

SHORT WRITINGS FROM TAIZÉ

11

Brother Richard

Blessed in Our Human Frailty

The humanity of the Son of God
and our humanity, as seen in the
story of the temptations

*What has not been assumed has not been
healed, but what is united to God is also saved.*

Gregory Nazianzen

Jesus at the Jordan, Jesus in the wilderness

In the first chapters of the gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, we find two accounts that form a kind of diptych. Before describing Christ's public activity they invite us to focus on his person, in a certain sense to contemplate his image. The first picture of the diptych presents Jesus radiant at the Jordan River; the second shows him exhausted and undergoing trials in the wilderness.

The story of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness is among the most astonishing ones we find in the gospels. It is unusual first of all in that it cannot depend upon the testimony of eyewitnesses. But it is exceptional above all by its penetration of the mystery of Jesus, Son of God. It is undoubtedly one of the most profound texts we have dealing with the identity of Jesus Christ.

The traditional title, "the temptations in the wilderness," focuses the reader's attention on the problem of temptation. Questions like "What does it mean to be tempted? How can temptations be avoided? How can they be dealt with successfully?" are certainly not absent. But in fact, another question is crucial for the

baptism scene as well as for the account of Jesus' experience in the desert – the question of his identity. Just who is this Jesus?

The story of Jesus in the wilderness begins with a phrase that echoes almost word for word the story of his baptism that preceded it: "Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Spirit, to be put to the test by the devil" (Matthew 4:1).

The first word, "then," describes the experience of Jesus in the wilderness as following immediately upon his baptism in the Jordan. The remark that "Jesus was led out into the wilderness" points in the same direction: the verb employed, difficult to render in English, means literally "to lead up." The reader sees Jesus climbing up out of the Jordan valley into the hill country of Judea.

But the two stories are linked above all by the presence of the Spirit. At the moment of his baptism, the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus like a dove. That same Spirit now leads him into the desert.

There, the essential aspects of what Jesus experienced at his baptism are put to the test. At the Jordan there was the voice from heaven, the voice of God his Father: "This is my beloved Son; in him I place all my joy" (Matthew 3:17). In the desert, what that voice affirmed will twice be called into question: "If you are Son of God..." (Matthew 4:3, 6).

Jesus' baptism revealed the luminous mystery of his being. He is the Son of God, beloved from all eternity and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In that communion, there is only light and love. An ancient

Syriac text says with great poetic beauty that at the moment when Jesus was baptized, the Jordan River caught fire for love. And then all at once we are in the desert, the wilderness marked by solitude, gloom and hunger. There is no longer any voice from heaven. Jesus will only hear God's Word in the verses from the Bible he has read and learned by heart. The contrast is striking.

If his baptism revealed Jesus to be the beloved Son of God, he is also a human being, the "Son of Man" as he likes to call himself. The story of Jesus in the wilderness shows the humanity of Jesus, Son of God. The story of his baptism could make us believe that Jesus, the Son of God filled with the Holy Spirit, would dominate the problems of the human condition from a lofty height. Since the heavens opened above him when he was baptized, will he not constantly live "with the heavens open," passing through his years on earth with a divine and sovereign freedom?

The Holy Spirit, who came down upon Jesus at his baptism, never ceases remaining on him, but that presence no longer opens heaven for him. It does not liberate him from the limits of the human condition. It leads him into the wilderness, where human frailty is shown at its crudest.

Put to the test by the slanderer

The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, but it is the devil who challenges him. The Spirit's activity corresponds to God's plan: if God reveals his Son Jesus in the light and joy of his love, he also wants him to be known in his human frailty. But the temptation itself does not come from God; it is the work of the devil. The Holy Spirit can lead him into the wilderness, that eminently inhospitable and dangerous place. But the Spirit never tempts.

This affords us an opportunity to clarify the meaning of these words. The word "temptation" is familiar to us; we say it for instance in the Our Father. But in reality it is somewhat ambiguous. Is temptation the seduction of evil? We can be tempted by good things, however: tasty food, a beautiful concert, an excursion with friends.... And in the Bible, the meaning of the word is different still.

It comes from a verb translated either as "to tempt" or "to test." Its most general meaning is "to cause to undergo a trial" or "to put to the test." The experience of the people of Israel in the desert represented such a trial or testing: "Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart" (Deuteronomy 8:2). In the desert masks fall away; it is impossible to pretend. What lies hidden deep in our hearts comes out into the light. The

forty years in the wilderness were the hour of truth for Israel.

In the most ancient parts of the Bible, God himself puts people to the test, as in the passage from Deuteronomy just quoted. Later, for example in the Book of Job, someone else takes on this role, “the satan,” in Hebrew *ha-satan*. All at once, the testing changes its character. Israel’s time in the wilderness was certainly a painful trial, but God was testing his people with no hostile intention and with the firm hope of a positive outcome. Job the righteous man, however, is put to the test by the satan with malicious intent. The trial is thus beyond all measure and becomes the synonym of an infinite suffering.

In the beginning, *ha-satan* is not a proper name, but designates the adversary, in particular during a lawsuit. The Greek version of the Old Testament renders *ha-satan* by *ho diabolos* – the word that became *devil* in English – which is not a proper name either. The verb from which it is derived means “to carry over, to traduce”, the *diabolos* is a malicious and malevolent informer, a slanderer.¹

In the Book of Job, *ha-satan* causes the unbearable trials of Job, after having slandered Job in God’s presence. By a cruel test, he tries to corroborate his suspicions. He wants to demonstrate that Job’s piety is superficial and self-interested. But in the final analysis, he is wrong. God is right in being proud of his servant

¹ It is sometimes said that *diabolos* means divider. This is not incorrect in the sense that slandering creates division. But when, in the New Testament, *diabolos* is used for human beings, it refers clearly to scandalmongers or calumniators (1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3).

Job. At the end of the story, the satan’s slander is not even mentioned.

What Jesus went through in the desert evokes both the trial of Israel as well as that of Job. The forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness of the hill-country of Judea correspond to the forty years of Israel in the Sinai desert. Like Israel Jesus is defenseless, and hungry. But the fact that the devil puts Jesus to the test forms a parallel with the situation of Job. As in the story of Job, the test is hostile. In the aridity of the desert, Jesus is exposed without protection to the malevolent challenge of the slanderer.

Trust

“After having fasted for forty days and forty nights, Jesus was famished” (Matthew 4:2). People fast today for different reasons – to feel better, to learn to control their desires.... Jesus fasted because in the wilderness there was nothing to eat. Jesus’ hunger manifests his human condition: like every human being, he does not draw life from himself. He is not his own source.

But is this in fact true for Jesus? Is he not the Son of God? Does not a Son of God “have life in himself,” as Jesus himself will claim (John 5:26)? If he is truly Son of God, how can he still be hungry? His hunger and his exhaustion call into question his identity as God’s beloved Son.

The devil plays the role of a well-meaning examiner. He shows the candidate a possible answer. He proposes

to Jesus that he change some of the many stones in the desert into bread. This would be an elegant solution to the problem that was posed: Jesus himself would no longer be hungry and, in addition, he would have solved the problem of world hunger. He would pass the test with flying colours, and his quality as Son of God could be duly recognized.

The response given by Jesus to this first test seems rather meagre. It proves nothing. His words do not transform any stones; he pronounces no secret or magic words, just a verse from the Bible and, moreover, one that is well-known. “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4).

Jesus consents to being hungry. He accepts his human limitations. Like every human being, he has to live on something; he is not his own source. Lack and hunger, without being ideals for him, are simply part of his humanity.

Let us suppose for a moment that Jesus followed the suggestion given to him and lived on stones. In so doing he would have acquired unlimited autonomy. He would be sovereign, not needing anything or anybody. But although he is Son of God, Jesus does not live on his own forces but by trusting in God. His hunger has the same profound meaning as the hunger of the people of Israel in the desert. It is the symbol of a basic dependency of human beings, the sign that every creature lives because of God and exists by God’s word.

The devil proposes that Jesus make use of his

words to change stones into bread. “*Tell* these stones to become bread.” That is a reference to God’s creative word. As the rest of the story will show, the devil knows the Bible well. He knows that it says about God: “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:9). Should not the same thing be true for the Son of God? But Jesus does not claim to play at being equal to God. Put to the test, he does not pronounce any creative divine word, just a Bible verse known by every child of Israel.

Jesus apparently comes out of this first trial with no glory. He did not prove his identity as Son of God. But paradoxically, the outcome of the test, at first sight inconclusive, is actually very revealing. It reveals the heart of Jesus, his humble trust. According to the criteria of the one who put him to the test, it is not appropriate for a Son of God to be hungry or deprived. For Jesus, on the contrary, his identity as the beloved Son of God is not incompatible with his human poverty and frailty.

This first test of the identity of Jesus shows in what the perfect communion of love between him and his Father consists. It does not make him a demi-god unaffected by the harshness of life. He is a poor man who lives by words that comes from the mouth of God: “This is my beloved Son; in him I put all my joy.” He is hungry and suffers while being loved by God and having the Spirit dwell within him.

Walking humbly with God

“Then the devil took him with him to the holy city, and placed him at the pinnacle of the temple” (Matthew 4:5). This fantastic change of the setting within which the action takes place suggests that the story is to be read as a visionary experience. Specifically, Jesus is still in the desert of Judah, but in a vision he is transported to the roof of the temple in Jerusalem.

“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down!” (Matthew 4:6). But why should Jesus throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple? This is a new invitation to prove that he is the Son of God. Can Jesus be Son of God if he has no extraordinary powers, if he has to submit like everyone else to the limits of the human condition?

During the first trial, the slanderer raised the question of whether a Son of God should not have the source of life within himself. Now, he insists, to be truly the Son of God Jesus should be immortal. And he invites Jesus to throw himself into the void so that his invulnerability and immortality may come to light. Such a leap would definitely place Jesus above all suspicion concerning his identity as Son of God.

The devil appears not only as an examiner, but also as a counsellor. He cites the Holy Scriptures: “For it is written: God has given orders concerning you to his angels, and in their hands they will bear you, so that you do not strike your foot against a stone” (Psalm 91:11-12 and Matthew 4:6). If anyone who

trusts in God can be sure of his protection, how much more his beloved Son! It is time to trust.

The devil’s argument seems credible – naturally, since it is based on Scripture. But it is insidious, full of mockery: “What a pathetic son of God you are, if you are afraid of death.”

For the second time, Jesus emerged from the test without glory. He showed no heroism. He did not jump. He remained hesitating on the edge of the temple. You can almost hear the jibes of the devil and all the mocking voices that join him: “What a pitiful Son of God!” But Jesus does not move, does not argue and quotes a single verse: “It is written: You will not put the Lord your God to the test” (Deuteronomy 6:16 and Matthew 4:7).

When he was hungry, Jesus wanted to live only by trusting in God. Why does he not trust him now, as the words of the psalm invite him to? It is because there is trust and trust. The first test revealed the total trust that Jesus has in his Father. He wants to root his life in nothing but God’s word. This second test refines the meaning of trust, by showing clearly what it is not.

Trusting in God does not mean using God as a stopgap. Jesus denies that God’s role is to supplement what human beings are incapable of doing. If someone wants to throw himself into the void, he has to take precautions, to wear a parachute. Jesus refused to use God to go beyond the limits of his human condition.

By refusing to jump, Jesus said yes fully to what he is. He is a human being, a creature and therefore he is

mortal. Slanderers and the ill-intentioned will see this as a confirmation of their suspicions: Jesus is not really Son of God. But in reality, this second test is a new step of revelation and startling truth: Jesus is both the beloved Son of God and a mortal creature.

The Gospel shows that what appears to be incompatible is united in Jesus. It is difficult to imagine a twofold nature of both beloved Son of God and mortal creature. But the Gospel does not ask us to imagine something; it asks us to look clearly at what is shown. Jesus is the Son of God and he humbly trusts. His trust is the manifestation of the secret of his being.

In Jesus' trust, there is no trace of pretentiousness; it is very humble. Jesus does not try and force God to intervene on his behalf so that he can leap into the void without danger. Though he is Son of God, Jesus "walks humbly with his God" (Micah 6:8). According to the prophet, that is what God asks of every person.

Should not being the Son of God give Jesus rights and perhaps even a certain power over God? Jesus does not want to know anything about this. He humbly trusts, even though this trust has no apparent purpose; it brings him nothing.

Humble trust has consequences. It humiliated Jesus before the devil; it will humiliate him again during the trial of the cross. In Matthew's gospel, the words "if you are Son of God" reappear later on, word for word. Those who pass before the cross of Jesus shake their heads and say, "Save yourself, if you are Son of God, and come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). For them, it is unthinkable that a Son of God would die in

such an appalling way. For Jesus, it is the last chance for him to prove he is the Son of God. He does not take it.

Patient waiting

In the biblical tradition, the Son of God is also "the king of Israel" (John 1:49), the Messiah destined to become "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5). Risen from the dead, Jesus will confirm those expectations. He will invite his disciples to meet him on a mountain in Galilee and tell them: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

If – again in a kind of visionary journey – the devil took Jesus "to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory" (Matthew 4:8), this was once again to put his identity as Son of God to the test. Unless "the kingdoms of the earth" belonged to him, how could Jesus really be the Messiah, the King of the nations?

This time, the devil does not call into question the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. He takes it for granted. But he suggests that these are just empty words if Jesus does not have universal and real authority. So he offers him a solution so that his identity as Son of God, as sovereign ruler, may become a reality obvious to all.

"All this I will give you, if you bow down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9). Jesus is still in the wilderness, exhausted. He realizes that he will wear himself out

even more by “walking humbly with his God.” So the invitation is attractive. Why should he tire himself out in this way? Is this path of humility and patience really the only way to attain the glory of the Messiah?

The devil claims that Jesus can manifest himself as the Messiah immediately, reaching his goal without waiting or getting tired. All he has to do is to want to. In fact, he insinuates a third time that being the Son of God is incompatible with human limitations. Here, it has to do with the limits of time: what kind of Son of God has to wait?

In thought and imagination humans may gain a certain distance on time, embracing with a single inward glance past, present and future. But they can only live in the present. If, in thought, they can anticipate the future, in their reality as human creatures of flesh and blood they cannot skip steps. Temporality is perhaps the most radical limit for creatures.

What the devil is proposing, therefore, is for Jesus to cease being situated in time. Jesus should not have to wait any longer; he should not experience uncertainty; he should never need patience. If, in any event, “all authority must be given” (Matthew 28:18), why not at once? Why wait, risk, suffer? The challenge concerns once again the understanding of what it means to be the Son of God. Can someone be the Son of God and at the same time become this patiently, through suffering?

Basically, it is impossible to answer such questions as long as the criterion is our preconceived notion of what a Son of God should be. The gospel does not

present a Son of God we conceive and imagine in our heads, but the Son of God who lived a concrete life on earth. The Son of God from Nazareth was born and grew to maturity. He became fully who he is by his life, death and resurrection. It was with great patience that he “entered into his glory” (Luke 24:26).

Why would reaching the goal with no delay be the equivalent for Jesus of worshipping the devil? Because in that way he would be denying the fundamental goodness of creation and, ultimately, God himself. That is because every creature has a beginning and develops, taking a journey in time. We now know that this is true not only for plants and animals, but even for the mineral world and the universe. All creatures become fully what they are in time.

When the devil offers Jesus a shortcut to reach the goal without delay, the mask falls. He wants to be worshipped in place of God. He claims to help Jesus to be the Messiah and thus prove his identity as the Son of God. But by belittling human patience, the need for ripening in time, all he does is denigrate God and the goodness of his creation.

According to the slanderer, becoming would be a failure for the Son of God. It seems to him unworthy of a Son of God that Jesus would reach the fullness of his being through a patient process and one, moreover, which would entail such a large amount of suffering. There is something plausible in the idea that a Son of God should dominate time. But for Jesus, being the Son of God is not incompatible with being a creature existing within time.

He quotes the Bible for the third time: “It is the Lord your God whom you shall worship, and him alone shall you serve” (Matthew 4:10). Worshipping God means saying yes to God with all my heart and saying yes to his work, to his creation. Jesus refuses to flee the human condition. It is by his humanity that he is united to God in worship.

This third time too, Jesus does not get out of the trial with any glory. There is still nothing that proves that he is the Son of God. He did not solve the problem of hunger. He did not give a demonstration of immortality by leaping from the pinnacle of the temple. He did not become king, but remained a poor man.

Jesus, poor and fragile, beloved and blessed

“Go away, Satan!” (Matthew 4:10). Jesus finally was able firmly to dismiss the slanderer. “Then the devil left him” (Matthew 4:11). Luke’s Gospel adds that he will return “at the appropriate time” (Luke 4:13). This indication refers to the passion. Luke connects the testing of Jesus in the desert to that of the cross. When Jesus is crucified, there will be not just one, but a host of people who cast aspersions on him and make fun of his alleged identity as Son of God. The devil is not an isolated individual, but the spirit of denigration.

It is not important to determine whether Jesus

passed the test or not. What matters is that he got through it. To overcome a temptation or a trial is, in any case, not biblical language. One endures temptation and passes through it (1 Corinthians 10:13). Jesus has endured the trial by focusing firmly on his unity with God. He did not let the darkness speak to him. He is aware of his destitution and his poverty. But he rejects the arguments that use his human frailty as an excuse to call into doubt his identity as God’s Son.

“And behold, angels came to him and served him” (Matthew 4:11). It was the Spirit of God who led Jesus into the desert. Yet in the course of these events God seemed absent, as if his presence had been withdrawn. That changes now with the coming of angels, God’s servants who place themselves at the service of Jesus. He is still a human being, frail and alone in the desert. But the presence of angels confirms that, in his human frailty, Jesus is the Son of God, the Beloved, the Blessed One.

Why did Jesus have to go through this trial? The trial is a moment of truth, it allows us to “know what is in the heart,” in the words of Deuteronomy. But since God knows his Son, why this time of testing?

Jesus is a human creature, and therefore grows and develops. He “grew in wisdom, years and grace” (Luke 2:52). His baptism and the forty days in the desert were a milestone in his life as a human being. At that time of his life, his unity with God had to be confirmed in a new way. The test was not feigned.

The angels communicated to him God’s recognition. In the eyes of the devil and all the nay-sayers,

Jesus was not very impressive. God, for his part, found in Jesus his joy. Not only at his baptism, but at every moment of his life when Jesus, in his human becoming, became what he was deep within himself.

“He was tested in all things in accordance with the likeness [i.e., according to his human nature, identical to ours], but without sinning” (Hebrews 4:15). In the trial, the Son of God fully said yes, yes to God and yes to his condition as a creature. He trusted; he remained humble and patient. Such attitudes are certainly part of his fragile human condition. But being weak and helpless is not incompatible with his identity as the Son of God. What would be incompatible would be not living in the love of God, not believing his words: “This is my beloved Son; in him I put all my joy.”

What is united to God is saved

The question: “Why did Jesus undergo these trials in the wilderness?” extends the question: “Why did Jesus have to be baptized in the Jordan?” If he is the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, why must the Holy Spirit still come down upon him? Jesus’ baptism has sometimes been seen as a vocation experience. If he had had an implicit knowledge of his identity as Son of God and of his mission since he was a child, at that moment it became a clear awareness.

But the accounts of his baptism are quite unlike vocation stories. They rather help us understand that the baptism of Jesus took place for us. In this respect,

Matthew’s account is particularly explicit: the voice from heaven is meant more for those who witnessed the baptism than for Jesus himself. It said: “This is my beloved Son,” and not “You are my Son.”

That is why the tradition of the Christian East, in referring to Jesus’ baptism, speaks of “theophany” (in other words, manifestation of God), stressing that the Holy Trinity is manifested: the Father by the voice from heaven, the Holy Spirit as a dove, and Jesus the beloved Son. Jesus’ baptism manifests God and reveals that the Holy Spirit will remain forever in human beings.

The story of Jesus in the desert extends this revelation. It gives us the incredible privilege of “knowing what is in his heart.” If baptism reveals that the Holy Spirit can remain on a human being forever, the trials in the wilderness show how Jesus shares our human condition. By his trials he espoused the reality of our life, so that our entire existence can find meaning and healing. Jesus passed the test in the wilderness for us, remaining united to God while being as fragile as we are. In this way he enables us to love our human condition.

From Gregory Nazianzen, a Christian intellectual and bishop of the fourth century, we have this remarkable formula: “What has not been assumed has not been healed, but what is united to God is also saved.”². Gregory was involved in a discussion where the issue was the humanity of the Son of God. To emphasize the perfection of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Apollinaris, a

² Letter 101, 32.

bishop of Laodicea in Syria, admitted his body and human soul, but excluded from his being the human capacity of self-determination. According to Apollinaris, it was the divine Spirit which, in place of a human mind, determined the choices of Christ.

Apollinaris was a renowned exegete and a brilliant thinker, and his understanding of Christ was at first sight very plausible. But Gregory understood what was really at stake. If Christ does not have the ability to make choices, then our human freedom remains outside of the communion with God. It is abandoned to itself, a prisoner of itself and not healed. In a language that is less conceptual but no less evocative, that is what is expressed by the story of the trials of Jesus in the desert. Jesus had the human ability, and therefore the human duty, to determine his choices.

A similar discussion would arise again in the seventh century, around the so-called monothelite crisis. The question arose whether Christ had one divine-human will (hence the word *monothelite*, which means “a single will”) or whether the Son of God had, in common with us, a human will. We cannot go into the details here. Suffice it to note that monothelism was attractive for this reason: it allowed believers to emphasize that in Jesus there was neither contradictions nor sin.

It was a monk, Maximus the Confessor, who realized the true import of the issue. During his lifetime, he was very isolated in his strong affirmation of a human will in Christ and he died as a result of mistreatment and exile for the defense of the faith – hence he is called Confessor. Nineteen years after his death,

in 681, the Third Council of Constantinople recognized the correctness of his position.

The Son of God’s humanity, and ours

The narrative of Jesus’ trials in the wilderness assures us that the Son of God took on all that we are in order to heal our whole being. It shows us the depth of Jesus’ heart, the humanity of the Son of God. In so doing, it reveals to us our own humanity as well, the humanity that Jesus came to save, that we can now fully assume since we know it has been potentially healed.

What is true for him is true for us. We are baptized together with Christ; each of us is a beloved son or daughter in whom God finds his joy. With Christ, we are vulnerable at the hour of trial, of testing. Our communion with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit does not take us out of our human condition. If Jesus, the beloved Son of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt, was hungry and did not put up a good show in the desert, then we should not be ashamed of our own frailty. Otherwise it would be as if we thought we could do better than him.

The Holy Spirit assures us of God’s love. Experiencing hunger and thirst and being unsatisfied are not signs of God’s absence. It is the Holy Spirit himself who can lead us into the desert, as he did for Jesus.

His presence is not incompatible with feelings of emptiness.

Sometimes the accuser will attack us as he did Jesus. "If you are the beloved child of God, how can you be so confused, so helpless? What a pathetic child of God you are!" This insidious voice can arise in our own heart or come from those around us.

The words of the Gospel then become words of liberation. We do not need to pretend or to impress. Jesus did not need to appear strong in front of the devil. God does not expect us to be able to deal fully with all problems. It is enough for us to continue to walk in the footsteps of Christ. He did not pass the test with brilliant answers, but escaped it with three poor Bible verses.

"Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." With these words, Jesus expressed his trust. Then when the devil remarked that his trust was very poor if he did not dare to throw himself into the hands of angels, Jesus reiterated his humility: "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." And finally, he consented to patience, to waiting for God and worshipping God: "It is the Lord your God whom you shall worship and him alone shall you serve."

"Christ had to become just like his brothers and sisters in all things, to be a merciful and faithful high priest before God, in order to achieve the forgiveness of the people's sins. Since he himself suffered by being tested, he is able to help those who are being tested" (Hebrews 2:17-18). Christ became like us in all things

so that we could become like him. His trust, his humility and his patience can also become ours.

Those three attitudes are a serene acceptance of our human condition. Trust: I do not live by myself, but by the word that assures me that I am loved. Humility: I do not need to be able to do everything. Patience: it is not necessary to reach the goal right away; what I am grows and matures in the time that God gives me.

Jesus was not ashamed of his human weakness. And so he opened a path where we are blessed and loved in what we are. The combat of faith is not intended to lift us above our human condition, but to maintain us firmly in the trust that God loves us even when we are weak and needy. Worshipping God alone means rooting our lives in his love, whatever happens.

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