

Fr. Perozich comments —

A refreshing back to basics Christian teaching by Romano Guardini is offered to us on THE CATHOLIC THING. It is refreshing because it is clear, unambiguous, a preaching of the Holy Name of Jesus, descriptions of His two natures human and divine, how our salvation unfolds in the person of the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus' experience reveals our own here and our destiny. Certainly we exist in time in the body, yet in our spirit we too are dangling between time and eternity as He is changing us by grace into His own divine image.

Here are no ambiguous statements today from current church leaders to criticize. No offerings of scandals, sacrilege, divisiveness, error, heresy are present. No frustration of current church leaders trying to co opt the faith of our fathers in order to try to create their new church in their own image and likeness. None of the nonsense of poorly trained theologians telling us that we must concentrate only on the human Jesus, not the divine One is present here.

Guardini shows us that the two natures are united, and that we must not forget either because we live in Him now in time as we are being unrooted from our earthly thoughts, desires, and wills.

Like Jesus in the period we call mystagogia, the 40 days between the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus, our own life is one of living in Him in this world, dying to the world, and being transformed into someone one new like the Savior.

Jesus' life is our destiny.

He came to reclaim what is His, that is you and me.

He came to redeem, to buy back with His own blood what is His, you and me.

He came to ransom a slave, you and me.

He came to restore our dignity as sons and daughters of God.

He came to restore our destiny: new and resurrected bodies, free from sin and bondage to live forever in heaven with God.

Just Jesus, pure and simple, is presented by one of the great Catholic minds of the previous century.

Enjoy and be transformed as Jesus is, free with all earthly bonds dissolved in order to ascend with Him forever to the eternal Father in the eternal Spirit in the Holy and Immortal Trinity.

BETWEEN TIME AND ETERNITY

Romano Guardini
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Romano Guardini (17 February 1885 – 1 October 1968) was an Italian-born German Catholic priest, author, and academic. He was one of the most important figures in Catholic intellectual life in the 20th century.



The days between Christ's Resurrection and his return to the Father are full of mystery. If we accept them, as we should, not as a legend, but as a vital part of our faith, then we must ask what they mean in the life of the Lord, and what their significance in our own Christian existence.

These are the days between time and eternity. The Lord is still on earth, but his feet are already detached, prepared to depart. Before him unfold the reaches of everlasting light, but he still pauses here in transitoriness.

In the New Testament there are two figures of Jesus; one "the carpenter's son." (Matt. 13:55) It is he who stands in the midst of earthly events, who toils, struggles, submits to his destiny. He has his own personal characteristics – mysterious and inexplicable, certainly – and yet so unmistakably his that we almost hear the tone of his voice, see the accompanying gesture. In the main, it is the Gospels that portray this Son of Man. (See the Epistles and Revelation.)

The other "nature" of Jesus is centered in eternity. Here all earthly limitations have fallen away. He is free, divinely free, Lord and Ruler. Nothing transitory, nothing accidental remains; everything is essence. "Jesus of Nazareth" has become "Christ our Lord," the eternal one whose figure St. John describes as it was revealed to him on the Island of Patmos: "One like to a son of man, clothed with a garment reaching to the ankles, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. But his head and his hair were white as white wool, and as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire; his feet were like fine brass, as in a glowing furnace, and his voice like the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars. And out of his mouth came forth a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was like the sun shining in its power."

“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, and he who lives; I was dead, and behold, I am living forevermore; and I have the keys of death and of hell.’ ”

St. Paul also describes him in the Epistle to the Colossians when he speaks of him: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For in him were created all things in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Principalities, or Powers. . . .For it has pleased God the Father that in him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross.” (Col. 1:15–20)



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Here all concrete detail falls away. Not one familiar trait remains; hardly a human feature. Everything is

strange and disproportionate. Is it the same Jesus who walked on earth? . . .

It might be asked: Why this mysterious lingering on earth after the Resurrection? Why didn't the Lord return home directly?

What was happening during those forty days? Let us for a moment suppose that the Resurrection and the period afterwards had been only offshoots of morbid religious experience, legend or myth – what would those days have looked like?

Doubtless, they would have been filled with demonstrations of the liberated one's power; the hunted one, now omnipotent, would have shattered his enemies; he would have blazed from temple altars, would have covered his followers with honors, and in these and other ways, have fulfilled the longings of the oppressed.

He would also have initiated the disciples into the wonderful mysteries of heaven, would have revealed the future, the beginning and end of all things. But nothing of all this occurs. No mysteries are revealed; no one is initiated into the secrets of the unknown. Not one miracle, save that of Christ's own transfigured existence and the wonderful fish-catch, which is only a repetition of an earlier event.

What does happen? Something completely unspectacular, exquisitely still: the past is confirmed. **The reality of the life that has been crosses over into eternity. These days are the period of that transition.** And we need them for our faith; particularly when we evoke the great images of the eternal Christ throning at his Father's right, coming upon the clouds to judge the living and the dead, ruling the Church and the souls of the faithful growing from the depths of God-

summoned humanity “to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13)

Such images place us in danger of losing the earthly figure of the Lord. This must not happen. **Everything depends on the eternal Christ’s remaining also Jesus of Nazareth, who walks among us until the day when all things will be enfolded in eternity; on the blending of borderless spirit with the here and thus and then of the process of salvation.**

In the Christ of the Apocalypse one vision holds this fast: the Lamb standing “as if slain” but alive. (Apoc. 5:6; 1:18) Earthly destiny entered into eternity. Once and forever, death has become lasting life.

But there is a danger that this truth will dangle in space, enigmatic as a rune on an ancient stone. This period of transition deciphers the rune, gives us the key to the parable: **All that has been remains in eternal form.** Every word Jesus ever spoke, every event during his lifetime is fixed in unchanging reality, then and now and forever. He who is seated on the throne contains the past transfigured to eternal present. – *From “The Lord”*

**Image: Adoration of the Mystic Lamb by Jan van Eyck, c. 1430 [Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent]. This is the center panel of the Ghent Altarpiece. Top left and anti-clockwise: the male martyrs, the pagan writers and Jewish prophets, the male saints, and the female martyrs.*