

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week. If you need more information, please contact Mr. Vautour. See the bottom of the bulletin the contact information.

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI, please see the international website at www.gci.org. On the left-hand upper side of the screen, you will see 3 short lines. You simply need to click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on "PARTICIPATE".

Please note that audio sermons are available of sermons are available at www.worshipim.ca and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday, in the morning.

For local prayer requests and financial updates, please see <http://www.worshipim.ca/> and click on **Members Only**. It is password protected for confidentiality reason. If you do not have the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

Voice of the Martyrs (<https://www.vomcanada.com/ng-2020-06-04b.htm>). Christians continue to be persecuted in many parts of the world. They need our prayers. You can receive a free publication through your email. If you are interested, please visit their website to subscribe.

Next Prayer Meeting (through ZOOM) is scheduled for Thursday September 10, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

For prayer requests please see local website www.worshipim.ca under "For Members Only". If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour

Offerings: you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5**. If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705**. Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God's church, his body.

From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director "We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon. Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using the donate button on our website www.gcicanada.ca We are waving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."

What Sort of Human Nature Did Jesus Have? by Ted Johnston (from <https://www.gcs.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=4499>)

The doctrine of the Incarnation declares that the eternal Son of God, in adding humanity to his divinity, became Jesus Christ—one person with two natures; fully God and fully human. Reflecting on that truth, many ask, What sort of human nature did Jesus have? Some say it was the one possessed by Adam and Eve before the fall. Others say it was human nature corrupted by the fall.

Though we do not consider this issue to be a core doctrine, it does (in alignment with historically orthodox Christian doctrine) teach that our salvation as humans is directly and fundamentally related to Jesus being human on our behalf in every respect. By uniting human nature with his perfect and perfecting divine nature, the Son of God brought to humanity the regeneration and healing we so desperately need yet are unable to achieve for

ourselves. This means that Jesus not only took upon himself our sinful external condition but also our human nature, corrupted by the fall. This understanding clarifies the doctrine of the Incarnation and points to the profound depths of Christ's atoning work on our behalf.

A notable theologian of the early church in the East who taught that the Son of God assumed corrupt human nature was Gregory Nazianzen (AD 329-390), one of the Cappadocian Fathers. In his First Letter to Cledonius, Gregory wrote this:

If anyone has put his trust in Christ as a Man without a human mind, he himself is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For that which he has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved. If only half of Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of him who was begotten, and so be saved as a whole. (quoted by Thomas F. Torrance in *The Christian Frame of Mind*, p. 9, emphasis added)

Gregory's assertion that the unassumed is the unredeemed had been put forward earlier by Irenaeus (died ca. AD 202). From early on (particularly in the East) the church taught that in the Incarnation ...the holy Son of God assumed from the Virgin Mary our fallen human nature, with all its weaknesses, sin and guilt, yet in such a way that instead of sinning himself he brought the judgment of God to bear upon us in the depths of our human nature, redeeming, healing and sanctifying at the same time what he took from us, through his atoning birth, life, death and resurrection. (*The Christian Frame of Mind*, p. 9)

Thomas F. Torrance is one of several Trinitarian theologians in recent times who, following Irenaeus, Gregory, Athanasius and other theologians of the ancient eastern church, teach that the Son of God assumed corrupt human nature—what the apostle Paul calls our flesh:

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3-4, NRSV)

Torrance asserted that there is no reason (biblically and theologically) to hold back from affirming that Jesus, during his earthly life, bore what he called "defiled" or "depraved" human nature—the nature that so desperately needs Christ's atoning and redeeming work in order for it to be healed and converted back to God. Torrance explains:

Through his incarnation, the Son of God has made himself one with us as we are, and indeed made himself what we are, thereby not only making our nature his own but taking on himself our lost condition subject to condemnation and death, all in order that he might substitute himself in our place, discharge our debt, and offer himself in atoning sacrifice to God on our behalf. Since sin and its judgment have affected the actual nature of death as we experience it, Christ has made our death and fate his own, thereby taking on himself the penalty due to all in death, destroying the power of sin and its stronghold in death, and thus redeeming or rescuing us from its dominion. (*The Trinitarian Faith*, p. 157)

Additional explanation from Torrance concerning this teaching is found in the book *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*. Here is a representative quotation:

Are we to think of this flesh which he became as our flesh? Are we to think of it as describing some neutral human nature and existence, or as describing our actual human nature and existence in the bondage and estrangement of humanity fallen from God and under the divine judgment? It was certainly into a state of enmity (hostility, animosity, synonyms added by Mr. Vautour) that the Word penetrated in becoming flesh, into darkness and blindness, that is, into the situation where light and darkness are in conflict and where his own receive him not.

There can be no doubt that the New Testament speaks of the flesh of Jesus as the concrete form of our human nature marked by Adam's fall, the human nature which seen from the cross is at enmity with God and needs to be reconciled to God. In becoming flesh the Word penetrated into hostile territory, into our human alienation and estrangement with God....

*Now when we listen to the witness of Holy Scripture... we know we are faced with something we can never fully understand, but it is something that we must seek to understand as far as we can. One thing should be abundantly clear, that if Jesus Christ did not assume our fallen flesh, our fallen humanity, then our fallen humanity is untouched by his work—for "the unassumed is the unredeemed," as Gregory Nazianzen put it. Patristic theology, especially as we see it expounded in the great Athanasius, makes a great deal of the fact that **he who knew no sin became sin for us [quoting 2 Cor. 5:21]**, exchanging his riches for our poverty [**quoting 2 Cor. 8:9**], his perfection for our imperfection, his incorruption for our corruption, his eternal life for our mortality [**alluding to 1 Cor. 15:53**]. Thus Christ took from Mary a corruptible and mortal body in order that he might take our sin, judge*

and condemn it in the flesh, and so assume our human nature as we have it in the fallen world that he might heal, sanctify and redeem it. In that teaching the Greek fathers were closely following the New Testament. If the Word of God did not actually come where we are, and join himself to us and range himself with us where we are in sin and under judgement, how could it be said that Christ really took our place, took our cause upon himself in order to redeem us? What could we then have to do with him? We stand before God as flesh of sin under God's judgement, and it is into this concrete form of our sin-laden, corruptible and mortal humanity in which we are damned and lost that Christ came, without ceasing to be the holy Son of God. He entered into complete solidarity with us in our sinful existence in order to save us, without becoming himself a sinner. (Incarnation, pp. 61, 62)

Not all theologians (ancient and contemporary) agree with this understanding that the Son of God assumed corrupt human nature. In fact, most theologians after the 5th century in the West took a different view. Torrance explains why:

Western divergence from the eastern Church can be traced back to [Roman Catholic Pope] Leo [ca. AD 440] rejecting the eastern teaching that in the Incarnation the Son of God took our depraved human nature upon himself... [Leo] held instead that it was not our fallen Adamic nature but some neutral human nature in Christ that became the instrument for his saving work for mankind. The theological consequences of that position were immense, as we can see in the typical approach of Latin theology to the idea of original sin as in the teaching of St. Augustine, in its formulation of a doctrine of atonement, largely in terms of external juridical relations, and... in the Roman [Catholic] dogmas of "the immaculate conception" and the "assumption of Mary..." Failure to recognize that the human mind, far from being neutral, is actually estranged and twisted, and thus in need of internal healing, opened the door to a pre-Christian Greek rationalism that has affected not only western theology but all western culture. (The Christian Frame of Mind, pp. 9, 10)

Most contemporary objections to the teaching of the eastern church on this topic arise out of presuming that the assumption of our human fallen condition would necessarily cause Jesus to sin, thus making him a sinner like we are. But that logic is based on an unwarranted inference—one that is not necessarily true. We understand from Holy Scripture that Jesus, in the midst of his incarnate life, never ceased having a divine nature. Jesus' human nature never existed apart from his divine nature—at all times he remained one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. That relationship makes all the difference as to why Jesus, the eternal Son of God, never sinned as we do. The author of Hebrews repudiates any false inferences to the contrary by asserting that Jesus was indeed **"like us in every respect," being "tempted... as we are," yet "without sin" (Heb. 2:17; 4:15)**. Though the Son of God assumed our fallen human nature, rather than being tarnished by it, it was sanctified by his touch. Torrance put it this way:

[Christ's assumption] of our flesh of sin was a sinless action, which means that Jesus does not do in the flesh of sin what we do, namely, sin, but it also means that by remaining holy and sinless in our flesh, he condemned sin in the flesh he assumed and judged it by his very sinlessness. (Incarnation, p. 63)

This understanding is consistent with the biblical teaching that Jesus' life was one of sanctifying himself (**John 17:19, ESV**). There would have been no need or even possibility of this being the case if Jesus had an unfallen (uncorrupt) human nature. We also note in Scripture that Jesus learned obedience, even though he was the perfect Son of God (**Heb. 5:8**). The human nature our Lord assumed was regenerated (remade or reborn) in Jesus by means of all that he went through during his life on earth, culminating in his crucifixion and ascension. Then, what Jesus achieved in his divine-human person is shared, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, with all who put their trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior (**Titus 3:5-6**). This is why the apostle Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 1:30 (NASB)** that Jesus, who is our life, is our **"sanctification."**

The good news is that the eternal Son of God, the Word, in becoming human via the Incarnation, assumed the human nature that is just like ours. In possessing that nature and resisting its downward pull at all points throughout his life, Jesus restored, renewed and so perfected that nature. Never succumbing to corrupt human nature, he never once sinned. Thus, there is no aspect of human existence, no depth of our fallen nature, that the redeeming work of Jesus has not touched and thus healed. Torrance comments:

From his birth to his death and resurrection on our behalf [Jesus] sanctified what he assumed through his own self-consecration as incarnate Son to the Father, and in sanctifying it brought the divine judgment to bear directly upon our human nature both in the holy life he lived and in the holy death he died in atoning and reconciling sacrifice before God. That was a vicarious (acting or done for another added by Mr. Vautour) activity which was brought to its triumphant fulfilment and which received the verdict of the Father's complete approval in the resurrection of Jesus as God's beloved Son from the dead and in the rebirth of humanity in him. (The Mediation of Christ, p. 50-51)

Through what Jesus did throughout his life on earth, bearing all the while our corrupt human nature, a reconciling exchange took place, as noted by the apostle Paul:

For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

The eternal Son took upon himself our corrupt (fallen) nature and purified and healed it through his life of perfect obedience to the Father. According to Torrance,

The work of atoning salvation does not take place outside of Christ, as something external to him, but takes place within him, within the incarnate constitution of his Person, as Mediator. (The Trinitarian Faith, p. 155)

Now in heaven, Jesus, who remains both fully God and fully (now glorified) human, shares his perfected humanity with us by the Holy Spirit. Though we continue to bear corrupt human nature, we are being conformed more and more to Jesus' perfected humanity until that glorious day when we will be granted, via glorification in the resurrection, the fullness of perfected humanity. It is by Jesus' vicarious (representative, substitutionary) humanity, united to his divinity, that we are justified, sanctified and glorified. Hallelujah!

Love Survives!

From (www.daybyday.org.uk August 29, 2020)



Cliff Neill is an Elder in Grace Communion Church Luton where he is on the Leadership Team

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:18 (NIV)

There was a group of religious people in Jesus' day who gave him a hard time during his ministry whose constant goal was to shame and discredit him. The culture of the Middle East at that time was, and still is today, an honour culture. They complained constantly about what he did or did not do, according to their very own standard of righteousness. Pharisee was their title, meaning the separated ones! They prided themselves on being super-righteous and strangely enough, they specialised in 'Social Distancing' as a way of life! Not because of some virus or contagious disease, but because of their desire to protect their ceremonial cleanliness, which apparently became 'defiled' if they touched anyone who did not keep the rules in the Torah, the

law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures! They religiously avoided the common people and would not so much as brush shoulders with them, or even look at them. Another part of their practice was to wash their hands often. Not just the hands but right up to the elbows!

Today we are doing this ourselves, not to avoid defilement, but to save our lives and the lives of others; not to earn brownie points with God. But just imagine living the whole of our lives with these restrictions—most of us are fed up with it after just a few months. Simply expressed, it is 'Loving our neighbour as ourselves.' This means being deeply concerned about their lives as well as our own. Jesus himself commands us to do this as a way of life. Notice in Galatians 5:14, the Apostle Paul echoes his words, "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command, 'Love your neighbour as yourself!'"

One day this virus and all the social distancing will be gone but I pray that our love and care for others will survive long after and that it has become a way of life. Love always survives you know. Once again, Paul hits the nail on the head in 1 Corinthians 13:13, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love!"

Prayer

Thank you, Great Father, for giving us instructions about loving and caring for everyone we come into contact with during our journey through life.

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—a) www.gci.org , b) www.worshipim.ca , c)

<https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton> ; d) Grace Communion International-Moncton

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmdZy69vJcFfPg>

For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.

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