



*Notes on
Cosmology,
Time,
Eternity*

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Introduction

The material presented in this booklet is a compilation of my lecture notes given in the Philosophy of Being course.

These notes are merely outline guides. There is little attempt to put the topics in a logical and sequential manner. The topics are intertwined. The lecture sequence is contingent upon the amount of material covered in the daily class presentation and, therefore, does not correspond to the order found in these notes.

For the reader to understand these notes and the manner in which they are presented, he must have attended the course.

The fundamental points are as follows:

- a) Movement towards unity
- b) Concept of time – becoming
- c) Concept of Eternity – fullness, unity, oneness
- d) Discovery of the being “I”
- e) Faith – awareness – light
- f) Hope – movement – life
- g) Love – unity – agape – love

A MIND MADE NOBLE LEADS A NOBLE LIFE

Br. Eugene

Eternity

Eternity is **permanence**, and the instant in which it is concentrated is a **now**, outside of all becoming. But eternity is also a **presence**. If every present is a presence, the Divine present is absolute presence itself, not to another, but by Itself. Time, by its inexorable sequences and intervals, renders us absent and distant from ourselves. But eternity is completely beyond sequences and intervals, it is the pure presence of God to Itself, the pure transparency of perfect act to itself, in the pure relationship of being, knowledge and love, which links the three Persons together. In them there is no possibility of distance.

Eternity, by its very nature, is the **possession of self**. Insofar as our existence is a process of becoming, it is always an inexorable flight, the endless draining of our being into nothingness. The fullness of thought, the fullness of love, the fullness of life, glory and happiness is suffused through eternity – through the union of all three into one. And thus the divine relationship: Father – Son – Holy Spirit.

Time and everything in time, seems to be the measure and the limit within which human thoughts can work and move; all that surpasses this limit remains inaccessible to our thoughts because it is devoid of everything within the grasp of man. In these realities there is no shape, no place, no size, no temporal measure – nothing for us to seize upon. If the mind tries to grasp them, it will follow its natural bent and seek to grasp time – segments and creatures – in time, and thus it will allow the incomprehensible nature to escape it on every side.

Divine substance is beyond any beginning, it does not furnish clues to its exact nature; it is known only by the fact that it cannot be known. This is its truly distinctive note; it is beyond any attempt of the mind to characterize it. This is why the mind cannot grasp it.

Eternity is the **absolute fullness of being**. The world has a beginning and it will have an end; eternity has neither beginning nor end. The world is that which passes away and develops in perpetual sequences of time; eternity does not pass away.

The world is in a process of movement and becoming; eternity excludes movement and becoming. It is that **absolute plenitude outside of movement, becoming and sequences outside beginning and ending – outside time**.

Eternity is plenitude of infinite life – infinite knowledge and infinite love. Eternity is the Divine itself – who is absolute plenitude.

The essence, the core of eternity is not, then, to be without beginning and without end; time itself might not have had a beginning or end. Nor is it to be beyond such movement and change. The essence of eternity is to be **absolute plenitude** in which everything is at once completely given.

God is not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow. God simply is, outside time completely. For nothing exists yesterday, today, or tomorrow except in time; nothing exists without the Divine, yet the Divine is not in place or time, but all things are in the Divine.

Time is essentially devoid of being and represents successions and lack of permanence.

Time is the proper measure of being in motion. The human mind measures “motion” by numbering things as before and after and thus it construes time.

In the Divine, the only conceivable “measure” is beyond every type of division, every type of sequence, every type of measure. It is a measure indivisible by way of unity. It is the pure unity and permanence of infinite act.

Being is the measure of every act, so eternity is the measure of every duration.

Eternity is a **measure by way of unity**.

The present is constantly disintegrating into two parts, both of which have the specific characteristics of being not present – the first part is made up of what has just been and the second part of what is ceasing to be. The second is a surging of the human spirit toward some potential, toward some point established by will or be desired from which action ensues.

It is an invention of what will be and at the same time, a passive waiting for that which is about to appear.

We tend to conceive of these two modes of the present as places. The mind envisages a domain where memories are preserved, which is symbolized in the convolutions of the brain; the mind likewise envisages futurity as a locale where the present is awaited or rather into which the present penetrates.

We need only think about what “place” means to be convinced that neither the future nor even the past exists in any place as things do. Rather, they are two aspects of being that divide an action in progress. The content of this action is continuously dissipated; either it is not yet, or it is no longer.

Through memory one finds the past again and it seems to one that if all efforts at recall were to converge, one would restore the past and establish it in one immobile instant. No parallel effort to sum up the future is possible for by its nature the future is that which is to become.

Everything that takes place happens within me.

In every exercise of the intelligence, one detects an attempt to suspend and even suppress time. That is why so many philosophers relegated the individual feelings, moving, enduring elements in human beings to nothingness and endeavored to conceive of eternal life as a logical life absorbed in the contemplation of unity.

The intelligence is always searching for relationships that are not subject to change. Even when the mind considers the question of becoming, it tries to discern either substances and forms or laws and types.

Memory never recovers the past as it was: the recollection of each moment is impregnated with the confused memory of all that preceded it and especially of what followed it.

Memory transforms the material. We recompose our own histories, arranging them to lead up to the present moment for it is our account. We color them with opinion.

Perfect communication is the final, most inexpressible characteristic of eternity; it is a communion of life, of light, and of love, that is always in act – it is the infinite activity – far above any other activity. Eternity is this infinite, unselfish life of communication, this mutual giving and receiving, this ebb and flow of life and love in the shoreless ocean of happiness. But this communication is never a process of becoming. It is always in perfect act, without beginning and without end. Eternity, therefore, implies the absolute plenitude, not only of divine existence, but also of divine community, where the One and the Three exist together in a state of absolute permanence in a communication beyond all movement, all processes of thought, and all categories of priority. Thus the God who is, is the living God.

The spiral – one within the other – eternally giving forth.

“Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. I made known thee; and these know that thou has sent me. I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou has loved me may be in them and I in them”
(Last Supper)

“If any man loves me, he will keep my word and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

The living God – absolute permanence and complete communication. No movement for movement implies progress in order to complete.

Movement – what is movement? It is our poor way of saying “becoming” and therefore we are always in the realm of the temporal and to say that we will be in “eternity” really makes no sense because that would imply that we have reached the fullness of communication, the fullness of self, the fullness of being (and, therefore, God).....

God’s eternity is, therefore, the essential foundation stone of man’s time. All our energy will be devoted to exploring this communication of eternity. The eternal instant, the foundation of endless time, which surrounds us completely, encircles us forever, and illuminates our power of understanding, allows room only for the pure song of praise.

The hierophanal expression at present is limited to the physical – because of the senses. But with faith (living and awareness), one can sense the limitlessness of power man has without the senses.

“Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into man’s mind what the Divine has prepared for them that choose (love) Him.” – St. Paul

The theme of eternity is found in the Gospel of St. John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” The theme of creation: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made.” The theme of life: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of man.” In all this is revealed the source of **BECOMING**.

The source of **becoming** - a philosophy that enriches, that gives each man the hope to become better, fuller, richer in the depth of life despite his failings and the difficulties of the moment.

God is – man becomes.

God is. “Before Abraham was, I am.”

The Concept of the Divine

God – **“that than which no greater can be conceived.”** I AM Who Am. There was never a time when the Divine was not and will never be a time when It is not. The Divine is the unlimited state of being.

Because the Divine is pure being, there are no limits to its capacity to be or act. It is the plenitude – a completeness. There is no lack. There is total unity. The Divine cannot be added to (increased) or subtracted (diminished).

The essence of sacrifice is unity. Love is the uniting force among beings, and sacrifice is the essential expression of that unity (hierophany). One can define love without sacrifice but not sacrifice without love. Sacrifice is essentially an act of unity among persons.

The essence of love – a complete unity with the one loved.

Since the Divine is love, it is united to all creatures or beings by Its love. The love of the Divine’s creatures for Him increases the creatures’ but does not increase the Divine. The Divine’s love for us is complete and constant.

Nothing being can do will increase or decrease the love of the Divine for us.

The lack of the love for the Divine diminishes the beings for it impedes their full unity with It. The free love of beings for the Divine enriches the beings. Failure on their part merely diminishes the beings.

Unity in love does not imply identity. Individuals or beings are clearly and obviously distinct beings although they are united by love.

The being’s love for the Divine increases the possibly unity between the being and the Divine. As the beings love for the Divine increases, the unity between the two is increased but only on the part of the being, not the Divine.

The nature of the Divine can never be known fully precisely because it is unlimited.

Man’s understanding of reality is incomplete. The reality is always only partially known. And thus man’s understanding of the Divine is only partially known.

The Divine exists in reality and not in the mind alone. Man tends to think and consider the Divine in the mind only.

Any being which exists in the understanding alone is not that than which no greater can be conceived for a being which exists both in the understanding and in reality would be greater than one which existed in the understanding alone.

Anything can be thought of as not existing (as being contingent). If we can think of all things as not existing then we can imagine a time when no thing existed.

Since nothing can come from nothing, if there was a time when no thing existed, there would be no thing now existing. However, things do now exist. Therefore, there could never have been a time when no things existed.

Therefore, there must have been some things which always existed and that thing is the Divine.

There is a tremendous difference between what we know and what we believe. What we believe has no rational justification.

Man has no experience of the Divine at all, no matter how limited. Then why does man believe that the Divine exists?

Does experience predicate itself upon knowledge itself? Or can things exist without knowledge? Is experiential data the only valid proof for reality? Or is it possible that man can accept reality despite the lack of knowledge or experiential data?

Does man tend for the unknown, the perfect, the limitless, the eternal even though he cannot explain it? Does the subjective seek the objective in the timelessness of his being? If so, then man can accept the Divine. If not, then there is no reason for anything.

Eternity - Time - Freedom

The Eternal creates time and eternity establishes time. Time starts and continues in direct contact with its transcendent source. Apart from this contact there is no time just as there is no existence.

Without being time is impossible for there is no measurement, nothing to which a concept or being can be applied – no movement, no relationship.

Man is not the only one “existing” between the beginning and the end. The whole world does, and therefore man does too. The entire temporal world is traveling through existence, its very own existence.

“Time is a measure by way of number while eternity is a measure by way of unity” – St. Thomas.

Time can be viewed in its horizontal development, in the successive relationships where past and future intersect in the present. But since time is the measure of the existential course of beings, it exists only in this course. Time presupposes the creative act which establishes the course and its measure simultaneously. Beings do not exist without the creator’s act; time does not exist without the act which establishes and unfolds it, in short without eternity. Perhaps the greatest paradox is

that time in its very succession always involves eternity. Only this establishes and explains the complexity, the fecundity, the forward progress of cosmic time.

Time, the creative act, the past and the future. A creature exists only because of an act – an eternal act. And the created act exists in relationship to the eternal act.

Time and eternity should be our allies rather than our enemies. Man does not live by the clock alone.

The fundamental characteristic which distinguishes man from all other living things is his time-binding capacity. For man, his time depends on the significance of the event.

Time has a natural meaning. It has a place in the chain of secondary causes and in the natural finality of the universe. The Divine gives time to each individual creature and to that magnificent creature, the universe, so that they may fulfill themselves. But it is an ordered whole – a cosmos in which each being united with every other being is to reach its end. (**Movement towards Unity**)

We should like to possess freedom here and now. We search for it everywhere and are astonished not to find it. The reason is that freedom and time are not interchangeable. Some men have thought that if we concede the possibility of there being a single free act in the course of a lifetime, it is enough to prove that freedom is not simply a word. Logically, indeed, a single action does suffice. But we will be neared the right if we post freedom at every step along the road of life rather than smother it everywhere in order to rekindle it on a single issue.

Freedom belongs to every moment of life and cannot be confined to any one moment. Freedom resides in the act of resolving and resolution is an inner action. It exists in the act of willing which is a continuing action rather than in the act of choosing which is rare.

Further, even when the will is limited to an act of consent, is it not a constant choice? Freedom is an act of a human being rather than from a capacity for decision of a human being that manifests itself only in crises.

If any one factor easily destroys freedom it is emotion.

There is psychological time. Remembering nothing of an entire day except the few minutes being with a girl that a man plans to marry. The rest of the day was lost.

And so, time becomes qualitative, significant of our experiences.

What happens when we experience this concept of time with the Divine?

The less alive a person is (a conscious direction of life), the more is time for him the time of the clock. The more alive he is, the quicker the clock is lost.

The fulfilling of one's self cannot be controlled by the clock.

Time as a measurement – two people in love and their measurement versus a measurement of two who can't stand each other.

Freedom is found in the concept of awareness: **Now – quality value**; not in the act of choosing **Here – quantity value – space**

Cosmic time is the basis of all human time and of the salvation period itself since man is to reach fulfillment in this world within the bounds of cosmic time. The salvation period is inserted in cosmic time, and cosmic time is its fundamental measure and its necessary prerequisite. But in a deeper sense, cosmic time is enveloped by the salvation period because it is measured by the creative idea in the light of this period which gives it its immanent purpose and its deepest meaning.

And what is meant by the salvation period that is spoken of so frequently?

Is it the period that man uses to find himself, to understand his relationship with the realities that exist and thereby to put him into a disposition to make an act of acceptance or rejection when the fullness is seen? (**movement towards unity**).

And perhaps this is why the urgency that man experiences in living a full life – in wanting to know the answers when in reality he cannot know the answers to his multiple questions and why he must resort to the fundamental bond of union between himself and all other realities: **faith (awareness)**.

A year is not a year of twelve months but rather the entire period of faith during which men believe in the message they have heard and are made agreeable to the Lord by being united with Him. Cosmic time does not have cosmological meaning. It has a human meaning. Its cosmological structure is maintained, but in the service of man. He is the real meaning of the cosmos.

We do not pick up our life and work exactly where we left off the evening before. While the nervous system is relaxing and asleep, the ego is restored to itself, and rediscovers its potency and unity.

Tomorrow does not follow on tonight but rather continues it. Something has happened in the interval – one has grown. Old age and youth are merely biological terms – they have nothing to do with the true understanding of “I”.

Cosmological time and biological (or physical time) are not the same. One has human meaning, the other body – growth meaning. And maturity or growth as a person is not based on the latter, but the former. Man is the real meaning of the cosmological time in the essence of growth.

Man exists in time through his living body. In this respect he is like other living beings. He appears one day and dies another. His biological life hurls him from birth to death, from one instant to the next. He is always beside himself.

The greatest difference between man and the animal is that man becomes very conscious of time, while the animal does not. In fact, man takes his time to understand time – it takes many years to pass from the perception of time to a realization of it. A child does not understand an hour. An adult does not understand the essence of time.

This leads us to the real problem of human time – what exactly is it in our life and our understanding of it. For in our reaction to it will be the reaction of every other concept, every other human endeavor of which we are capable.

The concept:

- **here vs. now**
- **becoming vs. is**

Man is meant to vitalize time because he is an incarnate spirit. The human soul is created in time and eternity. As the animating principle of the body, it is linked to time. As a spiritual act, it “depends on God” – transcending the body, escaping the process of becoming and time. It is measured by the duration proper to spirits. Note the activity: I think – I will. Time, through the body, is not affected by this. The motion is spiritual and its operations have a plenitude which makes them fragments of eternity.

I think – I will. The motion is totally physic – and not contingent on the human time element. We say it takes place with a second, a millionth of a second. Time-wise yes, because it involves the reaction of the brain cells. But is complete, full, and is not limited to the second or millionth part of the second.

What does it mean to say I WILL? What does it mean when I say I THINK? What does this mean to me – and how is it affected by time or can it be affected by it?

Eternity means unity. These fragments find existence and meaning only in connection with the unity which is their foundation, from which they spring, and in which they reach fulfillment. Little by little they form the unified continuity and the spiritual duration proper to man. In this unity permanence and becoming are inextricably linked, because the being shares in the unity of eternity and imitates it.

Unity – the concept of unity spoken about before – and how it figures so carefully into the concept of time and eternity. The unification of “I” within myself, “I” and “You” and finally “I” and the “Divine”.

The unity that exists between all three eliminates time, or rather joins all into a unity that is found within the eternal. And that is why man tends to identify himself with the eternal – why he keeps seeking the answers to the eternal, for he senses within himself a unifying force with the eternal which gives him the permanence he longs for.

No man wants to accept the fact that he is temporal – only for a moment – in this vast concept of life. He wants something more out of life. And it is on this that faith is built, that hope flourishes and finally that love is found. For love defies time – always has, and always will. And if love is founded on time, it is physical, emotional – and not love but affection – a sweet regard.

Starting vs. stopping

Interval vs. intersection

Time as space vs. time as value

I am NOT aware that I am growing or becoming aware

The world is already there. We do not invent days, months, and years. Man is not hurled through the world on a senseless journey. God wills men for their own sake, as ends in themselves. And, further, God wills that they be their own providence. They are to determine, freely, their aims, choose their own means, discover His plan and fulfill it with love. Man alone inaugurates time for himself. He is his own providence because he must choose distance, his end, and fulfill it. He can do it only through time. God inaugurates cosmic time that it may reach its end; but by God's generosity – man too, inaugurates cosmic time for his own fulfillment. God gives time to man more than to any other creature, that he may freely fashion the means of his fulfillment.

Man does not undergo time (cosmic, psychic, and biological) – he knows it – lives it, and consciously measures it.

Time fully appears only with consciousness, because it alone can convert the future into the past through the present.

And why, when asleep, the conscious is not aware of time.

The greater the element of time (not in proportion to eternity) dominates my life – the greater becomes the sense of frustration. I lose a sense of what I am and **time hangs heavy upon me**. I cannot identify myself with anything. I am lost, I am restless, I can't see things as they are.

Man discovers and lives on varying levels of meaning, grandeur, richness, and genuineness in the fullness of time. We must distinguish at least two basic levels. Insofar as man is a psychic living in the world, he calls attention to time as a reality. He structures time. Insofar as man is psyche living in God's presence, he confers spiritual meaning on time. Time has a goal to fulfill.

The first step in structuring time is spontaneous and necessary because it outlines the existential course of created things. It is a fundamental activity of a living psyche. (1) The **psyche** must structure time because it is linked to the development and reciprocal relations not only of its own interior world but also of the body and the world outside. It must spotlight time because it "wells up" from it. This is a level of time more profound than that of free acts. It is a basic framework of activity, a fundamental situation of human existence. Furthermore, this necessary temporality always stands out on an extremely complex temporal horizon or (2) **astral time**, involving the periodic motion of the various stars; (3) **physiological time**, measured by the reversible rhythm of some organs and the irreversible movement of tissues and fluids; (4) **sociological time**, inscribing on cosmic rhythms the cultural rhythms of labor and festival, work and rest, and measuring time by clocks, calendars, and social conventions. Through these surrounding kinds of time the psyche deploys its own time, which always depends on its temporal situation, and remains unique and intangible amid the most overwhelming circumstances.

(5) **Vertical time** – depth and intensity. (6) **linear time (horizontal time)** – how long, eras, or sociological time. (7) **Diagonal time** – a combination of vertical and linear time which is the human combination.

Although it is true that this structuring of time always occurs in the present, it does not follow that the present only is a point and a limit. The present has a duration, but this duration is measured by the psyche. The psyche sets it, limits it, and places it in relation to others. It runs before and behind it, inserting it in ever longer time-segments which are still linked together by a whole series of intentions and meanings. There is no time for man except through the activity of the psyche which establishes it in its relationship with the motion of the entire universe – the motion of things, beings, persons and even the psyche itself.

The spiritual ego is the primordial source from which my being and my action spring. It is my inexpressible center, the living, subsistent, unifying principle of my existence.

This act takes place continuously. It is prolonged in the world through the body it animates. It gives the surrounding realities a share in its own actualization. Time, too, is an instrument of its progressive actualization. The spiritual ego is actualized by the animated body in limited time-segments. Existence in time and actualization are one.

Man must participate in eternity to inaugurate time. And this spiritual ego is this participation in eternity. Its activity is the activity of a spirit which is not immersed in matter and maintains its unity by remaining in direct contact with the Creator's Spirit.

The psyche involves itself in time without losing its unity, because, in its living source, it goes beyond time and merges with the eternal act. I exist in time through my animated body. But I exist outside time through my spirit. Because my spirit shares in the eternal Spirit, time exists in me and through me.

In time man responds to eternity and must make himself eternal. Time is the battleground of freedom and spiritual activity. The meaning and efficacy of my time depends on my freedom.

Time is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is destructive. It throws everything, man included, back into past, to absence and non-being. On the other hand, it is creative. It brings the future to realization, makes the past a rich synthesis, and perfects beings.

Understand Being to Understand Time

Ultimately, our thought cannot comprehend anything but the whole (not oneness), nor when it really comes to the point, can our dreams entertain anything but the whole in terms of an idea.

The cosmos proceeds from the depths of the soul reaching out to the universe, that is, to the **all** he unknowingly seeks.

Mysticism is ultimately the rejection of all rational thought.

Being is not **ultra-material** but rather **ultra-living**.

Lovers feel themselves driven by passion to melt into each other and seek this unity through ever more material means. These increasingly material expressions of love soon bring surfeit and

disgust; the more lovers try to meet in this way, the more they drift apart. They fail because matter is not the principle of union; it only appears that way. In embracing matter, the fragile links of spirit are broken. Lovers can truly come together only in the depths of their spirit.

Matter has no real being; it is only the reflector of being it does not possess; in itself matter has no real unity, it is only the reflector of unity it does not possess; in itself matter is only a mirror of shining particles.

Life does not define dogmas; but it does indicate the direction in which one can grow greater in the truth.

Life and Thought are endlessly linked. Thought is merely the reflective form of Life. Life is carried forward into thought.

People have imposed human bounds on the universe so that it conforms with what they are familiar with and what is ordinary. Life reaches beyond all bounds. People have allowed a veil of conventional answers to cover the mystery of life.

We sometimes feel that we have found truth with our first idea. New ideas can shatter our thoughts, leaving confusion and fear.

Man moves from the higher to the lower and not the reverse. We explain the lower by means of the higher.

The Divine is existence. Man has existence. The Divine is life. Man has life. The Divine is love. Man has love. The higher is oneness, the lower is multiple. The lower has what the higher IS.

Freedom

Freedom determines what is to happen. Freedom gives time its spiritual, moral, or psychological value. If freedom is simply caught up in the passage of time and the weight of the past, the being renounces its task, dries up or disintegrates, and the being falls into nothingness.

Man is essentially a nature in the process of becoming. Freedom intrinsically implies incompleteness and, therefore, man's free nature is involved in an open process of development. Man can never be finished. By the very fact of recognizing that he is free, we have defined him as not yet developed, not yet complete. At the same time, we imply that he can never attain perfect identity with himself, never bridge the gap within him. He can never enter into full possession of his own promise. He is incapable of grasping the full range of his own reality. His activity always leaves an undetermined residue beyond the reach of his own free self-creation. What he is, is not yet disclosed. He is still free, subject to self-determination. Consequently, he is conscious of himself as essentially incomplete, existentially provisional.

All freedom is absolute. In its ontological ground (though not its effects) to the extent that it is freedom, it involves the absence of necessity. Precisely as such, this does not admit of greater or lesser freedom.

The absolute character of finite freedom means that man, as an intrinsically provisional reality, reaches down to unfathomable depths by the very root of his development; there is not and cannot be anything deeper. This shows that human capacity for development (the existentially provisional

character of our being) is an absolute element in our creaturely reality itself. To the extent that he is free, and because he is free, man can never come to the end of his own fullness.

Man's eternity must, therefore, be understood as an open process of becoming, as eternally provisional and cumulative. The absolute character of man's freedom raises him absolutely above any state of completion. He cannot ever be constituted completely and totally.

Conclusion: heaven cannot be thought of as a static condition. The happiness of heaven consists in a continual process of transformation into a greater comprehension of one's being in relation to the **eternal**.

The inner dialectic of freedom suggests that our state of eternal fulfillment, heaven, is to be thought of as an uninterrupted advance into God, a perpetual growth into the realms of reality which belong to God alone. That is why freedom is expressed in love – and why love cannot be contained or ever fulfilled.

By throwing light on the object (freedom – love) our mind itself receives light and is itself enlightened. (“Light of the World”) It is only what we give away that we truly possess. That is why we seek truth – objective truth for this is the only thing we can clearly see and thus it becomes part of us.

Objectivity of knowledge touches only one side of human cognition. Knowledge means possessing what is other than oneself; what is external is accomplished in an interior action. Cognition requires not only an object but also, and just as fundamentally, a union of knower and known. From this point of view duality of knower and known is subsequent and derivative, formed on the basis of a prior identity.

But how can subject and object from a unity be prior to their duality? Certainly not by the knower having prior possession of the object of knowledge in an actual act of cognition. The identity of knower and known can only come about as the union of the knower with that which is common to all intangible objects and which, therefore, transcends them singly and collectively, with being.

If freedom takes hold of its past and its future, the being grows, coordinates and spiritualizes itself, and the being perfects itself. And thus there is faith. (Freedom) – knowledge is its essence.

Man seeks total self-fulfillment in time because he seeks eternity concentrated in his use of time. But this makes him a prisoner of time. For time “gushes” from his being and he cannot stop it. And if he attempts to integrate the various levels of his time or his own duration, he is caught – ensnared – in the essential activity of his time-structuring being. And his spiritual ego – without which there is no time – is reduced to a vague meaningless process of synthesizing these evanescent time-structuring efforts. And that is why there is need of hope.

Hope enables man to find in the humble and patient acceptance of man's limitations a solid and comforting nourishment. Only when there is no more hope, does hope begin to be an authentic instrument. Hope or movement keeps confidence alive when every element of support disappears.

Cosmic time imposes on man limits, dissipation and endless succession. He is enslaved by it – whether it be astral time, time of civilization and progress, or the time of an individual being according to reason, emotions or pragmatic considerations.

When time becomes self-sufficient for the being, that being is marked for death – and he has distorted his spiritual growth. He has severed himself from its source – **eternity**.

The possibility of acting upon the very action which is my own life is an attribute peculiar to humans. How to put it to use?

If we will imagine the past to have been better than it was, believe that the future will be palpably perfect, and inflate the present with voluptuousness, passion, or mere infatuation, then we will have carved ourselves a little niche in the universe where we can thrive.

The contamination of the concept of eternity: the moment comes when our sense of the future grows dimmer, and it seems that then by way of some compensation the mind transfers its notion of eternity from the future to the past.

Eternity is of this moment if only the being will abjure itself. And there are no prescriptions. Belief in the survival of the being feeds on this same need of eternity, of course, but the believer is overwhelmed by despair because he cannot satisfy this need during his lifetime.

Distorted time can be marked by all sorts of symptoms – boredom, disgust, despair. Man abandons himself to sterile repetition and nausea, and slips toward the “black pit”. It is a time of fierce lust, when man wants to enjoy each instant as an atom of eternity. But it escapes him always. Or it is a time for savage domination. Man wants to harness the world and control it for his purpose. But time is always too short. It is a time of brutish and sinful revolt. Man has rejected the source of time – and disordered it. Man has sinned. Sin is nothing more than the distortion of time.

Time is opened and/or closed for man. Time passes and he is either lost or saved. All this indicated that there is a tragic element about existence in time. Only Christ’s grace – this constant movement – can support man and transform him through the virtue which truly belongs in time – **hope (movement towards unity)**.

The Beauty of Man

The entrance of a being (man – child) into the world is always a fulfillment because that being develops at a given point in the history of human generations.

In creating us living, intelligent beings, the Divine has placed us in the condition of being obligated to put to use the powers and faculties that constitute the characteristics of human life. We grow, we develop, we perfect ourselves because there are in us possibilities that can be realized in proportion as they are in imperfect beings.

Because man is destined to self-perfection in the area of volitional and intellectual activity, he has a tendency to the fulfillment of himself. Perfecting himself is placed before him, and man cannot draw back from it. He is attracted to what would make him better and more complete, and therefore

lets himself be drawn and goes to meet that very thing with a fervor that is determined both by the external good and by his own will. This double movement of attraction and of tendency is called love.

Love is the quickening of our capacity to desire. Therefore there is a double action: an attraction by an external good and the free movement of our will to this good. When love has obtained possession of that good thing, joy is experienced.

The Divine love for creatures has a single root – the limitless liberality of divine goodness which communicates being solely for the sake of sharing its own perfection. **True freedom frees the will to love – to love totally and completely and fully.**

The entrance of a being into this world is an upheaval because he appears as an individual being who will never be seen again. It is a source of activity because his being is expressed and fulfilled in action.

Each creation of a being is a wonder. What more the wonder of **Eternity** born into Time – the **Eternal Word found in Time.**

There is no necessary link between creation by the Word and fulfillment of this creation in the **Word Incarnate.** Between these two realities there is a gap which divine love freely chose to cross.

Eternity – God – in a meaningful moment “appointed in time” entered time – salvation time. It was a dotted moment in the scope of eternity. By it, He saves, purifies, and transfigures His people by His omnipotent activity.

God possesses a Spirit. It is a strange power. It is cosmic like the torrential wind, biological like the breath of life; spiritual like inspiration, divine like the power which transforms, purifies, and converts hearts, filling men with holiness, and like the greatest gift possible – **love.**

In the last analysis – it is “God Himself in His activity”. And thus, He summons men unceasingly to respond, to communicate, to believe. And so, man lives in a present in which an endless dialogue between himself and God begins.

And thus a community (union) of minds and hearts, united by faith (awareness) and love springs up. It is a divine community in which each man fulfills his activity (movement towards) to his greatest and maximum possibility and capability.

The Incarnation

The Incarnation is the most astounding break-through in the history of mankind. God Himself inhabits a woman's womb, assumes a body like ours, and appears in our midst as one of us. Henceforth the universe finds its source not only in God, but also in a man who is God. Nothing could be a direct preparation for this even, because nothing precontained it as its imminent end. Throughout the salvation period the path of Christ, His coming and His dwelling-place, were prepared. But time did not prepare for what transcends time itself and suddenly appears in time. With Christ something absolutely new appears, a new beginning, a complete renewal of temporal creation, founded not only on God, but also on God-incarnate.

Because the Word becomes man, He assumes an existence in time with all the relations which determine and limit it. He truly breaks into the universe. But because this man is the eternal Word, He at once becomes, even in His earthly existence, Him in whom is all fullness, the fullness of divinity, the fullness of the universe, the fullness of time itself.

Creative power now pulses through Christ's humanity. By bringing His own humanity into existence as the source of mediation between God and the universe, the Word establishes the existence of the entire universe.

The time of the world, new and forever, in every part and in its totality, is rooted, established, and measured in Christ. And when the Eternal enters time, the "first days" are over, the "last days" have begun. The Covenant is sealed forever. Now it is no longer between God and men, but between God and the God-Man, who represented God to men and men before God.

All the complex and indefinable temporal relations of the Christian universe are enveloped in this mystery, the infinite concentrated in a moment yet spanning the whole expanse of time.

The Incarnation is the sudden eruption of the Eternal into time. This eternal act does not determine human existence from without – rather it directly establishes each instant of human existence by opening it to its vocation and freedom. There is a crossing of the Eternal and human existence. Love is born.

The entrance of Christ into human time – the eternal and the temporal as one, must be viewed as the effective redemption of human freedom in time. And thus Christ becomes the head of the human race which now coexists with the humanity of Christ in its growth through time and maturing in the focal point of time – the Eternal.

Individuals living in time find themselves in very different relationships to the salvation period. Some have heard and rejected. Some are gradually drawn. Some part gradually. Some have a constant diminution of themselves. Some experience its full plenitude.

Those who totally accept find themselves involved in the unification of themselves with Christ (the dynamic sense of movement towards unity). Actually it is the Father attracting them through Christ. They begin to have a real birth, growth, and maturation in Christ. And thus Hope (movement) – theological Hope – is developed.

And this awareness of Christ brings with it a sharing in the mystery of Christ, an insertion into His eternal present. They anchor themselves in the mystery of His death and resurrection, and struggle towards the mystery of the Parousia. And thus Faith is born (awareness).

And this Faith is a principle of creative interpretation. It gives cosmic time a new dimension, its true dimension, and reaches the level of created time. It is a principle of transformation. Man can open himself to the time of grace because through faith he can reach the very core of his own psyche and the deepest meaning of his own spiritual being. The Christian has been able to transform cosmic time because his own being has been transformed.

The whole meaning of Christ's existence is to express His divinity and eternity; the whole purpose of the Incarnation is to communicate this to man. Christ's temporal mission is rooted in His temporal existence.

Each moment of man's temporal existence emerges beyond time, because it is activated by a spiritual, supra-temporal "ego". And this is fused with Christ's existence. And so **each moment** is the emergence of an eternal presence into time, a temporal epiphany of the eternal God, Christ's activity becomes man's. The mystical body of Christ, as expressed by Paul, now becomes clear.

Christ's human existence conditions the gradual realization of His redemptive mission. Each of Christ's "mysteries" must be situated properly in this process of gradual realization. Once only, before the Passion and because of it, does eternity break openly into time. The Transfiguration. Eternity reveals its presence in time.

Christ is, thus, really present in time. He gave, and gives, the proper relationship between time and eternity and the ultimate meaning of both. The Resurrection!

Salvation is possible for man only when he consents to be judged. Thus he has to recognize himself as a sinner and seek pardon. God wants man. In renouncing his refusal, a very difficult, painful, and challenging process, his redemption is accomplished.

Sin represents man's terrible power to disorganize reality. And so, Redemption is a mystery of reorganization and unification. But this redemption and reconciliation has a fearsome aspect – expiation. Sin separates man from his Source, his End, and his fraternal Communion. It turns man in upon himself, upon a desolate solitude, an interior wasteland. Sin is the distortion of time – and its greater understanding – Eternity. It is a movement **away from Unity**.

From all eternity, God wills to create, conserve, and sanctify. And now, in particular – this world. Christ's mission is to bring all men to the fullness of their creation. This is His mission. He realizes that He is the unique creator of humanity – past, present, and future.

Christ is in all – "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you". this presence establishes the salvation mystery, salvation-time and the day of grace...the life of God. And so, between Christ and us there is always a direct, vertical, transcendent relationship. Christ forms His Mystical Body by this personal act of grace. And so, we – Christians – The Church – mount toward eternity – rooted in Christ's eternity, enveloped in it, and orientated towards it.

And so there is a passing from unbelief to faith (awareness), from sin to conversion. Faith grows and continually deepens. The process of search alternates continuously with the act of discovery. Each person follows his path and enters more fully into the mystery of Christ. Man is propelled toward an existence transformed by Christ. Each day brings an experience of a “final hour”, a discovery and then another and another. The **Word** becomes the **Living Word**, glowing with vitality.

The Divine message is spoken, as is the hearing of the Word. It is now time for Faith (awareness). And a relationship is built. This relationship between the divine Word and faith, between proclamation and acceptance, is one of the greatest discoveries of man. This reciprocal relationship between an ever-present, eternal reality, and continuous repetitions in time is cemented in the Body of Christ – the unique center – the **Eucharist**. Faith now sees the Eucharist as the most obvious link between time (man) and eternity (God). This is the essential moment of growth (discovery).

Man begins to understand the meaning of man – himself and other men.

Time is neither cyclic nor linear. Nor is it a combination of both. Time, at every instant, is established in men’s psyche by an eternal Psyche – the heart of the world. Time is entrusted to man so that he may, by his free will, inscribe the history of his salvation on it.

In the decisive hour, when man must make his ultimate choice (say yes or no), his faith, hope, and love will appear in all its fullness. (His movement towards unity now is evident). Our entire life then appears in its true light. Faith calls out to us: The Kingdom is at hand! It is for you! It needs you! Here is the decision point. Man must take the necessary step. He must dedicate his freedom.

In that instant, the meaning of time is changed. Man is no longer bound by his past but freed by a transforming future. His existence in time attains a new level, because grace elevates him to the risen life of Christ. There is a new relationship between time and eternity. And as love must create, the act of dying is the greatest and final act of self-generation and creation – the person has reached complete maturity – the finalization of himself in the Divine – the Mystical Body of Christ in all its reality.

Death – For all, the arrival of death means that the future is blocked. Nothing more can occur, no further events can take place, and our existence becomes a work of art for the spirit to contemplate.

Even if the soul had no future once it was abstracted from materiality, our death forces others to conceive of us in thought and so gives us an unalterable form in their consciousness; our death changes us, both in them and in ourselves. But this empty, cerebral eternity is only the symbol of the real eternity where we are transformed into the being that is the creation of our deepest will. It is this immutability of the eternal being even more than its spirituality that makes death a cruel thing to think of; men find it hard to understand this.

Eternity previously had established an existence in which man was immersed in sin and separated from eternity. Now it inaugurates an existence in which man is incorporated into Christ and shares the eternal life of God. His temporal existence, too, is radically changed because its basic rhythm, its free development, and its true finality are literally transformed.

Notes on Cosmology, Time, Eternity

There is a danger that our fidelity may be threatened and sometimes broken. If it is rooted in Christ, and worked upon each day, the fulfillment will be completed through the Spirit.

Thus man enters a time-for-patience. He lives in joyous hope (movement). And every time he receives Christ the separation becomes less frequent. Man is faithful only because God is faithful (awareness). Fidelity is inscribed on God's heart alone, not on ours. And since tomorrow can be disposed of only by God, man must trust in his heavenly Father to watch and guide him lovingly. And thus the virtue of hope (again movement).

This union, this indwelling, involves a process of becoming, and eternal life involves a period of time in which our resemblance to God develops and becomes more apparent.

Our being immerses us in the One who calls all men to salvation and the fullness of life. Christian prayer in a "vertical" ascent, reaffirming the relationship between time and eternity. This contact is the foundation of Christian activity. Without it all is lost; with it everything is possible.

Prayer reaches the Eternal, overcoming time and enveloping the past and future. Because it activates both being and body, it must be a part of man. Our prayer does not penetrate into eternity suddenly and directly. It is woven from the fabric of our life and interpersonal relationships. It involves the difficult task of uplifting our whole life, of starting again each day until our days are complete. Hence the words: Give us **this** day our **daily** bread.

Man's free choices in time determine his entry into Eternity. The **NOW** of every Christian is marked by two tensions – two realities: **time and eternity**. They can be polarized. There can be two other tensions: body and soul. And yet, they can all be united.

Every time a being commits a sin, his existence is merely temporal, having broken the bridge. He chose the one over the other – disunity over unity.

If Faith (awareness) is genuine, so is the Hope (movement). And the two are the source of love – charity. And now the person **really** fulfills the great commandment – love.

The person, for the first time, understands a bit more clearly the vastness of the meaning of love – of humanity – of mankind. This view is "overwhelming". It is part of a rebirth into a new creation.

For the first time knowledge and love are linked – a union takes place. Man desires to see the truth – to share in the divine that dwells within him. This love never focuses on one particular activity of man, but affects everything. In ordinary human time – this new experience of faith – hope – love – is not time at all. It is an exchange – the full birth of the human being in the oneness, the unity of God and mankind, forming one spirit and one love. The ultimate: **movement towards unity**.

About Brother Eugene Trzeczieski



Eighty-two year old Marist Brother and teacher, Br. Eugene Trzeczieski, has worked at Christopher Columbus High School for the last 43 years. Br. Eugene became a Marist Brother at age 17, as soon as he graduated from high school. He started his teaching career in 1950 at New York's St. Ann's Academy and later taught at Archbishop Molloy High School, NY, and worked at the Marist Brothers Training House in Esopus, NY, as the Director of Novices. Over the years he has served Columbus as Academic Dean, Treasurer, Teacher of Latin, Philosophy, Humanities, and English. He was also a key leader in Columbus extra-curricular activities, moderating the National Honor Society for 25 years, creating the school's Student Activities Committee, and founding the Columbus Arts Society for Adults and the Erasmus Culture Club for students.

For years he also was in charge of the gardening and landscaping of the school's campus, a job he loved because of his great passion for nature.

Br. Eugene taught at Columbus from 1968 until 2010. Thousands of alumni from the last five decades remember him most for his famous 12th grade "Philosophy of Being" class, which he taught for 43 years straight. In fact, Br. Eugene holds the title of the teacher who taught at Columbus for the most number of years. Many alumni will also remember that Br. Eugene enlivened the campus with his beloved pet, Brandy, a St. Bernard that won the hearts of all the students and became the school's mascot.

Although he no longer teaches, Br. Eugene is still very actively engaged at Columbus, handling all of the school's paper copying and keeping the school archives, a collection that he started in 1968 and that today contains hundreds of bound books and files which he neatly organizes. It was Br. Eugene who came up with the idea to publish the school's first history book to commemorate the school's 50th Anniversary in 2008. He wrote the book entitled "50 Years Exploring Christopher Columbus High School" with co-author and fellow teacher, Mr. John Lynskey.

Around Columbus Br. Eugene is respected and loved by faculty, alumni, and students. He is known as a wise and gentle man who is demanding, kind, and inspiring. He always referred to his students as gentlemen, and never found the need to send a student to detention. Early in his career he came up with a quote that he began teaching to his students; "A mind made noble, leads a noble life." It has been his motto ever since.