



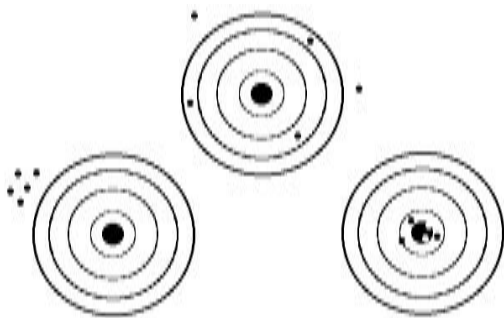
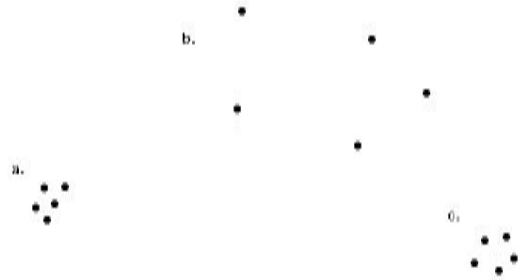
Preface

Why am I writing essays about the Bride of Christ? My interest in this topic began with an “experience,” some might call it a “revelation,” I would call it a noetic intuition. I almost immediately started to “unpack” this experience and over the next eight months I filled six composition books with my “ponderings” of what this intuition was and what it meant. I’m going to include three of my entries, the first entry, one from about a month later, and then last of my journal entries. I have included these entries because this is where the story of the Bride began for me. Please note that for my journal entries I am using a “handwriting” font and blue “ink” to differentiate the journal from this current commentary.

January 19, 2005

I had a conversation with a number of colleagues during lunch regarding the interminable debate between evolutionists and creationists (classical Darwinism, Punctuated Equilibrium, Intelligent Design, etc). As usual—fruitless: too difficult to break through long accepted paradigms.

It was after school, I had left the Science Building, and I was walking to my car to go home. I was deep in thought about this lunchtime conversation and I was thinking, about why I don't accept evolutionary theory; it has elements of precision that make its credible, but that alone does not make it true or accurate. This was a concept I frequently introduced early to my science students, that is, the difference between precision and accuracy. On an overhead projector I would show my students the targets from three different shooters and I'd ask them three questions, (1) Who is not a good marksman? (2) Who is a good marksman? and, (3) Who is an accurate marksman? They all agreed that “b” was not a good marksman, and most of them agreed that “a” and “c” were good marksman, but they had a difficult time determining who was the accurate marksman. I'd ask them why they were having a hard time in determining which of the marksmen was accurate, and then there was always a bright student who would excitedly shout out, “Because there's no bulls eye!” And that's right of course.



And it was while reflecting upon this discussion I would have with my students that I was suddenly struck with an intuitive flash. The bulls-eye with respect to the debate over Evolution vs. Creation is humanity itself. I do not believe that evolution is accurate, that is, the truth concerning man's origin and being, because it cannot explain the mystery of the human person. But as I reflected on what had just happened I realized that I experienced something that was not part of my usual cognitive process—I intuited. This intuition had come to me iconographically, symbolically, not discursively. It had a profound power, mystery, and assurance. Then my mind

immediately jumped on it and attempted to “unpack” it, dissect it, and understand it. And as my mind proceeded with its analysis the intuition began to fragment, lose its wholeness, its mystery and almost primordial certainty. I had replaced this intuition with imperfect, confused descriptions as my discursive mind attempted to articulate the vision. And I think that this was my first intuitions about intuitions, that is, they are

profoundly personal and our attempts to explain them, to repackage them so that they can be categorized, interconnected with existing knowledge, or shared with others, impersonalizes them, objectifies them, distorts them so that they become only shadows of what they were in that instantaneous apprehension.

About a month after I began journaling I discerned an axiom within the heart of this noetic intuition, something extraordinarily simple, impossible by human effort to attain, yet available by divine grace: $I < You$.

February 20, 2005

Imagine a world governed by this simple, single, yet seemingly impossible principle: $I < You$. This is the divine love, this is the kenosis of the Son, this is the "attitude" that we are to have.

³ Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves.
⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:3-8)

What art could be created, what discoveries made, what cures formulated, what lessons instructed, etc., unadulterated by the need to elevate the "I" over the "Other." How we could draw from the abyss of the Divine Wisdom to serve one another in Love.

Throughout those eight months of unpacking what I had "seen" in my *noetic* intuition I only realized on my very last entry in my Journal; all this time I was actually writing about the Bride. She is the perfected humanity that I had been trying to wrap my head around. She is the *telos* that has drawn the Church throughout the centuries towards her ultimate fulfillment. She has, is and will be conformed into the image of the Son, her Bridegroom, and the creation of the Holy Spirit, and not of evolutionary chance and necessity. She is the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev 21:2)

August 17, 2005

Here's a little visualization exercise; one that I believe iconographically captures what I have been writing about since the original intuition nearly eight months ago. Remember, how I wrote that the intuition I had came incongruently? What follows is that icon:

Imagine Rublev's icon of the Trinity with the Father seated at the left, the Son seated at His right (and at the right of the icon) and the Holy Spirit seated in the middle. Now, standing behind and between the Son and the Holy Spirit is a woman. Her left hand is resting on the Son's right shoulder. Her head is bowed and her gaze is fixed upon the Son. She is the Bride of the Son. She is the fulfillment of all of the Scriptural promises; the mystery of the Father sharing His divine life through our adoption and marriage to His Son. This is the potentiality of *theosis* actuated. It is the eschatological fulfillment of all that Christianity embraces.



We are the Bride—as unique, distinct persons, one in love with the others who are the brethren, which is the Church. Through grace we have been brought into participate in the Divine nature, into the Trinitarian life. This is the great mystery of the Trinity's love—that the Father so loved the world that He sent His son, that the son did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but

became man for our salvation, and that the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, in His own humility reveals only the Son preparing us to be the Bride of the Lamb. And when that day comes, when we are united with our Lord in an eternal covenant of heavenly marriage—nothing will be the same, creation will be restored, humanity will have found her destiny, the Son will be “complete” with His bride, and the Trinity—dare I say it? Can I say that it will no longer be appropriate to depict it as Rublev’s icon?—but as I described with the Bride standing next to and one with her Lord and therefore one with the Father and the Holy Spirit?



well of water flowing fresh from Lebanon.

Bride: Arise, north wind! Come, south wind! blow upon my garden that its perfumes may spread abroad. Let my lover come to his garden and eat its choice fruits.

Groom: I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gather my myrrh and my spices, I eat my honey and my sweetmeats, I drink my wine and my milk. Eat, friends; drink! Drink freely of love! (Song 4:7-5:1)

Groom: You are all-beautiful, my beloved, and there is no blemish in you. Come from Lebanon, my bride, come from Lebanon, come! Descend from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, From the haunts of lions, from the leopards' mountains. You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; you have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one bead of your necklace. How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride, how much more delightful is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your ointments than all spices! Your lips drip honey, my bride, sweetmeats and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments is the fragrance of Lebanon. You are an enclosed garden, my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden, a fountain sealed. You are a park that puts forth pomegranates, with all choice fruits; Nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all kinds of incense; Myrrh and aloes, with all the finest spices. You are a garden fountain, a