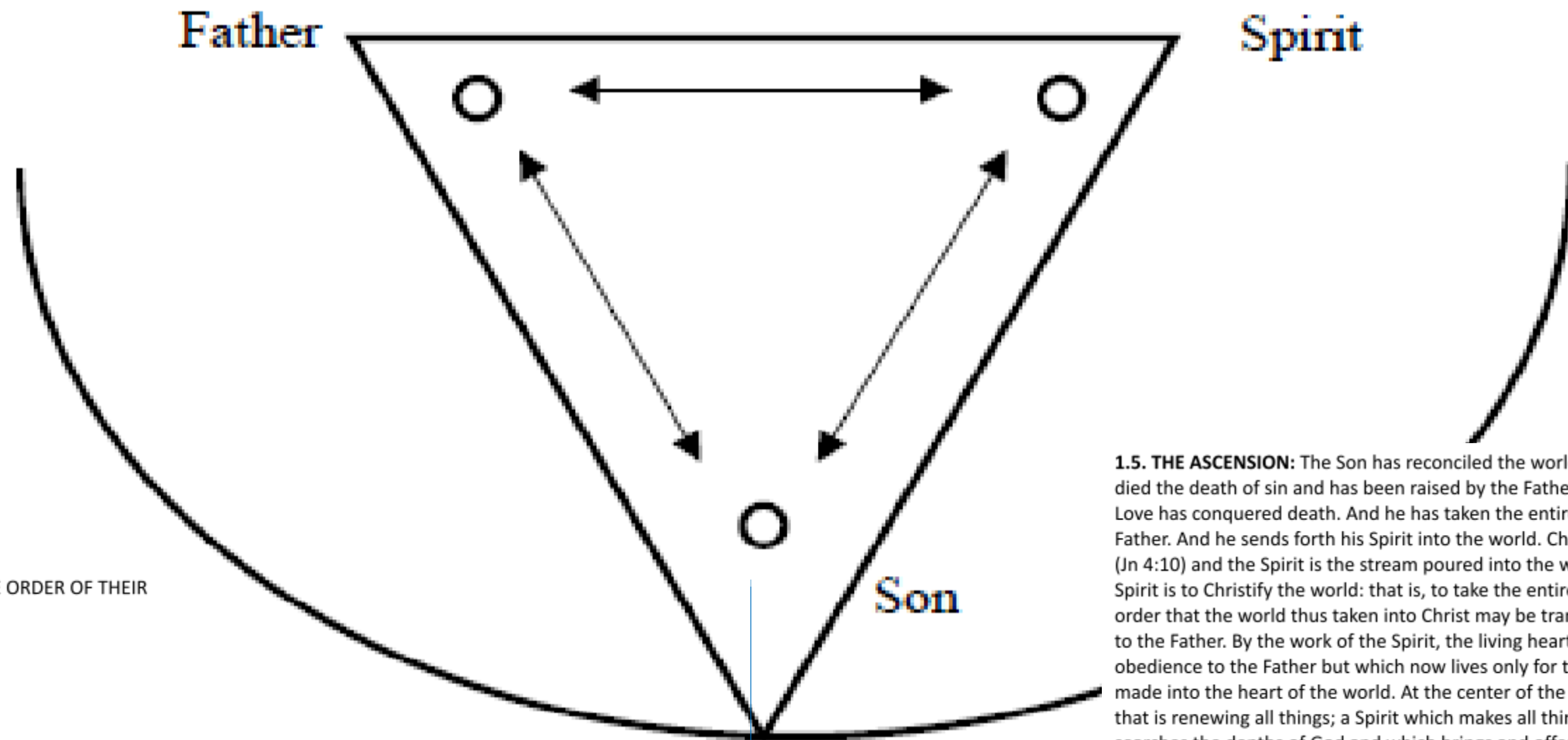




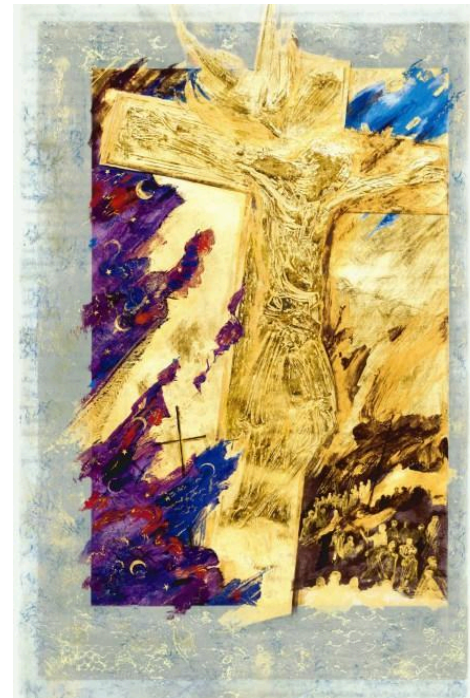
NOTE: READ THE TEXTS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR NUMERATION.

THE INCARNATION

The Son is sent into the World by the Father,
And he empties himself, and becomes man.

1.5. THE ASCENSION: The Son has reconciled the world to the Father. He has died the death of sin and has been raised by the Father to newness of life. Love has conquered death. And he has taken the entire world with him to his Father. And he sends forth his Spirit into the world. Christ is the living water (Jn 4:10) and the Spirit is the stream poured into the world. The task of the Spirit is to Christify the world: that is, to take the entire world into Christ, in order that the world thus taken into Christ may be transfigured and elevated to the Father. By the work of the Spirit, the living heart of Jesus which died in obedience to the Father but which now lives only for the Father (Rom. 6:10) is made into the heart of the world. At the center of the world now is a Spirit that is renewing all things; a Spirit which makes all things new; a Spirit which searches the depths of God and which brings and offers the world up to the Father through Christ. Jesus went up to the Father like a firework into the heavens, and once he was at the right hand of the Father, he spread himself into the whole work through the Spirit, like how a firework explodes and spread across the whole sky. The one light – the light of the world, Christ, ascended to the Father, but now the whole world is lit by Christ's light because the Spirit of Christ has indwelt in us all.

1.2. CROSS: In the Cross, we see the Son 'love to the end,' by following the will of the Father, and bearing the 'sin of the world'—all that is opposed to God, all that hates God. As the 'sin of the world,' the Father's eyes must turn away from his beloved Son, and the Son must give up his Spirit, the very Spirit that is the communion between him and the Father. He descends into forsakenness, godlessness, and abandonment in our place, out of love. "Christ's death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form" (Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 12: AAS 98 (2006), 228).



1.4. RESURRECTION: "We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God" (Rom 6:9-10). The love of the Father for his Son and the Son's unfailing fidelity to his Father, even in the face of death and abandonment, is the life of the world. Sin has been swallowed up in the unfailing love of the Father and Son. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaims, "God raised [Jesus] up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24). In the Resurrection, love is triumphant. But it doesn't deal with suffering, death, forsakenness, abandonment, or even hell, by offering some 'cosmic explanation,' or even a very good 'reason' that somehow sets them all aside; rather, it transfigures them from within in. It is the 'love poured out' that is unveiled in those realms. The wounds are transfigured. But how? ~~By the very love that bore those wounds for us.~~ By taking our brokenness—our sin, our suffering, and our death—upon himself by a love that is poured out 'to the very end,' that very love transfigured our sin, our suffering, and our death. The Resurrected body of Jesus is precisely a human body transfigured by and made transparent to the very love that was completely surrendered for us.

THE CROSS IS THE SELF-GLORIFICATION OF GOD'S LOVE IN THE WORLD.

1.1.1. This can be understood *only* if one takes into consideration and fully believes in the hidden meaning of the Cross, which is that in taking upon himself all the sins of the world—in being plunged into the darkest of nights—God's eternal love surrenders itself to the uttermost limits of God-forsakenness in order to prove itself, at the moment of its greatest weakness, stronger than all the guilt and sin of the world.

1.1.2. The power to regain life completely is contained in the capacity for self-surrender even amidst the experience of suffering: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (Jn 10:17-18).

1.1.3. Death and resurrection are two naturally-reverse aspects of *one and the same act of love*: The glory that manifests itself on Easter is already present in the veiled glory of Good Friday. This is why the Cross is his 'hour,' the 'hour of his glory,' in which he is 'glorified as he was in the beginning.' For, the glory is decisively the self-glorifying love of God manifested to all the world.

1.1. HOLY SATURDAY: On Holy Saturday, the question becomes: what will leave the dead world? The power of life or God's love poured forth into the depths? Jesus' death is the Father's ultimate word on Sin, but it is not the Father's ultimate word on love. The Father and Son, who are inseparable from eternity, appear divided (Matt 27:46; Mk 15:34; Cf. Ps 22:1ff). The Father has loved us so much that "He did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all" (Rom 8:32a; Cf. Jn 3:16a). But the love between Father and Son is such that not even death can overcome it. Jesus descended into the depths of the abyss of death (Cf. Rom 10:7) — the abyss of God-forsakenness. The Son, abandoned by the Father because he stood for our sin, descended into the depths of Hell itself (Cf. 1 Pet 3:18-20; See Apostles' Creed). But will sin conquer the Father's love for his Son?

1.4.1. This means that the Cross is not 'behind him' as it could only be considered as belonging to the past. Rather, it is 'done' in the sense that it is an *irreversible act of redemption that takes place between the time of his crucifixion and Resurrection*. The crucifixion Christ ceases to be bound by the limits of finite time, just as little as he is bound by it during his descent into hell, and in the Resurrection. (In case you have any doubts about this: how can he bear a sin that I will commit in 30 years from now if he is in the 'past' only? Or, how can we share in his sacrifice at the Mass if it is in the 'past,' and not, somehow, omnitemporal?). The Church is founded by this irreversible act. By seeing the Cross as something that is merely "past" in a temporal sense, you would be turning the Cross into a mere "bridge" or "tool" for you to go to heaven, rather than realizing that the goal of the Christian life is to be in intimate communion with *the very One who has poured himself forth for you on that very Cross!* The Cross cannot be instrumentalized in that way; it is a *love poured forth to the end*. To say that I want the Resurrection without the Cross, is to say that I want the benefits of love separated from the love poured out for me. To offer an example, it's kind of like when a spouse tells another spouse: "I love you because of what you love does for me; it makes me feel better, and it makes me feel more secure and more comfortable. That's why I'm grateful for you." My goodness! How terrible!

1.4.2. The love issuing forth from the spear-wound in the side of the resurrected Christ streams forth into the Church and the world: the seal of God's love is broken open. With the opening-up of his heart, the Spirit is poured forth into the world and bathes the Church in the light of Easter which the Word has earned for it. Christ's Resurrection is the transfiguration of hatred, forsakenness, Godlessness, abandonment, suffering, death, sin—in short, all that is distant or opposed to

--