book where, in conversation with Pseudo-Dionysius, she emphasises the primacy of divine desire and seeks to understand prayer in this light. This thesis seeks to do much the same in conversation with Augustine. However, Coakley's focus throughout her book is on contemplation, and here her study meets a particular limit, in that it does not discuss other pivotal types of prayer. In this thesis, I argue that intercession is a category particularly helpful for understanding our encounter with the divine missions. Indeed, I will argue that we can rightly describe the missions of the Son and Spirit as acts of divine intercession, through which all human prayer, and particularly our own intercession, is enabled.

In his recent introductory work on prayer, Cocksworth also discusses the interrelation of prayer and the Trinity, arguing that instead of simply something humans do, prayer is something God does in humanity. He rightly observes that this is not a modern claim, but is found in a number of patristic writers.[7] Human prayer, Cocksworth argues, is 'more expansively about being caught up by the Holy Spirit into the prayer of the praying Son before the Father'.[8] In conversation with Alan Torrance, he recognises the complexity of discussing the Trinity's inner life and the divine missions, but given Cocksworth's overall focus on prayer rather than the Trinity, the complexities of such trinitarian grammar are not explored.[9] This leaves it ambiguous as to whether Cocksworth intends to describe prayer only as part of the divine missions, or also as something characteristic of the processions. In this

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[6] See for instance: Coakley, 111n12.

[7] Including Origen and Gregory of Nyssa: Ashley Cocksworth, *Prayer: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 9.

[8] Cocksworth, 77.

[9] Cocksworth, 100–102. Cocksworth draws particularly on Torrance's Barthian account of doxological participation in Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation, with Special Reference to Volume One of Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).

thesis, through the category of intercession, I will argue that we fail to understand the full participatory shape of prayer if we do not carefully examine the place of prayer in both the missions and the processions, recognising intercession as a category of prayer that can be attributed to the divine missions but *not* to the processions.

Finally, in his book *Thinking Prayer,* Prevot argues that in the creative freedom of God we find that 'God is not merely the addressee of prayer, but its primary agent'.[10] He uses this principle to brilliant effect in conversation with Johann Baptist Metz, liberation theology and the works of James Cone in order to protest for the importance of prayer in the modern world as a vehicle of love 'in the midst of innumerable loveless and hateful circumstances'.[11] There are clear resonances here with Coakley's interest in divine desire, an interest this thesis will echo. However, Prevot's primary focus is on prayer and its outworking in the world, not with the doctrine of the Trinity. His work, like Cocksworth's and Speyr's, lacks the assessment of trinitarian grammar necessary to uphold his claim that God is prayer's primary agent.

In response to the shortcomings identified in this selection of modern accounts of prayer, this thesis seeks to ground its understanding of prayer in a careful account of the Trinity and of the trinitarian contours of participation. My critique of these four writers is admittedly brief, but critique is not this thesis' intention. Rather, I seek to address the two gaps I have noted in this current scholarship (a need for more thorough trinitarian grammar and a lack of interest in intercession) and contribute to their discussion by reframing the direction of approach and speaking more explicitly in terms of participation. In particular, I will ground my account of prayer directly in the doctrine of the Trinity, rather than speculating on the Trinity from the starting point of prayer. I will set my analysis of prayer in the context of an account of the Trinity that is thorough in its grammar and participatory in direction: namely, Augustine's *De Trinitate.*

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[10] Andrew L. Prevot, *Thinking Prayer: Theology and Spirituality amid the Crises of Modernity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 2.

[11] Prevot, 2.

2. Augustine of Hippo as Interlocutor

Augustine lends himself to an exploration of the connections between prayer and the Trinity because he has a thorough concern for both.[12] Indeed, his entire corpus is permeated with his experience of prayer. It is for this reason that Athanase Sage states, 'Saint Augustine is the great doctor of prayer because he is the doctor of grace,' and Tarcisius van Bavel famously claims that 'we do not know Augustine if we do not recognize the praying person in him'.[13] Augustine offers spiritual riches to the Christian tradition and his understanding of the Trinity is a good example of this.

Concurrent with the writing of this thesis, Jonathan Teubner has written on Augustine's understanding of prayer, drawing similar connections to those made in this thesis between Augustine's interest in human ascent to God and the need for the re-formation of human desires, not least in the context of prayer.[14] Teubner's chapter in the recent *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Prayer* explores the theme of ascent as it emerges in Augustine's earlier writings, especially his *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* and *De Magistro.* However, my interest in Augustine's theme of ascent emerges not from his earlier writings, but his mature trinitarian theology in *De Trinitate.* Teubner recognises that 'prayer is intimately entangled with all his efforts to understand himself, God as Trinity, and his corporate existence within the church'; my examination of the chiastic model of descent and ascent in

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[12] Prayer and spirituality are growing areas of interest in studies of Augustine's life and writings, in both academic and popular works. Recent examples of works aimed at a wider faith-based audience include James K. A. Smith, *On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2019) and Carolyn Hammond, *Augustine's Life of Prayer, Learning and Love: Lessons for Christian Living* (Abingdon: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2019).

[13] 'Saint Augustin est le grand docteur de la prière, parce qu'il est le docteur de la grâce' See Athanase Sage, *La Vie Religieuse Selon Saint Augustin* (Paris: La Vie Augustinienne, 1972), 204 and Tarcisius J. van Bavel, *The Longing of the Heart: Augustine's Doctrine on Prayer* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 1.

[14] Jonathan Teubner, 'Augustine on Prayer: Sin, Desire and the Form of Life', in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Prayer*, ed. Ashley Cocksworth and John C. McDowell (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 303–18.

De Trinitate lends itself to a more thorough understanding of how it is that the act of human prayer is entangled with Augustine's account of God as Trinity.[15]

Indeed, whilst Teubner does make brief comments regarding the participation of human prayer in divine acts, his lack of engagement with the breadth of Augustine's trinitarian thought renders his account of the Holy Spirit lacking and his account of the Son overreaching. Whilst Teubner claims, for instance, that for Augustine 'the Holy Spirit is not providing some divine version of intercessory prayer… [but] the Holy Spirit is that which transforms human prayer', this thesis will insist (in conversation with Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus*) that the Holy Spirit does intercede for us in the divine missions insofar as it is the Spirit who is God's Love in us.[16] Similarly, in his discussion of *Epistola CXXX*, Teubner claims that 'the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are primarily those of the Son for the Father, and any human participation in it will necessarily fall short'. Whilst this helpfully raises the fact of human participation in God through prayer, and indeed the limitations of such participation, it locates petition as an activity of the Son (rather than Christ's human nature) in a way in which this thesis will not condone, since I define petition as an articulation of need. In both these instances Teubner betrays a gap in his discussion of ascent, desire and prayer, namely a lack of thorough engagement with the riches of Augustine's mature trinitarian theology.

I attempt to address these concerns, alongside those that emerged from the contemporary scholars of prayer introduced above, by framing my analysis of prayer in the context of Augustine's participatory theology in *De Trinitate*. I thus seek to provide a more thorough account of otherwise under-developed statements describing human prayer as an act of participation in God (in Teubner and in many recent scholars of prayer). I seek to ask what is meant by participation in these statements, and to enquire as to how such participation occurs and to what end. In using Augustine to engage in this conceptual work I will seek to remain consistent with Augustine's own teachings on prayer and participation, and will make clear where the differences between Augustine and this thesis' other interlocutors emerge.

[15] Teubner, 303.

[16] Teubner, 313.

3. Outline of the Argument

This thesis is organised into three parts. Part I is introductory, providing a general overview of the concepts of participation and prayer. Chapter One introduces participation, particularly in conversation with the writings of Andrew Davison and Kathryn Tanner. It favours Tanner's account of participation for her distinction between weak (creaturely) and strong (human) participation, her articulation of the principle of non-competition between God and creation, and her interest in the *imago Dei*. Later (in Chapter Six) all three of these matters will be brought into fruitful conversation with Augustine's understanding of participation, in order to better understand the participatory shape of prayer.

Chapter Two introduces prayer. I first examine the nature of prayer, arguing that it is an act of communication, conversation and conformation. I then focus on prayer as an articulation of desire, defining such desire and noting desire's pre-eminence in God. It is within this context that I then examine the role of God in human prayer, and distinguish different types of prayer, drawing particular attention to intercession, a middle category of prayer which is neither wholly alien nor wholly intrinsic to God.

Part II of this thesis is concerned with Augustine. In Chapter Three I introduce key principles of his theology of prayer through attention to three texts: *Confessiones*, *Epistola CXXX ad Proba*, and *Enarrationes in Psalmos.* This thesis is not primarily interested in detailing Augustine's own understanding of prayer; my intention instead is to use Augustine's participatory theology as a conversation partner to understand the concept of prayer more broadly. However, it is important to set this thesis' account of prayer in the context of Augustine's own concerns on the matter, not least since he too understands prayer in terms of desire, and shows interest in prayer's participatory shape. Of particular note is this chapter's introduction to Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus*, to which the thesis will return more thoroughly in Chapter Five.

Chapters Four and Five of this thesis turn their attention to Augustine's principles of participation. Chapter Four is focussed on the structure and content of *De Trinitate*, the text at the heart of Augustine's mature trinitarian theology. I begin by engaging with a number of scholars who read the text in terms of participation and then offer my own close exposition of the treatise's content. The chapter argues that the work's content and its chiastic structure,

framed around divine descent and human ascent, seeks to lead us on a spiritual progression towards fuller participation in God.

Chapter Five then provides further theological analysis of *De Trinitate*. I begin by analysing Augustine's use of language and scripture in *De Trinitate*, which encourages us to read the treatise in participatory terms, and particularly with a focus on Christ as the locus of our participation in God. I then explore the christology and pneumatology evident in the treatise, in which Augustine presents God's activity 'for us' in Christ and 'in us' by the Holy Spirit. Here I return to the concept of the *totus Christus*. In Chapter Five I examine a broad range of Augustine's writings to explore Augustine's claim that the Church is united to Christ as a body to its head, such that we can call the Church and Christ together the 'whole Christ'. By bringing this principle into conversation with all that we have explored in *De Trinitate*, I thus end Part II by presenting an Augustinian model of participation. I claim that, for Augustine, we participate in God as we participate in the whole Christ, and such participation in the whole Christ is participation in Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and in the Church.

Part III of this thesis returns to the topic of prayer, as in Chapter Six I directly address our thesis question: how it is that human prayer participates in something of God's own self and action.[17] First, I explore the extent to which we can call God's self and action 'intercession', arguing that it is appropriate to describe the sending of the Son and Spirit as acts of divine intercession. I then argue, in comparison, that intercession is not an appropriate descriptor of the divine processions. Next, I re-examine the aspects of participation explored in Chapter One in order to enquire as to how human prayer might be described as an act of participation in God. Here I provide four answers to my thesis question, each of which, to varying degrees, articulates prayer as an act of participation in God. I suggest that we can call human prayer an act of participation in God because: 1) it emulates the character of God; 2) God desires us prayer; 3) human prayer imitates an act of divine prayer (most clearly in contemplation and praise, but also to a limited degree in intercession); and 4) human prayer is enabled and shaped by God. In conversation with Tanner, and with the Augustinian model of participation discerned in Chapter Five, I will argue that this fourth answer provides the richest participatory account of human prayer. And here I will return once again to my claim that intercession is a middle category of prayer since it is precisely in his own intercession, in

[17] Remembering, of course, that God acts as God is, and God is as God acts.

the divine missions, that God enables human prayer. ‘Intercession’ thus proves itself to be a particularly helpful category for understanding human participation in God. Above all it shows us the manner of our way of being in the Trinity, whose own way of being in creation is itself an act of intercession.

Part I

Introducing Participation and Prayer

Chapter One

Participation: An Overview

The Christian tradition has insisted as a fundamental theological truth that God is God, creation is creation, and that the two are fundamentally distinct. At the same time the Christian tradition confesses the God who creates *ex nihilo*, and is thus the source of all being; it insists that God continually upholds and shapes creation; and asserts that God is the telos of all creation, insofar as we are bound for ultimate union with God. One way in which to uphold these truths is through the language of 'participation'. In other words, we can posit the otherness of God to creation *and* the relationship between God and creation as we speak of creation's participation in God, who is the beginning, middle and end of all things.

This chapter introduces the concept of participation. I begin with an account of God's transcendence to creation articulated through the doctrine of divine simplicity. I then explore different aspects of our participation in God, drawing on the work of Andrew Davison, Jacob Sherman, Daniel Keating and Kathryn Tanner. I favour Tanner's account of participation for three reasons. Firstly, her description of 'weak' and 'strong' participation makes clear how it is that humans in particular participate in God (in comparison to the created order as a whole). Secondly, underpinned by a principle of non-competition between God and creation, her account clearly articulates God's transcendence as that which enables God's immanence to the created order. Thirdly, Tanner's way of articulating participation in God bears the closest and most fruitful similarities with what this thesis will discern as an Augustinian model of participation (in Part II), most importantly in her interest in the *imago Dei* as the locus of the human's participation in God.

Tanner's principle of non-competition and account of God's radical transcendence, I will argue, enables us to speak meaningfully of our participation in Christ, who is both the means and goal of our participation in God. It is in Christ, I will posit, that we find our way of being in the Trinity. This choice of language I will demonstrate as intentional; speaking of participation in God in terms of our 'way of being in the Trinity' draws our attention to the

consequences of an ontology of participation in action. It is thus with a brief account of participation in action that this chapter concludes.

1.1. God as the Source and End of All Creation

The claim that creation participates in God is a claim that all creation comes from God, that creation's character is shaped by God its creator, and that creation finds its telos in God. This most basic understanding of God is not unique to Christian doctrine. Jacob Sherman notes that,

> in its most general sense, the metaphysical concept of participation refers to a constitutive structure whereby a being or beings share to varying degrees in a positive quality or perfection that they receive from a donating source that alone enjoys the fullness of this quality or perfection.[18]

Neo-Platonic models of participation assert this through the notions of *exitus* and *reditus*, the coming forth from and return of all creation to 'God'. Aristotle's four causes – efficient (who did it?), material (what is it formed from?), formal (why is it like this?) and final (what is its purpose?)– insist, in their own manner, that creation has God as its beginning, middle and end.[19]

Participation takes a unique shape in Christian understandings of God, however, insofar as the assertion that God is the beginning, middle and end of creation cannot be separated from the person of Christ, the incarnate Son of the Father. Under a Christian model

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[18] Jacob H. Sherman, 'A Genealogy of Participation', in *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies*, ed. Jorge N. Ferrer and Jacob H. Sherman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 82.

[19] I borrow these descriptions of Aristotle's four causes from Andrew Davison, *Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 42. Davison's study has a particular interest in Thomas Aquinas, who is in turn heavily reliant on Aristotelian metaphysics. Augustine's understanding of participation is more Neo-Platonic in its origins. However, Davison's study will prove useful; in Chapter Six I will draw on his categorising of participation in order to explore how prayer is participatory, thereby bringing Davison into conversation with Augustine.

of participation, in the incarnation we encounter the God who is the beginning, middle and end of all creation because in Christ, as Kathryn Tanner puts it, we find, 'the whole of who God is for us as creator and redeemer'.[20] 'Christ,' Tanner insists, 'clarifies and specifies the nature, aim and trustworthiness of all God's dealings with us because Christ is where those dealings with us come to ultimate fruition'.[21] Similarly, in this chapter I will argue that Christ is the lens by which we must understand all creation's participation in God, and what it is that makes human participation in God distinctive.

First, however, I examine the manner in which God is the source and end of all creation. I begin by describing divine simplicity as the basis of participation theology, and I then explore the different aspects of participation we must be aware of when speaking of 'participation in God'. It is as a result of this awareness of different aspects of participation that I will return to Tanner's account of participation.

1.1.1. Divine Simplicity

The notion of *creation ex nihilo* is a claim that God is not another thing amongst things but rather transcends creation. God is not a definable entity, and thus cannot even be described as 'other' to creation; that is, God cannot be described as some*thing* that can be differentiated from other entities in terms of 'this' versus 'that'. Whilst this does not mean that we are prevented from talking about God – theology is precisely that – it means we must recognise that God is not like anything created.[22] One might quite rightly ask how this God who creates *ex nihilo* can be participated in, in any way. If God is utterly unique with respect to creation, how could any creature participate in God? The answer lies in God's simplicity, the claim that God is without parts.

A corollary of asserting that God is utterly unique with respect to created things, simplicity specifies this distinctiveness in terms of God's lacking any form of composition. Because God is simple rather than composite, we must say that all that God is, is identical with God's essence, including God's existence. That is, when we say God exists, we are not

[20] Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), viii.

[21] Tanner, viii.

[22] Theology is possible on the basis that creation is like God, albeit only by analogy.

saying that God partakes (or is composed) of a more general notion of existence, but that God is existence itself. Unlike all *things*, God cannot be reduced to or analysed in terms of something else: God simply is God.

In contrast, creation is composite. Creation's essence and existence are not identical, and both its essence and existence derives from God its Creator. The created order does not simply exist in its own right by nature of its very being but partakes of that existence which it receives from God. To put it another way, creation is dependent on God for its existence. Thus, we encounter the language of participation. Creation receives all that it is as gift from its creator, not in a sense of material causation in which creation is 'made out of' God, but in the sense of Aristotle's efficient causation or Neo-Platonism's *exitus* principle, insofar as all creation comes from God, who is its cause of being.

1.1.2. Aspects of Participation

The most basic aspect of participation which divine simplicity indicates, is that creation's existence participates in God's own existence. There are, however, many other particular ways in which we use language of participation to speak of the relationship between God and creation. Here I provide brief examples of these aspects of participation, first in conversation with Andrew Davison, then with Jacob Sherman, and finally in dialogue with Daniel Keating and Kathryn Tanner so that when I analyse intercession as a participative act in Chapter Six, we have a framework on which to map the aspects of participation at play. I find in Keating and Tanner a helpful differentiation between what it is for humans to participate in God compared to the participation true of creation in general. It is Tanner's distinction between weak and strong participation, and the broader frameworks in which it sits, which will become my focus. Tanner's model of participation helpfully foregrounds Christ as the locus of human participation in God, and draws attention to the progress towards God, in the shape of transformed relationship, which characterises human participation in God. This account of participation, together with my analysis of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, will shape my own reading of prayer as a participative act (in Chapter Six).

To begin, Davison brings two helpful clarifications to the question of participation. The first is his elucidation of the four Aristotelian causes as a way of understanding Christian

models of participation in God.[23] In divine simplicity we have seen already that God is the efficient cause of creation, the reason why creation exists at all. We must also note that God is *not* the material cause of creature, since creation comes from God but is not made up of God (or else God would no longer be simple). To these assertions Davison adds that God is both the final and formal cause of creation.

God is creation's final cause, because it is to and for God that creation exists; as Romans 11.36 puts it, 'from him [God] and through him and *to* him are all things'. God does not create to satisfy any lack in God, but we can (and will in Chapter Two) speak of God's desire for creation. Such divine desire is the reason why God creates at all, and is imitated in creation's own desire for God, as creation (and particularly humanity) reaches its fulfilment with the perfection of its desire for God in eternal life. In light of final causation, to participate in God has a teleological and eschatological character.

God is also creation's formal cause because the manner in which creation exists is in likeness to its Creator. This is most evident in the creation of humans in the *imago Dei,* but we can also point to ways in which the goodness and beauty exhibited in creation as a whole are traces of prior divine attributes. God's goodness, for instance, is a cause of creaturely goodness, and thus we can speak of creaturely goodness participating in God.

As well as his use of Aristotle's theory of causality, Davison's work also offers helpful clarity around prepositions. There are some prepositions associated with participation which make little or no theological sense in the context of Christian doctrine. To say that creation is 'part of' God, for instance, is dangerously close to stating that creation and God are the same sort of 'thing', or even that creation claims something of God by virtue of its existence.[24] Understanding participation as a 'part in' adds a helpful theme of partnership, implying that when humans participate in God they share a 'part in' God's work without detracting from God's own self.[25] Also useful is the preposition 'from' which is rarely used in discussions of participation in the English language – where 'participation in' is a more

[23] The first five chapters of Davison's study are organised according to Aristotle's four causes, read through a Christian lens. See Davison, *Participation in God*, chaps 1–5.

[24] Davison, 135–37.

[25] Davison, 137–41.

natural expression – but which is used readily in Latin writings.[26] To speak of participating 'from' God serves as a reminder that to participate in God is to be the recipient of a gift. Grammatically it makes God the primary agent of participation stressing the implication of the doctrine of divine simplicity that all which the creature is – essence and existence – is continually received from God.[27]

Davison favours speaking of participation 'in' God as the most natural way of expressing the participative relationship creation has towards God. However, he rightly insists that 'the reader is advised to keep the sense of "donation from" in mind' as a reflection of the priority of the divine agent.[28] To this I would add the value of 'in' as a preposition applicable to participative christology. In this thesis, and particularly in conversation with Augustine's understanding of the *totus Christus*, I will focus on Christ as the locus of the human's participation in God. We will observe in Chapter Five that it is 'in' Christ that humans participate in God, both in the sense that we receive the fullness of who we are from God through Christ and in the sense that our being in the Trinity is located in Christ, through our membership of his body, the Church.

A further clarification of participation is offered by Sherman's account of 'A Genealogy of Participation'. He maps historic developments in 'Western' thought beginning with the formal or essential participation found in Plato's writings ('what a being is'), through the existential participation introduced by Aristotle and culminating in the work of Thomas Aquinas ('why there is something rather than nothing'), to the language of creative participation generated in the Renaissance.[29] This creative turn is a reassertion of creaturely agency in which the question of how human creativity participates in divine creativity is brought to the fore.[30] In Part III of this thesis I will discern something of this creative turn at work in the ways I speak of prayer as an action through which we participate in God. Sherman himself anticipates this in his assertion that,

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[26] Davison, 35.

[27] Davison, 35–38.

[28] Davison, 38.

[29] Sherman, 'A Genealogy of Participation'.

[30] Sherman, 92–102. Whilst Sherman is largely plotting a chronology, he does recognise that elements of this creative turn are to be found in the early Platonic tradition.

> Participatory logic offers a way to think a person's active, shaping contribution to a mystical event without setting this role at odds with some sort of genuine, spiritual encounter. This allows us to more fully envision human soteriological flourishing as simultaneously a *work* and a *gift*.[31]

I will echo this in my own claims in Chapter Six, where I argue that the soteriological function of the divine missions invites humans to receive the intercessions of the Son and the Spirit as a gift, and in response to make intercession their own work as an act of participation in God.

A further benefit of Sherman's attention to the creative turn in accounts of participation, is the way he draws our focus to the particularity of human participation in God. Davison's account of participation, whilst remarkably thorough, starts in a register of philosophical theology which means it rarely needs to differentiate between 'creature' in general and 'human creatures' in particular.[32] This thesis seeks to work in a more explicitly doctrinal register. In that register it is important that we differentiate between creaturely participation in God in general and human participation in God in particular. This is especially important for my comments in Chapter Six, where I will argue that human prayer is a participatory act because it joins in with the intercessory action of the divine missions, which occur in the particular humanity of Jesus Christ for the benefit of human salvation.[33]

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[31] Sherman, 103.

[32] Two of the instances in which Davison does make this distinction are when discussing language of 'image' (he clarifies that the *imago Dei* belongs properly to human creatures (Davison, *Participation in God*, 106–8)) and when discussing God as final cause (he notes that each creature's relation to God as final cause is shaped by that creature's particular nature (Davison, 117)).

[33] The reconciliation between God and creation achieved in Jesus Christ extends to the whole created order; however, something particular is transformed in the relationship between God and humans, as those created in the *imago Dei.* Note too that I speak here of acts of *human* prayer. We can speak of creatures other than humans praying (although that is not the interest of this thesis); see for instance Revelation 5.11-13 as an indication that 'every creature in heaven and on earth' praises God. When it comes to the activity of prayer, it makes sense to

So, what is it that characterises human participation in God? It is here that Kathryn Tanner's account of participation is especially valuable, and to a lesser extent that of Daniel Keating. Keating, in his introductory account of deification argues that what characterises human participation in God is our creation in the image of God such that by grace we 'participate in the life and qualities of God through Christ and in the Spirit'.[34] This 'supernatural participation' as he calls it, is a more privileged form of participation than the 'ontological participation' enjoyed by the whole created order, and in particular because it is personal; that is, because 'through grace we enter into the personal communion of love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit'.[35] Keating is careful in stating that this is a process of deification in which we never become consubstantial with the divine nature, but his language implies that human participation in God is something more than ontological, and is thus misleading.

Tanner offers a fuller and more careful account of what distinguishes human participation in God from that of the rest of creation, through her concepts of 'weak' and 'strong' participation. This distinction is particularly fruitful in the context of this thesis. Firstly, because it will assist us in understanding the ways in which human prayer not only demonstrates dependence on God but also exhibits human participation as a movement towards God. Secondly, Tanner's account of participation will be important to this thesis because of the correlations to be drawn between her theology and Augustine's, not least in their shared interest in the *imago* as the locus of human movement towards God. Thirdly, Tanner's account of participation helpfully establishes a non-contrastive account of agency which will set important context for this thesis' examination of the role of divine and human action in prayer.

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assert that each creature prays according to the particularity of its nature, just as each creature participates in God according to the particularity of its nature.

[34] Daniel A. Keating, *Deification and Grace* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 100.

[35] Keating, 100.

1.1.3. Kathryn Tanner's Account of Participation

1.1.3.1 Weak and Strong Participation: Creaturely and Human Participation in God

Tanner distinguishes between 'weak' and 'strong' participation. By weak participation, she refers to creation as a whole (including each creature individually) in its relation of dependence upon God. As we have seen, as a consequence of divine simplicity, creation does not simply exist, but must be gifted its existence and its essence by its Creator. As Tanner puts it,

> not just human beings, but everything in the world gets all that it is… from what it is not – God. This is simply what it means to be a creature. Creatures participate in God by leading a derived life in that sense, a life derived from a God who does not derive from another as they do.[36]

From the perspective of creation then, we can speak of our participation in God insofar as all created being is derived from God. Creation by its nature has a part in something beyond itself: God.

However, Tanner notes that this universal form of creaturely participation in God is weak; an assertion of the derived life of creation and little more.[37] Although the defining fact of creaturely existence, it is noteworthy that such participation does not speak of any

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[36] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 8.

[37] Davison critiques Tanner, finding 'her 'weak' participation to be too weak, and her 'strong' participation too strong (see Davison, *Participation in God*, 276–78). He thinks Tanner too readily associates the dependence involved in weak participation as a description of flaw and argues that her strong participation 'renders a creature other than creaturely'. Davison also comments that Tanner lacks a clear account of what it is for a creature to be a recipient of divinity, such that she ends up using more 'spatial language'. Davison's first critique has weight and asks us to apply caution when reading Tanner's work, but it does not undermine her basic distinction between creaturely and human participation. His second critique I find far less of a concern, not least because I share Tanner's interest in a 'more resolutely doctrinal register'. Moreover, in its analysis of the *totus Christus* in Chapter Five, this thesis will show that Augustine's understanding of participation in God exhibits spatial descriptors such as 'in Christ', just like Tanner's.

particular agency on the part of the created. We can say that creation in its very existence participates in God, but to do so says nothing of the sort of creaturely agency which we associate with the relationship between God and humanity in particular. Indeed, if prayer is to be effectual in any sense other than human psychology (making the praying person feel better, for instance), we must recognise some human agency in relationship with God. For this we need Tanner's strong participation, which deals specifically with what it is that sets human relationship with God apart from God's relationship with the rest of the created order.

Tanner's description of strong participation asserts that humanity's creation in the *imago Dei* is the ground of our unique relationship to God, and thus the locus of our strong participation. She argues that divine simplicity, with its implication that God is distinct from creation, invalidates any notion of an ontological scale in creation, whereby humanity's creation in God's image places humans, by their very essence, higher than other creatures in the sense of being ontologically closer to God.[38] Instead, she insists that humans always participate weakly in God alongside all other creatures, and that their imaging of God is not evidence of any ontological superiority. In their tendency to suggest otherwise, depictions of the *imago Dei* which emphasise some human attribute (for example, rationality, creativity, or dominance over creation) as the locus of the image in humanity are found insufficient. Human participation in God via the *imago Dei* is more than a simple analogy of divine attributes in human persons.

What then is the *imago Dei*? Tanner argues that above all it concerns the transformation of humans in their relationship to God. 'Humanity,' Tanner argues, 'takes on… its own perfect shape by being reworked through attachment to the divine image'.[39] Being created in the *imago Dei* thus means that humanity not only exhibits the relationality to God that is intrinsic to all creatures, but also inhabits an identity before God that is innately concerned with progress; progress towards the perfecting of that image, and thus also progress into deeper relationality with the God from whom that image comes

The means and locus of this progress towards God is the Divine Image incarnate, in and through whom the human person is transformed by grace. Tanner insists that 'Jesus Christ is more than a paradigm for [our participation in God]…; he has become for us the

[38] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 1–2.

[39] Tanner, 16.

very means'.[40] In other words, we are not just created in God's image according to the pattern of Christ; it is precisely through our participation in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit who unites us with Christ and 'makes us one with him, in all the intensity of faith, hope, and love', that we image God.[41] To be in the *imago Dei* is thus not just to reflect God as a creature but to progress towards God through participation in the human being Jesus Christ, who redeems and reforms us.[42]

1.1.3.2 God's Transcendence and the Principle of Non-Competition

Tanner's work on participation is fruitful not just because it recognises Christ as the means of human participation in God. In addition, through assuming a non-contrastive understanding of God and creation, she is able to establish an account of God's radical transcendence which upholds God's immanence. She thus accounts both for the possibility of our participation in God and for the Incarnation as a consequence rather than contradiction of God's transcendence over creation.[43]

Tanner's concept of radical transcendence is rooted in the fact that if God is utterly transcendent to creation, we simply cannot contrast God and creation as if they are similar 'things' in competition. As Tanner puts it, 'a contrastive definition [of God's transcendence] will show its failure to follow through consistently on divine transcendence by inevitably bringing God down to the level of the non-divine to which it is opposed'.[44] By recognising that God and creation are not 'things' to be contrasted we can reimagine transcendence as a description of the Creator God from and through and by whom everything has its existence.

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[40] Tanner, 14.

[41] Tanner, 14.

[42] This thesis will argue that it is this understanding of participation which Augustine presents to us in *De Trinitate* through his account of humans imaging the Trinity (albeit with minor differences to Tanner, see Chapter 6.3.2).

[43] This principle of non-competition is explored most thoroughly in Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

[44] Tanner, 46.

This is the God whose radical transcendence from creation does not pit God against the created order, but upholds God's intimacy with creation.

We've explored the consequences of this in its most general sense, insofar as it is God's transcendence that enables us to speak at all of creation participating in God. Creation is intimately dependent on God (weak participation), and human persons are called into intimate relationship with God (strong participation) because it is God who is the beginning, middle, and end of creation as a whole and humans in particular. The intimacy of relationship between Creator and creatures is possible only because they are radically different.

This principle of non-contrastive ontology means the Incarnation is not a problem to be solved; either of contradictory natures or of reconciling the ways in which Jesus acts in his humanity or his divinity. Christ's humanity is not limited by his divinity, nor is his divinity limited by his humanity, because both natures are radically different and therefore radically intimate to one another. Indeed, we can only talk of humans participating strongly in God by being incorporated into Christ, because God's radical transcendence establishes such a distinction between divinity and humanity, between Creator and creation.[45] We can only speak of our participation in God via incorporation in Christ because our humanity and his divinity are not in competition, and cannot limit or threaten one another. We are thus free to claim that in the incarnate Christ we find the means and goal of our participation in God. It is to an explanation of the role of Christ in participation in God that I now turn.

1.2. Participation in Christ

1.2.1. Christ as the Means and Goal of Human Participation

There are two ways in which we can articulate that Christ is the means of human participation in God: as the incarnate Word through whom all things are created; and as the incarnate Divine Image through whom those in the *imago Dei* (humans) are enabled to move towards God. Christ is both of these things at once, since at all times the Word of God *is* the Divine Image and *is* the Son of the Father. However, each of these ways of naming the one who

[45] As this thesis will find to be Augustine's understanding of our participation in God through Christ, see Chapter 5.3-5.4.

becomes incarnate points us to a particular way in which the person of Jesus Christ is the means of human participation in God.

The claim that the second Person of the Trinity is the one through whom all things are created emerges from the Johannine Prologue: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God… All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being' (John 1.1, 3). This is the same Word of which is later said 'the Word became flesh and lived among us' (v.14). We can thus assert that Christ is the means of our participation in God insofar as it is through the Word, who becomes incarnate as the person of Jesus Christ, that creation is gifted its existence.[46] As Tanner puts it, 'the paradigms for created things exist in the second person, God's own Word'.[47] This is an articulation of weak participation; it asserts Christ as the means of *all* creation's participation in God (in which humans are included).

Christ is the means of strong participation in God because as the Divine Image he is the one who enables humans to image God; that is, to progress towards deeper relationship with God. As we have already seen in Tanner's account of strong participation, it is in attachment to the Divine Image, she argues, that the image in us is perfected. This attachment to the Divine Image is achieved by Christ through his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension. It is in Christ's salvific action, in other words, that our strong participation in God is made possible.[48] This has its roots in the Incarnation, since it is as Christ participates in our humanity, and thus with us participates both weakly and strongly in God, that the path is opened for humanity to participate in his divinity, through union with him. Our union with Christ is also a union with his death and resurrection, those acts in which Christ mediates on

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[46] Davison makes a similar argument by attributing formal causation to the second person of the Trinity (see Davison, *Participation in God*, 42–52). Thus, in answer to the question 'why is creation like this?' he argues that it is because it is created through the Word. In this thesis I favour doctrinal language discussing participation from the perspective of the *human* experience of such participation. Thus, I speak of the Word as the 'means' of participation in God instead of appealing to formal causality.

[47] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 9.

[48] I keep my comments here to a minimum. A fuller examination of the role of Christ's salvific work for participation in God will be provided in my analysis of the Son's activity 'for us' presented in Augustine's *De Trinitate;* see Chapter 5.2.

our behalf in order to restore us to right relationship with God. In his ascension, Christ bears our humanity, united to his, into the life of God, and thus our perfected humanity is brought to partake, in a human fashion, in his divine life. It is thus that we discover that Christ is the goal of our participation in God as well as its means, since it is *in* Christ that our movement towards God, our strong participation, takes its course and finds its rest.

1.2.2. Christ as our Way of Being in the Trinity

Because Christ is the means and the goal of human participation in God we can speak of Christ as our way of being in God. As the means of our participation he is our *way* of being in God. Moreover, it is through his sharing in our *being* (in the Incarnation) that we reach the goal of our participation in God, namely a share (albeit in a human fashion) in his *being* God.

More specifically, we can call Christ not just our way of being in God, but also our way of being in the *Trinity*, for through attachment to Christ we recognise that the God in whom we participate is trinitarian. We hear Christ name himself the Son of the Father (particularly in the Gospel of John) and are promised that we are made co-heirs with him as we share (in a human fashion, via Christ's human nature) in his sonship (Galatians 3.25-27). And such adoption (to take up the language of Galatians 4.4-5) cannot happen apart from the work of the Spirit, by whom God, in Christ, is revealed to us (1 Corinthians 2.10-11) and through whom we are adopted in Christ: 'you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him' (Romans 8.9). As we participate in Christ, therefore, we recognise that we participate by the power of the Spirit, who reveals the Father to us, and makes us children of God, in and with Christ in his Sonship.[49] Thus, as we participate in Christ, we discover that to participate in God is to 'be in the Trinity'; we are enabled to participate by the activity of the Son and Spirit, and such participation finds its end in our partaking of Christ's triune life. In order to assert this human fashion in which we share by participation in the triune life of God, our thesis refers to participation as our 'way of being in the Trinity'. Indeed, this phrase also serves as a helpful

[49] Indeed, Galatians 4.6 affirms the role of the Spirit in such adoption, with clear consequences for our understanding of prayer: 'because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"'.

reminder that our participation in God is not just a matter of what we are and who God is, but also a question of what God and humans do. Our 'way of being' as it pertains to participation in God is not simply a matter of our ontological status as creatures or as humans before God, but of the manner in which that ontology shapes our action. It is to such participation in action that I now turn.

1.3. Participation in Action

Ontology has a bearing on action; as Davison observes 'being is an act; indeed, it is the creature's great act: its overarching project, which each creature performs in its own particular way'.[50] We behave, therefore, in a fashion shaped by our nature. As we participate in God, both as creatures who receive their nature as a gift from God, and as humans who move towards God (as the *imago Dei* is perfected), we find that our action participates in God's action.

I understand participation in God's actions in two senses. First, we can describe all good creaturely action as participation in God's goodness, since anything that is good in creatures is received as a gift from God, who is *the* Good.[51] Secondly and more specifically, using Tanner's principle of the non-contrastive relationship between God and creation we can recognise human and divine agents working in specific actions, such that we can claim that a human person participates in particular actions of God. One such action, this thesis will argue, is the act of prayer, and in particular the act of intercession.

1.3.1. The Non-Competition of Divine and Human Agents

The radical difference which ensures that God and creation cannot be contrasted means that in their activity God and creation are never in *competition* with each other. Divine action is utterly different from creaturely action, because God is utterly transcendent to creation. However, because of such radical transcendence we can speak of divine and creaturely action

[50] Davison, *Participation in God*, 218.

[51] Sinful human activity is a privation of participation; it represents a movement away from rather than towards God.

as intimately bound up together. Since the actions of God and creature are utterly unlike one another, we can speak of both God and creature acting together without limiting one another.

Indeed, creaturely action can never truly be separated from divine action, because, just as God is the source of all, so too God is the source of all action. As Davison puts it, 'in creating, God acts to create agents, creatures with the power to act. God not only causes but, in causing, bestows upon creatures the powers to be causes themselves'.[52] Just as God's 'being' is radically transcendent to creation and thus not in contrast with creation but rather intimately related to it as Creator to creation, so too God's action is intimately connected to the creature's action, as its source. We act, in other words, because God, in creating us, acts to make us real agents.

As well as asserting that God is the source of all action, the principle of non-competition allows us to speak of the full agency of both the human creature and God in more particular ways. One important example of this is the agency of the divine and human natures of Christ. If the hypostatic union is an assertion that Christ is fully human and fully divine, we are claiming that Christ acts fully in his humanity and his divinity, because the way one acts is bound up with one's ontology. We must be able to differentiate Jesus' divine and human actions since his divinity is radically transcendent to his humanity. It is this radical transcendence, however, that enables the intimacy of the divine and human natures in Christ. Thus, in terms of action, we can assert with Tanner a 'unity of subject' in Jesus Christ, such that 'Jesus performs divine works in a human way (saves us by living a human life); and performs human works in a divine way (lives a human life in a way that saves)'.[53] Jesus' humanity does not limit his divinity, or vice versa; rather the actions of one nature shape the other, for the purpose of the perfection of the *imago Dei* in us.

Beyond the particular actions of the incarnate Christ, an affirmation of the non-competitive agency of both the human person and God invites us to consider how particular human actions participate in particular divine actions. We might ask, for instance, how it is that human creativity in the practice of the arts (drama, painting etc.) participates in God's creative act, or how the human pursuit of justice participates in God's acts of justice. In both

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[52] Davison, *Participation in God*, 217.

[53] Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 21.

of these examples we can assert in a very general sense that human action shares in the character of God as creative or just, or we can argue that particular acts of human creativity or justice participate in particular acts of God's creativity or justice (e.g., the establishing of justice in a human community as a participation in God's establishing of justice at the cross).[54]

Finally, we cannot rightly consider human participation in God via action without recognising that such agency is exercised not only individually but also communally, as human persons engage in the actions of the Church. Tanner, for instance, notes that it is by the activity of the Spirit through the ministry of the Church, in its 'extrospective movements of faith, praise, prayer and worship', that we are assumed by Christ and come to share in his divine life.[55] A human person's participation in God thus cannot be thought of apart from the participation of others in God. Human participation in God, as the *imago Dei* is perfected and we move towards God, is not experienced alone, but in union with all others who move towards God in this way. Our participation in God via the person of Jesus Christ is thus corporate in shape.[56]

Conclusion

This chapter has been deliberately broad in its brushstrokes, seeking to introduce participation as a concept which this thesis will bring into conversation with Augustine's trinitarian theology in *De Trinitate.* We have observed that participation theology is above all a claim that all creation has God as its source and end. Having examined various aspects of such participation, in conversation with Davison, Sherman, Keating and Tanner, we have particularly favoured Tanner's account for her emphasis on God's transcendence and the non-competitive relationship between God and creation, her concern for the *imago Dei* (and with it her christological focus), and her distinction between weak and strong participation. Already we have seen how these principles underpin a participatory account of action; in Chapter Six these principles will help us to determine the participatory shape of the act of prayer. First, however, we must clarify what prayer is, and in particular define the type of

[54] In Chapter Six I will pose these questions of the activity of prayer.

[55] Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity*, 60.

[56] We will find similar claims in Augustine's principle of the *totus Christus* in Chapter 5.3.

prayer with which this thesis has a special interest: intercession. It is to these questions that Chapter Two turns.

Chapter Two

Prayer: An Overview

In his work on participation, Davison notes that the God's radical transcendence, and thus intimate relationship with creation, has 'many consequences for Christian spirituality'.[57] One sphere of such consequence is prayer. In human prayer, we articulate desire for things, for other people and for God and in the right-ordering of these desires we see evidence of the participation of all creation, according to its nature, in God.

In this chapter, I begin by explaining what human prayer basically is: communication and, more specifically, communication that takes the *form* of conversation with the *goal* of conformation. Such conformation is to God but also, through participation in Christ, unites the person who prays to all others who pray; it thus betrays the participative framework in which all created things relate to each other and to God. It is our desires that are particularly transformed in prayer. In the exploration of desire with which this chapter continues I argue that rightly-ordered human desire finds both its goal in God as our ultimate desire, but also its beginning in God, in pre-eminent divine desire. One aspect of God's desire, I claim, is a desire for our prayer. Here I note the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in human prayer.

Finally, this chapter includes a categorisation of prayer, in which I differentiate prayers of confession, thanksgiving, petition, contemplation, praise and intercession. I claim that confession, thanksgiving and petition can only ever be an articulation of human desire, given their assumption of need, but that we can speak of God both contemplating and praising himself. Intercession, I argue, is a middle category of prayer, neither wholly intrinsic to God nor entirely alien to God, but is that type of prayer which particularly shapes our strong participation in God.[58]

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[57] Davison, *Participation in God*, 341.

[58] I develop this claim in full in Chapter Six.

2.1. The Nature of Prayer: Communication as Conversation and Conformation

At its most simple, human prayer is as an act of self-expression, or as Kenneth Leech puts it, a 'longing, desire, the expression of our deepest aspirations, joys, or sorrows'.[59] However, in order for us to begin to call such desire 'prayer' it must be expressed to a second party, namely God.[60] Hence, prayer is an act of *communication* between humans and God. A clear indication of this can be found in Jesus' answer to the disciples' request, 'Lord, teach us to pray', in which Jesus commands his disciples to say (λεγετε) 'Father, hallowed be your (σου) name' (Luke 11.42). Here we have not only an invitation to speak, but to address the Father in the second person, and thus in intimate, direct terms. Christian prayer is addressed *to* someone.

Indeed, prayer is intended to be both heard and answered. The Psalmist prays, 'I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words' (Psalm 17.6) and Christ's insists that it is worth persevering in prayer because the Father hears and responds. (Luke 11.5-13). We can thus describe prayer as an act of communication in the form of *conversation.* That is, prayer is not simply humanity speaking (and thus expecting to be heard); it also involves a response from God. Harold Anson claims that prayer thus involves two particular parties: one in need, and the other with the power to respond.[61] In comparison, Adrienne von Speyr, who we met in this thesis' introduction, claims that there are three parties conversing in divine prayer: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our own prayer would then be an engagement with this eternal conversation.[62]

Alongside my earlier critique of Speyr's under-developed trinitarian grammar (insofar as the divine missions are not given proper attention), we must also be clear, contrary to Speyr's lengthy discourse on the processions as acts of prayer, that what we can say of the 'eternal conversation' of God is limited. God is utterly transcendent to the created order and

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[59] Kenneth Leech, *True Prayer: An Introduction to Christian Spirituality* (London: Sheldon Press, 1980), 7.

[60] Such expression of desire need not be articulated in words, as evidenced in contemplation.

[61] Harold Anson, 'Prayer as Understanding', in *Concerning Prayer: Its Nature, Its Difficulties and Its Value*, ed. Lily Dougall (London: Macmillan and Co., 1916), 69.

[62] Speyr, *The World of Prayer*, 76.

thus the divine processions in particular test our powers of description. However, as we observed in conversation with Tanner in Chapter One, it is God's radical transcendence that enables God to be immanent to creation. We observed that it is not in contrary to but in keeping with God's transcendence that God makes himself known in the created order through self-revelation, most particularly in the person of Jesus Christ. Whilst God's transcendence is beyond proper articulation, we can speak from our human perspective of God's immanence, as we experience it in Christ. And in Christ we experience the Word of God 'spoken' to us, revealing who God is. In other words, we are the recipients of a form of communication, indeed we are creatures who hear 'divine speech'. Whilst there is little we can say of an eternal dialogue in God to which our human prayer relates, as Speyr posits, it does make sense to speak of our dialogue with God in prayer as a response to God's prior dialogue with us in his self-revelation. In this sense human prayer is not simply an act of human communication to which God responds, but an act of human communication in response to God's own self-communication towards us. It is, therefore, a conversation between humans and God.

It is in the goal of such conversation that we are most reminded of the differences between God and humanity in prayer. God and humanity cannot engage in the same way in prayer, because God is eternal and humans are temporal. If any activity of God in creation is as a consequence of God's radical transcendence, by which God is enabled to be immanent to creation but never of creation, we can assert that God has the power to affect the created order but is not affected by it. In comparison, as we also observed in Chapter One, humans participate in God both in terms of the dependence on God they share with all creation (weak participation), and in their movement towards God as creatures made in the *imago Dei* (strong participation). It is of the nature of humans, therefore, to be affected by God. In prayer this looks like the conformation of humanity to God.

Such conformation affects both the content of prayer and the person who prays. This is well articulated by Herbert McCabe who describes prayer thus:

> If we are honest enough to admit to our shabby infantile desires then the grace of God will grow in us, it will slowly be revealed to us, precisely in the course of our prayer, that there are more important things that we truly do want. But this will not be some abstract recognition that we ought to want

> these things, we will really discover a desire for them in ourselves. But we must start where we are.[63]

When humans pray, human desire becomes gradually more aligned to the will of God, through the process of continually encountering God in prayer. Our prayer is reshaped then, in the process of praying, to align us more closely with God. There are clear parallels to be drawn here with the movement towards God that is humanity's strong participation in God. Humanity is transformed in its relationship to God through the perfecting of the *imago Dei*, such that we are drawn as human participants into the divine life. Human prayer thus not only expresses human dependence on God, but also the shaping of the human person in their imaging of the God on whom they depend.

Such human conformation to God is not only experienced by the individual. As well as conforming us to God, prayer unites us with all others who pray. Whenever a human person prays, even privately, they are praying in communion with the rest of the Church. This is reflected in the way Jesus introduce the Lord's Prayer. The words '*our* Father' imply that prayer is always an act shared with all others who pray. As I will show at the end of this chapter, a signal instance of the corporate nature of prayer is to be found in intercession, where the one who prays explicitly relates themselves to others. However, other forms of prayer are also corporate (as evidenced in corporate acts of confession, for example). Even the most self-reflecting of petitionary prayer (such as a petition regarding a personal need), even as it expresses individual desire, remains profoundly corporate. As an expression of dependence on God, anyone who petitions shares in the character of all creation as it weakly participates in God. Leech rightly recognises this common situation in his explanation of why prayer can never 'be purely individualistic'.[64]

At the very least, then, we can describe human prayer as partaking in a shared activity, with reference to other human persons. As we continue to probe the inherent sociality of prayer, however, we discover that the corporate act of prayer is an act of participation in God, insofar as prayer is bound up with the person of Christ. We see this particularly in the language of Christ's intercession in John 17: 'as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me'

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[63] Herbert McCabe, *God Matters* (London: Continuum, 2005), 224.

[64] Leech, *True Prayer*, 89.

(John 17.21b). The answer to Christ's prayer is found in the indwelling of all people in God. John's Gospel precedes the development of the trinitarian doctrine of the conciliar period, but nonetheless it is clear that the indwelling of all people in God is based in the life of God that the Father, Son and Spirit share. Leech chooses to name this *koinonia* and, in so doing, helpfully draws together Christ's assertion that human fellowship and fellowship with God are intricately bound together.

Such fellowship is necessarily corporate, since Christ goes on to pray, 'the glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one' (John 17.22-23). Human unity is thus first achieved through the mediation of Christ who is 'in us' substantially, sharing in human nature. In addition, as a consequence of this, Christ shares in our activity, praying as we pray and uniting to himself all who pray in his name. Thus, we must recognise that prayer is fundamentally corporate, since it is the activity of the church, the *corpus* (body) of Christ (see Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12).[65] This Leech helpfully elucidates through his discussion of the relationship between prayer and baptism.[66] His claim that 'Christian prayer is the manifestation of Christian baptism' acts as a reminder that it is on the basis of the Christian's fellowship in the body of Christ, entered into at baptism, that prayer manifests itself. Just as Christ shares in prayer by virtue of being 'in us' through the Incarnation, so in return individual members of the Church pray *in Christ* as members of the body of Christ, the Church. Thus, when a human person prays, they are not simply starting a conversation, but rather entering into the greater work of God, in Christ and through the Church, through which the members of the Church are conformed to one another and to God. Ruth Burrows speaks of this shared conversation as a 'communion that is *there*, for us to be taken into'.[67] In the context of this thesis it makes sense to speak of this communion, and thus of prayer, in terms of participation.

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[65] This is Augustine's claim in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* via the concept of the *totus Christus*; see Chapter 3.2.

[66] Leech, *True Prayer*, 27–32.

[67] Ruth Burrows, *Essence of Prayer* (London: Burns & Oates, 2007), 79.

2.2. Prayer and Desire

In his definition of human prayer, we have seen Leech describe prayer as an expression of desire.[68] This chapter has thus far clarified that human prayer communicates our desires to God in the form of conservation with the goal of conformation (of ours desires and, more broadly, of our ontology). In order to properly understand prayer, and particularly what it says of the relationship between God and humans, we must determine what is meant by desire. Here I describe the ways in which human prayer is an expression of desire before examining what we can say of divine desire. In particular I draw on accounts of desire arising from a participatory framework: namely Kathryn Tanner's account of desire, nature and grace; Andrew Davison's rebuttal of the distinction between *eros* and *agape*; and Sarah Coakley's work on the pre-eminence of divine desire.[69] I argue that rightly-aligned human desire participates in a prior divine desire, and that we witness this divine desire enacted in the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. One aspect of God's desire is a desire for our prayer, and we observe this, I suggest, in the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in human prayer.[70]

Human desire is an expression of want for someone or something. It is a feeling of longing and thus hopes for some form of fulfilment (a need met or desire requited, for instance). What we desire, just like how we act, reveals the objects of our love. Thus, we can judge the quality of human desire by whether it draws us towards God – who is Love - or leads us astray from God. A desire for something other than God is not in itself problematic; for instance, as finite beings it is part of our nature to want for the basic needs of life (shelter, water, etc.). However, the right ordering of desire demands that we desire God above all else, as the gift-giver from whom we receive both our very existence and the things in life that sustain us. We only rightly desire anything besides God insofar as those things, like ourselves, participate in God. As they come forth and return to God, those things which we desire are only truly desirable in that they are themselves oriented towards God (by existing as they are made to exist) and thus as they in turn orient us towards God by exemplifying the

[68] Leech, *True Prayer*, 7.

[69] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 308–39; Davison, *Participation in God*, 331–39; Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 106–39.

[70] I also return to the claim that God desires human prayer in Chapter 6.3.1.

dependence on God which all creation shares. Therefore, God is the ultimate satisfier of human desire, as the one in whom all our lesser desires participate.[71]

Tanner includes an account of desire in her participatory framework.[72] In particular, she is concerned with upholding the gratuity of grace within the context of her account of strong participation. If we are made in the *imago Dei* to move towards full human participation in the divine life and to desire such participation, Tanner ponders, does this portray the work of grace as an inevitability arising from our nature? In the context of strong participation as the nature of what it is to be human, is the grace that enables such participation no longer the free gift of God, but simply 'owed to [humans] by right'?[73] Tanner upholds the gratuity of grace by insisting that our desire for God is not constitutive of our nature itself but instead 'results from the presence of God that forms an essential ingredient of our constitution'.[74] In other words, our desire for God originates not simply in our nature, but in our strong participation in God, which is the work of grace. In asserting our strong participation in God, as we observed in Chapter One, Tanner insists that humans share in what they are not: divinity.[75] It is this divinity that is the source of our desire for God, not our humanity. And it is only in the presence of divinity, that we desire God and thus move towards God as strong participants in him, finding our desire satisfied.[76]

This account of God as the source of our desire echoes what have observed in conversation with McCabe: the conforming work of human prayer. By grace, our prayers and our very selves are gradually conformed to God even as we pray. This is not simply a question of developing good habits, as if we are working for good upon our own nature. Rather such conformation is a result of encounter with God in prayer, through which our desire is transformed to align closer towards the will of God. The work of transformation is

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[71] Cf. Davison, *Participation in God*, 328–31.

[72] Tanner outlines and critiques a variety of models for addressing the relationship between nature and grace. For Tanner's own position see in particular: *Christ the Key*, 126–39.

[73] Tanner, 115.

[74] Tanner, 126.

[75] Tanner, 127.

[76] Tanner, 128.

God's and remains gratuitous, as he gifts us his presence in the conversation of prayer so that we receive by participation what we do not have by nature: a share in God's life.

If God is both the source and final satisfaction of human desire, we must reckon with two complicating factors evident in human experience: frustrated desire and evil desire. Firstly, it is common for us to experience the frustration of unmet need, even when what we desire appears to be a good thing, in keeping with what we would expect of the will of God (healing, for instance). Any account of prayer must honour the reality of so-called 'unanswered prayer', whether it is experienced as God's 'no' to our requests or as silence from God when we yearn for his guidance. As Davison notes regarding the problem of evil, we should be cautious in seeking to rationalise something which can be the source of suffering, and instead should think about how to 'characterise' such experiences.[77] Indeed, the experience of 'unanswered prayer' exhibits the character of prayer as genuine conversation. Although we are promised an answer to prayer, prayer is not a transaction in which any given request is guaranteed a particular form of response. Rather it is a conversation: between humans, invited by God to approach him boldly in prayer, and God, who is free to respond as he wills. Hence 1 John 5.14-15, whilst asserting that we can be confident God hears our prayers and thus 'we know that we have obtained the requests made of him', caveats that this depends on us asking 'according to his will'. In this life, whilst we are still in the process of being conformed to God's will, we cannot expect all prayers to be answered in a particular way. The desire expressed in human prayer thus bears the risk of being frustrated as a consequence of the riches of prayer's character as genuine encounter between humanity and God.

The starkest way in which our desires can misalign with the will of God is when our desires are contrary to the goodness of God. This is what the transformation of our prayer, as we encounter God and are conformed to him, seeks to correct. If a good ordering of desire has God as the ultimate satisfier of human desire and all other objects of desire are only properly desirable as they participate in God, then a wrong ordering of desire is a privation of such participation. In his account of participation, Davison describes evil acts as a privation of good. Evil, he argues, is a failure of participation, insofar as it is the creature's failure to act properly according to the nature in which they were created and is thus a betrayal of the

[77] Davison, *Participation in God*, 246–48.

gift to act bestowed on creatures by God.[78] What we might term 'evil desire' is similarly a failure of participation, since the one who desires in this way fails to honour the participatory relationship with God proper to that which they desire. Take a desire to harm another, for instance, which is a failure to recognise the gift of existence that is the other's life. Or, as is more likely in prayer, take the desire for self-gain. Prayers that seek God's provision can be according to the right-ordering of desire, in which we recognise that the things we ask for as gifts of God, and fellow participants in God. Where such prayers seek provision for personal gain without concern for the priority of God – prayers for the amassing of unnecessary wealth, for instance - we can name such desire a failure of participation, and thus describe it as evil.

We must be clear that ill-aligned desire is not to be haphazardly attributed to *eros*. Anders Nygren's work on love does this, associating 'desire' with *eros* and describing it as a self-interested form of love, in which we observe 'the will to get and possess, which depends on want and need'.[79] Unlike *agape,* which is for Nygren a self-sacrificing love and thus 'the Christian fundamental motif *par excellence*,'[80] *eros,* he argues, can never be claimed as a descriptor of God, who is always without lack.[81] Nygren is correct to insist that God is without lack but, as Davison rightly notes, by separating *eros* and *agape,* and by associating desire solely with the former, Nygren fails to render desire in its proper relation to God, before whom 'we should learn to apprehend all of reality, and all our experience'.[82] Separating *eros*, and thus desire, entirely from God's love of us fails to recognise that the things we lack and want, we desire *because* we receive them as the good gifts of God's loving act of creation. Desire is not to be construed, therefore, as a lesser counterpart of

[78] Davison, 239–45, 249.

[79] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 210.

[80] Nygren, 48.

[81] Nygren, 198.

[82] Davison, *Participation in God*, 341. I am indebted to Davison's critique of Nygren's work, not least for clearly noting that Nygren's division of *eros* and *agape* 'backfires' because of its non-participatory understanding of God and creation (see Davison, 332–40).

agape, nor as something solely egocentric;[83] under a participatory framework, the two are bound together.

Nyrgen's work on love insists that 'God is not Eros, and Eros is not God', and thus that desire cannot be associated with the divine life.[84] However, provided we recognise that God is without need (implying lack) or taint (God cannot exhibit wrongly-ordered desire as humans can), we can and indeed should speak of 'divine desire'. Indeed, if our participation in God calls us to recognise all things in their relation to God, as both their beginning and their end, then we are right to ponder not just whether human desire has its end in God, but whether its origin is also in God. Here Coakley's 'incorporative' model of the Trinity is helpful.[85] In *God, Sexuality and the Self,* Coakley argues that 'no cogent answer to the contemporary Christian question of the trinitarian God can be given without charting the necessary and intrinsic entanglement of human sexuality and spirituality in such a quest'.[86] We cannot separate the practice of prayer even from sexual desire, she insists. All desire has a right ordering with reference to the Trinity as its source and goal in what she describes as an 'ontology of desire', and within this ontology even our misaligned desires are corrected (again, cf. Tanner and McCabe) through the work of the Trinity: 'God the "Father," in and through the Spirit, both stirs up, and progressively chastens and purges, the frailer and often misdirected desires of humans, and so forges them… into the likeness of his Son'.[87]

At the root of this ontology of desire is the pre-eminence of divine desire, and in particular a pre-eminence of the exact *eros* that Nygren denies of God.[88] In Dionysius' use of *ekstasis*, Coakley finds a description of yearning (*eros*) beyond oneself that applies 'pre-

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[83] Cf. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 180.

[84] Nygren, 198.

[85] See in particular Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 311–22. This work draws particularly on Coakley's discussion of prayer and the Trinity in Sarah Coakley, 'Living into the Mystery of the Holy Trinity: Trinity, Prayer, and Sexuality', *Anglican Theological Review* 80 (1998): 223–32 which has been reprinted in: Sarah Coakley, *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender and the Quest for God* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 85–100.

[86] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 1–2.

[87] Coakley, 6.

[88] Albeit Coakley rightly recognises that we can only define divine desire, or *eros*, analogically to human desire.

eminently to God'. God exhibits desire in his love (even *eros*), for creation as he is carried beyond himself (whilst remaining divine) in the sending and return of the divine missions.[89] Before we desire God, Coakley argues, God first desires us. This 'primacy of divine desire' allows us to imagine human desire in participative terms, as something both originating from God and conforming us to God. Moreover, rather than risking importing human desire and its connotations of lack or need into our description of God, this primacy of divine desire allows divine desire to define human desire. Human desire, then, is either transformed towards alignment with divine desire or moves away from divine desire when it is wrongly-ordered.[90]

We can assert with Coakley a 'primacy of divine desire' because we encounter the desire of God in the missions of the Son and Spirit. Her 'prayer-based model of the Trinity' recognises that as a consequence of the sending of the Spirit, we are united to the incarnate Son, and thus incorporated into the trinitarian life of the God whom we desire.[91] How then, in prayer, do we encounter this mission-shaped desire of God such that we find ourselves called to articulate our own desire in return? An initial answer lies in the empowering work of the Spirit in us and in the fact of Christ's own prayer (not least his prayers for us). This role of God in our prayer, is indicated in the words used to introduce the 'Prayers of Intercessions' in the eucharistic liturgy of the Church of England: 'in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father'.[92] It evidences God's desire to hear our prayers; God's desire is made known in the missions of the Son and the Spirit who work in us to enable the articulation of our desires back to God in prayer.

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[89] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 314–15. This is in keeping with the presence of God to us at the root of Tanner's account of desire. Cf. Dionysius' *Divine Names* IV.12-14 in *Corpus Dionysiacum*, ed. Günter Heil, Adolf Martin Ritter, and Beata Regina Suchla, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 157–60.

[90] Linn Tonstad notes that Coakley needs a clearer distinction between finitude and sin in Linn Marie Tonstad, *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 98–132. Tonstad's critique is particularly concerned with the detail of Coakley's interest in linking sexual desire and divine desire, and thus whilst Tonstad poses an important critique, it is not one this thesis can devote space to interrogating.

[91] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 111.

[92] The Archbishops' Council, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 281–87.

2.2.1. 'In the Power of the Spirit and in Union with Christ, let us Pray to the Father'

God's role in prayer begins in the activity of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us to enable our prayer. Whilst this activity is most explicit in intercession (Romans 8.26-27), the Spirit stirs in us all forms of prayer, including thanksgiving (Luke 10.21), petition (Ephesians 6.18), and confession (John 16.8).[93] This is the same Spirit who moves over creation in Genesis 1, is breathed on the disciples by the risen Christ in John 20, and comes upon the apostles in Acts 2. George Herbert hints at this activity of the Spirit in his phrase, 'God's breath in man returning to his birth'; here he invites us to recognise the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer, as the one sent by God, who moves us to pray and thus enables our return to the God from whence it is sent.[94]

Similarly, the Son has a role in prayer, even whilst we maintain a clear separation between the activity of Christ in his humanity and divinity, because the life of Christ is always the life of the divine Son. We find this notion that Christ's prayer is tied to the mission of the Son indicated in Hebrews 7.24-25: '[Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them'. There must be an identity between the action of the Son who is sent by the Father for the good of creation, as an outpouring of divine desire, and the prayer of Christ, with its articulation of human desire for God (exhibited in a life lived, as Christ's is, in perfect relationship before and towards God). Thus, the Christ in whom the Church prays cannot be separated from the Son, whose incarnation enables us to speak at all of the humanity of Christ, let alone of the human Christ at prayer.

Finally, whilst not all human prayer is spoken 'to the Father' (the Jesus Prayer or *Veni Sancte Spiritus* are obvious exceptions), we can still say that all human prayer *terminates* in the Father, especially if we assume the Lord's Prayer to be a paradigmatic shaping of all

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[93] Note that we can only speak of the Spirit *stirring* humans to prayers of thanksgiving, petition and confession, rather than *praying* these types of prayers in us, since God cannot give thanks, petition or confess (see below).

[94] George Herbert, *Prayer (1)* in *The Complete English Poems*, ed. John J. Tobin, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 45–46.

human prayer. This termination of prayer in the Father aligns with Coakley's incorporative model of the Trinity in which it is through our encounter with the Spirit, who unites us to the Son, that we are led to the Father. Even those prayers that address the Son or Spirit also terminate in the Father, I argue, because it is the Father who sends the Son and Spirit, and it is to the Father that the Son and Spirit bear us in return. This movement of *exitus* and *reditus* is ultimately what enables the human to participate in God, who is creation's beginning and end, but more specifically is the underpinning movement of divine desire in which the human desire expressed in prayer has its context.

To conclude this section then, in prayer humans express their desire not just for other things of the created order, but ultimately for God, in whom all created things participate, and in relation to whom all desires for created things find their ordering. Rightly-ordered desire participates in the pre-eminent desire of God, because divine desire is the origin and end of all well-ordered human desire. Indeed, it is by the desire of God, exercised in the missions of the Son and Spirit, that human desire is articulated in prayer at all, as the Spirit empowers us to pray in union with Christ. Through this role of God in human prayer we learn that divine desire includes a desire for human prayer – not out of want or lack, but as an outworking of the participative relationship God initiates with us in his gratuitous act of creation. We pray, therefore, because God desires us to pray and works in us to enable such prayer.

2.3. Types of Prayer

Thus far we have treated prayer in homogenous terms, as a communication of desire, in the form of conversation, with the goal of conformation. However, human prayer takes a variety of forms, each of which articulate desire for God in different ways. In their work *Living in Praise,* Daniel Hardy and David Ford divide prayer into five types: adoration, thanksgiving, penitence, intercession and petition.[95] In his introductory text on prayer, Ashley Cocksworth notes the difficulties in characterising prayer, given its 'multifaceted, endlessly generative, [and] interestingly elastic nature'.[96] He directly names 'petition, contemplation, thanksgiving, lament, meditation, praise' and showcases the variety of ways in which one can pray,

[95] David Ford and Daniel W. Hardy, *Living in Praise: Worshipping and Knowing God* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2005), 19–21.

[96] Cocksworth, *Prayer*, 7.

including mention of voice, posture and the use of sacred objects.[97] I prefer to differentiate prayer according to the following types, largely in keeping with Hardy and Ford's categories: confession, thanksgiving, petition, contemplation, praise, and intercession. I order them as such deliberately. The first three of these categories – confession, thanksgiving and petition – are types of prayer proper only to human desire, whilst the latter three lend themselves as descriptors of divine desire, and thus raise the question of whether God's desire can also be articulated as something like prayer. In this thesis I pay particular attention to intercession, a type of prayer that is neither wholly intrinsic nor wholly alien to God.

2.3.1 Human Desire: Confession, Thanksgiving and Petition

Confession, thanksgiving and petition are all attributable to humans but are not types of prayer attributable to God because, as I define them, they express desire laden with a lack or need that cannot be associated with divine desire.[98] The first of these, confession, assumes an ability to sin and the subsequent need for absolution.[99] Prayers of confession turn human persons from their misaligned desires to that rightly-oriented desire for God which has its beginning and end in the pre-eminent desire of God for us.[100] Divine desire can never be articulated in confessionary terms, however, since God (and God's desire) is precisely what gives the ontology of desire its right-ordering. We similarly cannot associate prayers of thanksgiving directly with divine desire because this type of prayer emerges as a human

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[97] Cocksworth, 6.

[98] I briefly discuss these types of prayer again in Chapter Six, there in light of further discussion of what it means to claim that human prayer participates in something of God's own self and action. In that context I will make an additional caveat to my claim that confession, thanksgiving and petition are not acts of God, namely that God does not pray these types of prayers himself, but we can say that he works in and through us (in an appropriately divine fashion) as we pray them.

[99] We should note that 'confession' can have a breadth of meaning including confession of praise (i.e., doxology) and confession of faith, as well as the meaning I prioritise here: confession of sins.

[100] Such re-aligning of desire is implied by the New Testament's use of μετανοια (repentance), implying that repenting of one's sins is an act of turning back to God.

response to divine action, where thanksgiving is due because a need has been met, by the one from whom all good gifts are received.

It is also only appropriate to speak of human desire articulated in prayers of petition. Petition is arguably what people usually mean when they speak of prayer. The human who petitions God, asks God to act, thereby articulating their own need and dependence on God. In referring to the Lord's Prayer, it is typical to speak of each of the prayer's lines as a petition, since each one asks something of God, be that the fulfilment of God's will, the supply of daily bread, or the forgiveness of sins. However, it is the specific understanding of prayer exemplified in, 'give us this day our daily bread', that I wish to claim as petition proper. This line is petition in its clearest terms, since it recognises an inherent creaturely need and asks God to fill it. Unlike intercession's emphasis in desire for relationship and for the needs of the other, which we will explore shortly, petitionary prayer is a personal desire for provision; it is the mode of prayer meant in the dominical command, 'ask and it will be given you' (Matthew 7.7). It is thus not a type of prayer that we can imagine as an articulation of divine desire.

2.3.2. Human and Divine Desire: Contemplation and Praise

In comparison, it is consistent with how we speak of God to associate contemplation and praise with divine desire as well as human desire. We can, in other words, speak of a God who contemplates and who praises, insofar as the life of God is an act analogical to what we perform as contemplation and praise. Contemplation includes in its breadth of meaning the acts of 'beholding', 'considering' and 'understanding'. 1 Corinthians 13.12 points to the place of contemplation both now and in eternity, and thus hints at the relationship between our contemplative prayer and God's own contemplation of himself: 'For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known'. Who could possibly know God better than God himself? Or, as 1 Corinthians 2.11 puts it, 'no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God'. The primary act of contemplation is thus God's beholding of God's own self, since God's perfection demands that God has full self-knowledge. Indeed, the clause, 'as I have been fully known,' (13.12) reveals the fact that our beholding of God is grounded in God's primary beholding of us, and thus contemplation is born of being ourselves 'contemplated', albeit in a divine fashion.

It also makes sense to speak of God's praise of himself. Humans praise God as their Creator: 'you are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things' sing the elders before the throne in John's vision of heavenly worship (Revelation 4.11). Indeed, Psalm 19 ascribes praise to all creatures, animate and inanimate, when it declares that 'the heavens are telling the glory of God; the firmament proclaims his handiwork' (v.1). However, praise also arguably has a correlate in the life of the Trinity. God's glory must reside in God's self alone, since God is not dependent on anything. To speak of God's own praise is a helpful way of articulating this point – hence Speyr's claim that 'in the divine love which unites them [the persons] adore each other', and her insistence that this is the root of all prayer.[101] Indeed such praise, Hardy and Ford argue, exhibits a 'logic of overflow', attracting our praise, as we respond to the goodness of God in our own acts of adoration.[102]

2.3.3. A Middle Category of Prayer: Intercession

A final type of prayer, which raises particularly interesting questions regarding how we speak of divine desire, is that of intercession. Intercessory prayer, I argue, represents a middle category in my cataloguing of prayer in that it is neither wholly intrinsic to God (as are contemplation and praise) nor entirely alien to God (as are confession, thanksgiving and petition). In particular, intercession is that which shapes the relationship of strong participation exhibited between God and humanity.

The word intercession derives from *intercedere*, which means 'to go about between'. Intercession thus involves mediation. When a human person intercedes on behalf of another, by petitioning for that other's needs (for intercession and petition are closely associated with one another), they are placing their own prayer in the context of another's prayer. They are thus 'going about between' that person and God, in so far as they are bearers of that person's needs. In the simplest of senses, to intercede is to act like an emissary, carrying a message between one person and another. Hence Philip Clements-Jewery is right to claim that 'the act

[101] Speyr, *The World of Prayer*, 31.

[102] Ford and Hardy, *Living in Praise*, 8.

of intercession… reinforces the personal nature of the universe'.[103] The one who intercedes is brought into closer relationship to the one for whom they pray, just as we would expect an emissary to grow to know the community to which they are sent in more intimate detail as they become more immersed in said community's situation. Intercession thus not only draws the one who prays into a communicative relationship with God, but also into a communicative relationship with the person for whom they are praying.

Leonard Hodgson uses the analogy of child and parent to explain intercession; 'the nearest analogy we can find,' he says, is 'in the intercourse of child with father'.[104] This begins to explain what it means to intercede, but is limited insofar as it pertains only to the relationship between the one who prays and God, who hears. A better analogy for intercessory prayer would be that of a group of siblings conversing with their father, where relationship is built not just between the children and the father as two partners in a conversation, but among the children too, who enter into conversation not just with the father but with one another, representing and presenting each other's needs. Here the intimacy of relationship between child and father is based on the concurrent relationship of the children to each other. It is this building of relationship, rather than whatever need is sought for the other person, which is intercession's final goal. It is thus desire for relationship which intercession truly articulates. Such desire for relationship with others is, as with all rightly-ordered desire, set in the context of our ultimate desire for relationship with God.

It also makes sense to talk about God's activity in terms of 'intercession'. Indeed, we can describe the sending of the Son and the Spirit, who minister for us and in us, as *the* great act of intercession. We observed in Chapter One that, for Tanner, the *imago Dei*, which is the locus of our strong participation in God, is perfected through attachment to the Divine Image. The Holy Spirit ministers in us, uniting us to Christ, who ministers for us through his mediatory death and resurrection, such that we are restored to properly-ordered relationship with God. It is in this sense that God intercedes; not as an act of desire for himself, akin to God's self-contemplation or self-adoration, but as an outpouring of divine desire for us. God,

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[103] Philip Clements-Jewery, *Intercessory Prayer: Modern Theology, Biblical Teaching, and Philosophical Thought* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 6.

[104] Leonard Hodgson, 'Intercession', in *Concerning Prayer: Its Nature, Its Difficulties and Its Value*, ed. Lily Dougall (London: Macmillan and Co., 1916), 218.

of course, does not need us, but his desire for us is the best explanation we have for our own existence, and indeed for the salvific action of Christ.

We have already noted something of this outpouring of divine desire in contemplation and praise. Our contemplation of God is set in the context of being beheld by God and our praise of God is our response to the overflow of God's own life of self-adoration. What makes intercession different from contemplation and praise is the explicit way in which divine intercession, in the mediatory missions of the Son and Spirit, enables our strong participation in God. Indeed, human intercession can only truly be understood in light of the intercessory action of God; that is, our desire for restored relationship with one another and with God can only truly be understood in the context of God's prior desire for reconciled relationship with us. Whilst maintaining that God's intercessory work belongs to God alone, we can claim that the act of human intercession partakes in divine intercession, since our desire for restored relationship with one another and with God emerges only as God conforms us to himself. It is these claims to which we will return in full in Chapter Six. For now, however, our attention turns towards Augustine and his principles of participation and prayer.

Conclusion

How we define prayer clearly matters, not only in terms of elucidating its basic meaning – that it is an act of communication taking the form of conversation with the goal of conformation – but insofar as determining the different types of prayer points to the nuances of God's role in prayer. It is as we understand prayer to be an articulation of desire that these different types of prayer emerge, and can be categorised according to whether they are an expression of just human desire, or also of pre-eminent divine desire. Thus I have insisted that confession, thanksgiving and petition are human acts, whereas praise and contemplation are acts of both humans and God. In particular, we have begun to note the value of intercession for understanding human prayer as an act of participation in God. Most importantly, we have named intercession as a middle category of prayer, which is neither alien to God nor intrinsic to the life of God, but which is exercised by God in the missions of the Son and the Spirit. Human intercession, I have claimed, is set in the context of such divine intercession. I will return to this claim, and defend it more thoroughly, in Chapter Six. For now, our attention turns to Augustine.

Part II

Prayer and Participation in Conversation with Augustine

Chapter Three

Principles of Prayer in Augustine

In order to determine a participative model of prayer which is consistent with Augustine's own understanding of prayer, it is important to attend to more of Augustine's teaching than what he offers in *De Trinitate.* There are a small number of studies which explore Augustine's teachings on prayer.[105] The most recent and comprehensive of these is Jonathan

[105] Tarcisius J. van Bavel, *The Longing of the Heart: Augustine's Doctrine on Prayer* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009); A.-M. Besnard, 'Les Grandes Lois de La Prière', *La Vie Spirituelle* 101 (1959): 237–80; A.-M. Besnard, *Saint Augustin: Prier Dieu* (Paris: Cerf, 1964); Fulbert Cayré, *La Contemplation Augustinienne: Principes de Spiritualité et de Théologie: Essai d'analyse et de Synthése* (Paris: André Blot, 1927); Fulbert Cayré, 'L'Oraison Selon l'esprit de Saint Augustin', *La Vie Spirituelle* 43 (1935): 255–63; Gervase Corcoran, 'Prayer and Solidarity in Saint Augustine', *Downside Review* 108, no. 372 (1990): 157–74; G Daly, 'Heart in Pilgrimage', in *Second Annual Course on Augustinian Spirituality* (Rome: Augustinian Publications, 1976), 191–210; Duane H. Davies, 'Prayer and the Dialogical Communion Instrinsic to Augustine's Confessions', *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 1 (1994): 26–35; J Delamare, 'La Prière a l'école de Saint Augustin', *La Vie Spirituelle* 86 (1952): 477–93; Anthony Dupont, 'The Prayer Theme in Augustine's Sermones Ad Populum at the Time of the Pelagian Controversy: A Pastoral Treatment of a Focal Point of His Doctrine of Grace', *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 14, no. 2 (2010): 379–408; Gillian Evans, 'Making the Theory Fit the Practice: Augustine and Anselm on Prayer', *Epworth Review* 19, no. 1 (1992): 57–68; Alessandro Garcea, 'Prière et Silence Quelques Considerations Autour de Saint Augustin, De Magistro 2', in *La Prière En Latin de l'antiquité Au XVIe Siècle: Forms, Évolutions, Significations*, ed. Jean-François Cottier (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 157–76; M. Benedict Hackett, 'Augustine and Prayer: Theory and Practice', in *Second Annual Course on Augustinian Spirituality* (Rome: Augustinian Publications, 1976), 173–89; Roy Hammerling, 'St. Augustine of Hippo: Prayer as Sacrament', in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Roy Hammerling

Teubner's *Prayer After Augustine*, which particularly elevates the themes of hope and patience as they appear in Augustine's writings on prayer.[106] In this chapter I structure my

(Louvain: Brill, 2008), 183–200; T. A. Hand, *St. Augustine on Prayer* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963); M. G. Jackson, 'Prayer and Miracle in the Spirituality of Augustine' (PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1986); M. G. Jackson, 'Faith, Hope and Charity and Prayer in St Augustine', *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989): 265–70; M. G. Jackson, 'The Lord's Prayer in St Augustine', *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993): 311–21; Chrètien Jean-Louis, *Saint Augustin et Les Actes de Parole* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002); Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, 'La Lettre à Proba (Rom 8,26)', in *Saint Augustin et La Bible*, ed. Anne-Marie La Bonnardière (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1986), 181–88; Timothy Maschke, 'St Augustine's Theology of Prayer: Gracious Conformation', in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland J. Teske, Collectanea Augustiniana (New York: P. Lang, 1993), 431–46; C. Morel, 'La Vie de Prière de Saint Augustin d'après Sa Correspondence', *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 23 (1947): 222–58; M. Basil Pennington, 'A Letter on Prayer, Augustine 130', in *Word and Spirit: A Monastic Review, 9: St Augustine (387-1987)*, ed. Victorino Capánaga, Jean Leclercq, and George E. Saint-Laurent (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1987), 92–99; John M. Quinn, *Praise in St Augustine: Readings and Reflections* (Norwell, MA: Christopher Publishing House, 1987); J. Oroz Reta, 'Prière et Recherche de Dieu Dans Les Confessions de Saint Augustin', *Studia Patristica* 16, no. 2 (1985): 533–50; Heinrich Stirnimann, 'Zu Augustinus' Soliloquia I,1,2-6', in *Abendländische Mystik Im Mittelalter: Symposion Kloster Engelberg 1984*, ed. Kurt Ruh (Stuttgart: J B Metziersche, 1986), 181–88; Monique Vincent, 'Le Vocabulaire de La Prière Chez Saint Augustin', in *Augustiniana*, vol. 41, 1991, 783–804; Monique Vincent, *Saint Augustin. Maître de Prière* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1990); Rebecca H. Weaver, 'Prayer', in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub, 1999); Jonathan Teubner, 'Augustine on Prayer: Sin, Desire and the Form of Life', in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Prayer*, ed. Ashley Cocksworth and John C. McDowell (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 303–18.

[106] Jonathan D. Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine: A Study in the Development of the Latin Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

account of Augustine's principles of prayer according to three of his writings: *Confessiones*, *Epistola CXXX*, and *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.[107]

In his *Confessiones*, Augustine engages in a lengthy act of theological reflection, which is itself an act of prayer, taking the form of conversation with God, with its goal as Augustine's increasing conformation to God. As we eavesdrop on this conversation Augustine shows us the trinitarian shape of God's role in prayer, showing that prayer, and particularly intercession, is a route to intimacy with God and one's neighbour. In *Epistola* CXXX Augustine's focus is on petitionary prayer, but the tensions in prayer that he addresses in this text are useful in distinguishing between petitionary prayer and intercession. Particularly striking is the way Augustine speaks of the role of God in human prayer, and especially the role of the Holy Spirit. The pneumatology displayed in *Epistola CXXX* is noticeably different to that which will be of importance in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis, as I discern a participatory reading of *De Trinitate*.

My comments on the *Confessiones* and *Epistola CXXX* are deliberately broad, and aim to provide a wider context to Augustine's comments on prayer in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, which will be of greater importance to this thesis and its identification of the *totus Christus* ('the whole Christ') as an essential component of Augustine's participatory theology. I reserve a fuller analysis of the *totus Christus* for Chapter Five of this thesis, as I present my participatory reading of *De Trinitate*. However, the concept is introduced in this chapter because it is, for Augustine, an important principle of prayer.

3.1. Desire and Intercession in Two of Augustine's Writings

3.1.1. *Confessiones*: Desire for God

In his *Confessiones*, Augustine shows repeated concern for the transformation of wrongly-ordered desire into desire that is rightly-ordered before God. Most famously, through

[107] I have chosen not to examine the small amount that can said of the content and use of prayer in *De Trinitate* because it is the wider structure and content of the treatise that is our concern, as we analyse the theology of participation found in it. It is this understanding of participation that I will use in Chapter Six to readdress the topic of prayer.

recounting instances from both his childhood (e.g., his famous theft from the pear tree in II.4.9) and adulthood (e.g., his desire for the mother of his child in VI.15.25), he showcases to his readers the work of God in correcting human desire. Importantly, this transformation of desire is framed in the context of prayer. Indeed, the text proceeds as it begins, with words of praise addressed to God: 'great You are, Lord, and exceedingly praiseworthy' (*magnus us, domine, et laudabilis valde*).[108] It is thus not simply a theological treatise, an exposition of scripture, or even an autobiography. Rather, Augustine's *Confessiones* are a prayer. And a central theme that motivates the whole of the text is that restless desire of which it speaks at the outset: 'you have created us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you'.[109] It is this restlessness which marks Augustine's theological reflection throughout the text, as he considers and prays on moments in his life as stages on his own path of restless pilgrimage towards God.

Here I explore what the restless desire which permeates this text can teach us of Augustine's understanding of prayer. First, I examine how the text presents theological reflection as an expression of Augustine's prayer, which takes the form of conversation with God, and has its goal in Augustine's increasing conformation to God's will. I then explain the role of God in prayer, as presented in *Confessiones,* before looking at how in this text prayer (and, more particularly, contemplation and intercession) draws us into fellowship with our neighbour, to whose prayer our own is united.

The *Confessiones* speaks eloquently of Augustine's experience of God. Indeed, as Jamie Scott rightly indicates, Augustine's *Confessiones* bears a 'structure of testimony', presenting Augustine's own experience both to God in prayer, and to himself and the reader for theological reflection.[110] Of particular interest is the language Augustine employs. The

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[108] 'quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te': *Confessiones* I.1.1, quoting Psalm 147.5.

[109] *Confessiones* I.1.1.

[110] Jamie Scott, 'From Literal Self-Sacrifice to Literary Self-Sacrifice: Augustine's Confessions and the Rhetoric of Testimony', in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian,* by Joanne McWilliam, Timothy Barnes, and Michael Fahey (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002), 43. It is worth noting in particular Garry Wills' translation of the *Confessiones*, published as a series and subtitled *Testimony,* see for instance: Augustine,

near constant use of the second person and the vocative case throughout the work immediately reveals that this text is not simply about God, but addressed to God. And whilst some sections clearly have the form of prayers in and of themselves, the use of the second person and the vocative is broader even than this.[111] In what would otherwise appear to be autobiographical sections of the work, Augustine intersperses anecdotes from his past with reflections spoken to God in the present, moving seamlessly between narrative and the presentation of that narrative to God, the hearer; God is intended to hear the anecdotes no less than the reader.[112] It is unsurprising, therefore, that Augustine regularly uses variants of *invoco*, for Augustine calls upon God's name not only to remind the reader that he is engaged in an act of prayer, but also to reassert his plea for God's attention.

The *Confessiones* is thus (among other things) a dialogue with God. 'My faith, which you have given me, calls upon you, O Lord,' says Augustine, clearly arguing that God reaches out to him as much as he reaches out to God.[113] Indeed, both Aimé Solignac and Robert McMahon wisely observe that in the *Confessiones* God not only enables Augustine's prayer, but responds to it. Solignac argues that 'from his language, his feelings, the tone of his discourse… the reactions of his countenance, we sense the divine replies'.[114] McMahon develops this with helpful examples of God's grace at work. For instance, whilst *Confessiones* I.2.2-I.3.3 posits a series of questions, the text transitions in I.4.1 to praise of God. This sudden shift suggests that, in response to his questions, Augustine is directed towards God by God. McMahon notes that this does not deny Augustine's agency in how he narrates his experiences, but recognises the role of God's grace in directing how Augustine

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Saint Augustine's Childhood, Confessiones; Bk. 1, trans. Garry Wills (New York: Viking, 2001).

[111] E.g., *Confessiones* VIII.13.34-37.

[112] E.g., *Confessiones* VIII.2.3-5.

[113] 'Inuocat te, domine, fides mea, quam dedisti mihi': *Confessiones* I.1.1. See also Charles T Mathewes, 'Book One: The Presumptuousness of Autobiography and the Paradoxes of Beginning', in *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, ed. Kim Paffenroth and Robert Peter Kennedy, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 14. Mathewes explores this idea using the language of grasping.

[114] A Solignac, 'Introduction', in *Les Confessions*, vol. 13, Bibliotheque Augustienne (Paris: Desclee De Brouwer, 1912), 223.

edits his experiences for narration.[115] Thus, in the *Confessiones* we can see God responding not only to the Augustine who confesses, but also to Augustine the writer. In this sense the theological reflection in this work is not primarily a report of prayer to or dialogue with God, but rather *is* that prayerful dialogue itself, with which the reader is invited to engage.

Moreover, Augustine's theological reflection, which takes the form of conversation with God, also exemplifies the nature of prayer by detailing some of Augustine's process of increasing conformation towards God's will. This comes to the fore in Augustine's choice of title, since *confessio* encompasses a range of meanings, including confession of faith, confession of praise and confession of sins.[116] Whilst all three meanings are evident in the text, the fact that God's mercy, in response to Augustine's confession of sin, leads Augustine to confession of praise, is what takes centre stage. In Book I, for instance, Augustine introduces this movement from confession of sin to confession of praise alongside an account of his infancy and childhood, in which Augustine's will is increasingly conformed to God as his desire matures and becomes rightly-ordered to God. Indeed, this movement from sin to praise is evident in the very structure of the work. Each book's internal structure explores aspects of Augustine's sin before ending in prayers of praise, and exhibits increasing conformation to God's will as, book by book, Augustine enters into closer relationship with God. This then culminates in his dramatic contemplative ascent at Ostia in Book IX (which also serves as a transition away from autobiographical narrative, with its focus on Augustine's past sins, to the confession of praise and faith that becomes Augustine's focus in Books X-XII).

The most decisive moment of transformation in the *Confessiones* occurs in Book VIII, where Augustine recounts his conversion to Christ (particularly VIII.12.28-30). It is particularly striking that the scripture which moves Augustine in this moment is Paul's command in Romans 13.13: 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires'. Augustine recognises his need to turn away from the wrongly-ordered desires that have shaped his life thus far and instead to 'put on' Christ and have his desires transformed. This is not a statement of participation *in* Christ such that we will find in

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[115] Robert McMahon, *Augustine's Prayerful Ascent: An Essay on the Literary Form of the Confessions* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 10–12.

[116] For further exploration of these meanings see Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches Sur Les Confessions de Saint Augustin* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1950), 13.

Augustine's later theology (not least in his development of the concept of the *totus Christus*), but already here we have an indication that it is in being united to Christ that desire is transformed.[117]

As well as allowing us to eavesdrop on his conversation with God, the *Confessiones* also shows Augustine's current understanding of the shape of God's role in prayer. The degree to which the role of God is developed in trinitarian terms is uneven. At one level, Augustine views prayer as the result of the work of Christ the mediator, and thus as reflecting the same mode of divine activity that brought about his conversion and baptism.[118] Thus, John O'Meara observes that Augustine's initial conversion to Neo-Platonism 'was quickly succeeded by submission to Christ and a lifetime of confession', and that 'the full meaning of the title *Confessions* can be found especially here'.[119] He is certainly right to view this conversion as one from Neo-Platonism to a life lived in relationship with Christ (albeit understood in Neo-Platonist terms). Indeed, Augustine discusses grappling with his understanding of Christ just prior to his conversion account in VIII.5.12. The centrality of Christ to Augustine's understanding of faith should not be underestimated.

For all the importance of Christ, however, Suzanne Poque rightly observes that 'it is to the person of the Father that [Augustine] most often appeals'.[120] Thus, in *Confessiones* XIII.5.6 Augustine discusses the 'enigma' (*aenigmate*) of the Trinity, by *invoking* 'you, O Father' (*tu pater*), before then talking *about* the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are occasions where Christ is directly invoked (in *Confessiones* I.2.17, for example), but these are rare. Rather prayer tends to be directed to the Father, if any one person is invoked.

And what of the Holy Spirit? Shortly after the discussion of the Trinity just mentioned, in *Confessiones* XIII.7.8 Augustine reflects on the activity of the Holy Spirit, in

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[117] For further exploration of the concept of the *totus Christus*, see Chapters 3.2 and 5.3.

[118] This is more clearly elucidated in others of Augustine's works, but the importance of Christ's role as mediator between the human and divine is assumed in the *Confessiones*.

[119] John Joseph O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind up to His Conversion* (London: Longmans, 1954), 155.

[120] Suzanne Poque, 'L'invocation de Dieu dans les Confessions', in *Collectanea augustiniana: mélanges T.J. van Bavel*, ed. Tarcisius J. van Bavel et al., vol. 2, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 92 (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1990), 932–33.

terms that are not yet fully developed, but do imply that the Spirit's role is to draw humans to God in prayer. In Scripture, the clearest references to the Holy Spirit's activity in prayer is found in Romans 8.24: 'the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words'. Augustine alludes to this passage whilst discussing prayer in XII.16.23: 'I enter into my place of rest, and sing a love song to you, groaning with unutterable groans'.[121]

John Kenney argues that the *Confessiones* clearly show the role of the Holy Spirit, particularly in contemplative prayer, which he argues is 'a result of the indwelling of the Spirit of God'.[122] However, despite Kenney's attempts to move away from too mystical a reading of the *Confessiones*, his reading still presumes that Augustine's account of the Spirit is more nuanced in this relatively early work than it actually is. For instance, whilst Kenney happily speaks of the Spirit's work in Augustine and Monica's contemplative experience at Ostia (in *Confessiones* IX.10.23-26), there is only a passing reference to 'the first-fruits of the Spirit' (*primitias spiritus*) in IX.10.24. Even though this quotation is borrowed from Romans 8.23, Augustine makes no attempt to do more than allude to the Spirit's involvement in contemplation; he does not take this opportunity to meditate on how the Spirit facilitates contemplation, or indeed any type of prayer. Thus, whilst Augustine lays the groundwork here for further reflection on the role of the Spirit in prayer, he does not yet explain the exact nature of that role. Such reflection on the role of the Spirit, not least in uniting us to Christ in his prayer, will not emerge until Augustine's later works.

Compared to this uneven handling of the trinitarian shape of God's role in prayer in the *Confessiones*, Augustine displays a clearer understanding of the place of one's neighbour in both contemplative and intercessory prayer. This is first indicated in the fact that Augustine clearly wishes his readers to hear him praying; as O'Meara puts it, the reader is

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[121] 'interm in cubile meum et cantem tibi amatoria gemens inenarrabiles gemitus'. The *Confessiones* were written in c.397-401 AD; by the time he composed his *In Ioannis Epistolam Tractatus* in c.407, Augustine has developed this further, using Romans 8.26-27 to explain that when we pray this is the work of the Spirit instilling love in us. See *In Ioannis Epistolam Tractatus* VI.8. For an account of this work of the Spirit, and indeed of the Spirit's role in uniting us to Christ and his prayer in the context of the *totus Christus* see Chapter 5.3.

[122] John Peter Kenney, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Re-Reading the Confessions*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 106.

‘allowed to listen in’.[123] Just as Augustine had been inspired by the life of St Anthony, the reader is to be inspired by Augustine’s own life and prayer to seek to follow his example.[124]

As regards contemplation, Augustine has a clear understanding of the communal nature of contemplation, which can be seen in his own experience. This is most obvious in the ascent at Ostia (IX.10.23-26) which, in a clear advance on his previous attempts at contemplation (e.g., VII.10.16 and VII.10.17-23), here reaches, however briefly, a foretaste of the bliss that God promises in eternity. What differentiates Augustine’s experience of contemplation from the accounts of the Neo-Platonists, especially in Book IX, is that his contemplation involves not only himself, but also Monica, his mother. The importance of Monica’s involvement is beautifully elucidated by Paul Henry as he reflects on Ary Scheffer’s painting, *Saints Augustine and Monica*: ‘Their hands are intertwined, an expression of their mutual love, and their glances, which meet in another world, reveal their common love of God. The entire vision at Ostia is summed up in these hands and glances.’[125] This is far from Plotinus’ account of ‘a flight of the alone to the Alone’: Augustine and Monica do not experience contemplation alone as individuals, but together.[126]

We see Augustine exhibiting a similar concern for the communal experience of prayer in his report of intercession. In IX.13.37 Augustine prays for his mother after her death – ‘let her be in peace’ (*sit ergo in pace*) – thus interceding on behalf of another. Moreover, he asks God to inspire the intercessions of others, and particularly for them to pray that Monica’s last wish, to be remembered at God’s altar (*Confessiones* IX.11.27), may be fulfilled. In particular, Augustine seems to believe that there is something effective in the multiplying of intercession, such that his mother’s desire would be most abundantly fulfilled *in multorum orationibus*. Perhaps Augustine merely recognises that Monica’s wish to be remembered would be multiplied if she were remembered by many people. However, it is also implied that the prayers of many are especially effective. Indeed, James O’Donnell, who states that

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[123] O’Meara, *The Young Augustine*, 3.

[124] *Confessiones* VIII. 6.14-15.

[125] Paul Henry, *The Path to Transcendence: From Philosophy to Mysticism in Saint Augustine*, (Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick Press, 1981), 1–2. Scheffer’s painting, dated 1854, can be found in the National Gallery, London.

[126] Plotinus, *The Enneads*, VI.9.11, see e.g. *Plotinus: The Enneads*, trans. Lloyd P. Gerson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

‘Bk. 9 thus ends with the reader standing with A[ugustine] at the altar in prayer’, implies that there is not only a greater effect but also a greater sense of community where an intercession is made by many.[127] This intercession at the end of the ‘autobiographical’ section of the *Confessiones* thus not only demonstrates the intercessory register of prayer, but establishes that intercessory prayer binds the one who prays to the wider community of the Church.

3.1.2. *Epistola CXX*: Understanding Petition and Intercession

If we want to understand the place of intercession in Augustine’s description of prayer, his *Epistola CXXX* is another important resource. Written in 412, it is one of three letters (C*XXX*, *CXXXI* and *CL*) written to Proba, a wealthy widow who fled Rome when it was sacked by the Goths in 410 and joined a community of women in Carthage. This letter consists of Augustine’s response to Proba’s inquiries on the subject of prayer, namely ‘what manner of person you should be if you would pray’ and ‘what you ought to pray for’.[128] Augustine’s answers to both of these questions help not only to elucidate what he thinks prayer is, but to explain why and how one prays. Therein we also discover what we cannot say about prayer.

In particular, the second of Proba’s questions – regarding what to pray *for* – is helpful in discerning the difference between petitionary prayer (prayer for one’s own needs to be met) and intercessory prayer (prayer for others’ needs, which articulates a desire for relationship), which I introduced in Chapter Two. Augustine structures his reply to Proba around three specific tensions in prayer: 1) the tension between this life and eternal life; 2) the tension between spoken prayers and prayer without ceasing; and 3) the tension between the fact that we have examples of prayer on the one hand, but that we also know not what we ought to pray on the other. Augustine does not differentiate between types of prayer here, but it is precisely such differences that underlie each of these tensions. The first component of each tension (prayer in this life, spoken prayers, and examples of prayer) are particular concerns relating to *petition*, while the second (eternal life, prayer without ceasing and ignorance in prayer) pertain more particularly to *intercession*.

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[127] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Joseph O'Donnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3:149.

[128] ‘Audisti qualiter ores, audi et, quid ores’: *Epistola* CXXX.9.

First, through an examination of the tension between this life and eternal life, Augustine insists that petition must come from a position of desolation. Augustine begins his teaching on petition by drawing attention to Proba's situation. As a noblewoman Proba is wealthy and wants for little, yet as a widow she finds herself in desolation (or, as Anne-Marie Bonnardiere phrases it, '*l'abandon, la pauvreté*').[129] Augustine thus describes prayer in this life (which corresponds to petition) as the activity of one in spiritual desolation, the one seeking after 'that life in which is the true and certain consolation', the *beata vita*.[130] Hence petition is a necessity of the Christian life, offered from a place of need and as an act of desire for the 'consolation' of eternal life. This happens whether petition is explicitly made for our ultimate need (eternal life) or for some temporal need (e.g., good health; *Epistola* CXXX.10-15), provided that the one who prays remembers that any goods received in this life, 'are to be thrown aside in favour of obtaining eternal life'.[131]

In this way we learn what petition is and what it is not. Evidently it is an expression of desire, and it is directed towards the eternal life in God for which our hearts are restless, in light of which all other desires are rightly-ordered. For these reasons it also must be an activity proper to the present life, where there is temptation and need. As Basil Pennington comments, 'prayer is a thing of the way, which is a time of temptation and hope'.[132] The present time is unlike eternal life where 'we shall not be awaiting promised blessings, but contemplating the blessings actually restored'.[133] In Augustine's thinking there will be no need for petitionary prayer in eternal life. Given intercession's articulation of desire for relationship, and my own claims in Chapter Six that the divine missions can be described as intercessions (and that these missions bring us into a share in the life of God), I will argue in that final chapter of this thesis that whilst it does not make sense to speak of the act of intercession in eternal life (as with petition), it is precisely because of divine intercession that we share, eternally, in the divine life at all.

The second tension Augustine examines in this letter is that between the need to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5.17) and Christ's command to avoid piling up empty

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[129] La Bonnardiere, 'La Lettre à Proba (Rom. 8, 26)', 182.

[130] 'illa vita, ubi est verum certumque solacium': *Epistola* CXXX, 6.

[131] 'pro aeternae vitae adeptione abicienda est': *Epistola* CXXX.14.

[132] Pennington, 'A Letter on Prayer, Augustine 130', 93.

[133] 'non enim adhuc promissi boni exspectatio sed redditi contemplatio': *Epistola* CXXX.5.

words in prayer (Matthew 6.7-8). He observes the importance, as in the Egyptian tradition, of the use of short verbal prayers, but also the length of Christ's own prayers, in solitude on mountain tops and in the garden of Gethsemane.[134] Augustine's resolution is to return to the theme of 'desire' as that which has the true priority in prayer, observing that 'many words are one thing, lasting desire is another'.[135] He combines with this an exploration of *fides, spes,* and *caritas,* arguing that these three theological virtues are signified by the fish, egg, and bread alluded to in Matthew 7.7-11 and Luke 11.9-13. As such he implies that when we petition God to increase in us these virtues, we are inspired to further prayer because of them.

Tarcisius van Bavel rightly delves further, finding in Augustine's discussion in *Epistola* CXXX.16-18 an insistence that 'praying itself is an act of faith, of hoping, and loving', whereby 'the praying person is the person who believes, hopes, longs for, and considers what he or she must ask of the Lord in the Our Father'.[136] Hence, we reach Augustine's claim that 'in the exercise of faith and hope and charity, with continual desire, we "pray always"'.[137] It is therefore desire that holds together continual prayer with the importance of praying particular petitionary prayers.

Indeed, it is through this discussion of desire that Augustine begins to touch on the role of Christ in prayer, and thereby on the trinitarian nature of prayer. Noting the drawn-out nature of some of Christ's prayers (as found in the Gospels), laden with desire for our reconciliation with God and one another, he asks, 'in this is not an example offered to us by the one who is in time an Intercessor, and who eternally, with the Father, is the hearer of prayer?'.[138] Here Augustine explicitly speaks of intercession, indicating that Christ's role as an intercessor is founded on his incarnate identity. In *De Trinitate* we will witness the depths of this intercessory role in Christ's crucifixion, and thereby describe even the divine missions as acts of divine intercession.

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[134] *Epistola* CXXX.20.

[135] 'aliud est sermo multus aliud diuturnus affectus': *Epistola* CXXX.19.

[136] Bavel, *The Longing of the Heart*, 51.

[137] 'in ipsa ergo fide et spe et caritate continuato desiderio semper oramus': *Epistola* CXXX.18.

[138] 'Ubi quid aliud quam nobis praebebat exemplum in tempore precator opportunus, cum patre exauditor aeternus?': *Epistola* CXXX.19.

As well as a concern for christology, *Epistola CXXX* also describes the Holy Spirit's role in prayer. Having consulted various petitions of the Lord's Prayer (viz. the specific form of petitionary prayer Christ taught his disciples), Augustine claims that whatever words we might use, 'if we pray rightly and fittingly, we say nothing but what is set down in the Lord's Prayer'.[139] The Lord's Prayer is thus sufficient for all petitionary prayer; by knowing the Lord's Prayer we know precisely what we ought and need to bring to God in petition. However, Augustine immediately juxtaposes this with Romans 8.26: 'Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought'. This brings us to the third tension in this text: How, Augustine asks, can we know precisely what to pray and yet not know how to pray as we ought?

Augustine answers this dilemma with the notion of *docta ignorantia*, or 'learned ignorance', something he understands to be derived from the Spirit who aides us in our weakness.[140] Whilst William Sparrow-Simpson rightly notes that Paul, in speaking of our not knowing how to pray, 'is not betraying ignorance of the Lord's Prayer, but acknowledging ignorance which may be spiritually expedient to us',[141] each of Joseph Clair and Teubner's studies give a fuller indication of Augustine's interpretation of Romans 8.26. Clair observes that if we base our understanding of goods solely on the human experience of goodness, then we face the inevitable consequence of understanding goods simply from our 'our own limited projection'.[142] To avoid this, Clair finds in Augustine an emphasis on realigning our desires towards God, a process which 'finds a way to proceed toward the good by "learned ignorance"'.[143] It is thus a sort of a negative theology that Clair finds in Augustine's language of *docta ignorantia*, which in *Epistola CXXX* is reflected in our need to align our desire with God's in prayer, not by virtue of our own power but by the power of the Holy Spirit, who helps the praying person in their weakness and ignorance.

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[139] 'nihil aliud dicimus, quam quod in ista dominica oratione positum est, si recte et congruenter oramus': *Epistola* CXXX.22.

[140] *Epistola* CXXX.28, cf. Romans 8.26.

[141] William J. Sparrow-Simpson, *The Letters of St. Augustine* (London: SPCK, 1919), 266.

[142] Joseph Clair, *Discerning the Good in the Letters and Sermons of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 168.

[143] Clair, 169.

Teubner clarifies this further by taking a broad approach to Romans 8.26. He notes that this Pauline passage can be taken 'either as the problem that we do not know what to pray or as the problem that we do not know how to pray' and recognises that Augustine answers both by appealing to the activity of the Holy Spirit, who 'provides Augustine with the missing epistemic "link" between human desire as it temporally unfolds and the *beata vita* that exists a-temporally'.[144] Thus for Teubner, Augustine's notion of *docta ignorantia* not only accounts for the tension between having been taught the Lord's Prayer and not knowing what to pray, but also accounts for the tension already touched on between prayer's relation to this life and eternal life. Teubner thus points to the very difference between petitionary and intercessory prayer: petition is the purely temporal unfolding of our desire for God, expressed in looking to God for the meeting of our earthly needs, whilst intercession is bound to our 'a-temporal' desire for God's own self, and thus for a relationship with God that is fulfilled in the beatific vision.

We must note, however, that in *Epistola CXXX* Augustine claims only that the Holy Spirit enables the human person to pray; the Holy Spirit does not itself pray.[145] This is understandable given that Augustine's Arian contemporaries pointed to the 'praying' of the Holy Spirit as a reason to deny the Spirit's divinity. Thus, in the *Collatio cum Maximino*, Augustine reports Maximinus arguing (on the basis of Romans 8.26) that 'the Holy Spirit was subject to the extent that he pleads on our behalf with groans', thus advancing his argument that the Spirit is subject to the Son, as the Son is subject to the Father.[146] In this text, as in *Epistola CXXX*.28, Augustine replies by arguing that groaning is a mark of need, and therefore that the Spirit does not groan, but rather instead makes us groan.[147] Augustine's argument in *Epistola CXXX* is thus that the Spirit works in us a *docta ignorantia* and thereby 'inspires them [the saints] with longings for that great unknow which is to come, for which

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[144] Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 88.

[145] Again, Augustine's concern for the role of the Spirit in forming us as the *totus Christus* will lead us to discern that Augustine did imply in his mature trinitarian thought that the Spirit truly prays in us.

[146] *Collatio Cum Maximino,* XII.

[147] *Collatio cum Maximino,* XIII.

we wait patiently', namely, the *beata vita*.[148] Here, again, we see the importance of distinguishing between petition and intercession. The Spirit cannot be in need, and thus cannot petition; but the Spirit does have a particular role in stirring human persons to a longing that is centred on the vision of God in eternal life. This longing is a desire for relationship, and thus that with which intercession is concerned.

3.2. Introducing the *totus Christus*: *Enarrationes in Psalmos*

In Chapter Five of this thesis, when I consider the shape of our participation in God as found in Augustine's *De Trinitate,* not least the role of Holy Spirit in uniting us to Christ, Augustine's principle of the *totus Christus* will be essential. The *totus Christus* is the claim, rooted in Pauline theology (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12.12, Colossians 1.18), that Christ and the Church are bound up with one another, indeed 'in' one another, as 'the whole Christ'; Christ is the head of the body, the Church, and head and body together are the *totus Christus*. The principle of the *totus Christus* arises explicitly in the context of prayer in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, throughout which Augustine discerns the ways in which Christ's prayer is our prayer, and our prayer is Christ's.

In his *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* Augustine uses the language of prayer with abandon, not least because the psalms do so themselves.[149] Recognising the psalms as forms of address to God, Augustine probes the question of *who* is praying. Michael Fiedrowicz's study of the

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[148] 'inspirans eis desiderium etiam adhuc incognitae tantae rei, quam per patientiam exspectamus': *Epistola* CXXX.28.

[149] Charles Kannengiesser helpfully classifies the *Enarrationes* into four types – briefer exegetical notes, more substantial commentaries, short expositions probably dictated to his Priests, and sermons Augustine preached. See, Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1175. Note, discrepancies between Psalm numbering in the protestant canon and Augustine's writings arise because the Latin text Augustine used was numbered according to the numbering of Greek manuscripts. For the ease of the modern reader, I adopt the Hebrew numbering used in the protestant canon when discussing the Psalms, and only reference the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* according to Augustine's numbering.

Enarrationes in Psalmos offers a clear differentiation between these voices: the *vox ad Christum* (to Christ, as the Son of the Father), *vox de Christo* (of Christ, insofar as Christ is in the content of the Psalms), *vox de ecclesia* (of the Church, insofar as the Church is in the content of the Psalms), *vox Christi* (of Christ, insofar as Christ is their spokesman), *vox ecclesiae* (of the Church, insofar as the Church is their spokesman) and *vox totius Christi* (of the whole Christ).[150]

This christological reading of the psalms first recognises that in his divinity, Christ is the recipient of our prayer. Commenting on Psalm 35.13, for instance, Augustine argues that Christ in some sense prays unto himself, since the incarnate Son is one with the Father. In particular, he notes that it is in his divinity that Christ hears prayer: 'because prayer pertains more to man himself, so as Christ is the Word, he prays not, but hears prayer'.[151] Fiedrowicz would have us note, however, that such instances of Christ as the recipient of prayer are infrequent in the Psalms – 'the interpretation of a verse as a statement of the eternal Word remains the exception for Augustine' - since Christ primarily appropriates the Psalms as his own prayers, by virtue of the Incarnation.[152]

It is this appropriation of the Psalms, a collection of human prayers, that Fiedrowicz describes as the Psalms spoken in the *vox Christi*.[153] Besides noting that Christ in his divinity

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[150] Michael Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi: Studien Zu Augustins 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 249–378. For more on the distinction intended between *vox* + *de* and *vox* + the genitive form, see p.298.
A brief overview of references to the *totus Christus* in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* is offered in M Reveillaud, 'Le Christ-Homme, tete de l'Eglise. Etude d'ecclesiologie Selon les Ennarationes in Psalmos d' Augustin', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 5 (1968): 67–94. More detailed exegesis is primarily found in Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi*, 1997; Egon Franz, 'Totus Christus: Studien Über Christus Und Die Kirche Bei Augustin', PhD Thesis (Universität Bonn, 1956).
[151] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXXIV.16: 'quia oratio ad ipsum magis hominem pertinent, secundum enim quod Verbum est Christus, non orat, sed exaudit'. This raises questions, to which I will return in Chapter Six, about the manner in which we can speak of divine prayer.
[152] 'die Auslegung eines Verses als Aussage des ewigen Wortes bleibt bei Augustinus die Ausnahme': Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi*, 303.
[153] Fiedrowicz, 298–325.

is the recipient of our prayer, a reading of the Psalms in *vox Christi* rightly recognises that the incarnate Christ actually prayed the psalms. We too pray the Psalms, and can thus claim them as the *vox ecclesiae*; they are the voice of the whole church and not just of their original authors. Moreover, by binding the risen and ascended Christ (the head) with the Church (his body), Augustine insists that the whole Christ, or *totus Christus,* prays the Psalms. For Christ, this applies not just historically (to the actions of his incarnate life prior to his resurrection) but is also a present reality, since the continued prayer of Christ's body, the Church, cannot be separated from the prayer of its head.

Michael Cameron's work on the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* is especially helpful for its analysis of the voices speaking through the Psalms.[154] He claims that Augustine's increasing interest in Pauline Christology, especially at the same time as he composed *Enarrationes* XV-XXXII, leads in these particular expositions to a blending of christology and the ancient rhetorical practice of *prosopopoeia,* or impersonation. The Psalmist, Cameron argues, impersonates Christ and thus 'conjoins multiple voices within a single character', namely the Christ who in Augustine's analysis is united to the body of the Church as its head.[155] In impersonating the voice of Christ, therefore, the Psalmist reveals to us the voice of the *totus Christus.* As Cameron states,

> the individual prays *within* the Church's voice, just as the Church prays *within* the voice of Christ. The different voices of the body and the head speak in unison (*simul*) with Christ's voice, but the Church and its members speak *through him*.[156]

The voices which speak through the Psalms are thus not only multiple, but united. Indeed, an individual Christian is able to speak through the words of Christ, only as they are united with all others who are *in* the Church, and as that very Church is itself *in* Christ.

Augustine evidences this united voice in his claim that we share in Christ's historic prayers – the prayers he uttered between his birth and ascension – so intimately that we become present with Christ in these moments. The starkest example of this is found in

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[154] Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 165–212.

[155] Cameron, 181.

[156] Cameron, 183–84.

Augustine's comments on the famous cry of dereliction, taken up by Christ on the cross: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Psalm 22.1). Here Augustine insists that Christ speaks these words not as the Son of the Father (since it is theologically inconsistent for God to be forsaken by God), but as the Church. In fact, he claims that we were really there as Christ uttered his prayer of lament from the cross: '*nos ibi eramus*… quia corpus Christi Ecclesia'.[157] Hence Fiedrowicz observes that Christ does not simply pray Psalm 22 '*als Sprecher der sündigen Menschheit*' (that is, as a spokesperson); rather these *are* the words of the body, spoken by the head by means of the unity of the *totus Christus*.[158] Augustine makes a similar claim from other instances of Christ's speech, particularly in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXXIX (on Psalm 40). He insists that when Christ says to his disciples 'I was hungry and you gave me food' (Matthew 25.35), and when he asks Paul 'why do you persecute me?' (Acts 9.4), Christ is speaking not for himself but on behalf of those who are hungry or being persecuted, namely the community of the Church.[159] This interpretation of Christ's words to Paul is particularly striking for the clear way in which the unity of Christ's voice with that of the Church eludes the normal patterns of time. Christ speaks as the risen and ascended one, and yet he speaks of his suffering in the present tense, as an indication of the continued unity between him as the ascended head and the body of the Church, both contemporary with Paul and now.

Augustine's most articulate rendering of Christ's uniting role in prayer is found in his introductory remarks on Psalm 86. Here he asserts Christ's unity with God and with humanity by way of his two natures, before arguing that the one incarnate Christ is separate neither from the God to whom we pray, nor from the body that prays and of which he is the head. It is worth quoting Augustine's words in full:

> Nullum maius donum praestare posset Deus hominibus, quam ut Verbum suum per quod condidit omnia, faceret illis caput, et illos ei tamquam membra coaptaret; ut esset Filius Dei et filius hominis, unus Deus cum Patre, unus homo cum hominibus: ut et quando loquimur ad Deum deprecantes, non inde Filium separemus; et quando precatur corpus Filii, non a se separet caput suum; sitque

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[157] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXI.3: 'we were there… because the body of Christ is the Church'.

[158] Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi*, 319.

[159] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXXIX.5.

> ipse unus salvator corporis sui Dominus noster Iesus Christus Filius Dei, qui et oret pro nobis, et oret in nobis, et oretur a nobis. Orat pro nobis, ut sacerdos noster: orat in nobis, ut caput nostrum, oratur a nobis, ut Deus noster. Agnoscamus ergo et in illo voces nostras, et voces eius in nobis.[160]
>
> God could have given no greater gift to humanity than in making his Word, by which he created all things, their head, and joining them to him as members; that the Son of God might become also the Son of man, one God with the Father, one human with humanity; so that when we speak to God praying (for mercy), we do not separate the Son from him; and when the body of the Son prays, it does not separate its head from itself: and it is one saviour of his body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who prays for us, and prays in us, and is prayed to by us. He prays for us as our Priest, he prays in us as our head, he is prayed to by us as our God. Therefore, let us identify our voice in him, and his voice in us.

Augustine claims that as a consequence of the uniting of divinity and humanity in the Incarnation, we are joined to Christ as members of his body, the Church. Thus, in prayer Christ can be at once the one who prays on our behalf, the one heard speaking in our prayer, and the one to whom our prayer is directed. Although Augustine does not here give a careful analysis of the nature of our participation in Christ (I will examine this elsewhere in Augustine's corpus in Chapter Five), he does provide a clear indication that it is precisely *in Christ* that humans participate when they pray.[161]

As he continues his exposition of Psalm 86, Augustine asserts that '[Christ] is prayed to in the form of God, he prays in the form of a servant: he is prayed to as Creator, he prays as a creature' (*oratur ergo in forma Dei, orat in forma servi: ibi Creator, hic creatus*), whilst insisting that Christ remains one saviour (*unus salvator*).[162] Augustine's comments on Psalm

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[160] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* LXXXV.1.

[161] Fiedrowicz is helpful in drawing attention to the repeated use of *in illo* throughout Augustine's exposition of Psalm 86; Fiedrowicz observes that the phrase points to *der Inklusion* of humanity in both Christ's human nature, and in his prayer. See Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi*, 315–16.

[162] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* LXXXV.1.

86 thus insist on upholding the transcendence of the divine 'over' creation even whilst affirming the unity of Christ and the Church.

In particular it is worth noting that such language of *forma Dei* and *forma servi* is used readily in *De Trinitate* (to which we will turn in Chapter Four). A further similarity between the content of *De Trinitate* and Augustine's understanding of prayer in *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* can be discerned in conversation with Cameron's claim that Christ speaks in the Psalms as both King and Priest. In Augustine's association of Christ with both the kingly and priestly roles of the Old Testament (e.g., *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XIX.10), Cameron finds an interest in 'the divine and human working together' and frames this working together in terms of descent and ascent: 'the gloriously strong divine *King* who came down to earth to defend and teach his people, and the sympathetically weak human *Priest* who lifted himself to heaven as a sin-offering'.[163] In Chapter Four we will find a similar pattern of descent and ascent written into the structure and content of *De Trinitate,* and in Chapter Five will discern that it is this model of descent and ascent which underpins a participatory reading of the treatise. Particularly striking is Cameron's assertion that 'the roles of King and Priest coalesced in the *prosopopoeia* of the heavenly intercessor', not least in those words of lament from Psalm 22 which we have already observed Christ 'impersonating' on the cross.[164] Just as we will discern (again, in Chapter Five) that Christ's mediatory death 'for us' is the pivot between divine descent and human ascent, so too Cameron finds that Christ's death is the moment in which Christ's kingly and priestly roles truly meet. Christ prays for us 'by assuming… [our] identity before God' Cameron explains, even as sinners, though he himself is without sin (cf. *Enarrationes in Psalmos* IV.2). And thus, Cameron makes a claim which this thesis will share in its comments on the divine missions in Chapter Six, that 'Christ's intercession means that he prays *for* his people by praying *as* his people'.[165] In other words, in Christ's speaking the Psalms even from the cross, Christ unites himself with us and his voice with ours, and thus enables our intercession to participate in his.[166]

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[163] Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 176.

[164] Cameron, 185.

[165] Cameron, 184.

[166] In Chapter Six I will claim that Christ prays in us not only in his acts of human prayer, but also insofar as the very act of the sending of the Son is itself an act of intercession.

Above all then, we must note that by reading the Psalms christologically, and particularly by discerning the voice of the *totus Christus* in its words, Augustine's understanding of prayer in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* is both participatory and performative. It is an account of prayer grounded in participation in God, because it insists that our prayer cannot be separated from our union with Christ, in whom we partake because he first partakes of our nature (by virtue of the Incarnation).[167] In his comments on Psalm 86 Augustine respects God's transcendence and yet insists that human creatures are united to Christ; both in nature (through union with his humanity, by which we share in his divinity) and in action (as our prayers are united with Christ's prayer). Thus, this is also a performative account of prayer because by claiming the Psalms as the voice of the Church, Augustine invites us to enter into the prayer of the Psalmist, and indeed the prayer of Christ, by praying the words of the psalms ourselves.

Conclusion

In this brief study of Augustine's principles of prayer, we have observed that in *Confessiones* and *Epistola CXXX* Augustine speaks readily of desire as an aspect of prayer and betrays intercession's character as a type of prayer concerned with desire for relationship with others and with God. In both of these senses, Augustine's comments on prayer echo much of what we examined in more recent scholarship, in Chapter Two of this thesis. We have also seen that in these texts Augustine begins to highlight the trinitarian shape of God's role in prayer. He shows us that our prayer is enabled by the Spirit and is bound up with Christ's own prayer. This is expressed with far greater clarity in *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, where Augustine asserts repeatedly that the prayer of the Church is united to the prayers of Christ, as the Church and Christ, the body and head, are united as the *totus Christus*, or whole Christ. I will return to the concept of the *totus Christus* in Chapter Five, bringing it into conversation with the structure and content of *De Trinitate*, in order to discern an Augustinian model of

[167] Cameron makes a similar comparison between our prayers being united to Christ's and our participation in Christ via Christ's redemptive death. He talks of a 'voice exchange between Saviour and sinner' in his analysis of Augustine's writing on Psalm 22, which is to be compared to the 'unique conjunction of divine-human love [which] transacts the exchange of redemption'. See Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 198–99.

participation. But first, we must clarify what of the structure and content of *De Trinitate* is important for understanding participatory themes in the text. Thus, it is a close study of *De Trinitate* which we now begin in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Principles of Participation in Augustine I: Divine Descent and Human Ascent in *De Trinitate*

Following on from principles of prayer in Augustine's thought, we now turn our attention more directly to *De Trinitate*, seeking to find principles of participation in its structure and content. There are a number of scholars who observe themes of participation in both *De Trinitate* and Augustine's wider corpus, and this chapter begins by exploring three such studies, by Travis Ables, Jonathan Teubner and David Meconi. I will also examine Maarten Wisse's rejection of participatory themes in *De Trinitate.* This analysis of recent scholarship is set first in the context of Olivier Du Roy's seminal study of Augustine's trinitarian thought, and contemporary critique of that study.

Having established that other scholars of Augustine discern themes of participation in Augustine's works, the majority of this chapter will then be dedicated to a close analysis of the content of *De Trinitate*, in order to argue that we can discern a model of participation in the text, not least in its clear structure of descent and ascent. It is this chiastic structure, with a spiritual exercise at its structural centre (in Book VIII) and Christ's redemptive activity as its thematic heart (not least in Books IV and XIII), which I will further analyse in Chapter Five to discern an Augustinian model of participation in God, whereby we participate in Christ (who acts 'for us'), by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (who acts 'in us'), in the Church (which is a component of the 'whole Christ').

4.1. Participation in Recent Readings of *De Trinitate*

There are a number of scholars who discern in *De Trinitate* an interest in our participation in God, with varying degrees of detail and a range of rationales for such participatory readings. Three of these (by Matthew Levering, Mark McIntosh and Edmund Hill) are only introductory in nature but helpfully tie their participatory reading of the work to what they

discern of its structure. They also place particular emphasis on Augustine's concern for his own and his reader's spiritual progression.[168] Of these, Edmund Hill, in both his article on *De Trinitate* and in the commentary provided in his recent translation of the work, observes a model of descent and ascent in the work similar to that which I will discern (albeit with some differences in approach).[169] He also emphasises, through his reading of a chiastic structure in *De Trinitate,* that it is the salvific work of Christ which enables our ascent to God.[170] This we will find to be in keeping with a number of recent studies exploring *De Trinitate*.

Those scholars who offer a more in-depth analysis of *De Trinitate* and therein comment on Augustine's interest in participation, draw our attention to the work's core themes, content, and *sitz im leben.* In this first half of Chapter Four I will examine studies by a number of these scholars. Despite disagreeing with Maarten Wisse's rejection of participation as a theme of *De Trinitate,* I will find that his work offers a critique relevant to a project such as this thesis, seeking as it is to bring a historic theologian into conversation with contemporary accounts of participation in God. Contrary to Wisse, I will explore how both Travis Ables and Jonathan Teubner do discern participatory themes in *De Trinitate*. Ables' work helpfully discerns an interesting in *De Trinitate* in participative action, whilst Teubner sets his reading of participation in *De Trinitate* in the context of his study of Augustine's theology of prayer. Lastly, I will introduce David Meconi's study on deification. Whilst this

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[168] Matthew Levering, 'On the Trinity', in *The Theology of Augustine : An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 151–86; Mark Allen McIntosh, 'Augustine on the Mysterious Attraction of the Trinity', in *Divine Teaching : An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 139–59; Edmund Hill, 'St Augustine's De Trinitate: The Doctrinal Significance of its Structure', *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 19, no. 3–4 (January 1973): 277–86.

[169] See Hill, 'St Augustine's De Trinitate: The Doctrinal Significance of its Structure' and Augustine, *The Trinity: De Trinitate,* trans. Edmund Hill, 2nd ed. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012).

[170] Hill, 'St Augustine's De Trinitate: The Doctrinal Significance of its Structure', 284. In this earlier article, Hill is cautious about whether this chiastic structure is completely Augustine's own (Hill, 281). In his later introduction to his translation of *De Trinitate,* Hill is more confident in assuming that the chiastic structure was Augustine's intent (Augustine, *The Trinity: De Trinitate,* 13–14).

work is not primarily concerned with *De Trinitate*, the participatory themes Meconi discerns across Augustine's corpus I will shortly find echoed in *De Trinitate* itself.[171] We begin, however, with a brief introduction to the debate concerning Augustine's sources and influences. This debate has shaped many recent analyses of *De Trinitate*, including a number that find participatory themes in the treatise. This debate is most clearly contested between Olivier Du Roy and his critics, not least Luigi Gioia, Lewis Ayres, and Ronald Kany.

4.1.1. Olivier Du Roy and his Critics: A Failed Ascent?

Du Roy's study, which had a tremendous influence on twentieth-century Augustinian scholarship, insists that Augustine's mature trinitarian theology in *De Trinitate* flounders.[172] Above all, Du Roy claims that Augustine is unable to reconcile the effects of the Incarnation with his concern for the soul's ascent to God. With particular reference to the anagogical work in Augustine's earlier trinitarian theology, which he claims is heavily shaped by Neo-Platonic sources, Du Roy argues that Augustine cannot reconcile the soul's ascent through self-understanding (via the illumination of the Trinity) with the role of Christ as our mediator.[173] In other words, Augustine cannot reconcile an innate tension in his mature trinitarian theology between the Neo-Platonic shape of his thought and his encounter with the reconciling ministry of Christ. Thus, Du Roy insists, 'Augustine bequeathed to the West a dogmatic pattern which tends to cut off the Trinity from the economy of salvation'.[174]

In making these claims, Du Roy depends upon and further develops Théodore De Régnon's famous paradigm. In the first volume of his history of trinitarian doctrine, De Régnon claimed that Scholastic (Western) and Eastern theologies are divided in respect to their focus: Scholastic theologies prioritise the unity of the divine nature, and Eastern

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[171] I return to a closer study of deification within the treatise in Chapter 5.1.3.

[172] Olivier Du Roy, *L'intelligence de La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966).

[173] Du Roy, 441–50.

[174] 'Augustin a légué à l'Occident un scheme dogmatique de la Trinité qui tend à couper celle-ci de l'économie du salut': Du Roy, 460.

theologies the distinction of the divine persons.[175] Most importantly, De Régnon claimed that this divide begins with Augustine. Du Roy's study of Augustine's trinitarian theology is based on De Régnon's paradigm.[176] In particular, Du Roy claims that the most damaging divide Augustine instigates for future generations is that between our knowledge of the Trinity and our encounter with the salvific acts of Christ, and that this divide is based precisely in his emphasis on the unity of the divine nature.[177]

In comparison to Du Roy's assertion of an irreconcilable contradiction in *De Trinitate*, Du Roy's most recent critics argue that it is precisely through engagement with christology that Augustine's trinitarian theology in this text takes its participative shape. For instance, where Du Roy is insistent that Augustine's mature trinitarian thought fails epistemologically, Gioia argues that in *De Trinitate* it is precisely through Christ that we come to know God. Our participation in the Trinity can only ever be framed in the light of Christ, by whose renewal we are enlightened:

> the Word is not an essence in which we participate more or less, but a person of the Trinity who creates and renews us in his own image, enlightens us to enable us to know everything in the light of the personal efficient and formal principle of created reality.[178]

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[175] (Théodore De Régnon, *Etudes de Théologie Positive Sur La Saint Trinité*, vol. 1 (Paris: Victor Retaux, 1892). This paradigm has had tremendous influence on twentieth-century scholarship and is increasingly challenged, especially by French scholars (See Michel René Barnes, 'De Régnon Reconsidered', *Augustinian Studies* 26, no. 2 (1995): 51–79).

[176] (Du Roy, *L'intelligence de La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin*, 13).

[177] For Du Roy's discussion of De Régnon's paradigm see Du Roy, 451–52. For his claim that Augustine emphasises the unity of the divine nature see Du Roy, 447–50. Du Roy bases this claim on his reading of the 'psychological analogies' in *De Trinitate* IX-X. I discuss Du Roy's account of the 'psychological analogies' of the Trinity and offer my own reading of the mental triads in Chapter 4.2.4.1 and 4.2.4.2.

[178] Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 266. Cf. *De Trinitate* IV.2.4. Here Gioia unashamedly speaks in the metaphysical language of participation with which this thesis opened in Chapter One, and finds in *De Trinitate* a christological framing of such participation.

We participate in the Trinity, Gioia argues, only as Christ, the Word of God, redeems us and enlightens us for the sort of self-understanding that Du Roy associates with Neo-Platonic anagogy.

Similarly, Ayres critiques Du Roy by insisting on a properly christological reading of *De Trinitate*, in which Books IV and XIII are key to understanding the whole of the treatise. In his article 'The Christological Context of De Trinitate XIII', Ayres asserts that we ought to understand the relationship between *scientia* and *sapientia* in Book XIII in light of the two natures of Christ, such that our progress from *scientia* to *sapientia* occurs in the 'one person of Christ [who] embodies both scientia and sapientia in his two natures'.[179] It is in Christ, whose redemptive work is recounted in Book IV, that spiritual progression occurs. In his later monograph, *Augustine and the Trinity*, Ayres' primary intent, against Du Roy, is to show that Augustine's trinitarian theology was firmly rooted not just in his Neo-Platonic sources but in the Nicene tradition, and in particular the irreducibility of the Father, Son and Spirit, who are each the fullness of God even as they are together the fullness of God.[180] In so doing Ayres also presents an account of *De Trinitate* in which our movement towards contemplation of God is presented as 'a participation in the divine life… occurring through the reformation of the soul by Christ and the Spirit'.[181] In particular, Ayres continues his christological reading of *De Trinitate* in his argument for a 'christological epistemology' in *De Trinitate*, in which Augustine understands our movement towards contemplation of God as 'a constitutive part of the purification that is salvation, and as occurring *in* the two-natured Christ, through participation in Christ's body'.[182] As with Gioia, so Ayres too clearly believes that we fail to

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[179] Lewis Ayres, 'The Christological Context of De Trinitate XIII: Towards Relocating Books VIII-XV', *Augustinian Studies*, no. 29 (1998): 135.

[180] Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For Ayres' initial critique of Du Roy, on which the monograph builds, see Ayres, 13-41.

[181] Ayres, 5.

[182] Ayres, 142. Chapter Six of Ayres' monograph is concerned with this 'Christological Epistemology'. I will return to the ideas of participation *in* Christ through participation in Christ's body in my examination of the *totus Christus* (in Chapter 5.3) and my subsequent Augustinian model of participation (in Chapter 5.4).

In his introduction Ayres also draws attention to two themes in *De Trinitate* which are not the focus of his monograph but which can be found in Augustine's trinitarian thought, namely

read Augustine's trinitarian thought accurately if, we follow Du Roy in insisting that salvific work of Christ is somehow extrinsic to Augustine's understanding of the soul's ascent to God. Rather, it is precisely *in* Christ, who is our means of knowing God, that we participate in the divine life.

Kany offers a particularly striking comment in regards to the 'failure' of Augustine's trinitarian enterprise in the conclusion to his *Augustins Trinitätsdenken.* Kany, like Ayes and Gioia, is critical of Du Roy's assessment of *De Trinitate.* He finds in Augustine's treatise a daring to go further than his contemporaries precisely in exploring that human ascent to God which Christ enables in his mediation. Comparing Augustine with the Cappadocians, for instance, Kany notes that 'Augustine could have ended *De Trintitate* with the seventh book,' but is driven by his belief that we *are* called to try and understand that God in whom we believe.[183] And this is precisely where Augustine's explorations in *De Trinitate* rightly fail, not in integrating his trinitarian grammar and soteriology, but insofar as the wisdom needed to behold God is only fully received at the beatific vision. And of this Augustine is self-aware. We observe as much in his final prayer at the end of *De Trinitate* where he proclaims to God: 'my knowledge *and* my ignorance are in your sight'.[184] Kany notes similar in *De Trinitate* XV.2.2 in which Augustine says that 'incomprehensible things must be investigated, so that no one may assume nothing has been found, when he is only able to find how incomprehensible is that thing which he seeks'.[185] Thus, Kany concludes, 'that is why the

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'how Augustine sees the saving action of God as a Trinitarian event… [and] how he consequently sees Christian life as shaped by the Trinity' (Ayres, 4-5). In this thesis (especially in this chapter and the next) I turn my attention to these themes, seeking to demonstrate that in *De Trinitate*'s chiastic structure of descent and ascent we encounter the salvific work of Christ 'for us' and the Spirit 'in us' such that in Chapter Six I can argue that human prayer is set in the context of the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are themselves to be described as acts of divine intercession.

[183] 'Augustinus hätte De Trinitate mit dem siebten Buch enden lassen können'. Roland Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken: Bilanz, Kritik Und Weiterführung Der Modernen Forschung Zu 'De Trinitate'* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 508.

[184] 'coram te est scientia et ignorantia mea': *De Trinitate* XV.28.51. Emphasis my own.

[185] 'Sic enim sunt incomprehensibilia requirenda, ne se existimet nihil invenisse, qui quam sit incomprehensibile quod quaerebat, potuerit invenire'.

tremendous effort of a lifelong search was not in vain. Augustine's "opus tam laborious" ends not in misery but in a brilliant failure'.[186] It is *this* failure to truly comprehend God that is Augustine's gift to the history of trinitarian thought, as indeed to our understanding of participation in God.

4.1.2. Maarten Wisse's Rejection of Participation

Care must be exercised when considering Augustine as an expositor of participatory theology, and Maarten Wisse's presentation of *De Trinitate* as a work of non-participative theology is a particular example of a cautionary approach, albeit too cautionary. Helpfully, Wisse's account reminds us that the modern theologian must take care to read Augustine with an eye to Augustine's own context and theological concerns.[187] The danger of projecting modern theological ideas onto patristic theologians is ever-present. At the same time, in order for any constructive work to meaningfully converse with historic theologians we must be willing to bring historic theological concerns into conversation with the interests and vocabulary of the modern day. With this in mind, let us turn to Wisse's analysis.

It ought to be noted at the outset that Wisse is particularly measured in his account of descent and ascent in the work. Critiquing John Cavadini's reading of *De Trinitate* as a deliberately failed Neo-Platonic ascent, Wisse suggests 'that it is more useful to say that Augustine plays with the notion of ascent, but develops an alternative account of human vision'.[188] In respect to the second half of *De Trinitate*, he insists that 'even if the second half

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[186] 'Darum war der ungeheure Aufwand eines lebenslangen Suchens nicht umsonst. Augustins opus tam laborious endet nicht in einem kläglichen, sondern in einem glänzenden Scheitern'. Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken*, 534. Kany quotes here from Augustine's *Epistola* CLXXIV.

[187] Those who read themes of participation in *De Trinitate,* like this thesis, must be willing to recognise that participation is currently something of a theological buzzword. As such we must be on guard to its misinterpretation and misuse.

[188] Maarten Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology beyond Participation: Augustine's De Trinitate and Contemporary Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 120. For Cavadini's account of a 'failed ascent' in *De Trinitate* see: John Cavadini, 'The Structure and Intention of Augustine's De Trinitate', *Augustinian Studies*, no. 23 (1992): 103–23. Cavadini argues that

is in some sense an ascent, or better yet a return to the vision of God, this return is fundamentally different and, more importantly, much more complex than the ascent in a Neo-Platonic system'.[189] Two things of note stand out here: 1) that human ascent is specifically towards vision of God, and 2) that such ascent is not presented in plainly Neo-Platonic terms.

Wisse's concern for the vision of God is born of his outright critique of a participatory ontological relationship between God and creation. Augustine certainly does assert an ontological distinction between God and creation. In *De Trinitate* I.6.9 he declares that 'all substance which is not God is a creature, and [all substance] which is not a creature is God',[190] and this same ontological difference is asserted elsewhere in Augustine's writings.[191] This difference between the ontology of God and of creation continues into the eschaton, Wisse argues, and thus he rejects any notion of deification as the telos of humanity.[192] Rather than becoming gods in the eschaton, he argues, we remain creaturely and instead gain a full vision of God as creatures.

In his insistence that creatures remain creaturely when they gain a full vision of God, Wisse is correct; indeed, this assertion corresponds with what we will observe of the beatific vision in *De Trinitate* XV (later in this chapter). However, what Wisse fails to recognise is that such ontological continuity – the fact that a creature never ceases to be a creature – is precisely what underpins a participatory account of the relationship between God and creation. As we noted in Chapter One of this thesis (especially in conversation with Kathryn Tanner), it is only because of the ontological difference between God and creation that we can say that creation participates in God, because something can only participate in something which by nature it is not (and never becomes). The ontological distinction between

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Augustine engages in two failed Neo-Platonic ascents in Book VIII and over the course of Books IX-XIV and that *De Trinitate* is thus a polemic against the anagogical approach to God rife in Neo-Platonic thought; 'a declaration of the futility of any attempt to come to any saving knowledge of God apart from Christ' (Cavadini, 106).

[189] Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology Beyond Participation*, 169.

[190] 'omnis enim substantia quae deus non est creatura est, et quae creatura non est deus est'.

[191] For instance, Augustine's discussion of created goods in *De Natura Boni* 1: 'all other good things [*created* goods] are only from [God], not of [God]' (caetera omnia bona non nisi ab illo sunt sed non de illo).

[192] Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology Beyond Participation*, 12.

God and creation is thus not a reason to reject a participatory reading of *De Trinitate*¸ but a fundamental principle on which such a participatory reading must be built.[193] Indeed, as we will shortly see in Meconi's study of deification in Augustine, it is fundamental to Augustine's thought that the ontological distinction between God and creation remains even as the human is deified (for a deified human remains human).

Wisse is also too tentative in his articulation of descent and ascent in *De Trinitate.* Whilst I share his concern for emphasising Augustine's movement towards the beatific vision, it is clear that Augustine frames this movement in terms of the descent of the Son and Spirit in the divine missions, and the subsequent ascent of humanity. It is precisely through this divine descent and subsequent human ascent, enabled by the purifying work of the Son and enacted on humanity in the Spirit, that humans come in the eschaton to full vision of God.

Nonetheless, Wisse is correct to insist Augustine's model of ascent is not simply Neo-Platonic. Augustine is not, for instance, suggesting that created multiplicity ascends into ontological unity with God. But Augustine does clearly envisage an ascent, which has two aspects. First there is the ascent of the mind towards remembering, understanding and loving God, enabled by the salvific work of Christ. Second there is the soteriological corollary of this ascent, namely the ascent of humanity from corrupted to saved created nature, which finds itself at last enjoying the beatific vision. It is this soteriological aspect of ascent, which enables our epistemological ascent and leads such ascent to its eschatological fulfilment (cf. Gioia and Ayres).

In its examination of soteriology in *De Trinitate*, Wisse's study goes too far, rejecting outright a participative ontology as a consequence of his concern that soteriology is not

[193] In Chapter Five I will reintroduce the concept of the *totus Christus*. It is worth noting here that even in Augustine's claim that the church, made up of its human members, is really *in* Christ, the difference between God and the created order is not undermined (as Wisse might fear). Indeed, it is as a result of God's transcendence to creation that we are able to be intimately united to Christ, just as it is God's transcendence that enables his intimacy with creation. See *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus* II.10 and its assertion that 'by the presence of his majesty [God] creates what he creates; by his own presence he governs what he has made'(praesentia maiestatis facit quod facit; praesentia sua gubernat quod fecit).

reducible to ontology. He claims of the Incarnation, for instance, that 'the *humanity* of Christ is mediating God to humanity; the divinity of Christ is not ontologically mediated to the world in the incarnation'.[194] Wisse is right to observe that soteriology, and with it Augustine's understanding of participation, is not reducible to ontology alone, but he is wrong to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater' in thus rejecting a participatory reading of *De Trinitate.* Firstly, as I will argue in Chapter Five, in conversation with the concept of the *totus Christus*, Augustine *does* believe that our participation is ontological such that it is *in* Christ that human nature participates in the divine life. Secondly, it is on the basis of such ontology – the participation of our human nature in the divine life *in* the person of Christ – that a further participatory theme emerges in *De Trinitate*: participation in action. We see this especially in a proper reading of the so-called 'psychological analogies' in the second half of *De Trinitate.* Whilst Wisse correctly refuses to understand these analogies as crudely analogical (i.e., where each aspect of our mind corresponds to a particular person of the Trinity), he fails to affirm that, for Augustine, to image the Trinity in our capability of remembering, knowing and loving God, *is* to participate in God, and particularly to participate in God through knowing God and worshipping God (see *De Trinitate* XIV.12.15).[195] What is especially fruitful in Augustine's understanding of participation in God, not least for this thesis' interest in prayer, is the fact that we participate in God not only ontologically; as a consequence of such ontology we can also claim to participate in God through particular actions. It is such an interest in participation in action which, in comparison to Wisse's reading of *De Trinitate*, comes to the fore in the work of Travis Ables.

4.1.3. Travis Ables' Performative Pneumatology

Whereas Wisse rejects interpreting Augustine's account of the beatific vision in terms of participation, Travis Ables' study of *De Trinitate* is favourable to a participatory interpretation. Ables insists that 'for Augustine, the *imago Dei* is an actualisation of our mental operations insofar as the triune persons are the agents of those operations in their

[194] Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology Beyond Participation*, 146. Italics borrowed from original source.

[195] Wisse, 165. I examine how to read the so-called 'psychological analogies' in Chapter 4.2.4.1.

missions'.[196] In other words, Ables recognises that in Augustine's trinitarian anthropology, it is the Son and the Spirit in their missions who actualise the *imago* in the human person as they remember, understand and love God. The *imago* is not just something to be said of humanity, therefore, but is also part of the operation of the Trinity. It is in this sense that the *imago Dei* is specifically an *imago trinitatis.*

Ables thus suggests that we may understand this agency of the trinitarian persons in participative rather than simply operative terms by insisting on what he calls 'incarnational realism'. By this he means that 'the Son, in the person of Jesus Christ, simply is the eternally self-giving nature of God made flesh, the knowledge of whom is the mission of the Holy Spirit'.[197] This is 'incarnational realism' because there is a real encounter between the human subject and the redemptive act of God in the incarnate Christ, an encounter made possible by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who completes Christ's redemptive act in the human subject. In other words, the Incarnation is the hinge on which centres the activity of God, both 'for us' in the Son and God 'in us' by the Holy Spirit.

Ables articulates Augustine's *De Trinitate* in these terms with the aim of understanding Augustine's pneumatology. For Ables, it is essential to note that in *De Trinitate*, the missions of the Son and the Spirit constitute a single act (*opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*) even though they are manifested separately at the Incarnation and Pentecost.[198] Thus, when Ables speaks of the knowledge of the Son as the mission of the Holy Spirit, he is arguing that when a person knows Christ there is one act. This act is enabled by both the divine persons and the human agent. As the human person remembers, understands and loves God, the Holy Spirit is operative in guiding this action by making known the eternal self-giving of the Father in the Son through the Incarnation. This is what Ables means when he insists that pneumatology is *performative*: the Holy Spirit at work is the performance 'in us' of God's activity 'for us' in the incarnate ministry of the Son.[199]

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[196] Travis E. Ables, *Incarnational Realism: Trinity and the Spirit in Augustine and Barth* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 39.

[197] Ables, 12.

[198] *De Trinitate* IV.21. 30.

[199] Ables, *Incarnational Realism*, 72.

In two specific resonances, performative pneumatology is an invitation to *ethical participation.* First, Ables' performative pneumatology is *participative* because through the Spirit we participate in Christ; pneumatology, he insists, is 'the performative dimension of that [christological] doctrinal speech'.[200] When we speak of pneumatology we are thus speaking of our participation in Christ by the activity of the Spirit, rather than simply of the Spirit in isolation and in purely doctrinal terms. Our relationship with Christ in the Spirit is participative because it is 'ethical union with the divine *sapientia* that is identical to the incarnate Jesus'.[201] As the Spirit leads us into contemplation of Christ, we are both introduced to the Son through *sapientia* and made wise for such contemplation by that same Son who redeems us. Both our encounter with the Son and Christ's redemption of us, such that we can contemplate the Son, are performances of the Spirit. And these performances are participative because in them there are two agents: the Holy Spirit and the human person.

Secondly, performative pneumatology, as Ables reads it, is explicitly *ethical* participation because it is tied to the Church. Rather than a simple participation between the individual human person and the Holy Spirit, pneumatology is performed specifically in 'the deifying exchange inherent in the joining of Christ to his body, the Church, through the *totus Christus*'.[202] Ables argues that as a corollary of Augustine's *totus Christus,* the performance of the Spirit which unites us to Christ also unites us to each other insofar as we 'see Jesus, in the face of our neighbour, by the gift of his Spirit'.[203] The Incarnation, therefore, is made real in the church as each member loves their neighbour by the gift of the Spirit. Incarnational realism is thus an ecclesial form of participation centred on the ethical maxim to 'love thy neighbour'. It is in the performance of this ethical maxim, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, that the Church participates in Christ.

As will be apparent in my own Augustinian model of participation, towards which this and the next chapter proceed, Ables is correct to elevate the importance of ethical action as a part of what it is to participate in God. Augustine shows great concern for the command to 'love thy neighbour' as a corollary of what it is to love God. As Able puts it, Augustine

[200] Ables, 13.

[201] Ables, 53.

[202] Ables, 85.

[203] Ables, 82.

seeks to affirm that 'to talk about participation in Christ…is to talk about the way the life of the human subject is oriented in correspondence to the life of God'.[204]

Yet Ables' account of participation, despite offering a similar reading of *De Trinitate* to my own, goes too far in its extension of this *ethical participation,* by way of an *ethical apophaticism,* to the suggestion that 'our ascent is to the face of the other' – meaning not just God, but our neighbour.[205] Ables traces an apophaticism throughout *De Trinitate*, pointing to the obscurity of divine simplicity in Books I-VII and the floundering of our ascent towards God in the latter half of the text, held back as it is by our sinfulness. This is seen especially in the obscurity of the move, as we encounter eternity, between *scientia* and *sapientia.* Ables argues that apophaticism is when 'theological speech comes to an end in unknowing' and he insists that this happens precisely in the extension of love of God to our love of neighbour: 'We know that God is a perfect act of self-giving love, an act so perfectly identical to God's own being that we cannot conceive it – we can only act with, and within, it'.[206] Ables is correct to point to ethical action toward the neighbour as ingredient to our participation in God. However, by suggesting that this extends to the eschaton as a beholding of God in the face of our neighbour he fails to reckon with the specifics of the eschatological dimension of participation. Unlike our temporal encounter with God, in eternity Augustine insists with 1 Corinthians 13.12 that we will see God face-to-face. Whilst for now, to participate in God with the Church is to love one's neighbour as one loves God, beholding in the face of one's neighbour the face of Christ, in eternity we will behold God not through our neighbour but *together with our neighbour* as together, in Christ, we behold the Father. [207]

4.1.4. Jonathan Teubner's Spiritual Reading of Participation

In comparison to the writings of Wisse and Ables, Teubner's account of participation in *De Trinitate* (found in his *Prayer after Augustine*) is brief. He insists that we must recognise the limits of christology in the text and avoid the temptation to force Augustine into 'a how-to

[204] Ables, 185.

[205] Ables, 103.

[206] Ables, 103.

[207] Ables, 81–82.

guide to *participatio*'.[208] In particular he argues that Augustine intends to speak only tentatively of participation in order to 'dislocate the reader spiritually'.[209] *Sapientia* belongs strictly to eternity, he says, and thus for Augustine 'christology's power resides… in its rhetorical capacity to persuade Christians to live with integrity in a world in which *scientia* and *sapientia* are splintered by our mortal existence'.[210] For Teubner, this means that our discussion of Augustine's participative theology must be in broad strokes, framed by Augustine's understanding of prayer.

Teubner's overall description of participation in *De Trinitate* is a helpful one; namely that our participation in God through the mediation of Christ emerges 'through the matrix of prayer'.[211] In his reading of *De Trinitate* (and especially Book IV), Teubner argues that our participation lies between our prayers for pardon (*deprecari*) and our petitions (*precari*), as we are rescued from our deprecation and led towards a positive relationship with God in prayer through the mediatory death of Christ. As Teubner puts it, 'Augustine connects the human capacity for participation with human contemplation of God, explicitly highlighting the need for purification'.[212] According to this reading of *De Trinitate,* we cannot separate our participation in God from our experience of that participation in the activity of prayer; specifically, from our experience of prayer as an activity in which we 'put on' (*induo*) Christ.[213]

Teubner observes that whilst such participation begins temporally under grace (*sub gratia*), its culmination in full contemplation of God (*sapientia*) is deferred until eternity. It is for this reason that he asserts that 'for Augustine, then, Christian participation is most fundamentally a disposition of waiting, of patience in and with this present life'.[214] This is a

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[208] Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 87.

[209] Teubner, 87.

[210] Teubner, 87.

[211] Teubner, 97.

[212] Teubner, 98.

[213] I examine Augustine's use of *induo* in my analysis of his terminology in Chapter Five. See Chapter 5.1.2.

[214] Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 100. In the final stages of Chapter Six (particularly Chapter 6.3.3) I will use intercession's character as a middle category of prayer to describe

helpful reminder that for Augustine participation in this life is necessarily incomplete and falls short because we do not yet see God face to face.[215] Only in eternal life can we speak of full participation in Christ.

Before examining participatory themes in *De Trinitate*, however, Teubner offers a general description of participation which is frustratingly misleading. Specifically, Teubner identifies what he believes to be two primary axes in contemporary theologies of participation: 'horizontal' and 'vertical'. Using Paul Griffiths' description of participation as a 'two-way asymmetrical relation', Teubner describes vertical participation as those models of participation in which we emphasise both directions of that relation (e.g., God's participation in us, and ours in God) and horizontal participation as those models which only stress one direction (Teubner uses the example of baptism – we speak of our participation in baptism but not baptism's participation in us).[216] Whilst Teubner associates vertical participation specifically with the relationship between God and humanity, under horizontal participation he includes activities that make up the Christian life, such as prayer, the sacraments and acts of charity. His intention is to show that Christ is the intersection of these vertical and horizontal axes and thus the central locus of participation.

However, whilst Teubner's description of horizontal and vertical participation rightly emphasises Christ, it does so by setting up an unhelpful dichotomy. It falsely separates activities like prayer, the celebration of the sacraments and charity from the vertical participation which is humanity's relationship with God. All that Teubner lists under horizontal participation are aspects of the relationship between God and humanity. It is not that the vertical and horizontal axes of participation are brought together in Christ, but that by virtue of their common origin in Christ they can never be separated in the first place.

Teubner is also too reluctant to speak of participation in terms of action. He draws attention to a difference between ontological and functional participation (or, as I term it, participation as activity), but intends to show that Augustine describes participation as both,

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the nature of such participation in God in this present life (albeit I frame this present life in terms of 'pilgrimage' not 'waiting').

[215] Teubner, 101.

[216] Paul J. Griffiths, *Intellectual Appetite: A Theological Grammar* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 78.

on the condition that 'neither is pushed to its conclusion by Augustine himself'.[217] I argue however, that an ontological understanding of participation is pushed precisely to its conclusion in Augustine's interest in participative action. Augustine is clear that human participation is grounded in the uniting of human persons in Christ, but that this most clearly culminates in the eternal contemplation of God. Moreover, Augustine shows a clear interest, particularly in Book XV of *De Trinitate*, on participation as exhibited in ethical action. As will be discussed further below, for Augustine the human's love of God, enabled by the Holy Spirit who is love, is expressed in the Christian life by participation with the Church in love of neighbour. Far from refusing to commit fully to a functional understanding of participation, it is just such a model of participation by activity to which Augustine's ontological interests point (not least in the principle of the *totus Christus*).

4.1.5. David Meconi's Study on Deification

Meconi's study on deification is not primarily focused on *De Trinitate,* most obviously because the word *deifico* is never used in *De Trinitate*. However, I include Meconi's participatory reading of Augustine here because the themes he traces throughout Augustine's corpus I will shortly find echoed in *De Trinitate*; not least in its structure of descent and ascent, its interest in a relationship of ontological participation between God and humanity (even as the transcendence of God over creatures is respected), and its concern for participative action.

Meconi's *The One Christ* argues that whilst Augustine only uses the term *deifico* eighteen times across his corpus (and only eleven times with soteriological implications), deification is an overriding theme of Augustine's theology.[218] He argues that for Augustine, as persons created in God's image, we are called to imitate our Creator in union with the person of the incarnate Word, in order to become what we were created to be, namely human participants in the divine life. In the Incarnation, the Son participates in our humanity by assuming a human nature and we are then united with the Son's human nature through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, binding us together as the Church, so that we can participate in

[217] Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 87.

[218] David V Meconi, *The One Christ: St Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

God. We thus share in what we are not – divinity - through union with the human nature of the incarnate Son, in which we can fully share. This, Meconi claims, is what Augustine understands by deification: that we 'become gods' not by ceasing to be human, but in becoming one with the humanity of Christ and thereby sharing, in him, in the divine life.

Meconi traces this theme throughout Augustine's corpus, with particular attention to those places where *deifico* is used to speak of salvation.[219] He argues that Augustine often speaks in terms of deification with an eye to its rhetorical effect, particularly as he seeks to enliven the faith of his flock through his preaching. It thus makes sense that many of the passages Meconi references are sermons or commentaries on Scripture. He examines only two passages from *De Trinitate* in detail: VII.3.5 for its account of the *imago* (with broader and less detailed reference to the content of Books IX-XIV) and VI.5.7 for its teaching on the role of the Holy Spirit in our participation in God (with light additional reference to VIII.8.12). In his reading of both passages Meconi is particularly keen to draw out participatory themes. In VII.3.5, he discerns that for Augustine humans are only images of God by analogy, unlike the Son who *is* the Image of God.[220] We image God, then, as participants, sharing in something which is true of the Son's divinity but only as we are united with him, rather than by our own nature. For who we are in the *imago Dei* must be refashioned after the Divine Image, the Son, 'who is made a way for us in time by his humiliation, which is to us an eternal abiding-place through his divinity'.[221] In VI.5.7, Augustine teaches that unity, holiness and charity are rightly attributed to the Spirit as descriptors of the Spirit's relationship to the Father and Son. It is as created persons receive the gift of the Holy Spirit that they too are united, both to each other and to God.[222] Thus, Meconi, argues, the Holy Spirit is the glue which unites human persons to each other and to God in Christ. Indeed, 'the Spirit recreates the human person into a *homo spiritualis*,

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[219] Meconi, 79, 87.

[220] Meconi also notes that for Augustine, as we saw in Tanner's account of strong participation, it is humanity's creation in the *imago Dei* that separates humans from the remainder of creation and places them on a movement towards full participation in God. See Meconi, 43.

[221] 'quia factus est nobis via temporalis per humilitatem quae mansio nobis aeterna est per divinitatem'.

[222] Meconi, *The One Christ*, 145.

achieving godly attributes not attainable by unaided human nature alone', Meconi claims.[223] He thus finds, as I will also in this chapter and the next, that the Spirit has a crucial role in the transformation of our human nature into the fullness of what it was created to be, as we participate, in and through the Spirit, in God.

More broadly, Meconi's study resonates with what this thesis has already discerned as important to participation in general (in Chapter One), and a participatory model of prayer in particular (in Chapter Two). First, Meconi finds in Augustine a weaving together of his doctrines of creation and salvation in the shape of an *exitus* and *reditus* model of the created order. In Chapter One we recognised this as the basic shape of Neo-Platonic accounts of participation. Given the Neo-Platonic influences on Augustine's thought, it is unsurprising that I too will find an echo of the movement of *exitus* and *reditus* in *De Trinitate*, in the descent of the Son and the Spirit into the created order, and our ascent in return towards full participation in God.[224] Similarly, Meconi's study of deification in Augustine's doctrine of creation raises themes that echo our own discussion of Aristotelian causes in Chapter One. Meconi analyses Augustine's three questions regarding creation, as raised in *De Civitate Dei* 11.21. As we behold the goodness of creation (see Genesis 1's refrain, 'God saw that it was good'), we must ask: *quis fecerit* (who made it?); *per quid fecerit* (how did he make it?); and *quare fecerit* (why did he make it?). These are questions of efficient, formal and final causation, the three Aristotelian causes that Davison notes to have the clearest import for understanding participation in God. By posing these questions Augustine is exploring what it means for creation to participate in God, for created good to partake in its source, the God who is *the* Good. Meconi particularly notes that it is the Word who is central to the answer to all three of Augustine's questions. It is the Word (*Logos*) in and through whom all things are created, and through whom we are transformed and carried back to God.[225] He thus reaches the following conclusion: 'Augustinian cosmology is an existential *dia-logue* between creator and creation, a formative *con-vers(at)ion* carried on through the Word which makes creatures

[223] Meconi, 146.

[224] This weaving together of Neo-Platonic participatory themes and the missions of the Son and Spirit, active 'for us' and 'in us' (see Chapter 5.2), is an example of the successes of Augustine's account of participation in God, contrary to Du Roy's analysis.

[225] See particularly, Meconi, *The One Christ*, 3–31.

what they are to be'.[226] This has clear resonances with both my account of participation in Chapter One *and* my account of prayer in Chapter Two. Not only does Meconi recognise that it is in Christ the incarnate Word (*Logos*) that we are converted to a right ordering of ourselves and our desires before God, he does so using the descriptors of prayer that I foregrounded in Chapter Two, where I argued that prayer is an articulation of desire that takes the form of *conversation* with the goal of *conformation* (which is a gradual process of the conversion of human will to the will of God). Here then we have an account of Augustine's participatory framework explicitly rendered in the language of prayer. I too, in the following chapters, will draw out not only Augustine's interest in articulating our participation in God, but also the ways in which his *De Trinitate* contributes to a participatory understanding of prayer, both as a human act, and as something to be found exhibited even in the triune life of God.

In addition, Meconi's comments on desire echo my own in Chapter Two. He recognises the need for human desire to be re-ordered towards God as part of the process of deification. Humans are fallen because they have seized at 'becoming gods' by themselves rather than properly 'becoming gods' in a way befitting of human nature via participation in God.[227] Our full participation in God is thus bound up with the re-ordering of our desire to its proper end in God. Indeed, I argued in Chapter Two that God is the source of our desire as well as its end. Similarly, Meconi argues that for Augustine it is the Father's desire for the Son that overflows into a divine desire for us, such that we are adopted as co-heirs with Christ.[228]

As well as echoing themes already explored in this thesis, Meconi's study also highlights two key themes I will discern in this chapter and the next, which I will argue are pivotal to understanding the participatory shape of *De Trinitate.* First, he finds the locus of participation in our imaging of the Trinity. It is being created in the image of the Trinity which puts humans in a unique participative relationship with God, and Meconi rightly notes that for Augustine, not least in *De Trinitate,* being made in the image of the Trinity is not just

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[226] Meconi, 19.

[227] Meconi, 67.

[228] Meconi, 109. See *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XLIX.2. In Chapter Six I will offer a more cautious analysis of divine desire, arguing that the desire enacted in the divine missions is a result of the delight, rather than desire, found in the processions (see Chapter 6.2).

a matter of creation in God's likeness, but speaks of the human person's 'connatural desire to become one with its source'.[229] The telos of our imaging of the Trinity is thus important and is none other than participation in the divine life.

Second, Meconi rightly recognises that the implications of deification, for Augustine, include both 'ethical and physical changes in the human person'.[230] As humans 'become gods' they remain human in nature but their ontological status is nonetheless transformed as they become the fullness of what it is to be human through the indwelling of the Spirit and union with the humanity of Christ. This has important consequences for human activity, calling us to act in likeness to how God acts, through the empowering of the Spirit who dwells in us and draws us into the divine life.[231] In *De Trinitate*, and particularly in XIV.12.15, I will argue that Augustine sees our imaging of the Trinity as something grounded in our ontology and especially exhibited in our activity, and above all in worship of God as we remember, understand and love God as our Creator. I will thus, in Chapter Five, argue for an Augustinian model of participation which centres the consequences of a participatory ontology in participative action.

4.2. An Overview of Augustine's Argument

In order to continue to pursue my own participative reading of *De Trinitate*, it is essential to fully examine its content. In doing so I make two assertions of the text, shared with a number of other commentators. The first is that Augustine's intent is to lead his readers on a route map towards encounter with God, in which his pursuit of knowledge of God is enabled in the purification of the mind by God and finds its end in contemplation of God.[232] The second is

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[229] Meconi, 78.

[230] Meconi, 89.

[231] Meconi, 122.

[232] A number of commentators frame their reading of *De Trinitate* in terms of spiritual progression, either in detail or through passing comment. See, for instance: Ayres, 'The Christological Context of De Trinitate XIII: Towards Relocating Books VIII-XV'; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*; Michael Carreker, 'A Commentary on Books Five, Six, and Seven of the De Trinitate of Saint Augustine of Hippo' (PhD Thesis, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Dalhousie University, 1992); Nathan Crawford, 'The Sapiential Strucure of Augustine's De

that there is a unity and coherence to the treatise. Augustine hints at this himself; his frustration at having had to publish the text before he was ready, after a section of it had been stolen, betrays his intention that the work would constitute a coherent whole. Indeed, in *Epistola* CLXXIV, in which he voices this frustration, he insists that it matters that the treatise be published as a whole rather than book by book.[233] A particularly clear insistence on the unity and coherence of the treatise can be found in Gioia's work, where he argues that rather than the structure of the treatise it is its content, and especially Augustine's interest in theological epistemology, that gives the treatise its unity and purpose.[234] Interestingly for this thesis, it is the *practice* of such knowledge that Gioia argues Augustine is aiming to nurture in his readers. In other words, Augustine does not intend simply to analyse the conditions of knowledge of God, but to invite his readers to pursue knowledge of God and thereafter discern what it is that underpins such knowledge. Rowan Williams makes a similar claim regarding the practice of knowledge in his analysis of *De Trinitate* VIII (in which Augustine begins a search of the human mind for images of the Trinity). For Williams, Book VIII and the books that follow are not simply an occasion of 'solipsistic interiority', but driven by a greater purpose, namely 'the quest for an other to love'.[235] Augustine's interest in theological epistemology is thus not a pursuit of knowledge sought in a vacuum, or only for its own sake; rather this is a pursuit of knowledge that leads us to love of neighbour and love of God. It is

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Trinitate', *Pro Ecclesia*, no. 19 (2010): 434–52; R. D. Crouse, 'St. Augustine's De Trinitate: Philosophical Method', *Studia Patristica* 16, no. 2 (1985): 501–10; Ulrich Duchrow, 'Der Aufbau von Augustins Schriften Confessiones Und De Trinitate', *Zeitschrift Für Theologie Und Kirche* 62 (1965): 338–67; Hill, 'St Augustine's De Trinitate: The Doctrinal Significance of its Structure'; Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken*, 507–34; Levering, 'On the Trinity'; McIntosh, 'Augustine on the Mysterious Attraction of the Trinity'; Earl Muller, 'Rhetorical and Theological Issues in the Structuring of Augustine's De Trinitate', *Studia Patristica* 27 (1994): 356–63; Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 141–90.

[233] *Epistola CLXXIV:* 'For I had decided not to publish the books individually, but all together, for the progress of the inquiry led me to add the later books to the preceding ones' (non enim singillatim, sed omnes simul edere ea ratione decreveram, quoniam praecedentibus consequentes inquisitione proficiente nectuntur).

[234] Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*, 3.

[235] Williams, *On Augustine*, 161.

this practice of knowledge in a movement of love that, for Williams, gives *De Trinitate* its unity and purpose.[236]

I want to recognise in addition that the structure of the work echoes the unity and coherence evident in its content.[237] The work's chiastic structure leads the reader into an encounter with the triune God who makes himself known in the missions of the Son and Spirit (in the first half of the treatise) and thus draws us into deeper knowledge of God (in the second half of the treatise), with this journey's ultimate end in the contemplative act of the beatific vision (as described in Book XV). Book VIII lies at the centre of the treatise as a deliberate pause, serving as a lens and pivot.[238] As a lens, Book VIII draws the reader's attention deeper into the mysteries already discussed in Books I-VII, such that Books IX-XV proceed *modo interiore* ('by a more inward manner', see VIII.1.1). As a pivot, Book VIII marks an axis between the emphasis on the missions (and processions) of the Son and Spirit in Books I-VII, and the more explicit seeking of God in Books IX-XV through the grace-

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[236] Williams, 156.

[237] Some studies argue there is no systematic structure to *De Trinitate.* See Henri-Iréné Marrou, *Saint Augustin et La Fin de La Culture Antique* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1938); Goulven Madec, 'La Méditation Trinitaire', in *Lectures Augustiniennes,* by Goulven Madec (Paris: Institut d'Estudes Augustiniennes, 2001), 197–219; and John Cavadini, 'The Structure and Intention of Augustine's De Trinitate', *Augustinian Studies,* no. 23 (1992): 103–23. However, most scholars do claim that Augustine intended the treatise to follow a particular schema, debating instead how Augustine intended the treatise to be divided, and the overall shape and themes we are meant to discern in the work. An excellent discussion of the structure of *De Trinitate,* which recounts a number of scholarly positions in the debate, can be found in Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken,* 181–90.

[238] Of those who do argue for a deliberate structure in the work, most of the discussion tends to centre on the role of Book VIII, and in particular whether it marks the end of the first half of the treatise (e.g. Hans von Campenhausen), the beginning of the second half (e.g. Michael von Schmaus) or, as I suppose, a turning point in the work which needs to be demarcated in the structure in its own right. See Hans von Campenhausen, 'Augustin', in *Lateinische Kirchenväter,* by Hans von Campenhausen (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1983), 151–222; Michael von Schmaus, *Die Psychologische Trinitätslehre Des Heiligen Augustinus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1969).

enabled contemplation of the analogies of the Trinity in the reader's own mind. In other words, Book VIII marks an axis between the descent of God in Books I-VII and our ascent to God in Books IX-XV.

In the first half of *De Trinitate,* we witness descent through the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit, to the end that we both understand something of the Trinity's workings in creation and are redeemed through the mediatory and perfecting work of these divine missions. In the latter half, we ascend to God by the grace bestowed on us in the divine redemptive work, through meditation on our knowledge of the mind, which bears us towards wisdom and thereby the contemplation of God. Christ is at the heart of this divine redemptive work. Thus, with the likes of Ayres and Gioia, I want to insist too on the important place christology holds at the centre of each half of the treatise (Book IV in the first half, and Book XIII in the second half). It is this chiastic structure, with Augustine's interest in the person of Christ running through it, that I will take up in Chapter Five as I trace the activity of God 'for us' in Christ and 'in us' by the Spirit, to demonstrate what the treatise teaches us about human participation in God.

Indeed, this insistence on the unity and coherence of the work matters precisely because it demonstrates the coherence with which Augustine approaches questions of the Trinity, Christ and the Spirit. Behind most scholars' insistence on the coherence of the treatise lies the assertion, which I share, that Du Roy is incorrect: Augustine does not fail, in *De Trinitate,* to reconcile our knowledge of the Trinity and the 'economy of salvation' (that is the mediatory activity of Christ).[239] *De Trinitate* is *not* a failed attempt to hold together the soul's ascent to God and the role of Christ in that ascent, nor a failed attempt to hold together a grammar of the divine processions with the account of the missions of the Son and Spirit provided in Scripture. The books of *De Trinitate* find their ultimate coherence in the underlying truth that we cannot separate what we know of the Trinity from our encounter with the God who saves us. Rather than severing the dogma of the Trinity from God's saving works, Augustine claims that we learn, through faith, that God is as we encounter him in the 'economy of salvation'.[240]

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[239] Du Roy, *L'intelligence de La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin*, 460.

[240] This claim, contra Du Roy, that the God who saves us is the God who is Trinity, will be important in Chapter Six of this thesis. There I will explore the possibility of the Trinity

In the remainder of this chapter, I will give an overview of the content of *De Trinitate*. I separate the content as follows: Book I is an introductory book; Books II-IV focus primarily on the divine missions; Books V-VII focus primarily on the triune processions; Book VIII acts as a spiritual exercise; Books IX-XI is on the imaging of the Trinity; Books XII-XIV describe the perfecting of that imaging; and Book XV acts as a conclusion. In particular I argue *both* that Book VIII is the pivot at the centre of this chiasm *and* that each wing of the chiasm has the person of Jesus Christ at its centre (in Books IV and XIII), if not perfectly in terms of structure, then certainly theologically.

4.2.1. Book I: A Statement of Method

Augustine uses Book I of *De Trinitate* to present his method for the work. After an initial critique of those who scorn faith in favour of reason, Augustine uses Book I to explain his approach in dealing with the content of Christian faith. He does this on the basis of three general principles: 1) that self-assured rationalism is fundamentally dangerous; 2) that in order to contemplate God our minds need to be purified through faith; and 3) that such purification is based on and speaks to the relationship between God and creation, both in terms of our own created nature and in terms of the human nature of the incarnate Christ. It is by laying down these principles that Augustine makes Book I a statement of the method by which he will explore the divine missions and processions in Books II-VII. In particular, the need to be purified is a theme that runs across all three of these principles. This purification is the purpose of the divine descent and the means whereby Christ and the Spirit enables human ascent. It is, in other words, the purification achieved through God's saving actions.

Augustine begins his critique of 'immature and perverse love of reason' (*immaturum et perversum rationis amorem*) and thus introduces his first general principle at the very beginning of I.1.1; it is those who scorn faith in favour of reason that Augustine intends to correct as he writes (especially in I.1.1 to I.3.6). It will be of utmost importance to bear this in mind when we come to examine Books V-VII and IX-XI. In these later sections of the work Augustine is not trying and failing to lead us to knowledge of God through an exercise of

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doing something like prayer on the basis of the intercessory work of the Son and Spirit, in what Du Roy would call the 'economy of salvation' but which I prefer to label the 'divine missions'.

rational self-understanding, as he examines the way his mind images the triune God (as Du Roy suggests). Rather, in these later books of *De Trinitate,* as in the earlier books we are now considering, it is in the purification of the mind through faith in the incarnate Christ (who enacts that very purification) that our ascent towards God is enabled.

Moving to the second governing principle in Book I, Augustine writes, 'it is difficult for the substance of God to be contemplated and to be fully known', and that is why our minds need to be purified, 'whereby that ineffable [God] can be ineffably seen' (I.1.2).[241] This purification occurs as 'we are nurtured by faith' (*fide nutrimur*). It is faith, for Augustine, that leads us on the path to purification, and this faith is precisely faith in the saving work of the Son and the Holy Spirit that runs throughout *De Trinitate*. The treatise as a whole is thus an examination of the content of trinitarian faith and thereby Augustine's route-map for ascent to contemplation of God, which leads us by faith on the paths of purification.

Thirdly, this purification which Augustine pursues in *De Trinitate* is introduced in Book I as part of a wider discussion of the relationship between God and creation. Specifically, Augustine asks how it is that God relates to creation through the person of Christ, who is both Creator and created. His response is an appeal to the principle that in his humanity Christ acts in *forma servi,* and in his divinity as *forma Dei* (see I.7.14 onwards). This will be an essential principle in my own reading of Augustine's christology in *De Trinitate* and its consequences for my theology of prayer.[242] The principle's primary purpose in Book I is to set up two subsequent principles which are fundamental to all that follows:1) the unity of Christ with the Father, as the Son who is from the Father (Nicaea's 'God from God'); and 2) the fact that the God we encounter in the divine missions is inseparable from the trinitarian processions.[243] By asserting from the outset that the incarnate Son is in *forma*

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[241] I.1.3: 'substantiam dei… intueri et plene nosse difficile est… qua illud ineffabile ineffabiliter videri possit'.

[242] In I.10.20-21 Augustine discusses prayer as an activity of Christ in *forma servi,* rather than in *forma Dei.* This raises difficult questions for anyone who might like, as in this thesis, to explore the possibility of prayer as an activity associated even with the triune life. I will return to the question of prayer and the divine processions in Part III of this thesis.

[243] Ayres rightly recognises these principles as evidence of Augustine's pro-Nicene trinitarian theology. See, for instance, Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 96–97.

Dei and *forma servi*, Augustine is thus able to meaningfully speak of the life of the Son in creation without turning the Son into a creature or implying that he is less than the Father. Augustine therefore speaks of the role of the sending of the Son in the history of salvation (and thus in he and his readers' purification), without introducing subordinationism into his trinitarian logic. On this basis, the Trinity can be at work in creation without damaging its integrity; indeed, it is the processions of the Trinity that enable us to speak of the Trinity as engaged with creation at all, as we shall see in Books II-VII.

4.2.2. Divine Descent in Books II-VII

Following Book I, the first half of *De Trinitate* is concerned with divine descent, by which I mean the sending of the Son and the Spirit in the Incarnation and at Pentecost, respectively. Augustine's focus in Books II-IV is largely on the divine missions, not least as we encounter them in scripture. In comparison Books V-VII are especially interested in what the divine missions invite us to say of the triune processions. These two sections are not, however, to be too cleanly separated. The missions we encounter and through which we are purified to behold God *are* the divine processions poured forth into creation. With a proper reading of Books II-VII, Du Roy's accusation that Augustine sets up a fissure between the dogma of the Trinity and 'the economy of salvation' certainly flounders. Indeed, of particular significance in this section of the treatise is Book IV and its christological focus, which ties Augustine's discussion of the divine processions in Books V-VIII to Christ's salvific work.

4.2.2.1. Books II-IV: The Divine Missions in Scripture

In Books II-IV, where Augustine begins a detailed exposition of the Trinity as depicted in scripture, his intent is to clarify what is and what is not a divine mission. He concludes that these are limited to the Incarnation of the Son and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. This is an important stepping-stone for Augustine, who ultimately wants to highlight the incarnate life of the Son and thereafter the continued ministry of the Spirit, as *the* activity of the divine which enables human ascent.

Book II eventually discusses the Old Testament theophanies; but first, in II.1.2 to II.9.16, Augustine lays down three implications of the christological distinction between

forma Dei and *forma servi* for consideration when reading scripture.[244] First, as a prelude to his insistence on Christ as the key to our ascent (introduced in Book IV and elaborated further in the latter half of *De Trinitate,* and especially Book XIII), Augustine argues that the Incarnation is a unique event in comparison to the earlier theophanies of the Old Testament, since it is only in the Incarnation that God the Son unites with created being, acting in one person in *forma Dei* and in *forma servi*. Second, while the equality of the trinitarian persons is an important principle throughout *De Trinitate,* in Books II-IV Augustine particularly focuses on ensuring that we are not tempted to speak of the Son as *less* than the Father. We must bear this in mind as we read of Christ's perfecting work, and when extrapolating the role of Christ in prayer. That is, in recognising and utilising the fact that Christ is in *forma servi,* we must not lose sight of the fact that Christ is also always in *forma Dei.* Finally, the careful differentiation between *forma Dei* and *forma servi* helps Augustine to articulate the divine missions without impugning God's transcendence.[245] Each of these implications of the *forma Dei-forma servi* distinction is essential not just for Augustine's reading of scripture, but for his understanding of the divine descent.

We must not separate Augustine's account of spiritual progression here in *De Trinitate* from his wider experience of contemplative ascent. In *Confessiones* it is apparent that such ascent is limited; in this life, the closest one can get to the height of this ascent is a momentary encounter with God. Augustine's trinitarian theology has been informed by his ascent at Ostia (*Confessiones* IX.10.23-26) and a corresponding experience of God's utter transcendence. Augustine's use of the distinction between *forma Dei* and *forma servi* enables him to make direct connections between the limits of his experience of God's transcendence and the mission of the divine Son. It is this that Michel René Barnes picks up on in his claim that Augustine uses the *forma Dei-forma servi* distinction to assert the visibility of Christ and

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[244] Note that Gioia claims that the importance of the distinction between Christ in *forma Dei* and in *forma servi* falls away later in *De Trinitate.* See Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate,* 26. I disagree: this distinction is fundamental to Augustine's understanding of Christ and thus operates behind Augustine christological comments (what Gioia describes as a discussion of the 'crucified God' and 'humility of God') throughout *De Trinitate*.

[245] For as we saw in the twentieth-century work of Kathryn Tanner, God's intimacy with creation is as a result of, rather than contradiction to, God's radical transcendence.

the invisibility of the Trinity.[246] In opposition to the Homoians and their claim that the visibility of the Son in the Old Testament theophanies is proof that the Son is not truly God, Barnes explains that for Augustine we can see Christ now in *forma servi,* but that Christ in *forma Dei* remains invisible until we contemplate him in eternity.[247] In the visible Christ, in other words, we do not *see* the invisible Trinity, but we do not therefore have to reject the notion that Christ *is* truly divine (the Son of the Father). Barnes draws on the visual nature of Augustine's language of *forma* and insists that the proper object of our sight – the visible Christ, who is the invisible Son of the Father – is also the proper object of our knowledge. Like Gioia, he thus finds in Augustine's christology an interest in theological epistemology.[248] In Chapter Five I will claim that the proper object of our knowledge is also to be described as the means of our participation in God, finding in Augustine's christology in *De Trinitate,* including his distinction between Christ in *forma Dei* and in *forma servi,* a model for our participation in God.

The remainder of Book II and the whole of Book III, is dedicated to an explanation of the Old Testament theophanies, with Augustine maintaining that these appearances are not of God, but of angels serving as God's messengers. The theophanies are types of the divine missions (viz. the descents of the Son and the Holy Spirit), but they are not the missions themselves. Kari Kloos' study on Augustine's exegesis of the theophanies reminds us that this represents a change in Augustine's understanding. In *De Vera Religione* (c.390) and *Contra Adimantum* (c.394), he had chosen to read Christ into the Old Testament theophany accounts.[249] Like his predecessors, Ambrose and Hilary, in these earlier texts Augustine claimed that the Old Testament theophanies *were* appearances of the Son. Augustine's position in *De Trinitate* thus reflects a change in perspective. Kloos puts this change down to

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[246] Michel Rene Barnes, 'The Visible Christ and Invisible Trinity: MT 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400', *Modern Theology,* no. 19 (2003): 329–55. Ayres' study of Augustine's trinitarian theology builds on this article: see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity,* 143–44.

[247] Barnes, 'The Visible Christ and Invisible Trinity: MT 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400', 334–35.; cf. *De Trinitate* I.8.16-10.20.

[248] Barnes, 334.

[249] Kari Kloos, *Christ, Creation, and the Vision of God: Augustine's Transformation of Early Christian Theophany Interpretation,* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 101–28.

different polemical interests and a move towards understanding the theophanies spiritually.[250] She argues that a spiritual reading of the theophanies focuses Augustine's interest on our vision of God. Whilst Kloos explores this in epistemological terms, I believe Augustine also wants his readers to interpret the theophanies in contemplative terms, insofar as the theophanies have a role to play in orienting us towards true contemplation of God. Since the theophanies are not appearances of God, they point away from themselves to the real locus of our vision of God, namely the divine missions of the Son and the Spirit. The Incarnation of the Son and the continuing activity of the Spirit after Pentecost orient and enable our ascent towards God, such that we are led eventually to that eternal vision, where we will see God face to face (1 Corinthians 13.12).[251]

Augustine is thus already marking out the Incarnation and Pentecost as focal points around which his understanding of divine descent and human ascent revolve. In Book IV he engages in a detailed examination of the Incarnation, arguing via a theological exposition of the Johannine Prologue, that the Word became flesh in order to shine a light on the darkness of the world so as to cure (*curare)* fallen minds. This book lies thematically at the heart of the first half of *De Trinitate*. It asserts that weaved throughout the mystery of the Trinity, who is revealed in the divine missions as one God in three processions, is the question of salvation. In other words, the God revealed as Trinity is the God who saves.

Particularly striking in Book IV is the manner in which Augustine describes such salvation. In IV.2.4, Augustine speaks of our salvation in terms of a human participation (*participatio*) in the Word, such that we contemplate (*contemplamus*) God.[252] This contemplation is enabled because in the Incarnate Word, 'God became a just man and has

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[250] Kloos' identification of a 'polemical-doctrinal' rationale for this change refers to the fact that Augustine's *De Trinitate* is more concerned with Homoians than with his earlier opponents, the Manichees. Augustine no longer needed to emphasise the importance of the Old Testament in the face of a Manichean rejection of the Old Testament. Rather he needed to reiterate the equality of the Son and the Father in reaction to his new opponents. See Kloos, 135.

[251] Kloos hints at this reading towards the end of her study (see particularly Kloos, 165-191), but there is room for its development, particularly as regards the connections between this spiritual reading of the theophanies and the material in the latter half of *De Trinitate*.

[252] I examine Augustine's use of *participatio* in closer detail in Chapter 5.1.2.

interceded to God for sinful humans' (*deus itaque factus homo justus intercessit deo pro homine peccatore*, IV.2.4), and thus humanity is cleansed (*mundaremur*). In particular, Augustine links this cleansing intercession with the death of Christ and its effect on the *interior* and *exterior homo* of the human person. Here then we have intercession, and specifically the intercession of Christ our Saviour, presented as that which transform our bodies and minds and enables our final contemplation of God.

4.2.2.2. Books V-VII: Focussing on the Triune Processions

Having reviewed the sending of the Son and Holy Spirit as they are depicted in Books I-IV, in Books V-VII Augustine further explores what the divine missions say of the processions. Here his writing is repeatedly polemical, reflecting a context in which 'Arian' (viz. subordinationist) portrayals of the Trinity remained a threat. The challenge Augustine takes up in Books V-VII is to speak with suitable humility of the God who is transcendent, whilst reiterating that the divine missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit show their equality with the Father. His primary intent, however, is to guide his readers further on the path of faith. This is the faith that looks to the Son and Holy Spirit as the cause of salvation and thus believes in the eternal processions from which the divine missions extend. This exercise in trinitarian grammar is, therefore, a crucial part of Augustine's spiritual progression throughout *De Trinitate*, continuing and developing the depiction of divine descent (and therein initial comments on the processions) begun in Books I-IV.

Augustine's initial focus in Book V is on the logic of substance and relationship. 'Arian' theology insisted that everything said of God is said 'substance-wise', and that to be begotten (as all agreed the Son was) is therefore to be of a different substance from the Father, who is unbegotten. In order to defend the equality of the divine persons, Augustine appeals to the Aristotelian language of *substantia* and *accidentia.* In particular he asserts that in God there is one *substantia* and no *accidentiae*, since God is unchanging. As a result, Augustine must find language other than that of Aristotle's *accidentia* to speak of what differentiates the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are all equally eternal and unchanging (VI.4.5). He chooses language of relationship: the Father, Son and Spirit are thus defined by their unique relationships towards each other, rather than by anything that can be marked 'substance-wise'. Specifically, what it is to be the Son is to be begotten, what it is to be the Spirit is to proceed, and to be the Father is to be unbegotten. As a consequence, we can use

descriptors of God (i.e., substantive predicates) whether speaking of God as such or of any of the three, since the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of one equal substance.[253]

As well as speaking of the logic of substance and relationship in reference to the Trinity, Augustine also uses Book V to clarify what is different about terms used to speak of God's relationship with the created world. There are some terms used of God, such as 'donation' (viz. of the Holy Spirit), 'Lord' or 'refuge' which speak not of God's intra-trinitarian relationships, but of God's relationship to creation (V.16.17). Augustine insists that when such language bears reference to creation, it does not convey change in God, but a change in creation, as it relates to God in a new fashion.

Books VI and VII must be read in tandem. In Book VI, Augustine moves his focus to a discussion of 1 Corinthians 1.24: 'Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God'. He begins by observing the danger of anti-Nicene readings of this verse, which assume that because Christ is the power and wisdom of God, he is subordinate to the Father from whom these powers come. At the same time, Augustine also rejects a Nicene reading of the passage according to which the Son is not less than the Father because Christ is the power and wisdom of God, and that the Son and the Father together are wise and powerful as a result of the Son being begotten of the Father. As Michel René Barnes rightly observes, 'this production-based model of equality and union cannot be sustained'.[254] And this is the conclusion Augustine himself reaches in Book VII: 'Every being that is spoken of relatively, is still something besides its relativity', Augustine states, arguing that we must preserve a distinction between the substance of the Trinity and the relations of the Trinity.[255] Thus, in Books VI and VII Augustine insists both on the commonality of the divine substance and on

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[253] In all of this we ought to heed Ayres' comments that Augustine is not interested in giving a thorough account of subsistent relations (like we might find, for instance, in later scholastic theology) but providing enough language to enable a coherent discussion of divine communion. 'In this respect,' Ayres states, 'these books of the *De Trinitate* offer far less of a developed Trinitarian ontology than is frequently assumed'. See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 199.

[254] Michel René Barnes and Villanova University, in cooperation with the Philosophy Documentation Center, 'De Trinitate VI and VII: Augustine and the Limits of Nicene Orthodoxy', *Augustinian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 202.

[255] VII.2.2: 'omnis essentia quae relative dicitur est etiam aliquid excepto relatiuo sicut'.

a use of appropriation that allows us to say, first, that because God's divine substance *is* wisdom and power, and because such substance is common to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there are not separate wisdoms in the Son and the Father which relate to one another. Second, he maintains that we can speak of Christ as the wisdom of God by appropriating the substance term 'wisdom' to the Son. For although the Trinity as a whole must be understood as 'wisdom', from our position it makes sense to appropriate the property of wisdom to the Son, since it is in the incarnate Christ that we perceive the wisdom of God (VII.3.4).

Book's V-VII are a continuation of the descent portion of Augustine's descent-ascent chiasm, as observed already in Books II-IV, because their primary interest in the divine processions is based in the divine missions, and above all the Incarnation of the Son. We should not be misled by readings like those of Du Roy who would have us believe that there is an irreconcilable divide in Augustine's thinking between his trinitarian logic and his soteriology. We must instead assert with Augustine that the divine missions and the divine processions both pertain to the same trinitarian God. As Augustine puts it:

> sicut enim natum esse est filio a patre esse, ita mitti est filio cognosci quod ab illo sit. Et sicut spiritui sancto donum dei esse est a padre procedere, ita mitti est cognosci quod ab illo procedat.[256]
>
> Just as to be born is for the Son to be from the Father, so to be sent is for the Son to be known to be from [the Father]. And just as being the gift of God is for the Holy Spirit to proceed from the Father, so to be sent is for [the Spirit] to be known to proceed from [the Father].

In his trinitarian grammar in Books V-VII Augustine is above all seeking to give us language to speak meaningfully about God. And what makes such speech possible is precisely the divine missions. It is what is revealed of the Son and the Spirit in the Incarnation and at Pentecost that determines what Augustine can postulate about the divine processions in Books V-VII. Augustine's concern for the triune processions is not then a departure from his analysis of divine descent, but the a continuation of it.

Furthermore, we can dare to contemplate the Trinity at all only because of the effectiveness of the divine missions in purifying our minds. It is with regards to such

[256] IV.20.29.

purification that Augustine ends this examination of the triune processions. As he approaches the end of Book VII, Augustine returns to 1 Corinthians 1.24 with careful rhetorical effect, arguing that it is our being purified by God which allows us to move from knowledge of God to wisdom. In Book VII this move is facilitated by a discussion of the cloaked nature of scriptural references to the relations of the Trinity. In VII.6.12 Augustine points to the plural in Genesis 1.26 – 'let *us* make humankind in our image' – and introduces what will be a key principle for the latter half of the treatise: that the human person is created in the image of the Trinity. We therefore approach God, Augustine argues, by *similitudo* (likeness or similarity) that is 'not a proximity of place but a sort of imitation', made possible because we are called to be *reformamini* (refashioned) and *renovamini* (renewed; see Romans 12.2 and Colossians 3.10). In other words, we move closer to a *similitudo* as we are purified. Here already are indications of what constitutes human ascent.

4.2.3. Book VIII: A Spiritual Exercise

Augustine does not refer to Book VIII as a spiritual exercise, yet it clearly is one. Broadly speaking, a spiritual exercise is a guide for spiritual growth. Often it is an output from someone else's spiritual practice, intended to instigate and encourage spiritual reflection in the reader, such that the reader becomes a user of the text and thereby a companion on the writer's spiritual journey.[257] Having set out in Book I with the expectation that he and his readers are entering into a joint task (I.3.5), during the course of Book VIII Augustine invites his readers to pause with him in a moment of spiritual reflection, beginning his search (continued in Books IX-XI) for indicators of the Trinity. Herein is also the pivot on which the whole treatise turns; here the text's chiastic structure turns from an interest in the divine

[257] The nearest examples of spiritual exercises to Book VIII, both historically and stylistically, are those of classical philosophy. Pierre Hadot offers an analysis of this tradition, and draws attention to the use of spiritual exercises in the period between Socrates and the Neo-Platonists. It is his understanding of spiritual exercises that I take as an accurate account of the genre's role in the Greco-Roman tradition: 'By means of them, the individual raises himself up to the life of the objective Spirit; that is to say, he re-places himself within the perspective of the Whole'. See Pierre Hadot and Arnold I. Davidson, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 82.

missions and what they say of trinitarian grammar, to the inner reflection of the *modo interiore* of Books IX-XV, in which the focus is on the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind and the redemptive activity of the Trinity on that mind. As Hill puts it, Augustine is 'a prospector looking for gold', who having searched the surface, has by the end of Book VIII 'staked his claim and fixed the point where he is going to sink his shaft'.[258] We, the readers, are invited to join Augustine in this venture.

In terms of content, Book VIII is particularly concerned with the question of belief. Book VII had concluded with one of Augustine's favourite scriptural quotations, '*nisi credideritis non intellegetis'* ('without belief you will not understand', Isaiah 7.9), in order to emphasise that our encounter with the triune God begins with faith rather than theoretical understanding. Book VIII then asks how it is that we can believe in God if from our position of human squalor (VIII.2.3) we cannot begin to understand God except by faith. Augustine claims that to have faith in God we must have some initial knowledge of God, for 'who loves that of which one is ignorant?' (*quis diligit quod ignorat*, VIII.4.6). In other words, whilst it is faith that leads us into understanding, we cannot have faith without some initial knowledge of what it is that we believe.[259]

Augustine approaches this dilemma of the relationship between faith and understanding, with reference to the terms *veritas*, *bonus*, and *justus*. Augustine is happy to state that God is the truth, the good and the just, but recognises that this raises an epistemological challenge. That is, if God *is* the truth, the good and the just, how are we (in our fallen state) to know God? In his account of what 'just' is, Augustine recognises that even our understanding of what it is to be a just man is hard to pinpoint. He argues that although in our fallen state we are not just, we must have some way of knowing what 'just' is, since otherwise we would be

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[258] Hill, 'Introduction' in Augustine, *The Trinity: De Trinitate*, 10. A number of Hill's phrases to describe Book VIII are helpful, if a little liberal, in their interpretation of Augustine's Latin. Ayres is convincing however in his criticism of Hill's translation of *articulus alicuius exordia* in VIII.10.14 as 'the frame of a kind of warp' on which Augustine 'weaves' (*contexere*) his argument in the later books of *De Trinitate*. Here Augustine is actually employing an *exordium*, a rhetorical device used for the introduction of a speech in order to capture and stir the attention of his readers. See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 281.

[259] To believe in something you know absolutely nothing about is absurd.

unable to recognise a just person when we see one, and thus be inspired to be just in imitation.[260] As Augustine puts it,

> Ut autem sit justus qui nondum est uolet utique justus esse; ut autem velit diligit justum. Diligit ergo justum et qui nondum justus est. Diligere autem justum non potest si quid sit justus ignorat. Proinde nouit quid sit justus etiam qui nondum est.[261]
>
> But in order for the one who is not yet just to be 'just' – he who wants by all means to be just – he must wish to be just. And he who is not yet just, therefore loves the one who is just. But he cannot love the one who is just if he does not know what 'just' is. Hence the one who is not yet just, even so discerns what 'just' is.

We must then have some way of knowing what 'just' is, or else we would not seek it and could have no notion of what it means to say, 'God is just'. Forced into an epistemological corner, Augustine simply asserts that 'in ourselves, therefore, we have become acquainted with what the "just" is' (*in nobis igitur nouimus quid sit justus*): although we are not yet ourselves just, in searching ourselves we nevertheless find the notion of the 'just'.

Similarly, in his exploration of 'truth' and 'the good', Augustine appeals to the created person as an indication of the meaning of 'truth' and 'the good'. He is most restrained in his discussion of 'truth' in which he does little more than indicate that it is by truth that humans are created (VIII.1.2). In his account of the 'the good' he seeks further insight from introspection. Here Augustine argues that even in our fallen state humanity still partakes in the good by virtue of partaking in God, as creatures in relationship to their Creator (VIII.3.5, quoting Acts 17.27). Thus, Augustine claims that in the notion of 'the good' we have a point of epistemological access to God, as a consequence of our metaphysical partaking in God, as ones who have been created.

Augustine's intention in Book VIII is to show that it is through observing ourselves that we have a notion of the meaning of truth, the good and the just, and thus of the God who *is* truth, the good and the just. It is thus deliberate that in Book VIII's prologue Augustine

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[260] Augustine sets this in the context of an assumption that we love the Apostle Paul because he is a man of just mind.

[261] VIII.6.9.

speaks of the need for us to attend to a *modo interiore*; he intends to journey with the reader not just deeper into the trinitarian mystery, but specifically to do so through journeying deeper into the self.[262] In particular (and as shown in the so-called 'psychological analogies' that follow in Books IX-XI), the reader must delve into their own mind, for it is there they are to find the initial knowledge that will lead them to faith in the Trinity.

Furthermore, in order to develop his notions of truth, the good and the just such that they are not simply abstract ideas, Augustine ties each of them to the mind's active *loving* of that which is true, good and just. 'This is true love', Augustine says, 'that we should live justly by clinging to the truth' by following the dual command to love God and to love our neighbour.[263] Hill is right to suggest that this love is 'the all-embracing notion which covers the whole double movement of faith to understanding, and antecedent knowledge to faith', since, as we have already observed, Augustine frames his broader question of how it is we understand and believe in God around the question '*quis diligit quod ignorat*?'.[264] Our belief and our understanding are therefore not apathetic; they are intimately tied to our desire for God such that our love is dependent on our knowledge of that which we love, that our love is thus tied to our believing, and that in some sense loving is a type of knowing (VIII.8.12). It is unsurprising then that Augustine ends Book VIII with the threefold nature of love – 'there are three things: the lover and what is loved and love' (*amans, quod amatur* and *amor*, VIII.10.14) – beginning his discernment of the mind's imaging of God with the mind's loving activity. It is towards desire for God that Augustine directs the reader's attention in order to encourage the reader to continue reading *De Trinitate* not just in order to understand God, but to desire God with fresh vigour.[265]

In this way, the very content of Book VIII acts as a turning point in the wider work, asking challenging epistemological questions in order to focus the reader on the operation of their own mind as that which might lead us deeper into the mystery of the Trinity. What had

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[262] VIII.Prooem.

[263] VIII.7.10: 'Haec est autem vera dilectio ut inhaerentes veritati juste uiuamus'.

[264] Hill, 'Introductory Essay on Book VIII' in Augustine, *The Trinity: De Trinitate*, 296.

[265] Williams describes this self-reflection that so shapes Books VIII-XIV as a 'movement of desire' (see Williams, *On Augustine*, 157). He thus employs the same language of 'desire' that I have used to describe prayer in Chapter Two, and which I will use to describe the divine missions as acts of intercession in Chapter Six.

in Book VII been a technical question of trinitarian grammar becomes in Book VIII a matter for self-reflection and discernment of what the reader understands and believes, and how they do so. In particular, it is a moment of discernment directed by the love that is our desire for the God who *is* Love. Augustine asks us to pause for a moment with him in Book VIII inviting us to engage with him in a spiritual exercise intended to draw us, through ourselves, closer in understanding, belief and love to the mystery of God.

4.2.4. Human Ascent in Books IX-XIV

In the first half of *De Trinitate*, Augustine explores divine descent first with a focus on the divine missions (Books II-IV) and then with a focus on the corresponding divine processions (Books V-VII). In the second half of the treatise we enter the second half of its chiastic structure in which Augustine's discussion of the divine descent is mirrored by his spiritual ascent to God in the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind in Books IX-XI and the perfecting of that image in Books XII-XIV (prior to the summative and climactic Book XV).[266]

[266] I have already noted that Hill also finds a chiastic structure in *De Trinitate*. Whilst I divide the treatise in the same places as Hill, I want to distance myself from his labelling of these sections as either 'dramatic' (Books II-IV and XII-XIV) or 'logical' (Books V-VII and IX-XI). For Hill, in a very particular fashion, Augustine's interest in the imaging of the Trinity in Books IX-XI mirrors the logical focus of Books V-VII, and his interest in the perfecting of that imaging through the life of Christ in Books XII-XIV mirrors the more explicitly soteriological focus of Books II-IV (Hill, 'St Augustine's De Trinitate: The Doctrinal Significance of its Structure', 281). In his 'De Régnon Reconsidered', Barnes notes that Hill's work is heavily influenced by De Régnon's paradigm (Barnes, 'De Régnon Reconsidered', 71). In addition, I want to assert that Hill's overly-detailed chiastic structure falls towards the same mistake as Du Roy; that is, Hill's language of 'dramatic' and 'logical' is in danger of instigating a divide in *De Trinitate* between Augustine's trinitarian theology and his soteriology. My own chiastic reading of *De Trinitate* prefers to focus on the broader chiasm of descent and ascent. By collating the books in the same places that Hill does I do *not* claim his language of 'dramatic' and 'logical'.

In this second half of *De Trinitate*'s chiastic structure, Book XIII provides the thematic centre with its interest in Christ as the one whose redeeming activity perfects the human mind's imaging of the Trinity. In part this is explored through a very clear continuation of Augustine's interest in this half of the treatise on the imaging of the Trinity by the human mind, as Augustine argues that it is in the person of Christ that we move from *scientia* (knowledge) of God to *sapientia* (wisdom) of God. But this is also a clear continuation with the first half of *De Trinitate* and in particular the interest in Christ's redemptive activity in Book IV. It is precisely in the redeeming death of Christ that such a move from *scientia* to *sapientia* is enabled, as the imaging of the Trinity by the activity of our minds is perfected.

4.2.4.1. Books IX-XI: Imaging the Trinity

It is essential to an understanding of Books IX-XI of *De Trinitate* that we move away from reading these books as providing 'psychological analogies' for God. Augustine is clear that humans are created in the image of the Trinity (XII.6.6); but later in Book XIV he is equally clear that his understanding of the image of the Trinity in Books IX-XI is not to be read as an argument that the trinitarian image maps neatly onto the human mind:

> Haec igitur trinitas mentis non propterea dei est imago quia sui meminit mens et intellegit ac diligit se, sed quia potest etiam meminisse et intellegere et amare a quo facta est.[267]
>
> This trinity of the mind is not the image of God because the mind remembers and understands and loves itself, but because it is also able to remember and understand and love the one by whom it was made.

In light of this text, and the content of Books IX-XI themselves, we must recognise that rather than seeking so-called 'psychological analogies' for the Trinity in Books IX-XI, Augustine is being drawn into deeper participation in God as he seeks to understand the workings of his own mind in relation to God. It is only in grasping this intent that we are able to accompany

[267] XIV.12.15.

Augustine as he uses the imaging of the Trinity in the mind to carry us on an ascent towards God.

The clearest example of an unhelpful analysis of the 'psychological analogies' in *De Trinitate* is the work of Du Roy. As we have already seen Du Roy believes Augustine fails in his trinitarian project in *De Trinitate* because he is, supposedly, unable to bring together his interest in anagogy (as learned from his Neo-Platonist sources) with his christology and soteriology. Du Roy argues that Augustine was attempting to use mental triads in Books IX-X to show that creation reflects the trinitarian nature of its Creator and that, through this trinitarian analogy, the human mind ascends to God.[268] According to Du Roy this attempt fails because Augustine does not find a way to properly wed the 'psychological analogies' to the person of Christ.[269] Michael Schmaus' account is also misleading in its account of the so-called 'psychological analogies'. He over-emphasises the way the mental triads in Books IX-X are analogical as well as anagogical, even going so far as to begin to appropriate each term in the mental triads to persons of the Trinity.[270] In what follows I will argue that this is *not* Augustine's true intent. Augustine concern in the latter half of *De Trinitate* is not with how each part of the mind's activity images a particular person of the Trinity (viz. Schmaus), nor

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[268] Du Roy does so with a comparison to the triad of *cogito* Augustine offers in *De Civitate Dei* XI. See Du Roy, *L'intelligence de La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin*, 449. Ayres also compares *De Trinitate* IX-X to *De Civitate Dei* XI. However, he insists that Augustine is able to interpret the triadic shape of creation detailed in *De Civitate Dei* XI in light of the person of Christ; Augustine's stumbling in search of mental triads betrays precisely the failure of human ability to comprehend or contemplate God which Christ corrects in his redeeming death. See in particular: Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 277–96.

[269] Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin*, 21. Here, too, Du Roy's claims coincide with those of De Régnon. Du Roy believes that Augustine's 'psychological analogies', with their supposed emphasis on the one mind who remembers, understand and loves itself, betray an over-riding emphasis on the unity of the divine natures (see Du Roy, 447–50). If the so-called 'psychological analogies' are one of Augustine's great contributions to the history of trinitarian thought, herein lies the roots of Augustine's supposed influence on Scholastic theology, Du Roy would have us believe.

[270] Michael Schmaus, *Die Psyhcologische Trinitatslehre Des Hl. Augustinus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1967), 414–16.

with an over-simplified emphasis on the divine unity (viz. Du Roy) but with how the mind in its activity can be said to be imaging the Trinity, such that this imaging leads us above all into worship (see especially XIV.12.15).[271] Indeed, as we will see in Books XII-XIV, Augustine is interested in the work of Christ who redeems the activity of our minds and thus enables our ascent towards God, not in the activity of the mind for its own sake.

It is imperative, therefore, to carefully discern what Augustine intends to achieve in his examination of the human mind and its pursuit of God. In Book IX Augustine begins this work with a focus on the *interior homo.* By this he means his *mens*: the seat of the higher mental functions and spiritual senses. The first set of functions that Augustine examines are the mind's knowledge and love of itself (*notitia sui* and *amor sui*), both of which he argues are coextensive with the mind itself. Starting with the model of lover, beloved and love introduced at the close of Book VIII (VIII.10.14), Augustine recognises that this sequence reduces to a bipartite model when one talks of loving oneself, because in this instance the lover and beloved are one and the same. Thus, Augustine searches for a fresh tripartite model in the mind.[272] He finds it in the recognition that 'the mind cannot love itself if it does not know itself'.[273] Without knowledge of what something is, however limited, one cannot claim to love that thing, Augustine asserts. Thus, we must contemplate the mind not just as it loves itself, but also as it knows itself.

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[271] I thus share Kany's concern: 'One can call it tragic that Augustine's trinitarian thought was subsequently misunderstood… But this is exactly what happened when Augustine was ascribed a "psychological doctrine of the Trinity"' ('Man kann es tragisch nennen, daß Augustins Trinitatsdenken in der Folgezeit mißverstanden worden ist… Doch genau dies geschah, indem man Augustinus eine "psychologische Trinitätslehre" zuschrieb'). See Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken*, 533–34.

[272] I deliberately use 'tripartite' here to avoid describing these functions of the mind as 'trinitarian'. This is not because the mind's functions are not trinitarian; they are. Rather I am keen to differentiate between 'trinitarian' as model to be mapped analogically onto the functions of the mind, and 'trinitarian' in the sense in which Augustine means it; that is, that the mind functions in relation (an 'imaging') to the God who is trinitarian. Augustine uses *trinitas* for both meanings and thus his intent must be understood from his wider argument.

[273] IX.3.3: 'mens enim amare se ipsam non potest nisi etiam nouerit se'.

The remainder of Book IX is then given over to examining how this tripartite model – *mens*, *notitia sui* and *amor sui* – serves trinitarian theology. First Augustine assumes a connection between the eternal and the temporal, such that what the mind knows of itself it knows and judges in the light of eternal truth. When we inquire of the workings of our own mind, he says, we compare the current state of our mind to the way it ought to be in eternity.[274] Here Augustine is comparing the temporal and eternal in order to set up a subsequent comparison between covetous and charitable love (*cupiditas* and *caritas*, see IX.6.13). Having established a correlation between the eternal and the temporal, Augustine then asserts that anything one voluntarily thinks is first formulated in the mind as a *verbum mentis*; it is 'spoken first in one's heart'.[275] He claims that the *verbum mentis* uttered in charitable love rather than covetousness (rightly-ordered rather than wrongly-ordered love), bring us close to God. And here he formulates the minds knowing and loving of itself in a trinitarian fashion:

> Nascitur autem verbum cum excogitatum placet aut ad peccandum aut ad recte faciendum. Verbum ergo nostrum et mentem de qua gignitur quasi medius amor coniungit seque cum eis tertium complexu incorporeo sine ulla confusione constringit.[276]
>
> Now this is word is born having been thought to like it either for sinning or for doing good. Like something in the middle, love conjoins our word and the mind from which it is begotten, and binds with them a third thing, in an incorporeal embrace, without any confusion.

The resonances of knowing (in the formulating of a *verbum menits*) and loving, with the character of the Son (as *verbum dei*) and Spirit (as love) are easy to see. However, we must repeat that in this model mind, knowledge, and love cannot simply be equated with Father, Son, and Spirit. Rather, Augustine's point is that as the mind knows and loves itself, it actively images (albeit in a limited fashion) the relations of origin in the Trinity (that is, what it is for the Trinity to be the Trinity; see IX.9.14). Thus, it is only as and when the *verbum*

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[274] IX.6.9.

[275] IX.7.13: 'in corde suo prius dixerit'.

[276] IX.8.13. This is clearly trinitarian insofar as it corresponds to Augustine's trinitarian grammar presented in Books V-VII.

mentis is actively thought over (*excogitatum*) that the workings of the mind take trinitarian shape. Again, it is apparent that Augustine is not trying to come up with a model for the Trinity, but to activate the mind (both his and his reader's) such that it might proceed to ascent towards God.

At the end of Book IX Augustine considers the mind loving itself and notes that whilst the mind's knowledge of itself can be spoken of in terms of begetting, this is not appropriate for the *amor sui*. He makes this argument through an appeal to *inquisitio* (inquisitiveness), which he defines as the mind's *appetitus inveniendi* (appetite for discovery) for itself (IX.12.18).[277] The mind's knowing is begotten of itself because our appetite for knowledge is what conceives it: we want to know and so we come to know. The mind's love of itself, bound up in this inquisitiveness, is not begotten of the mind as knowing is; rather it is what unites the mind and its knowing. Augustine labels this as an *imago trinitatis*, explaining it thus:

> Idemque appetitus quo inhiatur rei cognoscendae fit amor cognitae dum tenet atque amplectitur placitam prolem, id est notitiam gignentique coniungit.[278]
>
> The same appetite which gapes to know a thing is made to be love of it while it holds and encircles the pleasing offspring that is knowledge, and conjoins with its begetter.

This final line of argument in Book IX thus correlates the imaging of the Trinity in the mind with the relations of origin Augustine observed in Book V.

Augustine is dissatisfied with this model, however, and redirects his attention in Book X towards a new tripartite model: *memoria, intellegentia* and *voluntas* (memory, understanding and will). There appear to be two reasons for this change of focus, one explicit and the other implicit. Explicitly, Augustine observes the complexity involved with speaking of the mind loving and knowing itself. In particular, he deals with the Delphic imperative – 'know thyself' – and observes that the mind must be commanded to know itself since its failure to truly know itself is as a psychological consequence of the fall. In particular,

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[277] The idea of the mind being curious about itself is odd; Augustine explains the idea in Book X.

[278] IX.12.18.

Augustine insists that the fallen mind far too readily clings to things exterior to itself such that the mind creates 'images made in itself out of itself'[279]. Implicitly, in his discussion of erroneous philosophies of the mind in X.6.8-10.16, Augustine highlights that if the *mens* is the location of the divine imaging (viz. the *interior homo* which Augustine is pursuing in search of the Trinity), it does not make sense for the *mens* to be part of the triad that makes up that imaging. Instead, Augustine changes his focus to those mental acts of which the mind is certain (X.9.14), *memoria, intelligentia* and *voluntas* (memory, understanding and will), on the grounds that 'life, mind and being; these are one to itself'.[280] Insofar as these three are all mental acts, this new tripartite model comes closer to Augustine's search for an active imaging of the Trinity in the mind.

Augustine had briefly mentioned *memoria* in Book VIII, when using his memories of Carthage as an example for how it is that we search and find within ourselves a means of understanding what it is to be just.[281] In Book X he returns to *memoria* as that which actively begets the *verbum mentis* in its own relation to knowing and loving, as a replacement for the *mens* which is not itself a relational entity. Ables offers a helpful articulation of this in explicitly epistemological terms: '*memoria* is not a metaphysical category that describes the soul's ontological origin [as *mens* tends to be], but an epistemological function explaining our capacity for the recognition of eternal ideas'.[282] To articulate this in trinitarian language, *memoria* serves as relation of origin for the *verbum mentis*, which acts in its relation to knowing (that which is begotten) and the will to know (that which unites *memoria* and *intellegentia* as one activity of the *mens*).[283]

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[279] X.5.7: 'imagines… factas in semetipsa de semetipsa'.

[280] X.11.18: 'uita est autem unaquaeque ad se ipsam et mens et essentia'.

[281] VIII.6.9.

[282] Ables, *Incarnational Realism*, 63.

[283] It is not wholly clear why Augustine chooses to replace *amor* with *voluntas.* I suspect his decision to replace *notitia* with *intelligentia* is a logical consequence of replacing *mens* with *memoria.* In Book IX's imaging of the Trinity, *notitia* conveys the fact that the *mens,* the first of the three parts of this imaging, knows itself as it becomes acquainted with itself. In the imaging introduced at the end of Book X, acquaintance is already conveyed in *memoria* insofar as the mind remembering is an act of awareness. It is in *intelligentia* that such

One might expect this particular tripartite model – *memoria, intelligentia* and *voluntas* – to be the perfect point for Augustine to introduce his examination of *scientia* and *sapientia* and the perfecting of the image by Christ, insofar as this would carry forward Augustine's interest in ascent.[284] However, Augustine instead uses Book XI to consider *vestigia* (vestiges, traces) of the Trinity in the *exterior homo.* Here we have an example of the ebb and flow of Augustine's thinking, with his focus less on rigorous arguments of proof, and more on exercising his own mind and that of his readers. Augustine recognises that models of the Trinity in the outer person are even less accurate than models in the inner person, but he is attuned to the draw of the fallen mind to bodily rather than spiritual matters (XI.1.1). In other words, he is not blind to the fact that in the context of the fall human ascent towards God is not direct, nor exempt from the danger of stumbling.

In order to refocus the distracted mind back on the path towards spiritual matters, Augustine seeks vestiges of the Trinity in the highest of the bodily senses: sight. This is not so much a departure from Augustine's motif of ascent in Books IX-XIV, as a widening of that ascent, to explore it in the broadest possible terms. Indeed there are two other benefits of Augustine's move in Book XI, which he does not explicitly state but which favour my reading of the text: 1) by introducing 'vestiges' Augustine is able to clarify what he means by 'imaging the Trinity' by pointing to the varied ways in which analogies of the Trinity fail; and 2) by introducing the sense of sight, Augustine offers an allusion to the beatific vision, which is the ultimate form of human participation in God. Whilst nothing created can perfectly image the Trinity, Augustine shows in Book XI that traces or indications of the Trinity can be found throughout the human person, in outer bodily things as well as inner spiritual things.

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awareness becomes understanding. Here the mind comes to knowledge of what is remembered.

[284] Indeed, there are commentators who approach their analysis of the second half of *De Trinitate* out of 'canonical' order because this would be the expected procession of Augustine's argument. See for instance, John Edward Sullivan's study on Augustine's doctrine of the *imago Dei*, which deals with Book XI before analysing Books IX-X: John Edward Sullivan, *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and Its Influence* (Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1963), 84–148.

Those aspects of seeing that Augustine correlates with the Trinity are the object seen, the sight with which it is seen, and the conscious intention that holds the object seen captured by the sense of sight.[285] Augustine explains that this vestige is limited because it involves three natures; the object seen is external to the one who sees, and conscious intention is an exercise of consciousness, which sight itself is not (he demonstrates this by observing that the blind are no less capable of consciousness for their lack of sight). He thus introduces a second, more accurate vestige of the Trinity: remembering something previously seen, the internal sight with which that memory is now seen, and the will which couples these two by holding the attention of the one who remembers.

A third vestige is introduced at the very end of the book, where Augustine creates a remarkably tenuous and yet effective link between his second vestige and the markers given in Wisdom 11.20: measure, number and weight. He remarks that those things impressed on the mind can be thought about in many ways (measure), seen in numerous ways (using the example of seeing double when looking at a flickering candle flame in XI.2.4), and are also (though here Augustine's analogy is stretched to its thinnest) like weight, since will grants the appetite for one to see. However tenuous its construction, this final triad draws on God's act of creation and thereby points to a general principle that all creation bears a vestige of the Trinity, insofar as it is the work of God who is Creator. It is here that it becomes most evident that what Augustine means by *vestigium* is indeed just a bare trace of God, not an imaging like that explored in Books IX-X.

4.2.4.2. Books XII-XIV: Perfecting the Image

Having examined the imaging of the trinity in the *interior homo* and the trinitarian vestiges in the *exterior homo* (and creation more generally), Augustine moves his focus in Books XII-XIV to Christ, who perfects the *imago trinitatis.* Despite Du Roy's claim to the contrary, Augustine carefully weaves together his analysis of the human mind with his understanding of the redemptive work of Christ, in order to demonstrate that there can be no ascent to God apart from in the person of Jesus Christ. Books XII-XIV are thus heavily grounded in the history of salvation. Just as Book IV provided the thematic centre of the first half of *De Trinitate*'s chiastic structure, so in this latter half of *De Trinitate* we will discover that Book

[285] XI.2.2.

XIII returns the reader's attention wholeheartedly to Christ as the means and locus of our ascent.

This section of *De Trinitate* begins with Book XII and its focus on the distinction between *scientia* (knowledge of temporal things) and *sapientia* (contemplative wisdom relating to eternal things). Augustine sets up this distinction by recognising the unity of the *interior homo*¸ whilst paying heed to the different directions in which the mind can be torn. Following the fall, Augustine argues, 'a person's true honour is the image and likeness of God in them, which cannot be preserved if it is not turned towards the one from whom its impression is given'.[286] In the temptations of sin, however, the mind is misled by its *appetitus* (appetite) for temporal things. This can lead one of two ways:

> Rationi autem scientiae appetitus vicinus est quandoquidem de ipsis corporalibus quae sensu corporis sentiuntur ratiocinatur ea quae scientia dicitur actionis; si bene ut eam notitiam referat ad finem summi boni; si autem male ut eis fruatur tamquam bonis talibus in quibus falsa beatitudine conquiescat.[287]
>
> The appetite is very close to the reasoning of knowledge, since it is the activity of this knowledge to reason about corporal things which are perceived through the corporal senses. If it does this well, it refers this knowledge to the highest good as its end; if it does this badly, it does so in order to enjoy them as the sort of goods in which it can take its repose with a false blessedness.

It is clear from the outset, then, that *scientia* is a precarious kind of 'knowing'. Used poorly, by giving in to the temptation to pursue one's own ends, *scientia* can lead the careless mind into the *lubricus deficiendi motus* ('the slippery motion of falling away'), i.e., into descent rather than ascent.[288] As Augustine will show in Book XIII, *scientia* of Christ's salvific work can lead us closer to God; and true security is found in the *sapientia*, to which this corresponds, and which Augustine locates in the eternal Word.

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[286] XII.11.16: 'honor enim hominis versus est imago et similitudo dei quae non custoditur nisi ad ipsum a quo imprimatur'.

[287] XII.12.17.

[288] XII.11.16. Hill's striking translation conveys Augustine's meaning well: "the careless glide little by little [like the snake in Genesis 3] along the slippery path of failure": Hill, Augustine, *The Trinity: De Trinitate*, 425.

Before proceeding to Book XIII, Augustine finishes Book XII with a critique of Plato's theory of reminiscence. This is not a digression, but constitutes an important clarification by Augustine of what he means by *memoria* before he returns to his *memoria, intelligentia, voluntas* triad in Book XIV. Plato argued that we have a memory of eternal things because of the pre-existence of our souls in the realm of Forms.[289] Instead Augustine asserts that our memory of eternal things is cultivated in transitory moments of *sapientia* (XII.13.23). Gioia understands this assertion in light of Book IV and its claim that pride bars Platonic philosophers from contemplation of God (IV.15.20-18.24). Gioia thus argues that it is human pride rather than the nature of *sapientia* itself that keeps such moments transitory.[290] Gioia's reading is convincing. Furthermore, it makes sense of Augustine's return in Book XIII, to Christ as the one who heals our pride and leads us into permanent and final *sapientia.*

In Book XIII, Augustine recounts the temporal things of our salvation (namely redemption in Christ) through the lens of the Johannine Prologue, in which Christ is depicted as the eternal Word made incarnate. By bringing Christ once again to the fore, this Book becomes the thematic centre of the second half of *De Trinitate* once again (akin to Book IV) weaving together the redemptive work of Christ and our ascent to God. Augustine's intentions in such an emphasis on Christ are threefold. Firstly, Augustine intends to distinguish again between *scientia* and *sapientia* in order to demonstrate how these two concepts are tied to Christ. In particular, he notes that in order to give us access to contemplation of the eternal truth of the Trinity (John 1.1), the Word shines as a light into the darkness (John 1.5) of our ignorance and pride. In other words, in the incarnate Christ, the Word enters our temporality and makes himself available to our *scientia.*

Thereby, Augustine demonstrates that faith begins with *scientia* insofar as it is belief in Christ's redemptive work within our temporality. This is why he claims that 'faith was [is] certainly needed in order to believe what cannot be seen'.[291] Faith is no less belief and trust in eternal things, but it does not begin there. Rather 'faith in true things [namely redemption in

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[289] *Phaedo*, 72e-73a: see David Sedley and Alex Long, eds., *Plato: Meno and Phaedo*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[290] Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*, 223–24.

[291] XIII.1.2: 'fide utique opus erat qua crederetur quod non videtur'.

Christ] crosses over, as we hope, into the same [things themselves]'.[292] And having transformed thus into *sapientia,* we will be experiencing not so much faith as sight (cf. Hebrews 11.1). Indeed, it is essential that faith begins in the temporality of Christ's redemption: if it does not begin with Christ's activity in and for us, then it is not a matter of grace.[293]

The minutiae of this logic of redemption is worked out in the third of Augustine's core assertions in Book XIII: it is in the person of Christ that faith moves from *scientia* to *sapientia*. Faith is not simply belief in the redemption of Christ as a fact of history, but is also Christ's enacting of that redemption in the one who believes. Here Augustine presents redemption in the context of his meditation on the workings of his mind, and thus in epistemological terms.[294] To be redeemed is to be transformed by the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ who is both *scientia* and *sapientia,* because he is the Word temporal and eternal:

> Quod vero idem ipse est unigenitus a patre plenus gratiae et Veritatis, id actum est ut idem ipse sit in rebus pro nobis temporaliter gestis cui per eandem fidem mundamur ut eum stabiliter contemplemur in rebus aeternis… Scientia ergo nostra Christus est, sapientia quoque nostra idem Christus est. Ipse nobis fidem de rebus temporalibus inserit; ipse de sempiternis exhibet veritatem.[295]
>
> The only-begotten from the Father, who is full of grace and truth is one and the same as the one who in time carried out acts for us, for whom we are cleansed through faith so that we may contemplate him steadfastly in eternity… Therefore, our knowledge is Christ and our wisdom is also the same Christ. He implants in us faith about temporal things; he holds forth [to us] truth about eternal things.

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[292] XIII.1.3: 'optabiliter autem rerum verarum in easdem res fides transit'.

[293] That faith is a gift is demonstrated in various places in Augustine's corpus. See e.g., *De Doctrina Christiana* III.33, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* VII.17.

[294] Redemption is not of course limited to our minds. Augustine implies the full breadth of redemption in his remarks on the resurrection of the body in *De Trinitate* IV.3.5, and in his understanding of epistemology in terms of contemplation, with all its spiritual as well as epistemological resonances.

[295] XIII.19.24.

Significantly, the redemption Augustine presents here in Book XIII is almost identical to that portrayed in Book IV, although this time perceived through an explicitly epistemological lens. The Christ who in Books II-IV was presented as both in *forma Dei* and *forma servi*, is here presented as both *scientia* and *sapientia.* Indeed Ayres, in noting this comparison between Augustine's earlier and later choices of terminology, helpfully points to the importance of Christ as the subject of both *scientia* and *sapientia* for understanding what it is to participate in Christ. Drawing on Augustine's use of Colossians 2.1-3 in XIII.19.24 ('in whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'), Ayres insists that 'our progress in faith and contemplation occurs *in* Christ, *within* the two natured person', and more precisely as we are united in the *corpus Christi.*[296] Our progress from *scientia* to *sapientia* cannot happen apart from our membership in the body (the Church) of which Christ, who is the subject of both *scientia* and *sapiential*, is the head. I will return in full to this link between Augustine's christology and ecclesiology in Chapter Five as I extrapolate a model of participation from Augustine's *De Trinitate*, that is participation in God precisely because it is participation *in* Christ as members of the Church. For now, it suffices to note that just as in Book IV, where a nod to 2 Peter 1.4 gave rise to participatory themes, so too in Book XIII Augustine's concern for christology bears heavily on how he understands our participation in God. With Book XIII, as we enter the closing stages of Augustine's spiritual ascent, Christ again appears as the one who mediates on our behalf, in whom redemption is achieved, and by whom we are led towards our fullest participation in God. In Christ, the divine ascent enables our human ascent.

In Book XIV Augustine reaches the final stage of this spiritual ascent by returning to the triad of *memoria, intelligentia* and *voluntas* and reworking it in light of Christ's redemptive work leading us towards *sapientia.* First Augustine identifies true wisdom with true worship (XIV.1.1) and in this light concludes that the *memoria, intelligentia, voluntas* triad as he has presented it cannot be the image of God in the truest sense, because thus far he has understood it only in reference to his own mind. As a result, this image only engages with *scientia*, whereas the true image is that which is directed towards *sapientia.* Augustine speaks of this as the mind directed towards God in worship, as it remembers, understands and loves God. It is as the mind worships in this fashion, that the mind is made wise (XIV.12.15).

[296] Ayres, 'The Christological Context of De Trinitate XIII: Towards Relocating Books VIII-XV', 120, 125–31.

Augustine finishes Book XIV with a reflection on the process of moving towards *sapientia*, which is a long and steady healing, enabled by the redemption of Christ. It is only at the very end of this healing process that a person comes to perfect vision of God and can be said to be fully in the Trinity's image. *Sapientia*, then, is the end of Augustine's spiritual progression, set in the context of and enabled by the sending of the Son and Spirit, and marked by the ascent of the reader towards God as she enters deeper into the imaging of the Trinity that is the directing of her mind to God. The climax of this spiritual ascent is Augustine's focus in Book XV.

4.2.5. The Beatific Vision: Book XV and the End of Spiritual Progression

In part, Book XV recaps the material from previous books in order to remind the reader of the work's thesis.[297] In fact, Augustine commits much of Book XV to an exegesis of Romans 1.20, 1 Corinthians 13.12 and 2 Corinthians 3.18 in order to consolidate his arguments from Books I to XIV. In examining Romans 1.20, Augustine reprises his interest in our encounter with the divine missions (which he had developed in Books I-VII) as well as the particular manner in which he encountered God imaged in the human mind (in Books IX-XI).[298] However, Augustine also observes the limitations of Romans 1.20: we cannot understand the invisible things of God through observation of created things, because full knowledge of God is unattainable in this life.[299] It is in response to this limitation that Augustine appeals to Paul's use of the term 'mirror' (ἐσοπτρον, or *speculum* in Augustine's Latin) in 1 Corinthians 13.12 and 2 Corinthians 3.18, noting that Paul's language echoes Augustine's own interest in the imaging of the Trinity in the human person in Books IX-XI ('now we see in a mirror') and the perfecting of that imaging in Books XII-XIV ('from one degree of glory to another').[300] Insofar as Augustine's exegetical interests in Book XV reprise and conclude the

[297] See XV.3.4-5.

[298] 'Ever since the creation of the world his [God's] eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made'.

[299] cf. Psalm 139.6 – 'such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it' – as used by Augustine in XV.7.13.

[300] 1 Corinthians 13.12: 'For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known'. 2

very points he has been making thus far in the treatise, Book XV is a clear end to the work as a formal study of trinitarian doctrine. However, Book XV also acts as an end to the treatise's account of spiritual progression. In addition to drawing his wider arguments to a close, Augustine also uses Book XV to introduce new teaching on the identity of the Holy Spirit and on our experience of the beatific vision, and then ends the book by addressing first his own soul, and then (in prayer) God.

First, Augustine names the Holy Spirit as *caritas* (love) and *donum* (gift), and then reiterates the Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son as a way of distinguishing the Spirit from the Son.[301] Whilst this might appear to be marginal to Augustine's wider concerns in Book XV, his account of the Holy Spirit is vital to how he understands human progression towards God. Augustine's naming of the Holy Spirit as *caritas* and *donum* is rooted in his conviction that whilst the whole triune God is Love (*caritas*), the Holy Spirit is Love in a particular way, since the Holy Spirit is God's gift (*donum*) of God's self to the created order, such that it is in the Spirit that the God who is Love abides in us.[302] Insofar as the Holy Spirit is God's gift of God's self to believers, it is by the activity of the Holy Spirit that spiritual progression becomes possible, such that the human person and God can abide in each other (cf. 1 John 4.13).[303]

Corinthians 3.18: 'And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit'.

In XV.8.14 Augustine makes a deliberate point of clarifying that those who see (*speculantes*) ought to be understood not as observing from a tower (*specula*), but as in a mirror (*speculum*) (XV.8.14). He believes there is a danger of falsely assuming that we see God as from a distant vantage point, whereas our vantage point for observing God is as close as it could be: it is none other than the human mind, which images the Trinity.

[301] There is a brief description of the Spirit as *donum Dei* (cf. John 4.10; Acts 8.20) in V.11.12 but here language of gift is used only of the processions and its consequences for the activity of the Spirit in humanity is not developed.

[302] XV.18.36 and XV.18.31.

[303] A further important descriptor of the Holy Spirit in *De Trinitate,* which is used primarily in VI.5.7 (drawing on Psalm 63.8) is 'glue' (using the verb *agglutinato*). It is the Spirit who glues believers together in Christ in the bonds of love. Meconi offers reflection on this

Augustine's second core interest in Book XV is offering a description of the beatific vision as the end of spiritual progression. In particular, he emphasises that even in eternity (as in this life) our experience of God is shaped by the activities of *seeking* and *finding.* The goal of spiritual progression is not a static state, but a dynamic process, where the human person eternally seeks and finds, and therefore seeks all the more.

In the Prologue to Book XV, Augustine reflects on Psalm 105.3-4 ('let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice; seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually') and notes that the Psalm speaks of always seeking and not of finding. 'Must [God] be sought when he is found?' Augustine asks, claiming that 'this is how incomprehensible things must be sought', since we should not assume that in finding something incomprehensible we have found nothing at all (XV.2.2).[304] Rather, in finding the God who is incomprehensible, we are drawn further into seeking the mystery of God. This is why Augustine quotes Sirach 24.21 ('those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more') and claims that God 'is sought so that he may be discovered more sweetly, and discovered so that he may be sought more eagerly'.[305] Encountering God 'face to face' in eternal life is not a static end to spiritual progression, but always an occasion for further seeking, such that our spiritual progression culminates in a dynamic end where seeking leads to finding and finding to further seeking, *ad infinitum*.[306]

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terminology in the context of the question of participation in God in Meconi, *The One Christ*, 149–50. I return to this matter in greater detail in my discussion of the Spirit's role in the *totus Christus*; see Chapter 5.3.

[304] XV.2.2: 'An et inuentus forte quaerendus est… sic enim sunt incomprehensibilia requirenda'.

[305] XV.2.2: 'quaeritur ut inueniatur dulcius et inuenitur ut quaeratur auidius'.

[306] In her work on the theme of pilgrimage in Augustine's work, Sarah Stewart-Kroeker also argues that the end of our pilgrimage, in the beatific vision, is not static. The 'fulfilment of faith and hope in the beatific vision,' she insists, 'does not pose a threat to love, as if in attaining that vision God's beauty and the believer's love would fade'; see Sarah Stewart-Kroeker, *Pilgrimage as Moral and Aesthetic Formation in Augustine's Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 148. The love that is exhibited in the beatific vision must be active in character otherwise it is no longer truly love.

This does not imply that the beatific vision is in any sense incomplete; rather the human person is in a constant yet satisfied relationship of seeking and finding.[307] The language of *seeking* and *finding* as Augustine uses it in Book XV is not a seeking of knowledge, but a seeking of relationship grounded in God who is *donum* and *caritas*.[308] This relational sense of seeking and finding is consistent with Augustine's teaching on the Holy Spirit as the divine person who is eternally gift. If gift is integral to the triune life, it would follow that the eternal life that God seeks to share is marked by dynamic relationship, in which the gift that is God's self is continually being given and received. There is thus no static existence in eternity. Rather, we come 'face to face' with the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit by the eternal giving of the Holy Spirit, such that we eternally seek what is given, find it, and then seek it all the more. The end of spiritual progression in eternity is thus continual, because it is dynamic.

Augustine ends Book XV and the treatise as a whole with a soliloquy addressed to his own soul (XV.27.50), followed by prayer (XV.28.51). The soliloquy demonstrates his understanding of eternity as a dynamic encounter of seeking and finding, reiterating what understanding has been found over the course of the treatise (and its mapping of a spiritual progression), and what such finds have shown are yet to be sought (above all the contemplation of God 'face to face' in eternity). This theme is then taken up in the final prayer, where Augustine prays:

> Tu da quaerendi uires, qui inueniri te fecisti et magis magisque inueniendi te spem dedisti.

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[307] Tanner makes similar comments in her account of participation, claiming that 'the satisfaction of desire that comes from the presence of God, indeed, only makes one want more by expanding one's capacities to receive what God has to give'. See Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 128.

[308] When Augustine says that in eternity 'we will see the truth without any difficulty and delight in its clarity and certitude' ('veritatem sine ulla difficultate videbimus eaque clarissimia et certissimi perfruemur') using not reason but contemplation (XV.25.45), he is speaking in particular of our rational understanding of what distinguishes the Spirit and the Son. This is not, therefore, a comment on our relationship with God in eternity, but on the perfecting of our understanding of God.

> Give me the strength to seek, having made yourself to be discovered and having given [us] hope of discovering you more and more.

In the context of Augustine's depiction of a dynamic beatific vision, we ought to expect this prayer to be answered in eternal life, precisely through the nature of eternal life as a continual seeking and finding of God.

Finally, in this closing prayer Augustine reiterates the purpose of the treatise as a whole:

> Meminerim tui; intelligam te; diligam te. Auge in me ista donec me reformes ad integrum
>
> Let me remember you; let me understand you; let me love you. Increase these things in me until you refashion me entirely.

For Augustine, intellectual pursuit of the Trinity cannot and should not be separated from God's reforming work on the human person. It is the Son and the Spirit, sent by the Father, who perform the redemptive work which recreates the theologian, redirecting their thought and providing the grace needed to speak about God.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have turned our attention to this thesis' primary source: *De Trinitate.* In conversation with Ayres, Gioia, Kany, Ables, Teubner and Meconi (and through critique of Du Roy and Wisse) we have discerned in the treatise a clear interest in participation. My particular interest has been in the work's chiastic structure as well as its content. Modelled as it is around the missions of the Son and the Spirit and our ascent towards God through the mind's imaging of the Trinity, the very structure of the *De Trinitate* models the way in which human ascent towards participation in God is enabled by a prior movement of divine descent. We have also observed (contra Du Roy) that such descent and ascent cannot be understood apart from the person of Christ. In Chapter Five, as we continue our analysis of participatory themes in *De Trinitate*, it is participation in Christ that will be our primary focus.

Chapter Five

Principles of Participation in Augustine II: Participation in the Whole Christ

Having discerned principles of participation in the structure and content of *De Trinitate*, this chapter now offers further theological analysis of participatory themes in the text. In particular, we will focus on Christ as the one in whom the mind's imaging of the Trinity is perfected such that it moves us towards fuller participation in God. We begin this work with a closer examination of the language and scripture Augustine uses in the treatise, which points us to Christ as the locus of our participation in God. This will include a return to the concept of deification as I seek to account for why we can posit something of deification in Augustine's thought despite the absence of the word *deifico* in *De Trinitate.*

Next, we examine God's activity throughout the sequence of descent and ascent presented in *De Trinitate.* This is important for it demonstrates that our participation in God is enabled by Christ's activity 'for us' in his inhabiting of the *forma servi* in the Incarnation and in his mediatory and reconciliatory death on the cross. We will also see that we cannot understand the activity of Christ apart from the activity of the Holy Spirit 'in us', not least as the Spirit unites us in Christ. It is our unity *in* Christ to which this chapter then turns. In Chapter Three the concept of the *totus Christus* has already arisen as a tool for understanding Augustine's principles of prayer. We return to the *totus Christus* here in order to explain why it is a key principle of participation for Augustine, pointing to the nature of our participation in Christ. Drawing on all that has been discerned in *De Trinitate* in this and the previous chapter, and bringing that treatise into conversation with the concept of the *totus Christus*, this chapter concludes with an 'Augustinian model of participation' which will then be applied to the practice of prayer in Chapter Six.

5.1. Augustine's Use of Language and Scripture in *De Trinitate*

I begin my further analysis of participatory themes in *De Trinitate* with a focus on Augustine's use of participative language, particularly in relation to scripture. Whilst the strongest argument for a participative reading of *De Trinitate* is found in the overall structure and content of the work, in which Augustine depicts participation as the result of the sequence of divine descent and human ascent, Augustine's interest in participation is also betrayed by his terminology. It is telling that many of these terms are borrowed from scriptural passages that are themselves relevant to questions of human participation in God. Through examining Augustine's terminology and his use of scripture it will become evident that *De Trinitate* bears numerous participative resonances, in which Christ is the both locus of our participation in God and the ground of the ethical behaviour of the Church.

In this section, I will examine Augustine's use of participatory language, first highlighting some of the terms he uses that are broadly participative in their resonances. In particular, I will examine his use of *maneo, haereo, conformo,* and *coaptatio,* noting where these are borrowed from scripture, and how Augustine employs them. I will then look in greater depth at *participatio, trado* and *induo,* arguing that Augustine uses these three terms to indicate that we participate in Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and thus in and with the Church. Finally, although the term *deifico* never appears in *De Trinitate,* I agree with Meconi's argument that deification is an operative theme in Augustine's corpus. Indeed, the way Augustine handles themes of deification, and scriptural passages traditionally linked with that theme, helps us to discern how Augustine understands human participation in God, in this life and the next. Again, Augustine's interest in deification points us to the fact of our participation in Christ. I thus end this examination of Augustine's language by returning to the concept of deification in Augustine's corpus more broadly and in *De Trinitate* in particular, not least to account for the absence of the term *deifico* in the treatise.

5.1.1. Broadly Participative Language: *maneo, haereo, conformo, a*nd *coaptatio*

There are a number of terms that Augustine uses throughout *De Trinitate,* which on their own do not prove Augustine was presenting a participatory understanding of the relationship between God and humanity, but which, considered cumulatively, do substantiate a participatory understanding of the text. The most frequent of these is *maneo* (remain, abide),

which (with its derivatives) is used in *De Trinitate* 74 times. Many of these occurrences do not suggest a theology of participation (e.g. I.3.5), but a few aid our understanding of participation in God.

Occasionally, *maneo* is used to speak of Christ, particularly as he is in *forma Dei* (the form of God). For example, in IV.13.18 Augustine describes Christ as the true mediator of the sacrifice of peace, because he is not only both the offering and the one making it, but also remains (*manens*) one with the God to whom it is offered. Similarly, XIII.10.13 describes part of the temporal content of faith as the truth that the Son of God (*Dei filius*) remains (*manens*) what he was in himself, namely divine, whilst also receiving what he was not, namely creatureliness. In these contexts, *maneo* is used to convey Christ's constant divinity. In another instance, *maneo* is used to speak of the Holy Spirit.[309] Referring to John 14.17 ('you know him [the Holy Spirit] because he abides with you and is in you'), Augustine argues both for the unity of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, and our unity with the Holy Spirit as we encounter the Spirit in the divine missions.

As well as describing the Trinity, Augustine also uses *maneo* to talk about the human mind's relation to *scientia* and *sapientia.* In XII.14.23, he describes how the mind wishes to abide (*manent*) in *sapientia*, but struggles to remain there. It is this use of *maneo* which holds the clearest participatory resonances, not least because Augustine appropriates the *sapientia* in which the mind abides to the person of Christ, in whom we thus abide. Briefly in VIII.7.10 and then more consistently in Book XV (viz. XV.19.31, 37) Augustine appeals to the language of 'abiding' in 1 John 4:16, where God is described as love. This abiding we experience specifically because of the gift of the Spirit, who is Love (1 John 4:13). In the context of Book XV, Augustine understands this abiding to be our final eternal abiding in God, when we see God face-to-face.

Another regularly used term with participatory resonance, is *haereo* (cling, cleave) and its many derivatives. Indeed, Teubner notes Augustine's use of the term to talk of humanity's participation in God and highlights the need for further study of *haereo* as used in

[309] I.9.19.

De Trinitate, especially in relation to *participatio*.[310] Augustine believes that humans have the potential to cleave in two directions, according to the interests of the will: towards those things which block us from God (e.g., XI.1.6 and XIII.17.22), or towards God (e.g., VIII.3.4).[311] Augustine also talks of Christ cleaving, both in terms of the Son cleaving to the *forma servi* in the Incarnation (II.7.12) and in terms of Christ's cleaving to us as our mediator (I.10.21). Whilst he uses the obvious derivatives of *haereo* (*inhaereo*, 'cling in'; *adhaereo*, 'cling to'; and *cohaereo*, 'cling together'), he does not appear to do so with any interest in attaching a distinctive meaning to any of them.

What makes Augustine's use of *haereo* interesting is its application to the *imago Dei*, the basis for our participation in God. In this context Augustine seems to use *haereo* as a way of speaking of our participation binding us to God, and clinging or cleaving is his chosen descriptor for that bond. In VIII.6.9 he explains that we are only capable of beholding God when we are cleaving (*inhaereo*) to that which we behold, and are therein formed by God. Augustine then establishes a closer link between beholding God and the *imago Dei* in XII.11.16, where he explains that the image of God will only ever properly be preserved when we behold God face to face, clinging to and loving God rather than anything else. This is elaborated further in XIV.14.20, where Augustine argues that the mind which images God will be 'one spirit' when it cleaves to God 'whose image it is' (*cuius imago est*, quoting 1 Corinthians 6.17).

In order to convey the change in creaturely identity resulting from this clinging, Augustine also employs the term *conformo* (I form, shape). We are, he argues, conformed to that which our mind images as we gaze on God (XIV.3.5, 6.8). This is because the mind is formed according to whatever it images (X.6.8). If it understands itself as it gazes upon God, it is conformed to God¸ and thus truly exemplifies the *imago Dei*. If, however, the mind is

[310] Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 96 n.54-5. Whilst the study in this chapter is not intended as a thorough examination of Augustine's terminology for participation, it does initiate that conversation.

[311] There are clear resonances here with this thesis' account of the articulation of desire in prayer, presented in Chapter Two. In Chapter Two I argued that human desire is integral to our participation in God, when such desire is rightly-ordered before God, exhibiting desire for other created things only as they too participate in God.

distracted by other things, conjuring from them 'images made in itself out of itself',[312] then it misleads itself into thinking it is conformed to these things. This is not true conformation, since the mind is not actually conformed to those images, it just believes itself to be.[313] True conformation arises from cleaving to God, whom we are unlike, and whom we can thus truly image. We can cleave to ourselves (indeed, it is in and from ourselves that distracting images are formed), but there is no true conformation to be had by conforming to ourselves.

Finally, whilst rarely employed, Augustine's coining of a new word, *coaptatio*, is particularly interesting in relation to the topic of participation in *De Trinitate*. In IV.2.4 Augustine equates the word with the Greek term ἁρμονια, intending by it the sort of 'harmony' one observes in music. Edmund Hill compares *coaptatio* here with its use in *De Civitate Dei* XXII.24.4, where Augustine also equates it with ἁρμονια in order to explain how the human body is constructed with a harmony like that of an instrument.[314] However, Hill's translation of *coaptatio* with his own neologism ('interlock') displays far too much concern with the question of 'construction', given that the musical or numerical (and thus the aesthetical) sense of harmony seems more Augustine's interest. Why else would two of his other instances of *coaptatio* be in reference to numbers (IV.6.10) and measure (XI.11.18)? In IV.2.4 the musical (and in ancient thought, mathematical) reference is explicitly made with Augustine's reference to a *monochordo*, a type of tuning fork. Augustine wishes to convey, therefore, that the Son's partaking of our humanity creates a sort of harmony between divine and human natures (and their respective activities), like the harmonising of two different musical notes, that allows us partake of his divinity.[315]

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[312] X.5.7: 'imagines… factus in semetipsa de semetipsa'.

[313] This is precisely the kind of conformation Augustine is criticising when he speaks of the dangers of being conformed to this age (e.g., XI.5.8 quoting Romans 12.2). I examined this kind of ill-conformation in Chapter Two when explaining that wrongly-ordered desire before God is wrongly-ordered precisely because it fails to recognise what is desired in its own proper place, as a participant in God.

[314] De Civitate Dei XXII.24.4. See Augustine, *The Trinity: De Trinitate*, 183 n12.

[315] I will return to this obvious use of 2 Peter 1.4 when I discuss Augustine's use of *participatio* in the next section (Chapter 5.1.2) and in my discussion of deification in the section immediately after (Chapter 5.1.3).

5.1.2. Augustine's Core Participatory Terms: *participatio, trado,* and *induo*

Whilst each of the terms just considered already has participatory resonances, there are three words in particular that Augustine uses in *De Trinitate* which demonstrate what he understood by participation, and place particular emphasis on our participation in Christ. The first is *participatio* (used 38 times). Augustine uses *paritcipatio* to convey important theological ideas regarding: 1) the simplicity of God, 2) the mission of the Son in the Incarnation, 3) the creatureliness of humanity, 4) the importance of the *image Dei* for participation, and 5) the interplay between participation and ethics. I will consider each of these principles in turn.

Firstly, Augustine insists that God is simple and thus cannot be said to participate in himself in any way. He makes this clear in V.10.11, where he explains that whilst great things certainly partake (*participatio*) of greatness,

> Deus autem quia non ea magnitudine magnus est quae non est quod ipse ut quasi particeps eius sit deus cum magnus est (alioquin illa erit maior magnitude quam deus; deo autem non est aliquid maius), ea igitur magnitudine magnus est qua ipse est eadem magnitudo.
>
> God is not great with a greatness which he is not himself, as if God were to participate in it and is therefore great (otherwise that thing would be greater than God; but there is nothing greater than God), rather God is great with a greatness by which he is this same greatness.

To be Trinity is *not*, therefore, for God to be three 'things' participating in each other. To claim this would be to render God no longer God. This is reiterated in VI.5.7. In defending the unity and equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, and all the while asserting the distinction of the Holy Spirit as a person of the Trinity, Augustine insists that the Holy Spirit does not *participate* in the Trinity:[316]

> manifestum est quod non aliquis duorum est quo uterque conjungitur, quo genitus a gignente diligatur generatoremque suum diligat, sintque non *participatione* sed

[316] Note, Augustine would be reluctant to use language of 'persons'. I too use the term only as the best available option, which avoids us becoming stuck, unable to say anything at all, cf. VII.4.7-6.11.

> essentia sua neque dono superioris alicuius sed suo proprio *seruantes unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis* [Ephesians 4.3].
>
> It is manifest that [the Holy Spirit] is not something of two, but is that by which the two are conjoined, by which the begotten is loved by the begetter and by which in turn the begotten loves the begetter, not because of their *participation* but because of their being, not by the gift of something superior but, as proper to themselves, 'keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'.

Thus, participation is not something we can use to speak of the divine processions. No person of the Trinity participates in another and God does not participate in himself.

Where we can describe God participating is in the context of the divine missions. Herein lies the second, third and fourth principles regarding participation listed above. Specifically, Augustine argues that in his divine mission, the incarnate Son participates in our humanity by taking on *forma servi* (principle 2); that humans in turn are enabled to participate in God whilst remaining creatures (principle 3); and that this occurs because of the Son's perfecting of the *imago Dei* (principle 4). At the centre of each of these is Christ, the incarnate Son, who participates in our humanity so that we can participate in his divine life.

The Son incarnate is the locus, then, of our movement towards participation in God. Quoting 2 Peter 1.4, famously held to be a scriptural hint at deification, Augustine argues in IV.2.4 that humans are unfit for participation with God until the Incarnation, at which point the Son's participation in our humanity makes it possible for us to participate in him:

> ut ad contemplandum deum quod natura non sumus per eum mundaremur factum quod natura sumus et quod peccato non sumus… Adiungens ergo nobis similitudinem humanitatis suae abstulit dissimilitudinem iniquitatis nostrae, et *factus particeps mortalitatis nostrae fecit participes divinitatis suae* [2 Peter 1.4].
>
> In order to contemplate God, which by nature we are not, we needed to be cleansed by the one who became what by nature we are and what by sin we are not… so he put on himself the similarity of our humanity to take away the dissimilarity of our iniquity, and 'participating in our mortality he made us to participate in his divinity'.

Thus, the Son's mediation is an act of participation that enables human participation in him and thereby in God. Augustine reiterates the same claim in IV.8.12, XIII.9.12 and XV.3.5.

Most particularly, here in IV.2.4, Augustine is expositing the Incarnation as participation's locus: it is in the Son that we participate in God.[317] Such participation is realised, in *De Trinitate,* in the human imaging of the Trinity in the mind, which Augustine has insisted is that which Christ perfects in his crucifixion. Even in their fallen state the image of God in humans is not lost, but it is in need of discovery. As Augustine explains:

> Sed prius mens in se ipsa consideranda est antequam sit *particeps* dei et in ea reperienda est imago eius. Diximus enim eam etsi amissa dei *participatione* obsoletam atque deformem dei tamen imaginem permanere. Eo quippe ipso imago eius est quo eius capax est eiusque esse *particeps* potest, quod tam magnum bonum nisi per hoc quod imago eius est non potest.[318]
>
> But first the mind must be considered in itself before it participates in God, in it God's image must be discovered. For we have said that although it has lost its participation in God it remains the image of God, albeit worn out and deformed. It is God's image in that it is capable of him and can participate in him, and in that it cannot achieve such a great good but through being his image.

It is key to Augustine's understanding of the *imago Dei*, therefore, that it is capable of participating in God. In Chapter One, I argued that the *imago Dei* is the vehicle of human participation in God not because of particular capacities that mirror God's capacities as such (such as rationality or creativity), but because in the *imago Dei* humans are called to be human in relationship with God. This is precisely the capacity for relationship of which Augustine is speaking in *De Trinitate,* a relationship in which human creatureliness is affirmed but understood in light of our capacity for participation in God.

Moreover (and as also argued in Chapter One), this participative relationship is progressive. Beginning as a capacity for participation, Augustine insists that the *imago Dei* in

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[317] Just as the Son does not abandon his divinity and become human, but instead exists in the Incarnation both in *forma Dei* and *forma servi,* so too humanity does not abandon its creatureliness and become divine when it participates in God. Even in his account of deification in Augustine's corpus (to which I return below), Meconi insists that the human's deification is never a removal of their human nature.

[318] XIV.8.11.

the mind is not static but is transformed as the mind increasingly images God under the perfecting work of Christ. Hence in XIV.14.18 Augustine states:

> Cum autem deum diligit mens et sicut dictum est conseqeunter eius meminit eumque intelligit, recte ille de proximo suo praecipitur ut eum sicut se diligat. Iam enim se non perverse sed recte diligit cum deum diligit cuius participatione imago illa non solum est, verum etiam ex vetustate renouatur, ex deformitate reformatur, ex infelicitate beatificatur.
>
> But when the mind loves God and as a consequence, as has been said, remembers and understands him, it is rightly commanded to love its neighbour as itself. For it loves itself not with a perverse love but a right love now that it loves God, in whom [the mind] participates not just by being in [God's] image, but by being renewed (from having been old), being reformed (from having been deformed) and being made happy (from having been miserable).

The *imago Dei* in humans thus progresses from a twisted love to a right love (cf., my account of rightly- and wrongly-ordered desire in Chapter Two), precisely as it shares (*participatione*) in God through the mind's *imago trinitatis*; the mind reaching a point where it remembers, understands and loves God as it was created to do. Augustine makes it clear in both Books XIV and XV that the culmination of this progress is in eternity where the capability of the human person to image God comes to completion.

The final principle which Augustine explores using the term *participatio* is the connection between the human's participation in God and ethical action. This is highlighted in Book VIII, especially in VIII.3.5. Here Augustine ties together the commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour, whilst insisting that love of God is prior. All goods, he argues, are 'good by participation in the good, you can look at good itself by participating in that by which these things are good'.[319] Only when observing goods in light of God who *is* the Good, can humans truly love either God or other humans:

> Si ergo potueris illis detractis per se ipsum perspicere bonum, perspexeris deum. Et si amore *inhaeseris*, continuo beatificaberis. Pudeat haerendo non amare bonum ipsum unde bona sunt.

[319] 'participatione boni bona sunt perspicere ipsum bonum cuius participatione bona sunt'.

> If you can put down goods and look at Good itself, you will look at God. And if you cling [*inhaeseris*] to him in love, you will immediately enter into beatitude. Let him be ashamed who clinging to them fails to love the good itself which makes them good.

There are two points Augustine is seeking to make here. Firstly, by insisting that all goods must be understood in light of God, who *is* the Good, Augustine is able to argue that the soul, too, is only good by clinging to the God from whom it has its origin. Secondly, Augustine's command that the soul must love goods in their right order is a reminder that love of neighbour, too, must be held in the context of love of God, from whom the goodness of our neighbour is derived. This is further demonstrated in VIII.7.10, where Augustine insists that true love of neighbour only exists when we 'love Love itself', that is when we first love God. It is then, he insists, that we fulfil the command in 1 John 4.16 to abide (*manet*) in God. These two assertions in VIII.3.5 are brought together when Augustine quotes from Acts 17.27-28 at the end of VIII.3.5, that 'he [God] is not far from each one us. For "in him we live and move and have our being"'. Here, in line with all that Augustine has said concerning the good, we find a model of participation framed not only in ontological terms but, as a consequence, in active, ethical terms (viz. how we live and move in God).

This link between participation in God and ethical action is also demonstrated in XV.26.46 in Augustine's final comments on the sending of the Holy Spirit. Observing that the Holy Spirit is given twice in Scripture – in John 20 and Acts 2 – Augustine argues that this indicates the dual direction of charity, towards God and towards our fellow humans: 'once on earth for love of neighbour, and again from heaven for love of God'.[320] The imaging of the Trinity in the mind that includes loving God, towards which Books VIII through XV have ultimately been directing us, is thus intimately tied to our action towards other humans.

Alongside Augustine's regular use of *pariticpatio,* we find Augustine's more streamlined use of *trado* ('hand over') for understanding Christ's role in the sequence of descent and ascent, and thereby in humanity's participation in God. Variants on *trado* appear in *De Trinitate* 48 times, often in a salvific context (especially describing the Son being

[320] XV.26.46: 'semel in terra propter dilectionem proximi et iiterum de caelo propter dilectionem dei'.

‘handed over’ to death), or in relation to its use in 1 Corinthians 15.24 (‘then comes the end, when he [Christ] hands over the Kingdom to God the Father’).

The former, soteriological use of *trado* is vital for understanding Augustine’s account of participation in *De Trinitate* because it highlights the importance of the Son’s descent in enabling human participation in God. In particular, through Augustine’s insistence that the Father delivers (*tradidit*) the Son *and* that the Son hands himself over (*tradidit*) to death (II.5.9), he makes clear that the Father and the Son’s (as well as the Holy Spirit’s) work is indivisible, and that we can genuinely speak of the Son being sent by the Father. As a consequence, we are reminded that the sending of the Son culminates in Christ’s descent to death on the cross.

The counterpart of the sending of the Son to be handed over to death is found in Augustine’s use of *trado* to describe the Son handing over of the kingdom to the Father. Augustine explains what he means by this sense of *trado* in I.8.16:

> sed quia omnes justos quibus nunc regnat *ex fide* viuentibus *mediator dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus* preducturus est ad *speciem* quam visionem dicit idem apostolus *facie ad faciem*, ita dictum est: *cum tradiderit renum deo et patri*, ac si diceretur: ‘cum perduxerit credentes ad contemplationem dei et patris’.
>
> But reigning for all *the just* who *live by faith* [Hebrews 2.4], this *man Jesus Christ, the mediator of God and human persons* [1 Timothy 2.5] is going to lead them to the *sight* of God, to the *face-to-face* vision [1 Corinthians 13.12] (as the apostle calls it), of that which is said: ‘*when he hands the kingdom over to God and the Father’* [1 Corinthians 15.24], as though to say: when he leads those who believe to contemplation of God and Father.

The Son handing over of the kingdom is thus the final handing over of humanity, such that humans are brought face-to-face with God in eternal contemplation. Augustine therefore rejects any questions 1 Corinthians 15.25 might raise concerning the equality of the Father and the Son (I.7.14-8.16) by insisting instead that the focus of the verse is the human experience of participation as something that the Son enables. Our experience of that participation is precisely as a ‘handing over’.

Thirdly, alongside Augustine’s use of *participatio* and *trado,* we gain a fuller understanding of the human experience of participation in God through his occasional and

careful use of *induo* (I put on).[321] In both *De Trinitate* and elsewhere (I mention, with Teubner, *Expositio ad Epistolae ad Galatas* and *Enarrationes in Psalmos*) Augustine uses *induo* in order to discuss what it means for humanity to 'put on' Christ. Its use in *De Trinitate* is rarely in moments of deliberate commentary on our participation in God. However, its place as an underlying, recurring theme reveals much of what Augustine understood by way of participation. Indeed, when I return to a fuller commentary on the principle of the *totus Christus* in Chapter Five it will become clear that the links between 'putting on' Christ and 'being in' Christ are resonant in numerous places in Augustine's corpus, including *De Trinitate.*

Teubner introduces *induo* via its use in Augustine's *Expositio ad Epistolae ad Galatas,* arguing that it refers to how the Christian is incorporated into the *totus Christus,* namely by 'putting on' Christ's humility, such that 'the Christian thus enters into the human-divine mediation'.[322] In conjunction with Augustine's focus on the *totus Christus* in *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* Teubner insists that this act of putting on Christ is communal, insofar as we take on the needs of the whole Christian community bound up in Christ as its head.

This insistence on the communal aspect of *induo* is helpful, not least for understanding the concept of the *totus Christus,* but there is more to be discerned regarding the term's participatory meaning. One further participatory resonance of *induo,* Teubner hints at but does not exposit in full: the link between Christ's humility, which we put on, and the Son's descent in the Incarnation. When we look in further detail at Augustine's use of *induo* in *De Trinitate* we also find the term holds another participatory resonance: that by putting on Christ we ascend towards God in the renewal of our mind.

In regards to the first of these resonances, we cannot talk about Christ's humility without drawing on the descent of the Son, since we cannot talk of Christ in *forma servi* without talking at the same time of Christ in *forma Dei*. In other words, the full depth of Christ's humility is only beheld if we remember that Christ is the incarnate, descended Son. There are clear theological connections between our 'putting on' Christ and the descent of the Son as that which enables us to participate in God in Christ. Teubner's account of *induo* is

[321] Augustine uses *induo* and its variants 16 times in *De Trinitate.*

[322] Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine,* 71.

based largely on *Expositio ad Epistolae ad Galatas,* and thus he does not fully elucidate the links between Christ's humility and his incarnation and death. Considered in light of *induo*'s use in *De Trinitate,* our 'putting on' of Christ is placed directly in the context of Augustine's structure of descent and ascent: by putting on Christ (whom we encounter in his descent), we are enabled to venture on our ascent towards God. This is made clear from the fact that the subject of *induo* in *De Trinitate* is not only human persons, but also the Son, who 'puts on' a human body and soul in the Incarnation (see IV.3.6 and XIII.10.13). Our 'putting on', which culminates in our ascent towards God, is the counterpart to the Son's 'putting on', which begins in the Incarnation and culminates in Christ's death on the cross.

Indeed, in recognising our 'putting on' as a counterpart to the Son's 'putting on', we are able to make full sense of the second emphasis Augustine intends by his use of *induo* in *De Trinitate*: 'putting on' Christ is a renewal of the human mind. Throughout *De Trinitate* the death of Christ is understood as that which perfects the image of God in humans, which is precisely the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind as it increasingly learns to remember, understand and love God. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the consequences of 'putting on' Christ would play out in the perfecting of the human mind.

In Galatians 3.27 'putting on' Christ is understood in the context of baptism as that which marks a person's entry into the Church. It is thus inevitable that by focusing on the use of *induo* in the *Expositio ad Epistolae ad Galatas*, Teubner's primary focus is on the communal and ecclesial aspects of the term. In *De Trinitate,* however, Augustine takes *induo* from its context in Ephesians 4.23-24, which speaks explicitly of the renewal of the mind, and in Colossians 3.9-10, which talks of being renewed in the image of God.[323] In *De Trinitate* itself, then, this is Augustine's immediate intent in using *induo:* the effect that 'putting on' Christ has on the renewal and perfection of the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind. Indeed, in XII.7.12, whilst Augustine's primary focus is on the question of women's imaging of God, he also makes a point of stating that the mind is the locus of the imaging of the Trinity, and that by 'putting on' Christ the mind is thus renewed. He *then* links this understanding of *induo* borrowed from Ephesians and Colossians with Galatians 3.27,

[323] This does not mean that Augustine abandons the idea of communal participation, since we have already seen that in *De Trinitate* participation also has consequences for the community via our love of neighbour, and indeed we will see that *De Trinitate* must be read in the context of Augustine's ecclesiology (see Chapter 5.3 on the *totus Christus*).

arguing that such renewal is enacted in the life of faith in baptism. The imaging of the Trinity in the mind is clearly the focal point therefore of the participation in God we experience as the Church, in Christ.

A final interesting aspect to Augustine's use of *induo* to speak of our participation in God, is its implications for the importance of human agency. It is the human who 'puts on' Christ, even if enabled to do so by the grace of God in Christ. This is a helpful reminder that both God and humanity are agents in participative theology, with the Creator-creature distinction ensuring that their agency is not in competition. Whilst Augustine does not claim this as explicitly as we have seen in Tanner's work, his use of *induo* supports the idea that he intends a model of non-competitive agency in which the human is also an agent in their participation in God.[324]

5.1.3. Augustine, *deifico* and Deification

In a discussion of Augustine's use of language and scripture in regards to participation, it would be remiss to ignore the term *deifico*, even if the thing of note is its startling near absence. Gerald Bonner finds fifteen instances of *deifico* across Augustine's corpus, whilst in his later study David Meconi finds eighteen.[325] Both note that a number of these instances are

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[324] See Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology*.

[325] See Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986): 369; Meconi, *The One Christ*, 79. Further studies on deification in Augustine can be found in: Henry Chadwick, 'Note Sur La Divinisation Chez Saint Augustin', *Revue Des Sciences Religieuses* 76, no. 2 (2002): 246–48; David Vincent Meconi, 'Becoming Gods by Becoming God's: Augsutine's Mystagogy of Identification', *Augustinian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2008): 61–74; Robert Puchniak, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification, Revisited', in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed. Stephen Finland and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 122–33; Patricia Wilson-Kastner, 'Grace as Participation in the Divine Life in the Theology of Augustine of Hippo', *Augustinian Studies* 7 (1976): 135–52. Those who argue that it is misleading to infer an account of deification in Augustine's writings include: Myrrha Lot-Borodine, *La Déification de l'homme Selon La Doctrine Des Pères Grecs* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970), 39ff; Roger E Olson, 'Deification in Contemporary Theology', *Theology Today* 64, no. 2 (2007): 193;

not relevant to a theological concept of deification, such that only eight instances for Bonner, and eleven for Meconi, are deemed relevant to discerning Augustine's participative theology in general, and whether he teaches deification in particular.[326] It must be noted, especially for this thesis, that Augustine *never* uses the term *deifico* in *De Trinitate.* Bonner and Meconi are both right, however, in their insistence that although the term *deifico* is rarely used across Augustine's corpus, Augustine did understand our participation in God to involve deification. Indeed, in the sources quoted in their studies (and in the ground-breaking work of their predecessor Victornio Capánaga) we find explicit language of participation (particularly *participatio*) is used alongside traditional descriptors of deification.[327] As such it is difficult to deny that Augustine holds to something like deification, even if he rarely uses *deifico* and its cognates. Thus, I now explore in brief the shape of his teaching on deification. Here I continue the work begun in my analysis of Meconi's work earlier in this chapter, but now my focus is on Augustine's use of scripture (in a number of sources, but most importantly in *De Trinitate*). Again, we will observe in Augustine's use of scripture that Christ is the locus of our participation in God (in this instance because it is in Christ that we access the deified life).

The term *deifico* literally means 'to make gods'. Thus, its association with human salvation needs careful articulation to avoid any suggestion that in being made gods we somehow become divine rather than human.[328] Both the Eastern and Western traditions (for

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Philip Sherrard, *The Greek East and the Latin West: A Study in the Christian Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 43f.

[326] Bonner points to the use of *deifico* in *Epistola* X.2, *De Civitate Dei* XIX.23, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XLIX.2 (thrice) and CXVII.11, *Sermo* CXXVI.10.14 and *Sermo* CLXVI.4.4. Meconi adds to this list the instances of *deifico* in *Sermo* XXIII(B). *Sermo* XXIII(B) is also known as Dolbeau 6 and Mainz 13, named either for the scholar François Dolbeau who identified the codex in which these new sermons were found, or for Mainz city library where they were discovered. For more details see Henry Chadwick, 'New Sermons of St Augustine', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 47, no. 1 (1996): 69–91.

[327] Victorino Capánaga, 'La Deificación En La Soteriologia Augustiniana', *Augustinus Magister* 2 (1954): 745–54.

[328] In an effort to avoid this confusion, there is some benefit to be found in reframing the process of 'deification' as truly a process of 'humanisation', insofar as to be deified, is to

they are not as divided on this matter as some scholars would claim) insist that the deified human remains human, but can be said to 'become god' through attachment to (even 'in') Christ's human nature, which is itself united (uniquely) to Christ's divinity.[329] Such uniting of our human nature with Christ's is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit, who transforms our nature into the fullness of its potential. Thus, our sanctification or strong participation (to take up Tanner's terminology once again) is a process of deification.

In his study of deification as it is found in Augustine's corpus, Meconi draws attention to four paradigms at play in Augustine's theology of participation, each of which interweave to form an account of deification, even where the word *deifico* is not itself always used. These are a theme of recapitulation (the assertion that our deification is bound up with our creation), an account of divine adoption (for we are made co-heirs with Christ as we are united with him), the great exchange of natures implied in Philippians 2.6-8 (Christ 'emptying himself' of divinity for the sake of redeeming our humanity), and finally an emphasis on the ethical implications of our participation in God (the deified life involves acting like gods).[330] To be deified, as Meconi understands it in Augustine's writings, is to become gods through God's salvific work and thus to live the deified life, 'led by the Spirit, ordered toward God, cognizant that all is a gift from above'.[331]

Because of these four paradigms weaved through Augustine's account of participation, Meconi argues that one of the reasons Augustine does use *deifico* across his

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become fully what it is to be human. For a recent general account of participation in God which uses such language, and interestingly does so with concern for our participation in Christ's ministry of prayer, see Tom Greggs, *Dogmatic Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 409n17. Greggs includes within his writing a particular concern for intercession. He argues that intercession binds us with the church and with God, calls us to action, and makes us active participants in divine grace, particularly as it is centred on Christ's great mediation on the cross. There is much here that resonates with the model of participation in prayer, inspired by Augustine's *De Trinitate*, for which I am arguing in this thesis. See: Greggs, 276–302.

[329] For an example of scholarship that too readily divides Western and Eastern theology regarding deification, see Olson, 'Deification in Contemporary Theology', 193.

[330] Meconi, *The One Christ*, 89–126.

[331] Meconi, 122.

corpus, even only occasionally, is precisely its way of weaving together, even 'bolstering', the variety of metaphors used in scripture to describe salvation. In addition, he argues that Augustine sees the need, in instances where he uses *deifico* as a descriptor for salvation, to correct false pagan teaching and clarify scriptural claims that we are to 'become gods'.[332]

There are two particular scriptural references to 'becoming gods' to which Augustine pays particular attention. The first, which Bonner argues is Augustine's primary biblical justification for deification, is found in Psalm 82.6: 'I say, "you are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince"'.[333] In his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* Augustine interprets this verse primarily as a rebuke of human pride, revealed in light of the humility of Christ.[334] However, in his more recently discovered sermon on Psalm 81, *Sermo* XXIII(B), Augustine explicitly interprets the Psalm with an interest in deification, thrice using a derivative of *deifico*, and in particular describing God as *deificatorem Deum* ('a god-making God').[335] Augustine explicitly states that we are made gods by grace through divine adoption rather than becoming God's by nature, thus maintaining that humans 'made gods' do not cease to be human.[336] Of particular interest to this thesis is the setting of Augustine's comments in a critique of pagan idol worship. It matters that humans remain human even as they are 'made gods', he argues, because such is the appropriate condition of worship; we worship the God who makes us gods even as we remain creatures (as this thesis would put it, via participation). This is unlike the pagans who make gods of other created things for them to be worshipped in place of the deifying God, and thus become as weak an image of God as their created idols.[337] This critique is similar to

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[332] Meconi, 127.

[333] Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 37, no. 2 (1986): 371.

[334] *Ennarationes in Psalmos* LXXXII.4.

[335] *Sermo* XXIII(B).2. In his translation of these newly discovered sermons, Hill notes that the word *deificatorem* appears to be a neologism. See Augustine, *Sermons: Newly Discovered Sermons*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, The Works of Saint Augustine, III/11 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 46n7.

[336] *Sermo* XXIII(B).2: 'non natura deorum, sed adoptione, sed gratia'.

[337] *Sermo* XXIII(B).5. Augustine claims that to a certain extent the pagans become akin to what they worship. Whilst in this particular passage Augustine does not use language of the

this thesis' account of desire in Chapter Two, in which it was argued that prayer exhibits rightly-ordered desire when other created things are desired as co-participants in God rather than in God's place. I will shortly argue that a similar claim is made by Augustine in *De Trinitate* XIV.12.15, where he finds the culmination of the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind in the human's worship of its Creator. Here in *Sermo* XXIII(B) such imaging of God in worship is linked with another theme that modern theology would label participatory: deification.

The phrase 'made gods' is used not only in Psalm 81, but also in John 10.34 where the phrase is quoted by Christ in the context of affirming his own status as the Son sent from the Father. This is the second scriptural reference to 'becoming gods' on which Augustine offers noticeable comment. In his *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus* XLVIII, with a passing critique of his Arian contemporaries (XLVIII.8), Augustine argues that it is Christ himself who makes us gods insofar as he is the Word of God and thus the one who deifies (XLVIII.9).[338] Two elements of Augustine's argument are especially worthy of note. First, that Augustine, in keeping with Jesus' words in John 10, identifies the Father sending the Son into the world as that which evidences the divinity of Christ. Here an explicit link is made between our deification and the mission of the Son, which this thesis will echo in its claim that human participation in God is enabled by the mission of the Son, which is an act of divine intercession. Secondly, Augustine ties his comments in this tractate (again in keeping with John 10) to the Father sanctifying the Son, and appeals to the Lord's Prayer in doing so: 'For if that which is sanctified was not holy before, how can we say to God the Father,

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'image of God', he does employ such language elsewhere in this sermon (*Sermo* XXIII(B).7, for instance).

[338] This identification of Christ as the agent of deification is not necessarily explicit in the Latin text where (XLVIII.9) it is the *sermo Dei* (word of God) which makes us gods: 'Si ergo vos deos facit sermo Dei, quomodo non est Deus Verbum Dei?' ('If, therefore, the word of God makes you gods, in what manner can the Word of God be but God?'). However, this use of *sermo Dei*, I argue, is a deliberate rhetorical flourish, linking the words of Christ proclaimed in John 10 with his identity as the *Verbum Dei*.

"hallowed by your name"?'.[339] Here (again, in keeping with the concerns of this thesis) we find Augustine employing the language of prayer in a participatory context.[340]

A further scriptural reference relevant to the scope of Augustine's teaching on deification is 2 Peter 1.4:

> Thus he [Christ] has given us, through these things [his glory and goodness], his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants in the divine nature.

This passage is of note because it is typically used in other accounts of deification and because its comments on participating in the divine nature are echoed by Augustine in *De Trinitate* IV.2.4. However, as we have already seen, in IV.2.4 Augustine uses cognates of *participatio* rather than *deifico* and thus prefers to frame his interpretation of this verse in terms of 'participation'. Bonner is wary of paying too much attention to Augustine's use of 2 Peter 1.4, claiming that 'although [it is] an obvious text, [it] stands in a magnificent isolation, and in any case Augustine… does not seek to base his theology upon it'.[341] On the matter of the passage's importance to Augustine's theology, in particular his trinitarian theology in *De Trinitate,* I disagree. Where Augustine alludes to 2 Peter 1.4 in IV.2.4 he does so in order to establish that it is through participation in Christ, who becomes incarnate to intercede for us, that we come to contemplate God. This claim, that we cannot understand our worship of God apart from Christ, is precisely the climax to which *De Trinitate* reaches in XIV.12.15. The roots of this climactic claim lie in Augustine's description of Christ's Incarnation and its intercessory purpose in IV.2.4. Thus, we can assert that 2 Peter 1.4, albeit without being quoted at length and without direct reference to deification, lies at the roots of Augustine's thought in *De Trinitate.* This means that the content of 2 Peter 1.4 – its claim that our participation in Christ is enabled by Christ's participation in our human nature - is at the heart of the treatise.

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[339] XLVIII.9: 'Nam si quod sanctificatur, ante non erat sanctum; quomodo dicimus Deo Patri: sanctificetur nomen tuum?'.

[340] Whilst Augustine does not use *deifico* in this tractate, choosing instead to us *facit*, he does use cognates of *participatio* six times.

[341] Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', 1986, 371.

5.2. God's Activity throughout the Sequence of Descent and Ascent

We find further indication of Christ's role as the locus of participation in God as we deepen our analysis of the chiastic shape of *De Trinitate*. Whilst in *De Trinitate* descent pertains to God and ascent to humanity, examining God's activity *throughout* this sequence reveals the complexity of divine and human interaction that results from divine descent and enables human ascent. Such analysis also highlights the importance of Augustine's christology and pneumatology. This section will thus consider Augustine's depiction of divine descent in terms of God's activity 'for us' in Christ, and then human ascent in terms of God's activity 'in us' by the Spirit.

Before examining what *De Trinitate* says of God's activity 'for us' and 'in us', brief explanation is warranted, in regards to our use of prepositions. It is paramount to recognise that speaking of Christ's activity 'for us' is not meant as a rejection of the idea of Christ 'in us'. Similar must be said of my description of the Spirit's work 'in us'. Neither descriptor is intended to underplay the importance for Augustine of Christ's being 'in' our nature in the *forma servi*, nor of our participation 'in' Christ. As we will observe in the later sections of this chapter, when it comes to speaking of human participation in God - that is, the effect of Christ's work 'for us' and the Spirit's work 'in us' - we can and should use the preposition 'in' to talk of both Christ and the Spirit (since we participate 'in' Christ and by the 'indwelling' of the Spirit). Here, 'for us' is used to emphasise the mediatory purpose of Christ 'in us', which we will then discern through the concept of the *totus Christus.*

5.2.1. God's Activity 'for us': Christology

As we have noted, the first half of *De Trinitate* is particularly concerned with divine descent. Having established his method in Book I, in Books II-IV Augustine focuses especially on the divine missions before exploring what this tells us the divine processions in Books V-VII. He focuses on divine descent in order to establish in the latter half of *De Trinitate* how it is that Christ enables human ascent towards participation in God. It is paramount to remember that when Augustine speaks of any divine activity, even when his focus is on one person of the Trinity, he intends to simultaneously affirm the *inseparabilem operationem* (indivisible

operation) of all three persons who share the one substance. Neither the Son or the Spirit act alone. However, within Augustine's sequence of descent and ascent the focus in the first half of *De Trinitate* is broadly on God's work 'for us' in the Son, insofar as the locus of our participation in God is found in Christ, the incarnate Son.

The climax of the Son's descent is the crucifixion, which is portrayed as an act that is at once *mediatory* and *reconciling.* It is in both these senses that Christ is the focus of God's activity 'for us'. In his description of the mission of the Son in Book IV, Augustine is clear that in place of the false mediation of the devil, who promises life but can only bring death (IV.13.17), Christ in his death is 'the one true mediator' (*ipse unus verusque mediator*, IV.14.19) who brings life:

> Morte sua quippe uno uerissimo sacrificio pro nobis oblate quidquid culparum erat unde nos principatus et potestates ad luenda supplicia iure detinebant purgauit, aboleuit, exstinxit, et sua resurrectione in nouam uitam nos praedestinatos uocauit, uocatos iustificauit, iustificatos glorificauit.[342]
>
> As you see, by his death he offered for us the one truest sacrifice, and thus what guilt there was – for which the principalities and power rightly hold us bound to our debts – he had purged, abolished and destroyed, and by his resurrection into new life we who were predestined he called, we who were justified he called, we who were justified he glorified.

This mediatory death is the climax of the Son's descent in the Incarnation. Augustine is quite adamant that it is Christ's existence in *forma servi* that makes the crucifixion effective. It is precisely as a *human*, of flesh and blood, that Christ's crucifixion is mediatory: 'God became a just man in order to intercede with God for sinful man'.[343] Of course, Christ as considered in *forma Dei* cannot die. To speak of the death of the divine substance is incoherent. However, with *forma Dei* and *forma servi* bound together in the Incarnation, even without the Chalcedonian grammar which post-dates him, Augustine is able to speak consistently of the Son incarnate dying on our behalf.

As well as describing the crucifixion as a mediation, Augustine has other ways of talking about the consequences of God's activity 'for us' in Christ's death. What is it,

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[342] IV.13.17.

[343] IV.2.4: 'deus itaque factus homo justus intercessit deo pro homine peccatore'.

Augustine ponders, that Christ's mediatory death does to the relationship between God and humanity? There are a number of descriptions Augustine uses in *De Trinitate* to explain the way in which the crucifixion reconciles us to God. Occasionally he speaks of the crucifixion as a healing act (e.g., IV.12.15). Later he appears to speak of Christ's death in terms of military victory: he certainly speaks of Christ 'striking down' (*occido*) the power with which the devil held humanity captive (IV.13.17). Elsewhere, appealing to Christ's virgin birth and thus his exemption from original sin, Augustine describes Christ's death as redemptive: Christ, the just man, pays the debt of death to the devil that we as sinners cannot (XIII.14.18). But, in the same breath, Augustine again describes Christ's death in terms of justice. It is as *the* just man that Christ redeems, justifying (*justificio*) us in his blood (*sanguine*).

There is particular ethical potential in this description of the crucifixion which Augustine himself does not develop, but which raises interesting questions regarding how we might imitate Christ in our intercessory prayer. In XIII.13.17 Augustine states,

> Sed cum diabolus uitio peruersitatis suae factus sit amator potentiae et desertor oppugnatorque justitiae (sic enim et homines eum tanto magis imitantur quanto magis neglecta uel etiam perosa justitia potentiae student eiusque uel adeptione laetantur uel inflammantur cuipditate), placuit deo ut propter eruendum hominem de diaboli potestate non potentia diabolus sed justitia vinceretur, atque ita et homines imitantes Christum justitia quaererent diabolum vincere non potentia.
>
> But the flaw in the devil's perversion made him a lover of power and a deserter and assaulter of justice (for in this way people imitate him all the more when they further neglect or even hate justice, devoting themselves to power, rejoicing in obtaining it or inflamed with desire for it), such that it pleased God to deliver man from the devil's authority through justice rather than power, so that men too might imitate Christ by seeking to defeat the devil through justice rather than power.

Here imitation of the devil is construed as the rejection of justice and pursuit of power. In comparison, humanity is delivered in the crucifixion so that we might imitate Christ in the pursuit of justice rather than power. Christ mediates in terms of justice, and so too must we. If we take intercession to be petition on behalf of others which seeks all that is just, might we

see human intercession as an extension of God's mediatory work 'for us' in Christ's death on the cross?[344]

In any event, Augustine's use of this language of imitation (*imitor*) is no accident. In Christ's crucifixion we are delivered such that we may imitate Christ rather than the devil. The question of imitation is related to that of imaging. Whilst to be in the image of God is primarily to be in relationship towards God, it is also to imitate God in God's own relationality. When he speaks of imitation in his description of the reconciling death of Christ in Book XIII, Augustine is not deviating from his search for an imaging of the Trinity in the human mind. Rather, Augustine understands the imitation of Christ (that is made possible by Christ's overturning of the devil's authority) to be a result of the perfection of the imaging of the Trinity in us. The connection between Christ's mediatory and reconciling death, and this perfecting of the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind, lies in the work of the Spirit. In other words, that which connects God's activity 'for us' in the Son and our subsequent ascent towards God, is the work of God 'in us' by the indwelling of the Spirit. It is an account of this work to which we now turn.

5.2.2. God's Activity 'in us': Pneumatology

Just as we can speak specifically of the Son's descent even though the whole Trinity always acts inseparably, so too we can speak of the Holy Spirit's descent and particularly of the Spirit's activity 'in us'. First, in order to demarcate the activities of the Son and the Spirit in this way we must note that the manner in which God relates to creation in the Holy Spirit is distinct from the way God relates to creation in the Son. As Augustine describes it, unlike the Son in the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit *appears* in creaturely form but never *becomes* a creature. Unlike the Son, the Holy Spirit cannot be said to be in *forma servi*. Rather, Augustine explains that appearances of the Holy Spirit are transient: 'these true corporeal manifestations appeared for a time to demonstrate what had to be shown and then afterwards ceased to be'.[345] Thus, whilst the Son was united to flesh in the Incarnation, and was thus in *forma servi* and *forma Dei*, we cannot say the same of the Holy Spirit: 'we cannot say of the

[344] I return to addressing this question in Chapter Six.

[345] II.7.12: 'illae vero species corporales ad demonstrandum quod opus fuit ad tempus apparuerunt et esse postea destiterunt'.

Holy Spirit that it is God and dove, or God and fire, just as we say of the Son that he is God and man'.[346]

If mediation (via the Incarnation and the Crucifixion) is the purpose of the Son's descent, what then is the purpose of the Holy Spirit's descent? Augustine implies three interconnected roles for the Holy Spirit in our spiritual progression: 1) to transmit to humans the benefits of Christ's activity 'for us' – that is, to make effective Christ's mediation – so as to enable our ascent to God; 2) to unite us to Christ in the *totus Christus*; and 3) to allow the human person to better imitate Christ in love of God and love of neighbour. Here I will initially address the first and last of these roles; I will return more explicitly to the Spirit's role in forming the *totus Christus* in the following section of this chapter (Chapter 5.3).

The transmission of the benefits of Christ's crucifixion is hinted at briefly during Books XIV-XV. In XIV.15.21 Augustine states that,

> quando autem bene recordatur domini sui spiritu eius accepto, sentit omnino quia hoc discit intimo magisterio, non nisi eius gratuito effectu posse se surgere.
>
> when [the mind] properly recalls its Lord after receiving his Spirit, it discerns, learning by intimate instruction, that it cannot rise expect by his gracious operation.

By entering into a *modo interiore* from Book IX onwards, Augustine encourages his readers to learn from within, via the 'intimate instruction' of the Spirit at work in us. Having received the Spirit, the mind is taught from within, such that it discerns that its ascent is only possible because of 'his *gracious operation*' (*eius gratuito effectu*).[347]

The work of the Spirit within the human mind, also leads the human person to imitation of Christ in worship and ethical action. This occurs as a consequence of the Spirit's

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[346] II.6.11: 'non tanem ita possumus dicere spiritum sanctum et deum et columbam aut et deum et ignem, sicut dicimus filium et deum et hominem'.

[347] Who is 'he' here: the Spirit or Christ (here named 'Lord')? Since both nouns are masculine, we cannot tell for certain to whom 'he' refers. Once we have explored the role of the Spirit in the *totus Christus* in Chapter 5.3 we will be in a position to recognise that the answer is arguably 'both', for it is by the Spirit in us that the whole Trinity dwells in us (XV.18.32), such that we can share in the divine life by abiding in Christ.

abiding in us, by which we in turn abide in God. In XV.17.31, Augustine directs our attention to how the activity of the Spirit 'in us' calls us to act:

> sanctus itaque spiritus de quo dedit nobis facit nos in deo manere et ipsum in nobis. Hoc autem facit dilectio. Ipse est igitur deus dilectio… Deus igitur spiritus sanctus qui procedit ex deo cum datus fuerit homini accendit eum in dilectionem dei et proximi, et ipse dilectio est. Non enim habet homo unde deum diligat nisi ex deo.
>
> And so, it is the Holy Spirit which he has given to us that makes us abide in God and God abide in us. This is what love does. He, therefore, is the gift of God who is love… Thus, it is God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God, that when given to a person, kindles in a person love of God and neighbour, and [God the Spirit] is itself love. Humans have no ability to love God except from God.

It is at the stirring of the Spirit dwelling 'in us' that humans love God and love neighbour. In XV.23.46 Augustine suggests that this is precisely why scripture talks of two moments in which the Spirit is poured out (viz. immediately after the resurrection in John 20.22 *and* at Pentecost in Acts 2) as a metaphor for the twofold form of charity to which the Spirit moves us. The Holy Spirit's activity 'in us' is not just about our ascent towards God as expressed in worship, but also about the relationships between humans. Thus, God's activity 'in us' through the Holy Spirit is not individualistic, but community-orientated: God works in *us*, not simply in the individual. We are reminded to avoid any temptation, therefore, to construe human ascent in *De Trintiate* in exclusively individualistic terms. Moreover, we find here evidence once again of that theme which this thesis observed in Chapter Three as important to Augustine's understanding of the activity of prayer: the concept of the *totus Christus*. The Holy Spirit's activity 'in us' is communal because it is the activity of the Spirit in and through those who are in Christ, and thus an activity exercised 'in' the body of the Church which, with its head, makes up the whole Christ. The Spirit empowers human community towards love of God and love of neighbour because human participation in Christ, by the Spirit who is operative 'in us', is itself to be understood in a corporate sense. In order to present a succinct model of participation in God derived from Augustine's *De Trinitate*, as is this chapter's final aim, it is to Augustine's broader interest in the *totus Christus* that we must now return.

5.3. Returning to the *totus Christus*

In Chapter Three we observed the role of the *totus Christus* in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* noting that the Psalms express a multitude of voices, including that of the Church (the body), Christ himself (the head) and of the whole Christ insofar as the head and the body speak each other's prayers. We acknowledged this as a sharing in one another's prayers, both amongst the individual members which make up the community of the Church (i.e., one individual Christian's prayer is a share in the prayers of the whole Church), and between the Church and Christ. If we take Augustine's exposition of Psalm 86 seriously, with its claim both that Christ 'prays in us as our head' by virtue of his sharing in our humanity *and* that as a consequence of the Incarnation the head and the body cannot be separated, we can rightly call our shared speech in prayer an act of participation.[348] In Chapter Three we noted that the themes which emerge from Augustine's use of the *totus Christus* in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* would reverberate in *De Trintitate.*[349] In Chapter Four and thus far in Chapter Five we have seen these reverberations. First, we have seen the importance of Augustine's *forma Dei-forma servi* distinction for understanding Christ's incarnate life (which we saw as an explanation of Christ's prayer, in *Enarrationes in Psalmos LXXXV*.1).[350] Second, we have observed the chiastic structure of descent and ascent which shapes the theology of *De Trinitate,* and points us to Christ's mediatory death as the height of Christ's activity 'for us' (which in turn enables our ascent to complete participation in God). In Chapter Six, we will explicitly label Christ's death for us as his great act of intercession, in an echo of the connections Cameron makes in his study of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, between Christ's descent and his role as our intercessor.[351] For now, we return directly to Augustine's interest in the *totus Christus,* examining its place across Augustine's writings.[352] In the final section

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[348] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* LXXXV.1: 'orat in nobis, ut caput nostrum'.

[349] See Chapter 3.3.

[350] See Chapters 4.2.1, 4.2.2.1 and 5.2.1.

[351] See Chapter 6.1.2.

[352] The most comprehensive study of texts in Augustine's corpus which speak of the *totus Christus* can be found in Franz, 'Totus Christus'. Bavel and Bochet also play close attention to the theme and their works provide a good indication of the key sources: Tarsicius van Bavel, *Recherches Sur La Christologie de Saint Augustin. L'humain et Le Divin Dans Le*

of this chapter it will be the idea of the *totus Christus*, in conjunction with all we have learned of participation in *De Trinitate*, which will shape what I call an 'Augustinian model of participation'.

The concept of the *totus Christus* is rooted in the Incarnation. In his humanity, Christ shares in our nature so that we in turn can share in him as members of his body, the Church. Individual Christians can claim to be in the Church by virtue of their baptism, itself an act of sharing in Christ's life, death and resurrection; thus both individually and corporately each believer participates in Christ as part of the one body which he leads as its head.[353] Although the phrase *totus Christus* only appears once in *De Trinitate*, in III.10.20 and its assertion that the whole Christ shares in Christ's resurrection, its influence is apparent across the treatise.[354] Most striking is Augustine's use of *induo* ('putting on'), which we examined in earlier in this chapter.[355] We are in Christ, Augustine claims, because we 'put on' Christ, initially and decisively through baptism, and thereafter (according to *De Trinitate*) through the renewing

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Christ d'après Saint Augustin (Fribourg: Imprimerie St-Paul, 1954), 74ff; Bochet, *Saint Augustin et Le Désir de Dieu*, 382–96.

Augustine uses a variety of images to discuss the *totus Christus*, including that of the vine and its branches and the wedding of the Bridegroom and his bride. Works paying particular attention to these images include: Bavel, *Recherches Sur La Christologie*; Tarcisius J. von Bavel and B. Bruning, 'Die Einheit Des "Totus Christus" Bei Augustinus', in *Scientia Augustiniana* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1975), 43–75; Bochet, *Saint Augustin et Le Désir de Dieu*.

[353] Franz analyses the manner in which Christ the head leads and the Church, as his body, follows in Franz, 'Totus Christus', 101–22. I explore Franz's analysis at the end of this section, for its implications on the life of the Church (including its acts of prayer).

[354] *De Trinitate* III.10.20. 'Ergo virga in serpentem, Christus in mortem, et serpens rursus in virgam, Christus in resurrectionem totus cum corpore suo quod est Ecclesia': 'Therefore, as the staff [of Moses, cf. Numbers 21.4-9] became the serpent, so Christ entered into death; and as the serpent returned to being a staff, so the whole Christ entered into the resurrection, with the body which is the Church'.

[355] See Chapter 5.1.2.

of our minds, as we learn to remember, understand and love God.[356] This human 'putting on' of Christ is enabled by Christ himself 'putting on' humanity in his Incarnation and exercising humility through his death (cf., *De Trinitate* IV.2.6 and XIII.10.13). Moreover, because 'putting on' Christ is bound up with baptism, itself the sacrament of incorporation into the Church, it is always corporate. This implies, therefore, that the right context for the renewal of the human mind, as it better images the Trinity, is also corporate; we are perfected in our imaging of God only as we are members of the whole Christ.

Both the grounding of the *totus Christus* in the Incarnation and the clear consequences for the human mind of putting on Christ, indicate that the unity between Christ and the Church is ontologically grounded. In other words, individual believers are really 'in' the Church and the Church is really 'in' Christ. Indeed, Bavel argues that Augustine even goes so far as to take language usually associated with the hypostatic union and apply it to his description of the unity of Christ and the Church, namely '*unus homo, idem ipse, unus et idem, una persona'*.[357] Here, however, Egon Franz rightly reminds us to exercise caution. We must not speak of the unity of Christ and the Church, he insists, in such a way that we undermine the uniqueness of the hypostatic union: 'the unique otherness of the Christ event forms the prerequisite for a meaningful soteriological exchange to take place between Christ and his Church'.[358] We must at once assert the true unity of Christ and the Church as the *totus Christus* whilst recognising

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[356] Augustine associates the renewal of the mind and our 'putting on' Christ with the event of baptism in *De Trinitate* XII.7.12. This is entirely consistent with his teachings elsewhere, including those where he writes specifically on baptism. In *De Baptismo* I.11.6, for instance, Augustine quotes Galatians 3.27 and equates 'putting on' Christ with baptism, remarking that this is a moment of regeneration. Similarly, in *De Baptismo* V.9.10-11 he examines Christ's own baptism, explaining that since Christ was without sin he did not require baptism, but was instead baptised so that we might 'put on' Christ through sharing in his baptism.

[357] 'one man, the same one, one and the same, one person'. Bavel justifies this emphasis on the language of person via various sources, some of which explicitly use *persona* (e.g., *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 30(II).4) and others of which prefer *homo* (e.g., *Sermo* XLV.5). See Bavel, *Recherches Sur La Christologie*, 81.

[358] 'Die einzigartige Andersheit des Christusgeschehens bildet geradezu die Voraussetzung dafür, dass ein soteriologisch sinnvoller Austausch zwischen Christus und seiner Kirche stattfinden kann'. Franz, 'Totus Christus', 141.

that it is the unique event of the Incarnation that enables our own participatory union in Christ. In fact, Augustine himself reiterates the uniqueness of Christ's Incarnation in the context of his discussion of the *totus Christus.* In *Sermo* CCCXLI he says that it is 'not that [Christ] is incomplete (*integer*) without the body', since Christ is a whole person in both his equality to the Father (as the Son) and in the unity of the human and divine in his Incarnation, 'but that he deigned to be complete with us' in making us his body.[359] Augustine is thus able to uphold at once the uniqueness of the Incarnation, the transcendence of Christ as the Son of the Father and the immanence of Christ to the Church, such that we can claim to be members of the 'whole Christ'.

Whilst the forming of the *totus Christus* is initiated in the Incarnation, when Christ chooses to be 'in us' in order to be 'for us', it is his crucifixion 'for us' which completes the formation of the body of Christ, enabling us to be 'in him'. The Church does not truly become part of the whole Christ, in other words, until Christ's mediatory death. Bochet helpfully demonstrates that this is because of the need for humanity's purification:

> For the human nature assumed by the Word was without sin; the Church, however, needs to be purified from sin. This is why the marriage of Christ and the Church is accomplished on the cross.[360]

Christ the incarnate Son is not marred by sin even as he shares in our human nature, but in order for humans to share in Christ we must be perfected. As we have seen already in this

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[359] *Sermo* CCCXLI.19: 'Etenim et caput et corpus unus Christus, non quia sine corpore non est integer, sed quia et nobiscum integer esse dignatus est,'. *Sermo* CCCXLI is also regularly referred to as *Dolbeau* 22.

[360] 'Car la nature humaine assumée par le Verbe était sans péché; l'Eglise, par contre, a besoin d'etre purifiée du péché. C'est pourquoi les noces du Christ et de l'Eglise s'accomplissent sur la croix'. Bochet, *Saint Augustin et Le Désir de Dieu*, 384–85; cf. Bavel, *Recherches Sur La Christologie*, 79–80. For an example of this in Augustine's writings see *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXXIX.5, in which he ties Christ becoming the head of the Church not just to the Incarnation but also to Christ's crucifixion 'for us': 'he deigned to become our head, the head of the body, by assuming our flesh, in which he would die for us' (caput nostrum ille, caput dignatus est corporis fieri, carnem assumendo pro nobis, in qua moreretur pro nobis).

chapter (and in Chapter Four) it is Christ's ministry 'for us' on the cross that does this work, rescuing us from sin and perfecting the imaging of the Trinity in our minds. It is the cross, then, that enables us to be in Christ as he is in us, and thus it is the cross that completes our becoming the *totus Christus*. Indeed, Franz argues that it is this completion of the *totus Christus* on the cross that makes the *totus Christus* properly corporate. At the Incarnation, Christ can already be called the head of the Church, but only as he represents the collective in his particular humanity. It is as a consequence of the reconciliatory activity of his death 'for us' that the Church is truly realised as Christ's body, such that 'the collective is considered as one person'; the Church as representing, 'being' even, Christ.[361]

We cannot fully comprehend the communal shape of the *totus Christus*, however, unless we also recognise the role of the Holy Spirit in forming the Church (just as our analysis of Christ's activity 'for us' earlier in this chapter had to be understood in relation to the Spirit's activity 'in us'). First, we must recall from *De Trinitate* that for Augustine the Spirit is rightly called both *gift* and *love* (cf. XV.19.33-37) since it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that: 1) God abides in us and we in God; and 2) that we are empowered to love one another. The first of these, is made most apparent in *De Trinitate* in XV.18.32 and its assertion that it is the Holy Spirit 'by whom the love of God is spread into our hearts, by which love the whole Trinity dwells (*inhabitet*) in us'.[362] It is as God the Spirit inhabits our hearts, Augustine thus argues, that we are enabled to love with that very love 'which leads to God'.[363]

This line from *De Trinitate* XV.18.32 is one of the more explicit indications of a theology of participation in the treatise. We have seen that the overall argument of *De Trinitate* is that our movement towards God involves the gradual perfection of our imaging of the Trinity (in the human mind). We have seen that it is the mediatory death of Christ 'for us' that enables this perfecting to happen. But this perfecting also cannot happen apart from the Spirit, for it is by the Spirit that the Trinity inhabits us such that we are led towards God. Indeed, we must assert that the life of the Trinity is to be found 'in' us or else we undermine

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[361] 'Das andere Mal *wird das Kollektiv als eine Person betrachtet*': see Franz, 'Totus Christus', 104–5.

[362] 'dilectio igitur quae ex Deo est et Deus est, proprie Spiritus Sanctus est, *per quem diffunditur in cordibus nostris Dei caritas, per quam nos tota inhabitet Trinitas*'.

[363] 'quae perducit ad Deum'.

the equality of the Spirit with both the Father and the Son; as Meconi rightly notes (in conversation with both *De Trinitate* XV.18.32 and VIII.8.12), 'the Spirit is clearly not some external gift independent of God but is presented as the very life of God now inhabiting the human soul'.[364] In return, as *De Trinitate* VIII.8.12 asserts, if we abide in love we abide in God, and thus we can claim that being led toward God is in fact to be led to abide in that very life of the Trinity which, in the Spirit, abides in us. We can even go so far as to claim, with Augustine in *Sermo* XXXIV.3, that 'since the Holy Spirit is God, let us love God with God'.[365] Indeed, our love for one another is similarly a consequence of the Trinity's abiding in us through the Spirit. *De Trinitate* VIII.8.12 asserts that we cannot be said to abide in love and thus in God if we do not also love our neighbour. Thus, our participation in the life of the Trinity through the Spirit's indwelling in us (such that we love 'with God') is innately communal. Our abiding in God enables our love not just of God, but also of other members of the Church with whom we are in Christ.

Moreover, we cannot properly describe what it is to be the Church without the enlivening and uniting effects of the Spirit's life in its members. Ayres makes this argument by comparing the human soul and the Spirit of Christ, arguing that just as the human body has a soul, so too the body of Christ cannot be understood apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who enlivens the body.[366] Augustine clearly asserts this in his *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus* XXVI.13 in which he compares the 'invisible spirit' (*spiritum invisibilem*) and 'visible body' (*corpus visible*) in a human person to the Spirit of Christ and body of Christ, arguing that just as the human body can only live by its own spirit, so too 'the body of Christ cannot live but by the Spirit of Christ'.[367] In fact, the body of Christ is not only enlivened by the Spirit of Christ; it is united as the body of Christ because of the Spirit's life in it. We see this in *De Trinitate* VI.5.7 and its description of the Holy Spirit as 'glue' (using the verb *agglutinato*). In Chapter Four, in conversation with Meconi, we saw that it is the Spirit, who as love 'glues' us to one another and to Christ, that makes the community of the

[364] Meconi, *The One Christ*, 168.

[365] 'immo quia Spiritus Sanctus Deus est, amemus Deum de Deo'.

[366] Lewis Ayres, 'Augustine on the Spirit as the Soul of the Body or Fragments of a Trinitarian Ecclesiology', *Augustinian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2010): 165–82.

[367] 'non potest vivere corpus Christi, nisi de Spiritu Christi'.

Church take form.[368] We cannot then understand the unity and activities of the *totus Christus*, including the activity of prayer, apart from the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ and by whose indwelling the Church *is* the Church.

What, then, does Augustine have to say about the life of the Church, in which the Spirit dwells? One area of particular focus for Augustine is the Eucharist.[369] Indeed, it is in reference to the Eucharist that Augustine provides one of his most explicit participatory accounts of the *totus Christus*, when in his *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus* XXVII.11 he says 'that we eat and drink to the *participation* (*participationem*) of the Spirit; that we abide as members in the Lord's body; that we are enlivened by his Spirit'.[370] As we receive the Eucharistic elements the Spirit participates in us, uniting us to Christ and enlivening us as Christ's body, the Church. And the unity generated between Christ and the Church in this moment is such that we can even recognise ourselves in the consecrated bread and the wine. Augustine claims as much in *Sermo* CCLXXII:

> Si ergo vos estis corpus Christi et membra, mysterium vestrum in mensa Dominica positum est: mysterium vestrum accipitis. Ad id quod estis, amen respondetis, et respondendo subscribitis. Audis enim, Corpus Christi; et respondes, amen. Esto membrum corporis Christi, ut verum sit amen.
>
> If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table: your own mystery that you are receiving! To what you are, you are answering 'amen' and by answering you underwrite your name [that is, you sign your name, affirming your belief in this answer]. For when you hear 'the body of Christ,' you reply 'amen'. Be a member of Christ's body, then, so that your 'amen' may sound true!

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[368] See Chapters 4.1.5 and 4.2.5. Cf. Meconi, *The One Christ*, 149–50.

[369] Note that this echoes what we saw of Augustine's thought in *Confessiones*, insofar as he understood both contemplation and intercession to be acts of fellowship with our neighbour. His comments on intercession included a call for others to pray for his departed mother in the context of the Eucharist.

[370] 'usque ad spiritus participationem manducemus et bibamus, ut in Domini corpore tamquam membra maneamus, ut eius spiritu vegetemur'.

The *totus Christus* is such, then, that we can affirm the unity of the members of the Church with Christ even in the unity of the Eucharistic elements and those who receive them; both the recipients of the Eucharist and the elements received are one with Christ the head. Note too that Augustine uses the second personal plural (e.g., *mysterium verstrum*) throughout this text; it is the whole community of the Church who receives and recognises themselves in the Eucharistic elements.

Indeed, we see this recognition of the communal aspect of the body of Christ, received in the Eucharistic elements, echoed in *De Civitate Dei* X.6:

> Hoc est sacrificium christianorum: multi unum corpus in Christo. Quod etiam sacramento altaris fidelibus noto frequentat ecclesia, ubi ei demonstratur, quod in ea re, quam offert, ipsa offeratur.
>
> This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, the many, are one body in Christ. This also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which it is shown that the Church itself is offered in the sacrifice which is offered.

Furthermore, it is implied in *De Civitate Dei* X.6, through the use of 'sacrifice' for both Christ's mediation on the cross and the Eucharist, that both on the cross and at the altar 'in this [Christ] is our Priest, in this the sacrifice'.[371] Thus, in the Eucharist there is an intimate union between the person of Christ and the Church, both in the act of offering the Eucharistic sacrifice and in receiving that sacrifice, via the Eucharistic elements. The *totus Christus* is thus revealed and enacted in the Church's eucharistic practice, through the binding of the sacrifice of the altar with Christ's mediation 'for us' once for all on the cross.

Finally, Augustine also draws particular attention to the way in which the *totus Christus* is actualised more broadly in the relationship between the activity of Christ and the activity of the Church. It is Franz's study of the *totus Christus* that brings this to the fore. He notes that Augustine regularly speaks of Christ leading, as the head, and the Church following, as the body. We see this in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* LXV.1: *quod praecessit in capite, sequitur in corpore.*[372] Franz comments that this 'leading' and 'following' is not simply to be understood as either 'Ethisch-Examplarischen' (ethical-exemplary, as if Christ

[371] 'in hac sacerdos, in hac sacrificium est'.

[372] 'That which has preceded in the Head, will follow in the body'.

merely sets the Church an example) or 'physich-mystischen' (physical-mystical, as if the activity of the Church is just a mystical consequence of Christ's reality). Rather we should understand this leading and following 'as the consummating event of a historical encounter that takes place in faith'.[373] In this encounter, grounded in faith, Franz argues that the relationship of leading and following in the *totus Christus* is one where 'the creative influence of the head enables the development of free responsibility on the part of the limbs [that is, the body]'.[374] This bears true to this thesis' reading of *De Trinitate,* in which Augustine believes the mind genuinely remembers, understands and loves God even as such activities, and thus our imaging of the Trinity, are only possible as enabled by Christ. Indeed, this correlates too with how we understood participation in action in Part I of this thesis, not least as found in Tanner's principle of a non-competitive relationship between God and creation. However, before we bring Augustine's thought into full conversation with contemporary theologies of participation (and indeed prayer), as is the intention for Chapter Six, it will be helpful to summarise what it is that Augustine's thought (particularly in his *De Trinitate* and use of the *totus Christus*) teaches us of participation. In what follows I seek to consolidate what we have learned of participation from Augustine thus far in Part II of this thesis in order to offer an 'Augustinian model of participation', in which participation in God is understood as participation in the whole Christ.

5.4. An Augustinian Model of Participation: Participation in God as Participation in the Whole Christ

Thus far in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis we have examined a selection of participative readings of Augustine's *De Trinitate* and discerned how the treatise's structure and content, shaped as it is in terms of divine descent and human ascent, speaks of participation. In particular we have seen that Christ's mediation enables and perfects the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind such that through Christ humans can move towards

[373] 'als das im Glauben sich vollziehende Ereignis geschichtlicher Begegnung': Franz, 'Totus Christus', 115–16.

[374] 'der schöpferische Einfluss des Hauptes ermöglicht erst die Entfaltung freier Verantwortung auf Seiten der Glieder': Franz, 116.

fuller participation in God. We have seen this emphasis on Christ echoed in the language and scripture Augustine uses in *De Trinitate*. We have also traced the role of Christ's activity 'for us' and the Spirit's work 'in us' before bringing such analysis into conversation with Augustine's broader use of the concept of the *totus Christus.* Indeed, we have shown that the preposition 'in' is essential to Augustine's understanding of the place of both Christ and the Holy Spirit in our relationship to the triune God. It is as the Spirit dwells *in* us that members of the Church are united to one another and the Church in turn is united to Christ, who is *in* us through the Incarnation, and *in* whom the Church can be said to joined as a body to its head. In this light, the activities of the Church (and especially the celebration of the Eucharist) ought to be understood as activities which are enabled by and in Christ, but in which the Church nonetheless has real agency. Before focussing on the activity of prayer in Chapter Six, first I present this content from Chapters Four and Five in terms of an 'Augustinian model of participation', in which our participation in God is a participation in the whole Christ. In doing so, I begin to re-employ the account of participation offered in Chapter One.

To begin, we must recognise that it is appropriate to attribute a model of *participation* to Augustine. First, we can call Augustine's thought in *De Trinitate* participatory because he repeatedly uses vocabulary that we have seen to be participatory in intent. This includes the terms *maneo* (abide), *haereo* (cling), *conformo* (form), the neologism *coaptatio* (harmony), *trado* (hand over), *induo* (put on), and most starkly *participatio* (participate). Most importantly, such choices in vocabulary are set in the context of Augustine's theological claims, in which he makes assertions similar to those we examined in Chapter One.

In Augustine's thought, for instance, we find an affirmation of the God who is the source and end of all creation. Whilst our study of *De Trinitate* has not included special emphasis on God's role as Creator, it is apparent in the treatise that Augustine assumes the stance taken elsewhere in his writings that God is the source of all created things.[375] Similarly, he readily talks of God as transcendent to creation, with the implication, to take up the language of Chapter One, that God is not a 'thing' amongst 'things' (as the doctrine of

[375] See for instance, Augustine's comments on the creation of time in *Confessiones* XII.15.20-21, not least that 'it is derived from you, our God, so that it is completely other than you and is not being itself'(est abs te, Deo nostro, ut aliud sit plane quam tu et non id ipsum).

divine simplicity teaches). We see this, for example, in *De Trinitate* I.6.9 and its assertion that 'all substance which is not God is creature; and all that is not creature is God'.[376] Such a claim is necessary to accounts of creation's participation in God, in which one is asserting that created things participate in what they are not. Moreover, this claim (in *De Trinitate* I.6.9) is made in the context of a discussion of the divinity of Christ, who is the Word of God through whom 'all things came into being' (John 1.3). Here, already Augustine teaches that creation's participation in God is to be understood as being in and through Christ, who is the Word incarnate.

In Chapter One we also understood that God is the end of all creation. We paid particular attention to this when seeking to discern what is particular about human participation in God. In conversation with Tanner we claimed that what distinguishes human participation in God from that of the rest of creation, is the human's creation in the *imago Dei*. Being in the *imago Dei*, for Tanner, means that we progress towards God; progressing towards the perfecting of that image in us and thus progressing into deeper relationship with the God we image. The similarities with Augustine's *De Trinitate* are clear (albeit with noticeable differences). In *De Trinitate* Augustine argues that human ascent to God occurs through the perfecting of the imagining of the Trinity in the human mind, as the mind learns to better remember, understand and love God. Although Tanner prefers to speak of the image of *God*, rather than the imaging of the *Trinity*, the basic principle is the same: our end is to be found in God.[377]

In particular, in conversation with Meconi, we have examined the extent to which this end can be described as the human's deification. Although Augustine does not use the word *deifico* in *De Trinitate* we have seen in *De Trinitate* IV.2.4 that the text of 2 Peter 1.4 and its assertion that we participate in Christ's divinity lies at the heart of Augustine's understanding of the Incarnation. Christ participates in our human nature, Augustine says, so that we in turn may participate in his divine life by being united in him. As we observed in Chapter One, to

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[376] 'omnis enim substantia, quae Deus non est, creatura est; et quae creatura non est, Deus est'. For further discussion of both this passage and *In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus* II.10, which also speaks of the implications of God's transcendence for our participation in God, see Chapter 4.1.2.

[377] I return to the differences between Tanner's account of the image of God and Augustine's account of the imaging of the Trinity in Chapter 6.3.2.

participate is to share in what one is not, receiving that share as a gift. Thus, deification is not a denial or removal of our humanity but an assertion that, in Christ, human ontology is transformed.

Having now more closely examined Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus* we can clarify the particular form that such transformation takes; our human nature is transformed as we become members of the body of Christ, united to Christ as our head. This unity is established through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who enlivens us and enacts Christ's mediation in us. And as the Spirit, who is the very Love of God, dwells in us, we are united as members of the Church to one another in Christ. Thus we have also discerned that the Church is the arena of our participation in God and the activities of the Church (not least the Eucharist) are an enacting of that participation. As I consider the activity of prayer in the next chapter, this then is the account of participation that I want to claim as an Augustinian model: we participate in God as we participate in the whole Christ, and such participation in the whole Christ is a participation in Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and in the Church.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have built upon our examination of *De Trinitate* in Chapter Four, drawing particular attention to the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in our ascent to God. In *De Trinitate* this has been most clear in Augustine's choice of terminology and use of scripture, and in his attention to the activity of Christ 'for us' and the Spirit's work 'in us'. We have also set this analysis of *De Trinitate* within the broader context of Augustine's corpus through particular attention to his concern for the *totus Christus.* This account of the *totus Christus* has enabled us to develop our analysis of *De Trinitate*, in Chapters Four and Five, into what we have named an 'Augustinian model of participation'. Above all, we have noted that for Augustine, human participation in God is understood in terms of our participation in the whole Christ. In the final part of this thesis, it is this model of participation which I will draw into conversation with the accounts of participation and prayer with which the thesis began. I do so in order to address the conceptual questions that arose from Part I, asking in what way our prayer participates in something of God's own self and action.

Part III

Prayer as a Way of Being in the Trinity

Chapter Six

Intercession as our Way of Being in the Trinity

In this final chapter I directly address the thesis question raised in the Introduction: in what way does our prayer participate in something of God's own self and action? As indicated in the Introduction, and indeed in my discussion of types of prayer in Chapter Two, I will argue that there are fruitful answers to be discerned when considering *intercessory* prayer in particular. Thus, in this chapter it is intercession that is our focus.

First, I explore intercession as an activity of God, explaining why it is that we *can* describe the sending of the Son and the Spirit as acts of divine intercession, but *cannot* appropriately use this descriptor for the divine processions. Here I will draw especially on our analysis of the divine missions in *De Trinitate* (in Chapters Four and Five) and bring this into conversation with my claim (from Chapter Two) that prayer is an articulation of desire. I will argue that the divine missions are an enactment of divine desire, whereas the processions are better described as the source of divine desire and the place in which human desire finds its fulfilment.

I will then return to the broader question of whether our prayer (according to its various types) participates in God's self or action. To begin to answer this question, I will return to the conceptual framework deployed in Part I of this thesis – particularly, the aspects of participation raised in Chapter One, and my definition of prayer in Chapter Two. I will then bring this into conversation with our Augustinian model of participation from Part II to argue that we best articulate the participatory shape of prayer if we recognise that the activity of prayer is a participation in the whole Christ. It is in light of this insistence on participation in Christ that I return finally to my claim that intercession is a 'middle category of prayer'. By describing intercession in this way, I argue that 'intercession' is an especially helpful category for understanding human participation in God; above all, it shows us *how* we participate in God, and thus points us to our *way* of being in the Trinity.

6.1. Intercession and the Divine Missions: God's Activity 'for us' and 'in us'

In order to explore, later in this chapter, whether or not human intercession participates in something of God's own self and action, it is appropriate to first ask if there is any sense in which we can posit intercession as an activity of God. I begin, then, with a study of the divine missions, drawing especially on my own claim that prayer (including intercessory prayer) is an articulation of desire and on Augustine's description of God's activity 'for us' in Christ and 'in us' by the Holy Spirit. I will argue that by employing Augustine's account of the divine missions, and by understanding these missions as an enactment of divine desire, we can claim that God is 'for us' and 'in us' as one who intercedes.

6.1.1. God's Desire for Humanity

In Chapter Two (in conversation with the likes of Leech, Tanner, Davison and Coakley) I claimed that prayer articulates desire, that rightly-aligned human desire participates in a prior divine desire, and that we witness this divine desire enacted in the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.[378] In that discussion my interest was in prayer in general, rather than intercession in particular, and only went so far as to posit in very broad terms that we see divine desire enacted as the Holy Spirit empowers us to pray in union with Christ. I will now explore more thoroughly the ways in which the divine missions exhibit God's desire for creation and, in particular, reconciliation with humanity. As an enactment of God's desire for the restoration of right human relationship with him, I will argue that we can confidently describe the divine missions as acts of divine intercession.

Augustine's understanding of the relationship between God and creation, and humans in particular, lends itself well to this way that I will employ the concept of divine desire. Bochet, in her work *Saint Augustin et le Desir,* traces three movements of desire with which Augustine's corpus is concerned: desire's wandering astray (*l'errance du desir*), the momentum of desire (*l'elan du desir*), and the fulfilment of desire (*l'accomplissement*).[379] She argues that wrongly ordered human desire must be converted, turned back to a right-ordering before God *by* Christ, and finally find its fulfilment *in* the person of Christ.[380] She appeals to Christ's mediatory ministry on the cross as that which reshapes our desires, and to the *totus Christus* as the locus of desire's fulfilment, as we are united to Christ.[381] In

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[378] This definition of prayer as an articulation of desire is found too in Augustine's teaching on prayer. In *Enarrationes in Psalmos* XXXVII.14 Augustine states of human prayer that 'your very desire is your prayer and your continuous desire is your continuous prayer' (ipsum enim desiderium tuum, oratio tua est: et si continuum desiderium, continua oratio).

[379] These are the titles she uses for the three parts of her book. See Bochet, *Saint Augustin et Le Désir de Dieu*.

[380] Bochet, 354–96.

[381] A good example of this can be seen in Augustine's use of nuptial imagery to describe the *totus Christus.* In his *In Epistolam Ioannis Tractatus* I.2, for instance, Augustine states that the formation of the whole Christ is based upon the Incarnation, in which Christ takes on human flesh in 'that Bridegroom's chamber [which] was the Virgin's womb, because in that

particular, she frames this conversion and fulfilment of desire in terms of divine descent and human ascent: 'the descent of the Word into flesh is ordered to the ascent of all humanity towards the Father, and this corresponds to the fulfilment of desire', Bochet says.[382] We have observed this in our own reading of *De Trinitate*, in which it is the divine missions, observed in Christ's activity 'for us' and the Spirit's activity 'in us', that enable human ascent towards God, as they (Christ and the Spirit) perfect the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind.

Moreover, Chapter Two's broader conceptual interest in prayer included an insistence that human desire must be understood as it is ordered in relation to pre-eminent divine desire. We observed this particularly in conversation with Coakley, for whom the primacy of divine desire is the context of her own prayer-focussed account of the Trinity. Bochet argues that in Augustine we discover desire has a divine source, not least because 'desire is the work of grace, of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the hearts of believers and who pours out there, from this life [*la vie celeste*, the heavenly life], divine charity'.[383] Indeed, as we have seen already, 'love' is one of the primary titles rightly attributed to the Spirit, who unites us with that very Christ in whom, Bochet insists, 'God searches for humanity'.[384]

Of course, as was noted at length in Chapter Two, we must be clear what we mean by desire if we are to attribute it pre-eminently to God. In particular, we must be sure not to introduce need into our description of God, or else we undermine our description of God's simplicity and transcendence. In Chapter Two, in conversation with Davison, we noted Nygren's error in separating *eros* and *agape*, and the unhelpful way in which he would have us attribute need and self-interest to *eros* such that only *agape* (which he named as 'self-sacrificing') can be attributed to God. It is in fact Augustine's account of love, and in particular his use of various terms across his corpus (including *caritas*, *amor*, and *dilectio*), which Nygren was seeking to present and critique. 'The streams of Eros and Agape meet in Augustine,' Nygren claims, and Augustine's position 'contains not only strong tensions, but

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virginal womb were joined the two, the Bridegroom and the bride' (et illius sponsi thalamus fuit uterus Virginis, quia in illo utero virginali coniuncti sunt duo, sponsus et sponsa).

[382] Bochet, *Saint Augustin et Le Désir de Dieu*, 382.

[383] 'Car ce désir est l'oeuvre de la grâce, de l'Esprit Saint qui habite le coeur des croyants et qui y répand, dès cette vie, la charité divine': Bochet, 395.

[384] Bochet, 335.

real inner contradictions'.[385] However, a number of scholars of Augustine have echoed the concerns I raised with Nygren's account in Chapter Two, noting that in Augustine there is not a distinction to be found between what Nygren calls *eros* and *agape* and that it is because of his refusal to define love in these stark terms that Augustine's presentation of love is so fruitful.[386] Oliver O'Donovan, for instance, argues that when considering both the range of Augustine's vocabulary and his concern for both love of neighbour and love of God, 'it is not that there are several different loves, immanently distinguished, but that the loving subject stands in a complex and variable relation to the reality which his love confronts'.[387] In other words, for Augustine, love is to be understood primarily in terms of its ordering before God, not according to divisions driven by vocabulary. Indeed, he uses terminology for love interchangeably, as he himself notes in *De Trinitate* XV.18.32, for instance, where he uses *dilectio* and *caritas* as synonyms ('for they are both names for one thing'), in a context where the love being spoken of is precisely that Love of God that is the Holy Spirit, by which the Trinity dwells in us and through which we are brought to God.[388] In his critique of Nygren, John Burnaby also makes reference to the activity of God *in* us, particularly what this thesis has determined as the participative role of the Holy Spirit, as it, Love, dwells in us. In his discussion of the phrase 'love of God' Burnaby is insistent that Augustine means human love of God, rather than God's love (i.e., God is love's object, not subject, in this phrase), but he properly understands this in the context of the God who *is* Love: 'the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts is no mere human affection… it is God's own love which is ours by His gift. But its object remains to the end God not man – or rather, man only as "in God"'.[389]

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[385] Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 451.

[386] E.g., John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 21; Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 10–13. Bochet also notes her rejection of Nygren's thesis but declines to critique his work in detail; see Bochet, *Saint Augustin et Le Désir de Dieu*, 277n1, 283n3. The arguments made in this thesis - not least my claim that Augustine is to be read participatively and that our understanding of prayer is enriched if we do so - are open to further development and research in conversation with the study of Augustine's theology of desire.

[387] O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 10, 12.

[388] 'nam unius rei est utrumque nomen'.

[389] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 99.

Our love of God, in other words, is intimately bound up with God's love insofar as it is the Love of God in us (by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, this thesis has argued). Too clean a separation between God's love and human love in the manner that Nygren presents it fails to truly render God's Love (the Holy Spirit) *in* us.

Whilst Burnaby, in his critique of Nygren, does not agree that we can call God's love 'desire', in the analysis which follows, of the divine missions as intercession, I claim with the likes of Coakley (again, as described in Chapter Two) that we can call God's love desire, provided that we are clear that such desire is a perfect divine desire which is not marked by any need; neither a need for its ordering to be corrected (for divine desire is by its nature ordered to itself), nor a need for us (as if God 'required' us).[390] Rather, divine desire, is marked by will, and particularly the will to enable the reconciliation of human persons with God.[391] This is where God's desire for humanity comes in to view in the divine missions, since they are what reconcile us to God. In Chapter Two, I claimed that the human articulation of a desire for relationship with another, in the context of prayer, is to be called 'intercession'. Since divine desire enables our reconciliation to God, it is fitting that we consider whether the divine missions, as articulations of divine desire, may rightly be called divine intercession.

6.1.2. The Intercession of the Son

In considering whether we can describe the missions of the Son and Spirit as 'divine intercession' there are two matters for discussion: 1) whether the Son and Spirit engage in intercessory prayer; and 2) whether we can label the mediatory work of the Son and Spirit 'for us' and 'in us' as intercessory. In this analysis of the intercession of the Son, it is thus the

[390] Burnaby's critique of Nygren's understanding of *eros* is precisely that he does not think *eros* is to be restricted to meaning 'desire', see Burnaby, 109. Note (as I will discuss shortly, see Chapter 6.3.1) to claim that God does not need us does not prevent us from saying that God desires to act through us.

[391] Whilst Burnaby will not call God's love 'desire' he does share this distinction between 'need' and 'will' and my assertion that only the latter can be attributed to God; see Burnaby, 161–79.

question of Christ's intercessory prayer *and* the question of Christ's mediatory activity which is in mind.

Firstly, as regards the intercessory prayer of Christ, we have already ascertained that Christ prays in *forma servi*. However, for Augustine, Christ in *forma servi* can never be separated from Christ in *forma Dei*; the Christ who sleeps in the manger and the Christ who hangs on the cross is always the incarnate Son. Thus, whilst Augustine's christological grammar dictates that when addressing instances of the incarnate Christ at prayer in the Gospel narratives, we must attribute these acts to Christ in *forma servi,* not Christ in *forma Dei,* we cannot cleanly separate such human activity of Christ from Christ's identity as the divine Son. Indeed, we have seen the importance of this in Augustine's participative thought, and especially in the way in which Augustine's employs themes of deification. We have observed in our analysis of the *totus Christus* that we are in Christ as a consequence of Christ's sharing in our nature (in *forma servi*). When this participation in Christ is read in light of Meconi's claim that the Christian goal is to 'become gods' as we 'become members of the whole Christ', we discover that for Augustine to participate in Christ is for us to share, albeit in a human manner (in *forma servi*), in what Christ is in *forma Dei.*[392] And for Augustine, it is this *totus Christus,* in which we share in Christ's divinity, which is how we are to understand human prayer (including intercession) and its participation in Christ's own prayer. Christ's intercessory prayer in *forma servi* thus cannot be separated from his identity as the Son. Similarly, our participation in Christ's intercessory prayer reveals itself to be a share not only in Christ's human activity, but also a participation in that of Christ which we are not, his identity in *forma Dei.*

As well as the implications of Christ's intercessory prayer in *forma servi* for our understanding of his identity in *forma Dei*, we can also describe God's desire for humanity, enacted in the descent of the Son, as an act of intercession. That the descent of the Son is an enactment of divine desire follows from the assertion in the Gospel of John, that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' (3.16). Augustine himself explains that having been 'exiled' from the 'unchanging joy' of union with God, we must turn away from sin and return to God,

[392] Meconi, *The One Christ*, xii. For his discussion of the *totus Christus* see Meconi, 175–233.

and that this is made possible because of the divine descents (*De Trinitate* IV.1.2), in which the incarnate Son acts 'for us', reconciling us to God. The reason for the sending of the Son (as well the sending of the Holy Spirit) is thus divine desire; it is an enacting of God's will to enable the reconciliation of human persons with himself. As Meconi puts it, choosing to highlight divine adoption as an aspect of this reconciliation of humans with God:

> The Son descends out of the Father's desire to add to his children, namely to extend his paternity to creatures. Such is the love the Father has for the Son [*tanta caritas*] that he wants to extend it even to beings of a distinct, lesser order of being, but who are now heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.[393]

We have discerned through our analysis of *De Trinitate*, not least in conversation with Augustine's broader interest in the concept of the *totus Christus*, that which Meconi claims in his language of 'heirs' and 'co-heirs': the divine descents enable human participation in God. In *De Trinitate* this process is depicted particularly as Christ's perfecting the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind by his mediatory death. God graciously acts in creation for our reconciliation through the descent of the Son, in order to restore us to a relationship of strong participation in God (to use Tanner's terminology), precisely in that same incarnate Son who mediates for us on the cross and through whom we share in the divine life as we participate in the whole Christ. In this way, the particular form of divine desire seen in the mission of the Son can be described in terms of intercession, because it is a 'going about between', here between God and creation, with the intent of restoring relationship. As we saw in Chapter Two, such mediation in pursuit of relationship is also characteristic of human intercession. The sending of the Son, therefore, as it enacts God's desire for reconciliation with humanity, can also be understood as an act of intercession. Indeed, Augustine himself uses 'intercession' as a description of the purpose of the Son's descent in *De Trinitate* IV.2.4, where he states that 'God became a just man and has interceded (*intercessit*) to God for sinful humans… so he put on himself the similarity of our humanity to take away the dissimilarity of our iniquity, and participating in our mortality he made us to participate in his divinity'. To

[393] Meconi, 109.

name the descent of the Son as the intercession of the Son is thus in keeping with Augustine's own use of the term *intercedo*.[394]

6.1.3. The Intercession of the Holy Spirit

The mission of the Holy Spirit, like that of the Son, is for the enacting of the reconciliation of humans with God and thus can also be described as an enactment of the divine desire for such reconciliation. Insofar as this act of desire is the indwelling of the whole Trinity in us (*De Trinitate* XV.18.32), such that we participate in God, it too can be described as an act of intercession. As in our discussion of the intercession of the Son, there are two senses in which we must consider how it is that the Spirit intercedes. The intercessory purpose of the Spirit's mission will thus be considered in the context of the Spirit's more specific role in intercessory prayer.

As we saw in Chapter Three, in his *Epistola* CXXX Augustine interprets Romans 8:22-26 by arguing that the Holy Spirit cannot be in need and thus rather than groaning himself, 'he makes us to plead with groans'.[395] As such, Augustine takes Paul's teaching that the Spirit 'intercedes with sighs too deep for words' as a movement of the Spirit that specifically leads *us* to prayer, but not as indicating prayer *by* the Spirit. In other words, according only to Augustine's comments in *Epistola* CXXX, we can only say that the Spirit stirs us to intercede, not that the Spirit intercedes in us. This understanding of prayer, however, does not fit the depiction of intercession this thesis has garnered more broadly from

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[394] There is a second instance in *De Trinitate* where Augustine uses *intercedo* to discuss the intercession of Christ. In IV.4.7 Augustine references the plea of the gardener in the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13.8-9). Augustine here clearly understands the fig tree as a type for the Church. Although in the Gospel, the gardener is assumed to be a type for God the Father, the fact that in IV.4.7 the parable is juxtaposed with Christ's healing of the crippled woman (Luke 13.11-16) implies that Augustine interprets the gardener as a type for Christ. Here then we have an indication of Augustine's primary interest in intercession in *De Trinitate*: the intercession of Christ 'for us' as he mediates on our behalf in order for us, 'in Christ', to participate in God.

[395] *Epistola* CXXX.28.

De Trinitate. In this broader perspective, intercession is concerned with the restoration of relationships, including that between human persons and God (understood as reflecting desire not caused by need on God's side). In *Epistola* CXXX Augustine sets human prayer in the context of need, advising Proba to pray from her deprivation.[396] This implies that Augustine's concern in this text is with those types of prayer that involve the satisfaction of human need (viz. confession, thanksgiving and petition). Since petition is a type of prayer enacted by humans, the Holy Spirit certainly does not pray in the mode of petition – but this does not exclude the possibility of talking about the Holy Spirit's undertaking forms of prayer that are not rooted in the need of the one praying – including intercession.[397]

Indeed, to talk of the Holy Spirit undertaking the activity of intercessory prayer in us echoes the depiction of the Spirit that this thesis has garnered more broadly from *De Trinitate* and from Augustine's interest in the *totus Christus.* As we observed in Chapter Five, the Holy Spirit acts 'in us' to complete the activity of God 'for us' in Christ, and it is the Spirit not just acting through us but dwelling *in* us that unites us to Christ, forming us into the *totus Christus.* It is thus the Spirit which enables our participation in Christ, which is itself the means of our participation in God. If we can say by virtue of Christ's death that the purpose of the Son's descent is to intercede for us, then so too we can say that the descent of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of sharing in that intercession by realising it in us. In terms of the specific activity of intercessory prayer, this means that the Spirit intercedes in us as the one who dwells in us, enacting in us a desire for restoration of relationship with other humans (for whom we intercede) and with God. Indeed, we can say not only that the Spirit realises Christ's intercession in us, but that the Spirit itself intercedes in us. If, as Augustine claims in *De Trinitate* XV.18.32, it is through the Spirit's indwelling in us that the whole Trinity dwells in us, the Spirit not only enacts our unity in Christ, but also brings alive in us that restored relationship which is the very intent of the divine missions. We simply cannot

[396] *Epistola* CXXX.1.1.

[397] This is not to say that the Holy Spirit does not act through human prayers of petition, since it is the Holy Spirit who stirs humans to all types of prayer. This is an assertion that the Spirit stirs us to petition (and confession and thanksgiving) and works through such prayers, but that these *cannot* be described as instances of the Spirit itself petitioning (or confessing or giving thanks). For further discussion of this distinction see Chapter 6.3.3.

understand the sending of the Son as an act of intercession unless we perceive the sending of the Spirit as an act of intercession also.

6.2. Intercession and the Divine Processions

Where we have exercised confidence in describing the divine missions as acts of intercession, it is with far more caution that I approach my discussion of the divine processions. Augustine's *De Trinitate* sets a precedent for this. In his own focus on the divine processions in Books V-VII, for instance, Augustine exercises repeated caution, not least in his use of terminology (e.g., V.8.9-9.10). Earlier, the processions are discussed in Books I-IV but Augustine's largest focus here is on the sending of the Son and the Spirit, and the matter of human encounter with God in the divine missions. From Books VIII onwards Augustine's reference to the divine processions is then set in the context of his discussion of human participation in God, through the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind. *De Trinitate* is about the Trinity but it does not presume to over-examine the divine processions apart from the divine missions. What Augustine does say of the divine processions – that the 'persons' are distinguished only by their relationship to one another – emerges from what creation encounters of God.

Various of the concepts introduced in Chapter One as central to participation theology similarly encourage us to exercise caution in our discussion of the divine processions, whilst reminding us that we are not bound to say nothing at all. In the doctrine of divine simplicity we noted that we cannot even properly call God a 'thing' amongst other things or else we undermine the difference between God and creation. This difference we named 'transcendence'. At the same time, Tanner's account of God's radical transcendence drew our attention to the consequences of God's otherness, namely that immanence and transcendence are not a problem of contradiction to be solved, as if God and creation are competing 'things'. Rather, it is God's transcendence, his radical difference from all created things, that makes possible God's immanence to creation.

As Augustine so clearly asserts in *De Trinitate,* it is in the divine missions that God is immanent to creation, and most clearly so in the Incarnation. In turn it is as our faith is perfected through the mediation of Christ, as we are moved from *scientia* to *sapientia*, that we can postulate what the divine missions teach us of the processions. As Ayres puts it: 'one

of the most well known principles of Augustine's Trinitarian theology is that the missions reveal processions'.[398] In particular the missions reveal both that the Son and the Spirit are equal with one another and with the Father, and that the Father is the *principium* or source of the Son and the Spirit, who are begotten and proceed from the Father (see *De Trinitate* IV.21.31).

God, then, is as God reveals himself in the divine missions. The question remains whether we can say anything more of the processions as a result of the missions, besides asserting the unity of the persons and distinguishing them according to their relations. More specifically, does my claim that the divine missions are enactments of divine desire and thus that they are divine intercessions, tell us anything particular about the divine processions? Here I will argue that this account of the divine missions does confirm the appropriateness of Augustine's famous analogy for the processions (from *De Trinitate* VIII.10.14) - lover, beloved and the love shared between them – inviting us to speak of the processions not in terms of divine desire, but as divine delight. What we cannot do is claim the processions as intercessions.

Insofar as the divine missions enact a desire for enabling human reconciliation with God, I have argued that we can call them intercessions. I have done so through a comparison with my definition of intercessory prayer in Chapter Two, where I defined intercession as a type of prayer which articulates a desire for relationship. When it comes to the divine processions, which are defined by their own eternal relationship rather than their relationship with creation (albeit such immanence is their consequence), arguably it makes more sense to speak of divine *delight* than divine desire. Burnaby employs a distinction between desire and delight when discussing human love of God: 'the *raison d'être* of all human love is that realised union of lover and beloved in which desire gives place to delight, because need has been met by the good appropriate to it,' he says.[399] We have already clarified that this question of need cannot apply to God, even in the divine missions and so when I use 'delight' to speak about the divine processions this is not to be taken as meaning that there is need in God that requires satisfaction. Rather, the divine processions are 'divine delight' insofar as they are the source of all divine desire. For example, we have observed that the mission of the Spirit entails the Spirit's indwelling in the Church as love, such that human persons can, in

[398] Ayres, 'Augustine on the Spirit as the Soul of the Body', 179.

[399] Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 96.

turn, love one another and God. It is the Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son, in an eternal relationship analogous to the love shared between a lover and beloved, that Augustine believes is the source of this divine mission and its consequences in the life of the Church (cf. *De Trinitate* VIII.10.14 and XV.17.31). The relationships that constitute the divine processions are thus what is revealed in the divine missions, which we encounter as divine desire and through which we are led to desire God in turn. It is in this sense that we can call the processions 'divine delight', as the origin of what is revealed to us as divine desire, and thereby as the fulfilment of rightly-ordered human desire. It is only as divine intercession's source and human intercession's fulfilment that we can speak meaningfully of the divine processions and intercession; it makes little sense to speak of the divine processions as themselves intercessory.

6.3. Intercession and Human Participation in God

Having considered how we can talk of the divine missions as intercessions and the limits of what we can say regarding the divine processions, thus clarifying further the self and action of the God in whom humans participate, we now turn to the question of our prayer as a component of such participation in God. In particular I address our thesis question, asking in what ways human prayer participates in something of God's own self or action. Initially I will broaden our scope once again from intercession in particular to prayer in general (bringing the conceptual framework introduced in Chapters One and Two of this thesis into conversation with the Augustinian model of participation offered in Chapter Five). I address prayer in general like this in order to show that intercession is an especially helpful category for understanding human participation in God.

6.3.1. Prayer and Aspects of Participation

First, then, let us reconsider the aspects of participation introduced in Chapter One in order to address our thesis question, namely how human prayer can be called a participation in

something of God's own self and action.[400] Our analysis will deliberately echo that found in Chapter One. I begin here in in conversation with Davison's accounts of participation, before focussing in the next section on Tanner's account of participation, bringing her interest in the particulars of human participation in God into conversation with the Augustinian model of participation discerned in Chapter Five.

In Chapter One, I first defined participation theology as a claim that all creation comes from God, that creation's character is shaped by God its creator, and that creation finds its telos in God. All creation must thus be understood in light of our participative relationship with God. To think about human prayer in terms of a theology of participation is, at its most general, to consider the ways in which human prayer relates to our nature as persons who come from God, are shaped by God and finds their telos in God. In Chapter Two we described human prayer as an articulation of human desire, which finds its proper end in God. Such desire we have set in the context of pre-eminent divine desire: that which is enacted in the divine missions. Thus, God is already the source and end of that very desire which constitutes human prayer (as it is properly conformed to God, of course). Moreover, we have noted that human prayer is an articulation of desire from a position of need or lack. Insofar as human prayer is a conversation with God that expects God to be the one to answer and fulfil the desires articulated in human prayer, such prayer betrays the fact of human dependence on God. And it is precisely such human, indeed creaturely, dependence on God that theologies of participation assert in their claim that God is the source and end of all created things. Already, then, the nature of human prayer points us towards the truth of human participation in God.

We can, however, inquire further into the relationship between prayer and participation. In particular, the notion of all creation's participation in God invites us to consider the particular ways that the activity of human prayer is itself a specific act of participation in God. In what follows I will consider four options in turn: 1) that human prayer aligns with the character of God; 2) that God desires human prayer; 3) that human prayer imitates divine prayer; and 4) that God's action enables and shapes human prayer.

[400] God's self and action cannot be separated from one another. We see this, for instance, in the fact that the divine missions reveal the divine procession – God acts as God is, and God is as God acts.

First, we can answer our thesis question and speak of human prayer as an activity which participates in something of God's own self and action if we assert that human prayer participates in God when the content of such prayer corresponds with the character of God. As in prayer we articulate a desire for things like holiness or justice, for instance, we are asking God to enact attributes that can only ever find their source and end in God, who *is* Holy and Just. Let us compare this to Augustine's comments in *De Trinitate* VIII.6.9. Here he asks how it is that we know what 'just' is, claiming that we can begin to recognise what is just through introspection. He introduces this question as he begins his search for the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind, thus suggesting that the 'just' which we discern within ourselves is itself an image of that 'just' which is truly a descriptor of God. Similarly, that which we speak as 'just' in prayer images God as its source. Indeed, we should expect human desires to better reflect God's character as they are increasingly re-ordered before God and conformed to his will. We should expect the God who is Holy and therefore whose will is holy, to reshape us into holy people. Moreover, if McCabe is correct (as I claimed in Chapter Two that he is), that 'the grace of God will grow in us… precisely in the course of our prayer', we can expect such reshaping of the human person according to God's character to happen during the act of human prayer.[401] Already in terms of its content, then, human prayer reveals itself to be a participation in God because as it is gradually conformed to God's will the content of human prayer increasingly images the character of the God to whom it is addressed. What we have here is an example of the aspect of participation Davison associated with formal causation; that 'we look to God as the cause of creation's characterfulness'.[402] More particularly, this is an example of formal causation evident in the *content* of what is spoken in human prayer, since we will shortly recognise too an application of formal causation pertaining to the very *activity* of prayer.

A second approach to answering the question of whether human prayer participates in something of God's being and action, is to assert that God does not need us to pray but he does desire our prayer.[403] In Chapter Two I claimed that God is the final satisfaction of rightly-ordered human desire. It was in light of this that we understood misaligned human

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[401] McCabe, *God Matters*, 224.

[402] Davison, *Participation in God*, 84.

[403] Note, that it was in light of God's desire for our prayer that we first examined the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in human prayer, in Chapter 2.2.1.

desire as a failure to recognise God as creation's source and end, and bore some of the intellectual burden of frustrated human desire (God's 'no' in answer to human prayer), recognising this as evidence of the need for our desires to be continually conformed to God's will. In addition, in conversation with Coakley, I insisted on the primacy of divine desire, thus claiming that rightly-ordered human desire also finds its source in God. Since God is the source and satisfaction of human desire, and we can rightly speak of God 'desiring', we can claim that our prayer participates in God because it is an act which God desires of us.[404] The clearest evidence of this desire for our prayer, unmarked by any need that would undermine God's transcendence, is the human prayer of Christ. The prayers of Christ are gratuitous, in the sense that the relationship between the Father and the incarnate Son cannot require a Christ who prays. Rather, we recognise Christ at prayer as evidence of his gracious participation in our humanity and thus an aspect of Christ's mediatory activity 'for us', as he intercedes for us as one sharing in our nature. It is in this context, indeed *in* Christ's very speech according to Augustine's understanding of the *totus Christus*, that all human prayer is spoken by us and heard and answered by God. As Hebrews 4.15-16 puts it:

> we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Son is sent to be united to our humanity and the incarnate Son prays in that humanity as an enactment of God's desire not just to enable our reconciliation to him; God also desires our prayers as an aspect of that reconciled relationship, in which we offer our desires for God's correction and exhibit our dependence on God as our source and end.

Indeed, we can argue too, in conversation with Davison, that 'the grace of God then also involves God's doing *with us and through us* what God could have done without us', such that God desires human prayer as a way of exercising his agency in creation.[405] This relies on the same basic principle of non-competition as we discerned in Tanner's writings,

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[404] Note from our discussion in 6.1.1 that this language of divine desire sits most comfortably with the divine missions. When speaking of the divine processions in particular, we would do better to say that God delights in our prayer.

[405] Davison, *Participation in God*, 223.

for it is an assertion that divine and human action are not in competition with one another and thus God can work through human action without limiting himself or denying us real agency.[406] Indeed, Davison justifies this claim that God desires to work through us with reference to Augustine.[407] He observes Augustine's claim in *Sermo* CLXIX.11.13 that 'while therefore he [God] made you without you, he does not justify you without you… yet it is he himself that justifies'.[408] We find evidence of this too in scripture. See, for example, Hebrew 13.21 and its prayer that God would be working 'among us that which is pleasing in his sight'. It is thus this thesis' assertion that one such means of God working among us is precisely in the human act of prayer. And in so far as God desires our prayer, then, human prayer exhibits final causation; it is an act that participates in God as its end and fulfilment, performed 'to' God but also 'for' God. As Davison puts it, 'to say that God is the final cause of creatures is first of all to say that creatures exist for God's sake'.[409] This is made especially evident in God's desire to receive human prayer and to minster through it.

A third possible answer to the question of how human prayer participates in God, is the claim that human prayer imitates divine prayer. Here we have a particularly stark assertion of formal causation applied to the very *activity* of human prayer (as opposed to its content, which we discussed above). This is the claim that the act of human prayer images a prior act of divine prayer. We observed a claim like this in our Introduction and in Chapter Two, in Speyr's assertion that our prayer is a 'participation in the eternal conversation between Father, Son and Spirit', a conversation which is a reciprocal exchange of expectation

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[406] In a recent homily, Davison refers to this as the fact that there is 'no zero-sum game' at play in the relationship between God and creation. In a context particularly concerned with the mission of the Church, of which prayer is a key aspect (not least in relation to the divine missions), Davison asserts that we can speak of the God who desires to work through us without thereby placing limits on God. See Andrew Davison, '"With God There Is No Zero-Sum": A Sermon for the Closing Mass of the Anglican Catholic Future / Forward in Faith Conference 20 September 2018', in *God's Church in the World: The Gift of Catholic Mission*, ed. Susan Lucas (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2020), 118–21.

[407] Davison, *Participation in God*, 223.

[408] 'qui ergo fecit te sine te, non te iustificat sine te... tamen ipse iustificat'.

[409] Davison, *Participation in God*, 113.

and fulfilment even in the divine processions.[410] This claim, as one that says we can speak of prayer as a characteristic of the divine processions, requires careful testing. We ascertained above that it is more appropriate to speak of the relations that are the divine processions in terms of delight rather than desire; just as the missions reveal to us the processions, so God's desire enacted in the sending of the Son and the Spirit reveals to us the delight of the Father, Son and Spirit who are lover, beloved and love (cf. *De Trinitate* VIII.10.14). In this context it is appropriate to speak of the Father, Son and Spirit contemplating or praising one another. These types of prayer, and their content as beholding and glorifying, can be sensibly described as either acts of desire *or* acts of delight, if we determine desire to be that expressed when the one being beheld or glorified is 'other' than the one who contemplates or praises, and delight that when the one who contemplates or praises *is* the one being beheld and glorified. In other words, when God contemplates or praises himself it is an act of delight, when humans contemplate or praise God, it is an articulation of desire. Through the meditation of Christ our desire is being conformed to a right-ordering before God such that it finds its fulfilment in the God who delights. Therefore, as regards contemplation and praise, in which we desire the God who delights in himself, we *can* speak of human prayer as an imitation of divine prayer. In Chapter Two we also observed, however, that confession, thanksgiving and petition cannot be claimed as activities of God because they are each innately associated with lack or need. When humans confess, give thanks or petition God they thus *cannot* be imitating something that God does himself. We are reminded once again of the need to demarcate the different types of prayer and to speak of human prayer as an act of participation in God in light of those differences.

It is in light of such categorising of prayer that intercession emerges, and indeed reveals itself to be a particularly fruitful type of prayer for understanding human participation in God, for it is intercession that reveals *how* it is that we imitate God (for example, in acts of contemplation or praise). In this chapter we have defined divine intercession as the enactment of God's desire to enable human reconciliation to him, enacted precisely in the divine missions. In light of this, we will now discover that, for humans, to pray is not simply to copy

[410] Speyr, *The World of Prayer*, 79. For her discussion of expectation and fulfilment see Speyr, 29.

God's intercession but to be enabled by God's intercessions.[411] Here we have our fourth possible answer to our thesis question, namely that human prayer participates in God's being and action because it is God that enables and shapes our prayer.

In some ways this fourth answer to our thesis question posits God as the efficient and formal cause of our prayer (to use Davison's preferred terminology) since God is the one who makes our prayer possible in such a way (or in such a form) that it draws us into closer relationship with him. We might also appeal to Sherman's language of a 'creative turn' in participation theology, in which, since human activity need not be at odds with God's activity, we can 'envision human soteriological flourishing as simultaneously a *work* and a *gift*'.[412] In the context of prayer, then, we can speak meaningfully both of God's intercession enacted in us for our salvation as 'gift', and of our own prayer as a 'work' or activity not in competition with God's intercession but set in context with it. However, as we will see in the following section, it is Tanner's account of strong participation, brought into conversation with Augustine's participatory model, which better describes the manner in which divine prayer enables human prayer. Together, these two theologians show us that we *can* describe human prayer as a participation in God because God's action enables and shapes our prayer, specifically in the person of Christ (through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit), in whom the Church at prayer participates as the whole Christ.

6.3.2. Prayer as Participation in the Whole Christ

In Chapter One I gave three reasons for favouring Tanner's account of participation: 1) her distinction between weak and strong participation makes clear how humans in particularly participate in God; 2) her principles of non-competition between God and creation and the radical transcendence of God allow us to speak meaningfully of God's interaction with creation, and of human action in relation to divine action; and 3) her interest in the *imago Dei* as the locus of strong participation shares similarities with Augustine's interest in the imaging of the Trinity and helpfully frames human participation as movement towards God. In this

[411] Here I deliberately use 'pray' in its general sense, for every type of human prayer is in need of the conformation to God's will that the divine missions enact in us as part of our reconciliation to God. Towards the end of Chapter 6.3.2 and in Chapter 6.3.3 I will turn my attention to the particular ways that human *intercession* is enabled by divine intercession.
[412] Sherman, 'A Genealogy of Participation', 103.

section I will address the second and third of these reasons in turn, bringing Tanner into conversation with Augustine on the question of human participation in God. My comments on the first reason, however, need only be brief; that is, let us observe that it is Tanner's concept of strong participation that is our primary concern since it is the human activity of prayer that is our interest.

Tanner's assertion of a non-competitive relationship between God and creation emerges from the fact that God and creation are utterly different from one another, such that they cannot then be in competition with one another as if they were both opposing 'things'. It is thus a concept rooted in God's transcendence. Because Tanner has established that God and creation are not in competition, she can assert God's radical transcendence in which God's transcendence is that which allows God to be immanent to what he is not, namely creation. It is this understanding of transcendence, albeit not described in Tanner's terms, that underpins Augustine's entire model of participation. It is because divinity and humanity are not opposed that we can speak with Augustine of Christ's Incarnation: of his action in *forma servi* and *forma Dei*, indeed of his sharing in our humanity such that we can, in him, share in a human fashion in his divine life. Similarly, it is because humanity and divinity are not in competition that we can speak of the Spirit really dwelling in us and thus us in Christ, such that we are united to our neighbours and to Christ (our head) as the body of the Church. Indeed, this also has implications for how we understand human action, including the action of prayer. We observed in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* that it is as a consequence of the *totus* Christus, the unity of Christ and the Church in the whole Christ, that our prayer is united to Christ's human prayer.[413] Under an Augustinian model of participation, we cannot understand prayer apart from the concept of the *totus Christus*, which in turn cannot be understood apart from the principle that God and creation are not in competition with one another, and that God's transcendence thus enables his intimacy with us.

In Part II of this thesis we used Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus* to better understand the shape of participation in *De Trinitate*, in which human participation in God occurs as the human mind's imaging of the Trinity is perfected by Christ. For Tanner, our strong participation in God occurs in our imaging of God because it is through 'attachment to

[413] Although, as we have noted before, we must assert that Christ does *not* pray prayers of confessions, since unlike us he is without sin.

the divine image' that we are perfected for closer relationship with God.[414] Tanner's account of the *imago Dei* differs from Augustine's, because he avoids stating that human persons are in the image of the Divine Image (as Tanner's claim that Christ is 'the key' argues) preferring to speak of humans as imaging the whole Trinity.[415] For Augustine, to speak of being in the image of the Son, that is to describe humans as 'after the image' (*ad imaginem*) of the Divine Image, is to bring us too close to the equality shared between the Son and the Father; it is to undermine 'the inequality of the likeness' (*imparem similitudinem*) between humans and God. Augustine prefers to describe humans as in the image of the Trinity because this lends itself to his assertion that to image the Trinity is to approach or ascend towards God.[416] Here then Augustine and Tanner differ. However, in their own ways, both Tanner and Augustine understand human participation in God as a movement in which the human person is perfected, in attachment to the divine Image (as Tanner describes it), or through the mediation of Christ who perfects our imaging of the Trinity in the human mind (as Augustine prefers).[417]

In addition, in both their accounts of such movement towards God, Tanner and Augustine give heed to the role of the Holy Spirit, and particularly in a way that reminds us

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[414] Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 16.

[415] Tanner, 5. For Tanner's account of how Christ (who is the incarnate Son, the Divine Image, who we image) leads us into a trinitarian way of life, see Tanner, 140–206.

[416] *De Trinitate* VII.6.12.

[417] Note, that in Tanner's comments on *De Trinitate* she claims that Augustine (in Books VIII-XI) implies too readily that the image of the Trinity is located *in* the human mind, so much so that 'the mind is a *better* image of God when knowing itself rather than God' (cf. *De Trinitate* IX.11.16). Here her comments sound similar to Du Roy and Schmaus' concerns (as examined in 4.3.4.1) that Augustine is offering simple and insufficient psychological analogies for the Trinity. However, she does immediately state that 'in subsequent books of *De Trinitate* Augustine dispels this impression by affirming that the soul's relations to itself become the image of God in the strongest sense only when informed by an actual relationship with God'. Tanner's error is in failing to acknowledge that Books VIII-XI are earlier moves in the very argument which leads Augustine to his claims about participation in God through the imaging of the Trinity (in *De Trinitate* XIV.8.11 and XIV.11.15). See Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 4.

that the participatory shape of human prayer is bound up with prayer's definition as an articulation of desire. For Tanner, it is through the Spirit that Christ is in us and we are in Christ and it is thus the Spirit who sanctifies us, bringing about changes in our lives, namely the 'good changes… that attachment to Christ brings about'.[418] If it is in attachment to Christ, the divine Image, that we participate strongly in God, it is through the Spirit's work in us that such attachment shows forth in our lives, in love of neighbour and of God. We have observed similar in Augustine's understanding of the Spirit, especially in his account of the Spirit uniting the members of the Church to each other and to Christ as the *totus Christus.* This uniting role of the Spirit is itself based upon Augustine's claim that the Spirit is Love, that very Love which kindles in us love of God and love of neighbour (cf. *De Trinitate* XV.17.31). Both Tanner and Augustine thus present accounts of participation as a movement towards God which occurs through attachment to Christ (see Tanner) or in the whole Christ (see Augustine), and through the indwelling of the Spirit, who unites us to Christ, makes the Trinity to dwell even in us, enables our participation and teaches us to love. [419] In the matter of prayer it is my claim that one of the specific ways in which we exhibit this love of God and our neighbour is in the articulation of desire which is prayer. We have understood that such desire must be gradually conformed so that it becomes a desire for things and for others which recognises all created things in their right-ordering before God. Thus, the gradual movement towards God which is characteristic of human participation in God is witnessed in microcosm in our prayers themselves, as they, like all our being and activity, are gradually perfected before God. And as with our broader participation, so too in human prayer, this perfecting happens through the indwelling of the Spirit who is Love, and in union with

[418] Tanner, 25, 87.

[419] Keating also asserts the role of the Spirit in his account of participation, in his argument (found also in Augustine) that our sanctification is a process of deification in which we are invited by the Spirit and in Christ to share, in our humanity, as participants in the divine life. However, Keating's distinction between broader creaturely participation as 'ontological' and human participation as 'supernatural' does not fully emulate the ontological significance of Augustine's *totus Christus*, in which Augustine argues that just as Christ is 'in' us (which is certainly an ontological claim), so we are in him (which appears to be an ontological claim). See Keating, *Deification and Grace*, 100.

Christ, in whom the members of the Church constitute what we might call 'the praying *totus Christus'*.

To sum up thus far, we have discerned that we can especially describe human prayer as an act of participation in God because God's action enables and shapes our prayer. This work of God happens through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and in the person of Christ, in whom the Church at prayer participates as the whole Christ: 'the praying *totus Christus*'. Moreover, it is by this same Christ's mediation 'for us' that the desires we articulate in prayer are gradually conformed to a right-ordering before God. It is with this mediation of Christ in mind, that I turn to my final claim regarding prayer and participation in God: that as a middle category of prayer 'intercession' is an especially helpful category for understanding human participation in God. I will argue this on the basis of two reasons: 1) 'intercession' describes *how* we participate in God; and 2) 'intercession' draws our focus to the particular character of human participation *now*, whilst humans are still pilgrims on their movement towards full participation in God.

6.3.3. Intercession as a Middle Category of Prayer

First, 'intercession' is a helpful category for understanding human participation in God because it describes *how* such participation is enabled. This pertains to the way in which I have already described intercession as a middle category of prayer (in Chapter Two). This description emerged from distinguishing different types of prayer. I insisted that since they express lack or need prayers of confession, thanksgiving and petition cannot be attributed to God as divine actions; they are, by definition, human activities.[420] At the same time, I

[420] It is important to clarify further what has already been said about prayers of confession, thanksgiving and petition (in Chapter Two), now in light of this chapter's discussion of the participatory shape of prayer. In my claim that God desires our prayer (in Chapter 6.3.1) I argued that God acts through human activity and that includes the act of prayer. This means something in particular as it pertains to those prayers that I have claimed are not divine actions. God does work *in* and *through* human confession, thanksgiving and petition but in so doing we cannot say that God himself is confessing, giving thanks and petitioning. Rather we must say only that God works in and through us in an appropriately divine fashion to lead us into these human acts of prayer and to reform us as we pray in this way. In respect to prayers

observed that we can describe God as one who contemplates and praises; indeed, we can speak of the life of the Trinity as the mutual adoration and beholding of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I thus claimed contemplation and praise as types of prayer that are both human and divine. Intercession, I claimed, is more complex in its association with human and divine activity. I stated that intercession is a middle category of prayer which is neither wholly intrinsic to the life of the Trinity nor wholly alien to God. In this chapter I have since made this claim clearer. I argued that whilst the missions enact divine desire, it is divine delight rather than divine desire that characterises the processions. Thus, we *can* call the sending of the Son and the Spirit acts of intercession, but we *cannot* describe the processions of the Son and the Spirit as intercessions. We can only describe the processions, if anything, as the source of divine intercession and the fulfilment of human intercession. This is the primary sense in which intercession is a middle category of prayer: as a description of intercession as it relates to the being and activity of God. And this shows us why intercession is a helpful category for understanding human participation in God: because it reminds us *how* we participate in God. This sense in which intercession is a middle category of prayer has now shown us, at quite some length, that we participate in God because in the sending of the Son and the Spirit God intercedes for us.

Having applied our Augustinian model of participation to the question of prayer, we can now assert the second sense in which intercession is a middle category of prayer; insofar as it describes the manner of humanity's current participation in God. Bochet's threefold account of desire helps shed light on what I mean by this sense of 'middle category'. As we have seen, Bochet recognises three stages in Augustine's account of desire: desire's wandering astray, the momentum of desire, and the fulfilment of desire. The need and lack inherent in those prayers that are only human - confession, thanksgiving and petition – attributes such prayers to the transition between the first and second of Bochet's stages of desire. Confession, thanksgiving and petition all speak to the realigning of human desire that takes place as desire's wandering is corrected and as human desire begins its movement back to full realignment towards God. Meanwhile, those types of prayer which can be described as

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of contemplation, praise and intercession, which I have claimed as divine actions, my claim is that God not only acts through these types of human prayer but performs or enacts these very types of prayer himself. That is, contemplation, praise and intercession *are* prayers that can be prayed in a divine manner.

both human and divine – contemplation and praise – although they occur now, belong most properly to the end of this movement, in the fulfilment of desire in the beatific vision, where Augustine says we will see God 'face-to-face' (*De Trinitate* XV.3.4-5, cf. 1 Corinthians 13.12). Human intercession most appropriately lies only in the middle of these two poles, in the transition between what Bochet describes as the momentum of desire and the fulfilment of desire, for it is not an act characteristic of eternal life (unlike contemplation and praise). When we experience full and eternal union with Christ and with one another in the beatific vision we will not need to intercede for one another, articulating desire for relationship, because we will enjoy such relationships in all their fullness. In eternal life we will experience, in our capacity as human participants, our share in that delight which we used to describe the divine processions. Until then our union in Christ and with our neighbour is still marked by desire for this fullness of relationship and is thus still something we find ourselves articulating in intercessory prayer. Intercession, then, is a characteristic of this 'middle time' in which we are pilgrims on our way towards God, still in the process of that perfecting which will culminate in the fulfilment of desire in the beatific vision.

Herein lies the second reason why intercession is a helpful category for understanding human participation in God: it draws our focus to the particular character of our participation in God *now*, as those who are still moving towards full (strong) participation in God. All creation, by virtue of being created, always has God as its source and end. For humans in particular, we have seen that we are created in the image of God such that we move towards our final end, a human share in the eternal divine life. Intercession draws our attention to the character of our participation in between these two poles, as those who are created in God's image but not yet participants in the eternal divine life. And this 'middle time' is one in which humans rightly intercede, articulating a desire for relationship that is experienced now in our union in Christ, but which will only truly be fulfilled in eternal life.

Conclusion

Having introduced the concepts of both participation and prayer in Part I of this thesis, this final chapter has sought to understand prayer in light of participation, with the assistance of the Augustinian model of participation discerned in Part II, from Augustine's *De Trinitate* and in conversation with his understanding of the *totus Christus.* We have explored how it is that human prayer can be described as an act of participation in God and thus a way of being

in the Trinity. Intercession, as an articulation of desire for relationship, has proven itself a particularly helpful category for understanding such participation. Indeed, through applying the model of divine descent and human ascent at the heart of *De Trinitate*, we have discerned that it is the intercession of the Son and the Spirit which enables human participation in God. It is in the context of this divine intercession that human prayer in general and human intercession in particular must be understood as themselves (albeit in differing degrees) acts of participation in God.

Conclusion

From the outset, this thesis insisted that prayer and theology are intricately linked. Its intention has been to understand prayer as an aspect of humanity's broader participation in God, and to ask how the act of human prayer thus participates in something of God's own self and action. Our primary source for engaging with this question has been Augustine's *De Trinitate*, a text concerning God as Trinity which is both theologically rigorous and prayerfully attuned. I have argued that it is written as an account of spiritual progression, composed in chiastic shape, in which divine descent is mirrored by human ascent. The treatise therein conjures a model of participation in God that is centred on the imaging of the Trinity in the human mind as it remembers, understands and loves God. In conversation with

Augustine's concept of the *totus Christus* we have observed that this participation, which is a movement of human ascent towards God, occurs as the human person participates in the whole Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as a member of the Church. It is this understanding of participation that we have since applied to the concept of prayer. We have described the divine missions as acts of intercession and explored how human prayer takes participatory shape in the context of this prior divine prayer. Above all we have observed that 'intercession' is a particularly fruitful category for understanding the participatory shape of human prayer, for it is as a consequence of the intercessory divine missions that humans are enabled to participate in God at all.

In Part I, this thesis sought to introduce 'participation' and 'prayer' as they have emerged in modern theology. In Chapter One, which introduced participation, we drew particularly on Kathryn Tanner's distinction between weak participation and strong participation, the latter of which refers to the specific relationship between humanity and God, shaped by the creation of human persons in the *imago Dei*. Locating participation in the *imago Dei* was essential in order to understand, in later chapters, the participative purposes of Augustine's discovery of the *imago trinitatis* in the human mind. In addition, in our final chapter we have employed Tanner's articulation of the non-competitive relationship between creation and God, through which Tanner articulates her account of the radical transcendence of God, who is imminent to creation *because* he is transcendent to it. These principles of non-competition and radical transcendence have reiterated the participatory shape of Augustine's account of the divine missions, as those acts in which God is immanent to creation in order to draw us into full participation (as human participants) in the triune life.

Chapter Two's introduction to prayer also foregrounded definitional matters that would be essential to the thesis' later constructive work. Having described prayer as an act of communication, which takes the form of conversation with the goal of conformation, we honed in on that which is articulated in such communication and conversation, and which must be conformed to God: desire. In conversation with Davison, Tanner and Coakley we found that the source and end of rightly-ordered human desire is in God, and above all in the pre-eminence of divine desire. It was this recognition of divine desire which allowed us to distinguish between different types of prayer. This was essential to our examination of the participatory shape of prayer in our final chapter. Distinguishing different types of prayer also brought the category of 'intercession' to the fore as a form of prayer which at its heart articulates a desire for relationship with others and with God. With this in mind we were able

to posit intercession as a middle category of prayer, neither wholly alien nor wholly intrinsic to God (a description to which we returned, in light of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, in Chapter Six).

In Part II our focus turned to Augustine and his principles of prayer and participation. Chapter Three offered a general introduction to prayer in Augustine's writings, with an initial focus on the themes of desire and intercession in his *Confessiones* and *Epistola CXXX*. Most important, however, was our exploration of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* and its use of the concept of the *totus Christus* to articulate the multitude of voices speaking in prayer. We discovered that for Augustine we cannot understand our prayer apart from Christ's own prayer, in which we share as members of the whole Christ.

Chapter Four was the concerned with *De Trinitate* itself. My analysis of the treatise was first set in the context of other scholars who have found participatory themes in the work. In the latter half of Chapter Four, and in continuing conversation with these scholars, we explored the content of *De Trinitate*, book by book. I argued that the treatise is structured according to a chiastic pattern of divine descent and human ascent, in which the divine missions, and particularly the person of Christ, enable our ascent towards God. We learned from Augustine that this ascent occurs as the imaging of the Trinity in us is perfected; that is, as we come to better remember, understand and love God.

Chapter Five then pursued further theological analysis of what we learned of participation from *De Trinitate.* I first analysed the terminology and scripture in *De Trinitate* which particularly pertain to themes of participation. Here we noted Augustine's careful use of the word *participatio* and, whilst noting that Augustine does not use *deifico* in the treatise, I concluded with Meconi that Augustine does understand our ascent to God to be a movement towards deification. Most importantly, Christ lay at the heart of much of this terminology, as the one in whom we participate in God. Indeed, we saw that it is as Christ is in us, that we, in him, will finally share in that which is not ours by nature: the triune life.

Next in Chapter Five, I focussed on Augustine's christology and pneumatology, showing that these offer, respectively, a depiction of God's activity 'for us' and 'in us'. We then returned to the concept of the *totus Christus* first posited in Chapter Three via Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos.* We now explored his use of the concept in sources across his corpus. We observed that the participation in God of which *De Trinitate* speaks is a participation that occurs as we are found in the whole Christ. I thus concluded Part II by

presenting an Augustinian model of participation, derived from our study of *De Trinitate* and paying heed to the concept of the *totus Christus*: we participate in God, Augustine claims, as we participate in Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as members of the Church.

It is this Augustinian model of participation which we carried forward into Part III of the thesis in order to help us discern how human prayer participates in something of God's self and action. We posed four possible approaches to articulating such participation: 1) that human prayer aligns with the character of God; 2) that God desires human prayer; 3) that some types of human prayer imitate a prior act of divine prayer (most obviously contemplation and praise but also, in a limited sense, intercession); and 4) that God's action enables and shapes human prayer. In this fourth aspect of participation, we recognised that God is the formal cause of the act of human prayer because God is the one who makes it such that our prayer leads us into closer relationship with him. It was here that 'intercession' revealed itself to be such a fruitful category for speaking of the participatory shape of prayer. By recognising that the divine missions can themselves be called acts of divine intercession, we discerned that it is the intercession of the Son and the Spirit which enables human participation in God. It is in the context of this divine intercession, I argued, that we must understand human prayer generally and human intercession in particular as acts of participation in God.

In the introduction to this thesis, I situated this work in the context of four recent scholars who offer us theologies of prayer: Adrienne von Speyr, Sarah Coakley, Ashley Cocksworth and Andrew Prevot. I observed that each of these scholars seek to claim prayer as an act of participation in God's triune life. However, I offered two critiques of their claims. I claimed that Speyr, Cocksworth and Prevot's work betrays a need for closer attention to trinitarian grammar, whilst all four would benefit from closer attention to different types of prayer, and particularly to the category of intercession. This thesis has thus sought to redress their approach to the intersections between trinitarian theology, theologies of participation and theologies of prayer, by beginning with an examination of our participation in the triune God and asking from that perspective what role prayer plays in such participation. In other words, I have sought to start with the Doctrine of the Trinity rather than with the Doctrine of Prayer. It is Augustine's account of the Trinity as offered in *De Trinitate* that I have used to

this end.[421] The treatise offers an account of the descent of the Son and the Spirit in the divine missions as that which enables human ascent to full participation in God, and thus invites us to consider how it is that the divine missions shape us as people who pray.

Above all, this thesis has contributed to a broader conversation about the participatory shape of prayer by pointing to 'intercession' as a fruitful category for understanding human participation in God. Intercession, I have argued, is a middle category of prayer in two respects. First, intercession is the one type of prayer which is neither wholly intrinsic nor wholly alien to the triune life of God, since it cannot be attributed to the divine processions but can and indeed ought to be used as a description of the divine missions. In this distinction we have discovered that *divine intercession* is that which describes *how* we participate in God. Second, we have noted that *human intercession* is a particular characteristic of human participation *now*, and thus is an act of this 'middle time' in which we can claim to be ascending towards God, but cannot yet claim to share fully in the divine life. It is in *both* of these senses that we have discovered that 'intercession' is our way of being in the Trinity; that Trinity who descends to us in the Son and the Spirit, and enables us to ascend towards full participation in him from whom, through whom and for whom we exist.

[421] As also noted in this thesis' introduction, this is a marked difference between my work and that of Jonathan Teubner. In his 'Augustine on Prayer: Sin, Desire and the Form of Life' Teubner does not discuss *De Trinitate*, preferring to draw on themes of ascent as they emerge in Augustine's earlier writings in order to understand Augustine's theology of prayer (see Teubner, 'Augustine on Prayer: Sin, Desire and the Form of Life'). In his earlier monograph, *Prayer After Augustine* Teubner does note the participatory themes present in *De Trinitate* (as we observed in Chapter 4.1.4) but my own thesis examines these themes in far greater detail and to a different end; namely, in order to facilitate constructive work on prayer with Augustine as an interlocutor.

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Primary Texts in Latin

All the following are authored by Augustine of Hippo. CSEL stands for the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, CCSL stands for the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, and PL stands for the *Patrologia Latina* series.

Collatio cum Maximino, PL42.

Confessiones, CCSL 27.

Contra Adimantium, CSEL 25/1.

De Baptismo, CSEL 51.

De Civitate Dei, CCSL 47.

De Doctrina Christiana, CCSL 32.

De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio, PL 44.

De Magistro, CCSL 29.

De Moribus Ecclesia Catholicae, CSEL 90.

De Natura Boni, CSEL 25/2.

De Vera Religione, CCSL 32.

Enarrationes in Psalmos, CCSL 38-40.

Epistolae, CCSL 31.

Expositio ad Epistolae ad Galatas, CSEL 84.

In Epistolam Ioannis Tractatus, PL 35.

In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus, CCSL 36.

Sermones. There is no complete Latin edition of these texts. See table in Fitzgerald, Allan, ed., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 774-89. I have sourced my quotations from Augustine's *Sermones* from S. Aurelii Augustini OPERA OMNIA - Editio Latina, Accessed January 31. 2023, https://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm.

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