



March 2023

## ***THE CALL***

### **St. Thomas More Fraternity, Secular Franciscan Order**

*From Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel*

---

Minister: Andrea Bender, OFS; Vice Minister: Sita Chakrawarti, OFS; Secretary: Thomas Bender, OFS; Treasurer: Ann Wester, OFS; Formation Director: Janette Martin, OFS; Councilors-at-Large: Ann Corro, OFS, Michael Landrigan, OFS

#### **Meeting – 1:00 pm. - Sunday, March 12, 2023**

- We are collecting acetaminophen (Tylenol) and cold medicines for earthquake survivors in Syria and Turkey.
- *Opening Prayer* – Ritual, p. 35.
- *Ongoing Formation* – Sita will lead a discussion of Article 11<sup>1</sup> of our Rule as we strive for a spirit of detachment, being in the world but not of the world, focusing on poverty. This seems a particularly appropriate article to focus on as we double down on our Lenten practices. Can you name one thing you do that expresses evangelical poverty? Is there something you say you need that is more of an “I want” than an “I need”? Reducing our personal needs frees us to share both material and spiritual goods. Please come prepared to share, or question.
- *Fellowship*
- *Business Meeting*
- *Liturgy of the Hours* – Evening Prayer II for the Third Sunday of Lent, Psalter Week III, Proper of Seasons for 3rd Sunday in Lent. Hymn TBD. Please bring your breviary and hymnal.
- *Closing Prayers* – Ritual, p. 36.

#### **Remote Access to the Monthly Meeting Info**

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85418000041?pwd=d0pFSDREaDJmdjZpNWlqbII4T20rZz09>

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

Dial by your location

Phone: +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 854 1800 0041

Passcode: 668951

---

<sup>1</sup> **Rule 11.** Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life<sup>19</sup>, even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God’s children. Thus, in the spirit of “the Beatitudes”, and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power (Rom. 8:17; Lumen Gentium 7:4).

## Minister's Notes

What happens to saint feast days during Lent? People (including future saints) don't stop dying because it is Lent. Feast days usually center on the date a saint enters heaven, a heavenly birthday. If you still have a Catholic calendar there are still saint's names and fish symbols reminding you to abstain from meat on Friday. Lack of catholic calendars can partially be blamed on the pandemic but also on iPhone, a paper calendar isn't where most people check the date anymore.

Back to saints, what happened? Lent happened. When you pray liturgy of the hours, you may still be concentrating on the 4-week psalter and not have graduated to celebrating the communion of the saints. This is a fine place to be, especially in Lent. If you have been following the saint of the day and centering your prayer on their virtue; lent stands out in stark contrast. The red print we tend to ignore explains it.

During Lent, memorials are not celebrated. If it is desired to commemorate a saint, the ending of the concluding prayer is omitted, the gospel canticle proper to the saint is read and the Office concludes with the concluding prayer of the saint and dismissal.

We are all familiar with Sunday trumps a feast day, though there are exceptions. Lenten weekdays trump memorials of saints. But, we do celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph and the Feast the Annunciation, nine months before Christmas. These trump Lent, but not Holy Week. Then the celebration is moved.

Follow your Ordo or check your iPhone, even if you use a paper breviary. Treat the saints, or lack thereof, like you treat the lack of flowers in church-a reminder of what we are

about these forty days.

*Future Dates* - Part of being on council is planning and preparing for future dates.

*April* - To avoid meeting on Easter, we will meet on Palm Sunday, **April 2 at 2:00** immediately following the Knights monthly brunch. (\$12 if you want to come early to socialize and eat)

*May* - The council decided to have a day of recollection (mini retreat) in May at **Missionhurst** in North Arlington. Fr, Ricardo Terga CICM will offer Mass with us at **10 AM Saturday May 13**, He will speak to us on the Eucharist. We will conclude by 3 PM. This will take the place of our May fraternity meeting.

Is anyone willing to coordinate coffee/tea service and/or lunch? Lunch involves contacting catering service and either arranging delivery or picking up food Saturday morning.

*June* - we return to our regular meetings. Randy had a fraternal visitation to do for another Fraternity at the time of our meeting. Is anyone willing to come early and transport the Minister? Thank you.

*July* – Fraternity meeting on July 9. Our Regional Retreat is set for July 21 – 23 at the Loyola Retreat Center on the Potomac in Faulkner, Maryland. More details will follow but the facilitator for the weekend is Fr. Charley Miller, OFM. A bio for Fr. Charley can be found on our regional website: <https://saintmargaretofcortona.org/upcoming-events/>

Pax et Bonum,  
Andrea

## Prayer Intentions

Peace in Ukraine and protection for Ukrainian and Ruthenian Rite Catholics there.

Repose of the soul of Elly's brother Pedro

Personal intention of Anne-Marie Pastorkovich, OFS and for her husband's Aunt Peg

Repose of the soul of Maria Cassidy, OFS Grace Coipuram, OFS

Virginia Roccapriore, widow of Joseph Roccapriore, OFS

Repose of the soul of Martin Kennedy, father of Joe Kennedy

Healing for Patrick Birello

Peace with China

## Professions

3/11/06 - Elizabeth T Shaeffer, DDS  
(Elizabeth of Hungary)

## Birthdays of the Month

Elly Escobal (16th)

## Necrology

Edward G Gleason – Mar 9, 1987

Patricia Smith – Mar 2003

Bettyann Ostergren – Mar 2005

Mary E. McDonough – Mar 1, 2006

Edwin Finney – Mar 28, 2007

Margaret Fitzgerald – Mar 31, 2011

Dcn Thomas Bello (Min.) – Mar 29, 2016

## Secretary's Note

I was compiling the necrology for this month and realized we are celebrating the seventh anniversary of the passing of Tom Bello, OFS. I have included an article he wrote for TAU-USA when he was National Minister on Lent that relates to our reflection on Article 11 of our Rule.

As Andrea mentioned, we are celebrating the Annunciation of Our Lord this month when the Word became Incarnate. Often, we hear that it is a particular charism of

## Remembering Maria Cassidy, OFS

Maria Cassidy and Ann Wester attended my father's funeral in 2010 at Blessed Sacrament Church. Maria wanted to come out of respect for me.

Doris Mason, OFS (St. John the Beloved Fraternity) was a best friend of Maria's. When we found out that Doris had suffered a stroke at Priestfield while boarding the bus to come back to VA., Maria called me and we drove down to WVA and went to the nearby hospital to see Doris. Maria arranged to have Doris transported by ambulance back to Arlington, VA. – *Ann Corro, OFS*

*A Secular Franciscan needed some respite while caring for her husband, who dealt with challenges of paralysis.*

*Maria Cassidy volunteered to help many times, for example, with medical devices as part of home care. Maria was untiring in pursuing charitable work, yet she was exceedingly grateful for any small kindness toward her. – Terrence Lisbeth, OFS*

I will always remember Maria as the perfect Secular Franciscan. She was always very positive, supportive, and appreciative during her participation in the fraternity's Initial Formation program. She kept up this joyful, positive attitude over her years as an active fraternity member. Among her many "church related" and other ministries, she was a consistent contributor of generous snacks to our fraternity meetings. She continued to send us snacks even in later years when she became too infirm to attend our meetings.

As a true follower of St. Francis, Maria held on to her joyful smile and positive disposition throughout her last years as she became consistently more infirm. Despite her problems with mobility and her eventual confinement to bed, Maria always reached beyond herself and would ask her visitors about their family, and always asked fellow Franciscans about the members of the fraternity. Maria never complained and always accepted her difficult "cross." She remained very devoted to prayer and to her family and friends throughout her ordeal.

Maria left us all the gift of her example of how to face the end stages of life. She was fittingly interred wearing our Franciscan wooden Tau Cross around her neck. May this beautiful lady and perfect Secular Franciscan rest in God's peace! – *Mike Landrigan, OFS*

Franciscans to believe that God would have become Incarnate even if Original Sin had never happened. We are not the only Christians who hold this. Anna Pastorkovich might appreciate this the most, but in some ways, part of the Franciscan genius was/is to revive in the Christian West ideas that had long been in the Christian East. So, I have included an article on the thought of St. Maximus the Confessor who lived in 7<sup>th</sup> century Constantinople on why God became man.

Cassidy's passing, Frank wrote on 2/17 that "Thank you for letting us know. We're doing well. Carol was just elected minister of our new fraternity, St Clare Fraternity, which itself is doing well. We have two other nearby fraternities that want to merge with ours, and we will initiate about 6 new novices tomorrow, including the pastor of the church where we meet!"

Peace and Good,  
Randy

Last, when notifying the Petroski's about Maria

\*\*\*\*\*

### Saints of the Month

<https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Franciscan-Saints-2022-1-Catalog-by-Mary-Lou-Coffman-OFS.pdf>

March 2

St. Agnes of Prague, Virgin, Poor Clare (1205-March 6, 1282)

<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-agnes-of-prague/>

March 3

Bls. Liberatus Weiss, Samuele Marzorati and Michele Pio Fasoli, Martyrs of Gondar, Ethiopia, Priests, Order of Friars Minor (d. 1716)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes\\_Laurentius\\_Weiss\\_and\\_companions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Laurentius_Weiss_and_companions)

Bl. Innocent of Berzo, Priest, First Order Capuchin (March 19, 1844-March 3, 1890)

<https://www.capdox.capuchin.org.au/saints-blesseds/blessed-innocenzo-da-berzo/>

March 5

St. John-Joseph of the Cross, Priest, Alcantarine Franciscan (August 15, 1654-March 5, 1839)

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-john-joseph-of-the-cross/>

March 6

St. Colette de Corbie, Foundress: Colettine Poor Clares (February 13, 1381-March 6, 1447)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-colette-de-corbie.html>

March 7

Bl. Christopher of Milan, Priest, First Order Franciscan (d. 1485)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-christopher-of-milan.html>

March 9

St. Catherine of Bologna, Poor Clare Sister (September 8, 1413-March 9, 1463)

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/saint-catherine-of-bologna/>

St. Frances of Rome, Franciscan Third Order Secular, Oblates of St. Benedict (1384-March 9, 1440)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/st-frances-of-rome.html>

March 11

Bl. John Baptist Righi of Fabriano, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1469-March 11, 1539)

<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/john-baptist-righi.html>

Bl. John Kearney, Priest, Order of Friars Minor, Martyr (1619-March 11, 1653)

<https://theblackcordelias.wordpress.com/2009/03/11/blessed-john-kearney-march-11/>

March 12

Bl. Angela Salawa of Cracow, Virgin, Third Order Secular (September 9, 1881-March 12, 1922)

<https://theblackcordelias.wordpress.com/2009/03/12/blessed-angela-aniela-salawa-march-12/>

March 16

Bl. Torello of Poppi, Third Order Secular (1202-March 16, 1282)

<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-torello-of-poppi.html>

- March 17  
Bl. Mark of Montegallo, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (1426-March 19, 1496)  
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-mark-of-montegallo.html>
- March 18  
St. Salvator of Horta, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (December 1520-March 18, 1567)  
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-salvator-of-horta.html>
- March 19  
St. Joseph, Foster Father of Our Lord  
[https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=4](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4)
- March 20  
Bl. Hippolyte Galentini, Confessor, Third Order Secular (d. 1620)  
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-hippolyte-galantini.html>
- March 21  
Bl. John of Parma, Minister General, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1209-March 19, 1289)  
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-john-of-parma.html>  
St. Nicholas of Flüe, Minister General, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1447-March 21, 1487)  
<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/saints/nicholas-of-flue-710>
- March 22  
St. Benvenute of Osimo, Bishop, Order of Friars Minor (d. March 22, 1282)  
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/saint-benvenute-of-osimo.html>
- March 23  
Bl. Jeremy Lambertenghi, Priest, Third Order Secular (d. 1513)  
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-jeremy-lambertenghi.html>
- March 25  
Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01542a.htm>
- March 28  
Bl. Jane Mary of Maille, Third Order Secular (April 14, 1331-March 28, 1414)  
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/jane-mary-of-maille.html>
- March 30  
Bl. Amadeus IX of Savoy, Third Order Secular (February 1, 1435-March 30, 1472)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amadeus\\_IX,\\_Duke\\_of\\_Savoy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amadeus_IX,_Duke_of_Savoy)  
Bl. Ludovico of Casoria, Priest, Order of Friars Minor (March 11, 1814-March 30, 1885)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludovico\\_of\\_Casoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludovico_of_Casoria)  
Bl. Maria Restituta Kafka, Sister, Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity (May 1, 1894-m. March 30, 1943)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria\\_Restituta\\_Kafka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Restituta_Kafka)  
St. Peter Regalado, Priest, OFM Conventual (1390-March 30, 1456)  
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-peter-regalado/>
- April 1  
Bl. Henry Alfieri of Asti, Vicar General and Minister of the Order of Friars Minor (1315-1405)  
<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0401-25.htm>
- April 2  
Bl. Elisabetta Vendramini, Foundress, Third Order Sisters of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (April 9, 1790-April 2, 1860)  
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/vendramini-elisabetta-bl>  
St. Francis of Paola, Founder, Order of Minims (March 27, 1416-April 2, 1507)  
<http://stevenwood.com/reflections/franciscan/0402-20.htm>
- April 3  
St. Luigi Scrosoppi of Udine, Priest, Third Order Secular (August 4, 1804-April 3, 1884)  
<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-luigi-scrosoppi-of-udine/>

April 4

St. Benedict Larcari (the Moor) of San Fratello, Friar, Order of Friars Minor (1526-April 4, 1589)  
<https://catholicreadings.org/saint-benedict-the-black-saint-of-the-day-april-4/>

April 7

Bl. Maria Assunta Pallotta, Third Order Regular (August 20, 1878-April 7, 1905)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria\\_Assunta\\_Pallotta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Assunta_Pallotta)

April 8

Bl. Julian of St. Augustine, Lay Brother, Order of Friars Minor (c. 1550-April 8, 1606)  
<http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/blessed-julian-of-saint-augustine.html>

April 9

Bl. Thomas of Tolentino and Companions, Priest, Martyrs of India, Order of Friars Minor (Fr. James of Padua, Br. Demetrius of Tiflis, Fr. Peter of Siena) (d. 1321)  
<https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/thomas-of-tolentino-and-companions.html>

April 10

Bl. Boniface Zukowski, Order of Friars Minor, Conventual, Martyr (January 13, 1913-April 10, 1942)  
<http://catholicsaints.info/blessed-boniface-zukowski/>

\*\*\*\*\*

### **From Lent to Life: A Proposed Daily Spiritual Agenda**

Dcn. Tom Bello, OFS

As we all hear in St. Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18) on each Ash Wednesday every year, the three great works of Lent are fasting (self-denial), almsgiving (self-giving) and prayer (self-surrender to God).

As you may have heard in Ash Wednesday or Lenten homilies, these three great Lenten works have some parallel to the three great Evangelical Counsels: fasting (self-denial) to chastity; almsgiving (self-giving) to poverty; and prayer (self-surrender) to obedience (to God).

These three, whether as Lenten works or Evangelical Counsels, serve to counter the three great evils, as depicted in 1 John 2:16, that the devil, the flesh and the world offer to entice our attention and our lives away from God: "Carnal allurements, enticements for the eye and the life of empty show."

Let us unpack these three evils to see how the Lenten works or Evangelical Counsels may counter them and thus offer us Secular Franciscans a daily spiritual agenda for the rest of our lives.

First, carnal allurements may indeed be, as reads one Bible translation, "sensual lust," but that big word "concupiscence" could easily fit here. Carnal allurements may be any desires of our fallen human flesh for something or someone not conducive to our true good, who is God.

Thus, any form of physical excess, like lust, gluttony, or drunkenness, would be here. Any form of spiritual or physical release or laziness would be here.

Letting ourselves go. Not being or doing all that we could be or should do. Also, any fear of suffering or sacrifice for the glory of God and the good of our sisters and brothers could fit here as well. The focus in these allurements, this concupiscence, is on "Me, Me, Me!" at the expense of love of God or love of neighbor.

And thus, easier said than done, we counter this "Me, Me, Me!" by self-denial, self-control, chastity, even celibacy for consecrated religious.

What is penance after all but a turning from self, from sin, to God? "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel," as my local Bishop always says when dispensing ashes on Ash Wednesday (see Mark 1:15).

Fasting from chocolate or Facebook, if chocolate or Facebook offer temptations, for 40 days during Lent might be a step in this direction, but the greatest form of fasting would be a daily, not just Lenten, struggle to fast from all sin. That might seem impossible, and so it is without God's great and daily grace, but surely the saints mastered sin most of the time, and aren't we all striving to be saints?

This first great evil from the world, the devil and the flesh, which St. John calls "carnal allurements" or "sensual lust" may be resisted by daily, not just Lenten, thoughts, words and deeds of fasting, penance, self-denial and greater self-control. This resistance is surely strengthened by God's grace obtained through the Sacraments and daily prayer.

Most Catholics I know do try to practice these remedies during Lent. Why not consider practicing them every day?

Second, what evils and/or distractions might be found in “enticements for the eye”? Well, here would be all the “bling,” the glitter, the gold, whatever or whomever money might seem able to obtain for us.

Although our big word “concupiscence” might also include greed, here is that greed for the spangles and baubles the world, the flesh or the devil might dangle before our eyes: any new material possessions when what we already have is more than adequate OR when that money might be better given to those in our families or in our fraternities or in our Church or world who have much greater need than we do for the essentials of life.

Again, easier said than done, we combat this temptation by simplifying our lives, by conscious poverty, and if we have enough, by giving our money away! What we don’t have won’t burn any holes in our pockets, and here is the great beauty of almsgiving: we control the money; the money doesn’t control us!

I read somewhere that the only money we take to heaven is the money we gave away to those most in need out of love for God and neighbor. We don’t usually have to look far to find those in need. Many good charities exist to use our money to do good. Give ourselves away! Give our money away!

Enticements for the eyes are thus countered by daily, not just Lenten, thoughts, words and deeds of poverty, almsgiving, charity, self-giving. These thoughts, words and actions are strengthened by God’s grace, by frequent reception of the Sacraments, particularly Holy Communion and Penance, and by daily prayer, especially in a form recommended by Holy Mother Church (see *Secular Franciscan Rule* #8).

Third and finally, what of “the life of empty show”? Well, here we can find the great sin of pride, the source of all other sins. Pride, Vanity, Vainglory, anything that, or anyone who, puffs us beyond being “holy and without blemish,” which God intended for us before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). Here would fall any manifestation of Power or Glory not directly deeded us by God, but rather “grasped”

(Philippians 2:6) by us for selfish self-satisfaction or self-aggrandizement.

We combat this pretentious life, this life of empty show, this pride, this vanity, by prayer, by giving ourselves in humble obedience to God and Holy Mother Church every day in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in praying daily the Liturgy of the Hours, by daily reading and praying Sacred Scriptures (lectio divina), by the daily sacrifice of the Rosary and/or the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We let go and we let God take over our lives. We pray without ceasing (see 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Again, most Catholics, most Secular Franciscans that I know, do try, during Lent, to deny themselves, to give of themselves and to pray more. That’s great, but surely, we know that the struggle against sin, against the devil, the flesh and the world, is not just during Lent, but every day. The purpose of this article is for all of us to consider that what we give up, take on and pray during Lent can surely become a daily spiritual agenda for the rest of our lives!

Let us pray. *Heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit, help us translate our Lenten Pences of self-denial (fasting), self-giving (almsgiving) and self-surrender (prayer) into a daily routine of penance and conversion (see Secular Franciscan Rule #7). After all, none of us may be tempted as directly as Christ was by the devil in the wilderness (see, for example, Matthew 4:1-11), but all of us are tempted, perhaps every day, by “carnal allurements, enticements for the eye and the life of empty show” (1 John 2:16). Help us by our Lenten Sacrifices translated into a daily spiritual agenda to stay ever close to Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior, through the example and prayers of SS. Francis, Clare and all the Franciscan saints. May we never be defeated by sin. May we never give up in our struggles against the devil, the flesh, and the world. We pray in Jesus’ name.*

TAU-USA, Spring 2015, Issue 83, pp.3-4.

[https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Tau\\_USA\\_083\\_spr\\_15.pdf](https://www.secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Tau_USA_083_spr_15.pdf)

Accessed 3/7/2023.

\*\*\*\*\*

**St. Maximus the Confessor on Why God Became Man** by Joseph Healy

There is an age-old question of debate within Christianity: “If mankind hadn’t sinned, would Christ

have become man?” For St. Maximus the Confessor, this question is a resounding yes. In fact, Maximus posits that the purpose of the entire creation was for the incarnation of Christ, stating that the mystery of the incarnation is, “the blessed end for which all things are ordained . . . the preconceived goal for which everything exists,” and “It is the mystery which circumscribes all the ages, and which reveals the grand plan of God, a super-infinite plan infinitely pre-existing the ages.”

St. Maximus affirms that Christ would have become embodied without mankind’s fall from grace, since the incarnation was God’s “preconceived goal” that pre-existed the creation. “For the Word of God wills always, and in all things, to accomplish the mystery of his embodiment.” We can see this train of thought in some of the Pauline epistles, especially in the first chapter of Ephesians. Paul writes that God chose us to be in Christ before the foundation of the world, and God made known to us the mystery of his will, which is to unite all things in himself (Eph. 1:4-10).

Therefore, the incarnation is not a reaction to the transgression of mankind. In fact, Maximus sees the fall and reconciliation of man as a smaller arch in the larger story of God’s plan. That plan which “pre-existed the ages” is the movement of the Creator wishing to unite his creation with himself. He wishes to share his divine life, and the way that he does this is to be hypostatically united to man.

In fact, Christ’s hypostatic union unites himself to the whole of creation because man—the capstone of creation—is a microcosm of the entire universe. Unlike the rest of creation, mankind encapsulates both created worlds within itself. In man exists the material and immaterial; the visible and invisible. As St. Maximus says, mankind is both a heavenly being and an earthly one, “though weak in comparison with other animals, on the earth, like an angel he was able to worship God, with the senses as well as the intellect.”

Christ’s incarnation grants mankind the dignity of becoming agents of salvation for the whole world.

Therefore, man is, in the words of St. Maximus, “a kind of second cosmos.” Consequently, Christ’s embodiment is not only deifying human nature, but also, “displaying the grace of God

affective to deify the universe.” In other words, Christ’s incarnation grants mankind the dignity of becoming agents of salvation for the whole world. Thus, creation is saved by man, and man is saved by the Cosmic Man, Christ.

Furthermore, St. Maximus is always clear that Christ retained the immutability that is proper to God when assuming human nature: “The plan was for him to mingle, without change on his part, by true hypostatic union, to unite human nature to himself while remaining immutable.” Consequently, this engenders a train of thought that has been infamous throughout Church history among theologians; namely, that Christ always had a human nature, and only about two-thousand years ago, manifested it to the human consciousness.

This is explicative of why the Old Testament prophets, when having visions of God, would see him having human features even though the incarnation hadn’t taken place within the reality of space and time. This is mysterious but easily agreeable when Christ is above space and time, and every moment of past, present, and future is held within the “now” for God. It also makes sense of why the devil hates man. Remember, according to many Patristics, the devil fell because of envy. The serpent was not envious of God. Rather, Satan was envious of mankind. In fact, Satan’s envy for man is even upheld in the Islamic tradition.

In the Qur’an, the devil is cast out of heaven because he refuses to prostrate himself before Adam (The Qur’an, 2:34). This is curious because the envy displayed by the devil can only logically make sense within a Christian scope or standpoint; a scope that elevates man to such a dignity as the incarnation does for mankind, “man is made god by divinization, and God is made man by hominization,” as St. Maximus points out. Satan is precisely jealous of man’s destiny in Christ, which is to become a sharer in Christ’s cosmic reconciliation.

This is the mysterious will of God that was hidden from the beginning of the ages: namely, that all created things, the logoi, which come forth from the Logos, be brought into union with him, thus sharing in the divine life of God.

<https://www.wordonfire.org/articles/contributors/st-maximus-the-confessor-on-why-god-became-man/?queryID=22c1291e964176d2bdf348573263cd>  
1 Accessed 3/7/2023.