Raimon Panikkar’s Christophany
A Day of Engagement, Reflection, and Contemplation

The son of an Indian Hindu father and a Spanish Catholic mother, Panikkar was simultaneously a philosopher, theologian, mystic, poet, and Catholic priest. He is recognized as one of the major contributors to the modern study of comparative religion and one of the great pioneers of interreligious dialogue. In his Christophany Panikkar seeks for us to have the same kind of deep spiritual experience of God that Jesus had and for which Jesus prayed for us to have in John 17.

“This study constitutes an attempt to concentrate the pathos of an entire life into a few pages; I have been meditating and writing on this topic for more than fifty years” (xix).

“I can only hope that [my] words will resonate whenever true listening occurs in the depth of the heart where Life vivifies us, while rocks (‘the living stones’) become fire, purifying everything, and God becomes all in all” (Panikkar 137).

PRESENTED BY

Dr. Rickey Cotton

February 8, 2014
The Schedule (flexible, organic, adjustable as needed)

8:30-9:00  Registration, Coffee, Snacks, Fellowship
9:00-9:15  Introductions and Orientation
9:15-9:40  Centering Prayer
9:40-9:50  Silent Break
9:50-10:40 Conference I
11:10-12:00 Conference II
12:00-12:45 Lunch Together
12:45-1:10  Centering Prayer
1:10-2:00  Conference III
2:30-3:00  Small Group Discussion
3:00-3:20  Christophany and Daily Life
3:15-3:30  Conclusion and Closing Prayer

Bibliography


Christophany: The Fullness of Man

by Raimon Panikkar

Forward by Francis D'Sa, S.J.

Preface  Part 1, INTRODUCTION, The Christophanic Experience

1. A Challenge to Christology
2. The Task of Christophany
3. The Christophanic Experience

Part 2, THE MYSTICISM OF JESUS THE CHRIST, The Experience of Jesus

1. The Approach
2. The Expressions
3. The Mystical Experience of Jesus Christ

Part 3, CHRISTOPHANY, The Christic Experience

Nine Sutra
Conference I Readings

Orientation and Foundational Values for Panikkar Dialogue

Quote from Thomas Keating: “Throughout the centuries the apophatic tradition had been treated with more or less discretion, sometimes going too far one way, sometimes too far in the opposite direction. We cannot undiscriminatingly trust any of the spiritual masters. Each is conditioned by his or her times and culture, at least in some degrees. Looking at the tradition, we have to know how to read the Fathers and to bring them into critical relationship with later writers and with modern psychology, exercising a certain caution regarding the exhortations of writers who did not have that knowledge” (Intimacy with God, 128).

I Thessalonians 5:21: …test everything; hold fast to what is good…

DIALOGUE AND A VERBAL COMMUNICATION CONTINUUM

Consider this verbal continuum: conversation – dialogue – debate – battle – war

In regard to this continuum, I define/describe the terms above in the following ways.

Conversation is relaxed, informal, personal, unguarded, trusting. It occurs among people who feel friendly toward one another and who are relaxed together.

Dialogue is more aware, alert. It requires interest in the dialogue partner and a willingness to temporarily “bracket” one’s own perspectives to empathetically understand the other’s. It does not strive for agreement but for understanding. It does not require the relinquishing or compromising of one’s own perspectives, only their temporary “bracketing” and setting to the side for the time needed to empathetically understand the other’s.

Debate is competitive, aggressive. There may or may not be a game-like quality to it, but it does involve seeking to “win” the “argument.” It can be done with civility and respect (and often has been traditionally), but it remains competitive, producing winners and losers. It has a definite and legitimately valuable place in public discussion and reflection, but in recent years it has often been ugly, aggressive, and lacking in integrity.

Battle is full-scale aggression. Winning is paramount, and very often civility and respect are abandoned in the process.

War involves a long-term, ongoing sense of conflict and commitment to winning, to defeating and dominating those who disagree.

In meaningful communication about complex issues, I believe it is best to develop an overall sense of dialogue, often relaxing into conversation. Debate is allowed but limited, and its only purpose is to reveal where people’s convictions and passions are. We don’t do Battle and War. Once we see where people’s convictions and passions are, we seek to return to dialogue that demonstrates respect and care for those who disagree and those agree. We remember that we are one body. This creates an atmosphere in which we can “come to voice” in a genuine way, neither feeling threatened nor causing anyone else to feel threatened, and together seeking “the mind of Christ.”

Some Key Scriptures

John 1: 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 14:11: “I am in the Father and the Father is in me….”
Conference 1 Readings

**John 17:** 20 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us…. I in them and you in me…."

**Ephesians 3:** 14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

**Colossians 1:** 15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together…. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things….

**Galatians 2:20:** I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

**Acts 17:** 22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands…. though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’”

**An Excerpt from the Nicene Creed**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten [emphasis mine] of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made….We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

**An Excerpt from the Athanasian Creed**

--And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.


460 The Word became flesh to make us “partakers of the divine nature”:78 “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.”79 “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”80 “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.”81

Conference 1 Readings

**Pope Francis on Interreligious Dialogue**
In the final days of November 2013 Pope Francis made two significant statements regarding the Catholic Church’s position on interreligious dialogue. The first came in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, issued on November 24, 2013. In paragraphs 250-254 he speaks of interreligious dialogue as a necessary condition for peace in the world and refers to the essential bond between dialogue and proclamation. He emphasizes the importance of and conditions for dialogue with Islam and concludes by describing the spiritual treasures of other religions as the work of the Holy Spirit from which Christians can benefit. The complete document can be found on the Vatican website.

**from Contemplative Outreach Theological Principles, #8-12**
8. Our relationship with the living Christ is the bond uniting us together in mutual love.
9. While formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and our experience of Christ through Centering Prayer.
10. We identify with the Christian contemplative heritage in which Centering Prayer is rooted. We recognize this heritage as the common ground for Christian unity.
11. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions.
12. Through the continuing practice of Centering Prayer, we experience a deepening commitment to the needs and rights of each member of the human family and an increasing respect for the interdependence of all creation.

**from Contemplative Outreach Administrative Principles, #11**
11. We wish to remain accessible to everyone. For this reason, we do not endorse particular causes or take part in public controversies, whether religious, political or social. As private individuals, we act according to our conscience.

**Raimon Panikkar’s Attitude**

“It is neither the fear of being stoned nor declared a heretic—I am always ready to make corrections—that restrains me, much less the fear of saying what others prefer not to hear; it is, rather, the impossibility of embodying in words what I have heard” (Panikkar 137).

“I can only hope that [my] words will resonate whenever true listening occurs in the depth of the heart where Life vivifies us, while rocks (‘the living stones’) become fire, purifying everything, and God becomes all in all” (Panikkar 137).

“What I am doing… is describing my own experience in an intimate, personal way. I simply feel that the divine is in me and, moreover, that I experience the unity that makes my life truly real. Yet I am fully aware how far I still am from that achievement” (Panikkar 137).
Panikkar’s Christophasy 6

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Raimon Panikkar’s Christophasy: The Fullness of Man
Part 1, INTRODUCTION, The Christophanic Experience

1. A Challenge to Christology
2. The Task of Christophany
3. The Christophanic Experience

Part 2, THE MYSTICISM OF JESUS THE CHRIST, The Experience of Jesus
1. The Approach
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Christology and Christophany Compared
from Cynthia Bourgeault: www.contemplative.org/cynthia.html

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Some Key Definitions
--Advaita: nonduality; the irreducibility of reality to pure unity (monism) or mere duality (two-fold, divided).
--Cosmotheandric: It refers to the dynamic relational ground of reality. It is a combination of cosmos (world), theos (God), and andros (man). Cynthia Bourgeault says, it “…suggests a continuous intercirculation among these three distinct planes of existence in a single motion of self-communicating love.”
--Cosmovision (or worldviews): constitutes the omnicomprehensive sense or vision we have of reality and how it works. It produces meaning and makes things and events coherent within its distinctive vision of the world.
--Kenosis: emptying of oneself; annihilation
--Koinonia: community; communion
--Perichoresis (Latin: circuminsessio): interpenetration, compenetration of the three persons of the Trinity
--Pleroma: fullness; completeness
--Sola fides: by faith alone; scholasticism’s recognition that unaided reason and philosophy cannot answer all theological questions

From Parts I and 2
“Every knowledge is fragmented, not only when its object has become detached from the rest of reality but also when the knowing subject has shattered its knowing by reducing it to either sensible perception or rational intelligibility. It thereby forgets the knowledge of the third eye, on which more than one tradition, including the Christian (the eye of the flesh, the eye of the mind, the eye of the faith) insists” (Panikkar 3).

Mystical Language
“…[T]here is no objective language, sometimes defined as ‘literal,’ in the interpretation of texts, whether sacred or not….With the exception of poets, who are granted the right to speak metaphorically, [Western] culture utilizes language as a system of conceptual signs” (Panikkar 25-26).
Conference 2 Readings

“In the following pages I have tried to be as simple and clear as possible and have therefore avoided poetry and metaphor. Nevertheless, words are symbols, not concepts. A christophany that takes into account the other religious traditions of mankind cannot accept the conceptual algebra of the West as a neutral and universal paradigm” (Panikkar 26).

“Naturally, on the part of the one who knows how to impose himself, that is, on the part of power, the language of the strong has become a weapon. A Christian discourse should be conscious of this use (abuse) by those who hold power” (Panikkar 27).

“Mysticism possesses a more direct and immediate language. Let me conclude this introduction with a comment on a phrase of St. Teresa of Avila….The saint heard Christ speak the following words: Teresa, búscate en mí, búscame en ti (‘Seek for yourself in me, seek for me in yourself’). These words inspired a poem that seems to me one of the most beautiful expressions of christophanic experience” (Panikkar 27).

Soul, you must seek yourself in Me
And Me you must seek in yourself.

....
You were created for love
Beautiful, gracious, and thus
In my heart painted,
Should you lose yourself, O my beloved,
Soul, you must seek yourself in Me.

....
But if perhaps you should not know
Where you may find Me
Do not go hither and thither,
But, if you should wish to find me,
Me you must seek in yourself.

“In commenting on the poem allow me to retain the form of the first person addressing another. Each of us is a pilgrim still on the way, a seeker, a ‘being’ who is not yet, who is becoming” (Panikkar 28).

“…Teresa heard two invitations: ‘seek yourself, seek me’” (Panikkar 28).

“[S]eek for yourself, in me; seek for me, in yourself” ….This is the christophanic experience on which I would like to comment. It is not a mere search for oneself in one’s self, a more or less egocentric introspection. Still less is it a simple search for the Other in a transcendence, a more or less total going out of ourselves. It is a search for ourselves in an icon which, because it dwells in our deepest self, does not alienate us: Christ is man like us, while he is at the same time infinitely superior to us. […] We seek ourselves in seeking Christ; we seek Christ in seeking ourselves” (Panikkar 28-29).

“1. Seek for yourself in me—emptying yourself of yourself” (Panikkar 29).

“You cannot seek for me if you are full of yourself—you must empty yourself….To search for ‘him’ we must form an emptiness in ourselves. This act of self-emptying is equivalent to a death. Without this complete death to ourselves we cannot be resuscitated and we remain moribund throughout our temporal existence. It would be pathological to remain fixed in a negative, necrophilic, and perhaps even suicidal asceticism, yet without this first step, the monastic compunction cordis, the Gospel’s metanoia, or meditation on emptiness, there is no fully human life” (Panikkar 29).

“2. Seek yourself in me by going out of yourself” (Panikkar 29).

“Otherwise you will not find yourself. Your identity, what you seek, does not reside in yourself [as an individual]; you must go out toward the Other. You cannot seek me unless you abandon all that you possess—you must go out of yourself. But inasmuch as the other is Other, there is no road, there are no ways that have already been traveled and marked out.
Conference 2 Readings

The great unknown cannot be sought as a known: *y por aquí no hay camino* (‘going this way there is no passage’), *avitiñātam, vijnātām, ..., rayo de tiniebla, cloud of unknowing, the tao named is not the tao.’” (Panikkar 29).

“We cannot attain transcendence, but neither can we remain enclosed within immanence; we must open ourselves to transcendence—open ourselves only because we cannot cross the abyss….’Abraham left Ur without knowing where he was going’ (Genesis 12:1; Hebrews 11:8).” (Panikkar 30).

“3. Seek yourself in me—discovering Me” (Panikkar 30).

“The journey toward Me never ends” (Panikkar 30).

“At this level objective knowledge is no longer possible; knowledge involves the subject as well. It is the mystical intuition, the vision of the third eye, the consciousness of the ‘realization’ that never ends—in fact, is infinite. God (the infinite, the reality, the absolute, or even nirvāṇa) is not an object of either thought or prayer. The third eye does not compete with the intellectual eye; it belongs to a different order Not only do we discover the world of reality within us, but we also become conscious that we ourselves constitute reality. To consider ourselves ‘part’ or this reality is a gross and overly spatial metaphor. We are, rather, images, icons, of the whole of reality. We lift the *velamen essendi* (Meister Eckhart’s ‘veil of being’) in order to catch a glimpse of the microtheos that we are” (Panikkar 30-31).

“Here again we find a virtually universal theme. ‘The pearl is not far away, *Noli foras ire*’ (Augustine, *De vera religione* I, 39, n. 72 [PL 34:154]). [...] This Me is not an abstraction; it has a recognizable face. The lover discovers the beloved” (Panikkar 31).

“Seek for yourself, you must seek yourself, you are obliged to seek yourself, to know who you are. But you must do this outside yourself (this is why you are seeking), without leaving yourself—otherwise you will not find yourself but another, you will alienate yourself” (Panikkar 31).

“We cannot, however, know ourselves as objects, because we are not objects. We should know ourselves as subjects, although full self-consciousness is impossible: the one that is known is not the one who knows” (Panikkar 31).

“You cannot seek yourself in things. They are not you; should you find yourself among them you would simply be a thing. [...] You must seek yourself by seeking Me” (Panikkar 31).

“This leads us to the second moment: what we seek cannot be elsewhere than in ourselves” (Panikkar 31).

“1. Seek me in thyself—as your deepest thou” (Panikkar 32).

“But in the beginning thou wilt not find anything that resembles Me. In thyself thou wilt find only egoism, littleness, limitation. And what if this were not thee? Hast thou forgotten that thou art ‘beautiful, graceful, painted in my heart’? If thou sekest Me in thee, thou wilt find this goodness, beauty, and truth that are in thee; thou wilt discover thy dignity and have trust in thyself. How can thou believe in Me unless thou believest in thyself, who is the subject of thy believing?” (Panikkar 32).

“2. Seek me in thyself—as thy thou” (Panikkar 32).

“Thou discover me and speak to me as a friend, a beloved—that is, as a thou who is in relation with thee. [...] Thou hast conquered dualism because thou experience this thou as thy thou. But thou hast not overcome monism. I am not thee” (Panikkar 32).

“Neither monism nor dualism, reality is *advitiyan*, nondualist, as Chāndogya- upanisad (VI, 2) proclaims. Dialogue is a ..., a passing through the *logos*, in the Spirit. [...] We open ourselves to a life of prayer: we turn to ‘him’ as a thou. We pray to ‘him’ as a you, we call him ‘thou’” (Panikkar 33).

“3. Seek me in thyself—as your I” (Panikkar 33).
Conference 2 Readings

“Seek me in thy thou because you will not find me outside of thee. [...] Seek me, not as another, not as Two, not as One, but as the I who I am—who makes it possible that thou art—a thou, my thou. It is ‘thou’ who art ‘thee,’ not ‘I’” (Panikkar 33).

“The other is alienating, discouraging. [...] We stop when we renounce the journey, because if God is the Other, the goal is unreachable. This is dualism” (Panikkar 33).

“Dualism transforms this aspiration into a nightmare. The abyss cannot be crossed” (Panikkar 34).

“Insofar as God has withdrawn into transcendence, then, and abandoned him, man consecrates himself to working on things, turning himself into a master and becoming the lord of all those things. This accounts for the rise of the powerful world of technoscience. At least a tower of Babel might have been built, a world government and other such things—while, of course, everything remains under our control. Finally, however, the human project, too, seems to collapse, just like the divine design of a Creator. The clamor of the winners does not stifle the cries of the slaves, the oppressed, and of all the holocausts of history” (Panikkar 34).

“This tension pierces the whole history of spirituality: either Man or God, either the humanistic and atheistic epiphany or the dehumanizing and monotheistic theophany. What is lacking is a mediator, a christophany that is, at one and same time, human and divine” (Panikkar 34).

“The seek me cannot be divided from the seek thyself, for the me and the thou are correlative. The metron is human and divine, theandric—indeed, cosmotheandric. This is the third stage, the discovery of the I. Here the Trinity or advaita is central” (Panikkar 35).

“Thou art not I. ‘You’ are a ‘thou’ who is in Me, a ‘thou’ that the I releases—by loving….Thou canst unite thyself to me and, without ceasing to be thyself, experience the fact that thou art because I say ‘I am thee,’ even if thou cannot say ‘(I) am thee’” (Panikkar 35).

“Then the mortal jump occurs. God is not the thou, my thou, my possession—as in so many forms of exaggerated, barely sane spirituality. I am not I, ‘my’ I. God is the I. I discover myself as ‘thou,’ God’s thou. God is the I, and I am God’s thou. It is the I who speaks and to whom we listen—not as slaves, not as creatures but as children (children of the Son) in the Spirit. This is the Trinitarian life; this is the christophanic experience: neither the mere dualism of creatureliness, the worldly, nor the monistic simplification of divinization. What or who this Christ is who has spoken to Teresa is the focal point of this book” (Panikkar 35).

Part II Chapter 2: The Expressions [Panikkar meditates on three expressions of Jesus]

“Mystical knowledge is not the work of the imagination but the fruit of experience; it is not invented but rather lived; not read, but received” (Miguel de Molinos [1676] quoted in Panikkar 90).

Abba, Pater

“‘Abba is undoubtedly the most theologically dense word in the entire New Testament,’ González de Cardedal (1975b) 99 qtd. in Panikkar 91).

“Jesus calls God his Father and invites us to do the same by virtue of the divine Spirit that dwells in us” (Panikkar 92).

“We become participants in the divine nature by entering in communion with it... It is more than a participation. It is a koinōnia (‘communion’). God is his very divine nature; it is through his power that we reach it. And it is through the work of the Spirit that we become transformed in that same icon. This metamorphosis bears the meaning of the whole adventure of creation and constitutes the trinitarian perichōrēsis” (Panikkar 95).

“The Gospel also tells us that Christ is the vine and we the branches (John 15:5). In commenting on these words, St. Augustine does not hesitate to say, unius quipped naturae sunt vitis et palmites (The ‘vine and the branches do in fact
constitute the same nature”; *Tractatus* 80), and St. Thomas approved his statement. Paul himself is not afraid to cite a Greek poet to tell us that already in the present, ‘we are of his race’—that is, or his same ethnic origin, as the preceding phrase asserts: ‘In him we live and move and exist’—and not only in the future (1 Corinthians 15:28). Luke reports words of Jesus that link our real sonship with the resurrection (20:36). All these texts speak to us of a real, not just juridical, filiation” (Panikkar 95).

“The texts, moreover, show that Christ is ‘the body’s head,’ the reason for which we too participate in the divine nature….Let us note that today we are rediscovering the doctrine of deification, even in St. Thomas….Our filiation is a real participation in the divine nature that is realized to the extent to which we become what we are called to be (Colossians 3:1). Our divinization is as little docetic as the humanization of the Logos” (Panikkar 95-96).

“St. Augustine’s trinitarian cry: *Deus supra quem nihil, extra quem nihil, sine quo nihil est* (‘God, above whom there is nothing, outside of whom nothing, without whom nothing exists’; *Soliloquia* I, 4)” (Panikkar 97-98).

“Therein precisely lies the mystery of Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, without any confusion yet also without any dichotomy….It is written that we have been given the Spirit (Romans 8:9), which makes us know that we dwell in the Son (John 14:23; 1 John 3:24)” (Panikkar 98).

“Vatican Council II itself states that ‘as children in the Son, we can exclaim in the Spirit: Abba, Father!’ (*Gaudium et spes* 22). Not even the Latin liturgy seems to be satisfied with a simple adoption; the Collect for the feast of the Transfiguration (August 6), echoing Eastern theology, speaks of our ‘perfect’ (that is, complete) ‘adoption.’ In short, if Christ calls God his father, we too can live this experience through the gift of the Spirit (Romans 8:9)” (Panikkar 99).

“In the language of the following centuries we could say that Jesus experienced the *continuous creation*, or better, the *constant generation* (by the Father). He felt himself constantly generated, created, sustained, made alive, inspired by that invisible mystery which many people call God and portray in the most diverse ways. This is the *continuous incarnation*, as we will explain later” (Panikkar 100).

“…the Grund is not an ‘other,’ a non-I, but a ‘thou,’ an immanent transcendence in me—which I discover as the I and therefore as my I” (Panikkar 101).

“We exist because ‘we are from’ *(ex-sistere)*, we proceed from this infinite source which is not limited by any name or, in the words of Eckhart, is *sunder Namen* (‘without name’), *uber all Namen* (‘above all names’), *innominabilis* (unnamable), and *omninominabilibus* (‘namable by all [names]’)—appellations or non-appellations that are found in a millenarian, apophatic tradition” (Panikkar 102).

“The source of everything is also the origin of love. Although often on a minor scale, we become conscious of the *perichōrēsis* we have cited so often….Love, to be sure, is no mere feeling; it is, rather, the dynamism itself of the real, the force that moves the universe—as so many sacred scriptures and poets say” (Panikkar 103).

“The word ‘father’ has lost much of its symbolism today. Patriarchalism is bad, but the destruction of the family without offering any substitute is still worse” (Panikkar 104).

“Scripture calls us … *(synergoi, cooperators* in Latin) (1 Corinthians 3:9), and yet it is with hesitation that I say, ‘I can pray and believe in *Abba Patēr* but I must do so with the same suffering and pain with which, we have been told, thou prayed at Gethsemane’” (Panikkar 104).

**The Father and I Are One**

“We are asked to accept the testimony of a life and acknowledge, citing John 10:38, that: ‘The father is in me and I in the Father….’” In another analogous passage (John 17:21-23) this unity is extended to all who will believe in him: ‘Because we are all one. As you, Father, are in me, and I in you, may they too be one with us…I in them and you in me that they may be perfected in unity’” (Panikkar 108).
Conference 2 Readings

“The father is father-of-the-son and the son is son-of-the-father. This paternity and filiation constitute their entire ‘being.’ They are pure relation. In more philosophical language, their Being is not Substance….Nothing exists outside the Trinity, nor is the Trinity subordinated to Unity” (Panikkar 111).

“God is neither one (a substance) nor three (three Gods). God is the ultimate reality and infinite correlative of reality—‘For from him and through him and to him are all things’ (Romans 11:36; see also 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16)....‘Let me insist again, both identity and difference exist....They are pure relation. In more philosophical language, their Being is not Substance. Their being is relational; even grammatically, their being is a verb....Relation is in fact the category of the Trinity—and advaita’” (Panikkar 111-112).

“Jesus is the only son not in the sense of being the offspring of a father who could have had many other children but in the sense of the sole filiation of a Son who continues to be generated semper nascens, always in the process of being born from the Father, as Eckhart would say” (Panikkar 113).

“Only an intellect that does not pretend to intus-legere but rather experiences an immediate inter-legere is able to grasp relation directly. And this is the same thinking we find in nondualistic advaita. Once it has transcended a subject-object individualism, advaita becomes conscious of reality such as it presents itself, without engaging in either analysis or synthesis, precisely because it does not begin with an a priori that is ungrounded in reality” (Panikkar 113).

“In our case, there is a Fountain, a source of my being, a mysterious Fountain of Being that is neither my ego nor my non-ego....This relation, in which the whole universe is involved, does not result in a final monism; it is not closed, because it is the Spirit that keeps it open” (Panikkar 113).

“...[I] discover that the whole universe is mine, or rather, is me when it is not a question of a ‘me’—an ego that interferes with this kind of belonging” (Panikkar 115). “See the courageous statement of St. John of the Cross, who says that everything is his: ‘Mine are the heavens, mine the earth, and peoples...God himself is mine because Christ is mine and everything is for me’ (Maximas y sentencias, 25)” (Panikkar 115 footnote).

“Christian spirituality ends not with Good Friday but with Resurrection Sunday, which Pentecost makes real to us—a situation that does not divinize by dehumanizing us but, on the contrary, humanizes us by divinizing us. We certainly do not always live at the highest level, though every person thirsts for the infinite and searches for a water that satisfies, howsoever fleeting and hidden it might be” (Panikkar 116).

“Christ did not come to ‘teach’ doctrines as much as he did to communicate life (John 10:10) and definitely to communicate himself, his own life, the life of the Father—‘And his life was the light of men’ (John 1:4)” (Panikkar 116).

“Those who truly experience samsara discover nirvana” (Panikkar 116).

“I would now like to quote St. Thomas Aquinas, who is not a sentimental writer: ‘If Jesus Christ had entrusted his teaching to the written word, people would have imagined that nothing else existed in his reaching other than what was contained in the scriptures....’ Inasmuch as I am attempting to describe my experience, I must search in my own heart even as I refer to the scriptures. It is again St. Thomas who tells us that the so-called law of the New Testament is not a written law but, rather, one that is inscribed on our hearts: ‘The law of the New Testament is inscribed in our heart’ (Summa theologiae I-II, q. 106, a. 1)” (Panikkar 117).

“‘I and the Father are one.’ We have already eliminated the fear of pantheism by acknowledging that the difference between the Father and us is infinite—as it is among the ‘persons’ of the Trinity. Our being one with God—our divine aspect, as Christian tradition loves to say—entails neither an indiscriminate fusion nor separation” (Panikkar 118).

It Is Good That I Leave

“Our third mahāvākya [great saying] represents the deepest stage of spiritual experience, for many reasons, but especially because it is the most human. The kenōsis is an act that continues. The theōsis (divinization of man) without the kenosis
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(divine annihilation) would constitute a diabolical temptation (Genesis 3:5). The Trinity is the fulcrum of Christian experience. The Christ represents both the divinization of Man and the humanization of God” (Panikkar 120).

“He has not left them anything durable, no institution; he has neither baptized nor ordained, much less has he founded anything—though he may have manifested the intention of doing so. He has left both the Spirit and himself as a silent Presence in the Eucharistic act. He has sent them as a lamb among wolves and refuses to change tactics even at the end: wolves are still roaming about. He promises his followers only one thing: the Spirit….He promises them consolation, comfort, an intercessor, a mediator, an advocate, an aid, a Paraclete. In other texts the advocate is described as the Spirit and often called ‘the Spirit of truth’ (e.g., John 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13)….When, however, the Spirit of truth will come, he will guide you to the whole truth. (John 16:13)” (Panikkar 122).

“As soon as he leaves, the Spirit of truth will come and introduce us to the truth in its entirety….The Spirit is a Spirit of truth, that truth which makes us free (John 8:32; 2 Corinthians 3:17). Although this Spirit will not carry us toward precise formulations or fragments of truth, it will carry us toward truth in its entirety, toward indivisible truth….‘Consecrate them in the truth’ (John 17:17). The Spirit does not make us omniscient but true seekers; it does not lead us to know everything but to be everything—the totum in parte (‘the whole in the part’), the icon of reality” (Panikkar 123).

“Although truth can perhaps be translated into concepts, it itself is not a concept any more than orthodoxy is a doctrine. As I noted in the dedication, truth itself is ‘journeying,’’ like a pilgrim….Not only is truth a relation. It is also a personal relation….Truth is one and the same as the spirit of truth” (Panikkar 123).

“Christophany illuminates every being. Neither a manifestation of another nor a human alienation, it is rather the maximal actualization of our true identity….Christ has left and thereby allowed the Spirit to bestow our identity on us….Unless Jesus leaves, the Spirit will not come and his resurrection will not acquire its full meaning” (Panikkar 125 & 127).

“We have already seen how the scholastic creation continua liberates us from a fixed and conditioned universe” (Panikkar 128).

“Although this is not the place to present a ‘theology’ of the eucharist understood as incarnation continua, we shall refer to it in the third part of this work as an example of the harmony and coherence of Christian intuitions. Too often the eucharist has been reduced to a private devotion or a quasi-superstitious act or a disincarnate faith” (Panikkar 128).

“‘The visible universe is God’s living body; it is the temple of the living God’ (p. 163). This idea is present in many religions which, without falling into pantheism, see God’s body in the world” (Panikkar 129).

“In life we find dynamism, in reality that Spirit of truth which flows from me too, if only I do not enclose myself within myself….Jesus’s experience manifests a truly liberated soul, and what this implies is clear: Jesus achieved a total transparency and transcended both the burden of the past and the fear of the future” (Panikkar 130).

“‘I then find a force in myself that is free of the ego, a power (exousia) that sends the Spirit into the world: it is the Spirit with which I succeed in identifying myself when my heart is pure’” (Panikkar 132).

“His sole testament is his Spirit, which means that his followers have a perfect right to establish a church, create rites, and continue his work creatively—even at the risk of making mistakes” (Panikkar 133).

“The Father ‘leaves’ into the Son, gives God’s whole self and disappears as Father—or rather, disappears as Father if, by virtue of the trinitarian perichōrēsis through the word of the Spirit, he did not become resurrected into fatherhood. In the same manner, the Son ‘leaves,’ and it is the Spirit that ‘renews’ all things, or rather, brings it about that reality is an ‘absolute novelty’ and not simply a ‘circular’ renewal.” (Panikkar 134).

“Only when all this is complete and an echo of divine transcendence in its immanence and when I dwell in this presence and that presence is the final cause of my being—and in some way conscious—only after the Abba, Paṭēr, can I say, ‘I and the Father are one.’ Only when the light flows like molten metal enveloping the chalk of my skeleton by penetrating
all the cavities can I say, I have reached the original, the Christ. Only when my image is completed and my icon painted and consecrated can I reflect the Father. Then those who see me see God in the Spirit that envelopes us” (Panikkar 134).

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Part II Chapter 3: The Mystical Experience of Jesus Christ [a reflection on three terms]

“Eva Me Suttam: ‘This I have heard,’ as many Buddhist scriptures say…” (Panikkar 135).

“Once there was a man who came to the world and asserted that he was one with the Origin of the universe, although in fact he was not the Origin; he had come from the Source and he had to return to the Source. He spent the time granted him doing good deeds without any programmatic calculation and did nothing out of the ordinary, though what he did was intense, finished, authentic” (Panikkar 135).

“He saw himself as Man: Son of Man, barnasha (eighty-two times in the Gospels). He loved the name and discovered, for himself and others, that his humanity was nothing other than the face of divinity, inseparable even though distinct, so distinct, in fact, that he, in the form of that humanity, was painfully conscious of the existence of sin” (Panikkar 136).

“He spent a great deal of his life in the shadow, and his death was even more obscure. Yet he never experienced any frustration whatsoever; the moment power tempted him, he despised it; and when he failed he dared to promise his friends that he would really be present, not only through the Spirit but likewise through the simple food and drink which they would consume in common” (Panikkar 136).

“‘I have also heard’ something else. I have heard twenty centuries of reflection on Jesus and dozens of doctrinal systems of every kind. I can neither ignore nor study them all…. ‘I have also heard of painful controversies and prejudiced confrontations among and between followers and disciples; I have even been compelled to take sides” (Panikkar 136).

“I have heard, furthermore, that we must necessarily practice discernment. This realization has led me to discover the priority of personal experience….Since it is on myself that I must rely, it is on purifying my entire self that I must work. Although the task never ends, it has liberation me from absolutizing my convictions. I have, moreover, heard so many things that I have been obliged to listen ever more attentively to the Spirit” (Panikkar 136-137).

“It is neither the fear of being stoned nor declared a heretic—I am always ready to make corrections—that restrains me, much less the fear of saying what others prefer not to hear; it is, rather, the impossibility of embodying in words what I have heard” (Panikkar 137).

“I can only hope that the words will resonate whenever true listening occurs in the depth of the heart where Life vivifies us, while rocks (“the living stones”) become fire, purifying everything, and God becomes all in all’” (Panikkar 137).

“Itipasyāmi”

“‘This I see.’ The inner life of Jesus reveals a universal experience….it is I too—intensity and pride aside—who am in a position to understand and live that experience” (Panikkar 137).

“What I am doing, rather, is describing my own experience in an intimate, personal way. I simply feel that the divine is in me and, moreover, that I experience the unity that makes my life truly real. Yet I am fully aware how far I still am from that achievement” (Panikkar 137).

“The kenōsis of the Son of Man is neither his singular privilege, nor did it occur because he was humble: it occurred because he was Man….We are all kenotic, emptied of the divinity that is lodged hidden in each one of us; we are all naked, so to speak, without our most authentic clothing….Jesus did not hide this situation from us—in fact, it is only a divine person who can reveal so much humanity, a humanity brimming with divinity” (Panikkar 137).

“Religious identifications are even more subtle: Christian, Buddhist, monk, priest, or spiritual roles such as saint, iguru, samnyāsin. Yet these ways of living neither exhaust our being nor touch the heart of what we essentially are: a microcosm of the whole of reality, the lineage of the sat-purusa, an icon of divinity” (Panikkar 138).
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“The early councils defined the union as both completely human and completely divine; and this kind of union constitutes the divine aspect of the human condition that is common to all of us....” (Panikkar 138).

“Sat-purusa” [the true being, the cosmic man]

“The mysticism of Jesus Christ is simply human mysticism. What else could it be? It is the ultimate experience of man as Man. Sat-purusa signifies not only an individual or exemplar of the human species but also the plenitude of what we all are. Although we speak of divinization, we must observe that the moment we cease being men, that divinization may turn into alienation” (Panikkar 138).

“I would dare say Jesus’s experience was that pure human experience which, without denying any of them, transcends all kinds of peculiarities. It is only by being concrete that we can become universal. Jesus’s experience did not consist in his being a male or a Jew, much less a Christian, a member of a class, a caste, a party, or a religion: it was solely the experience of being man, Son of man. This, his kenōsis, made it possible for him to speak to all of us from the depths of our true humanity, from the authentic center of what we truly are. Paradoxically enough, the more we free ourselves from every attribute or role, the more we are ourselves and discover ourselves to be completely human and even more divine” (Panikkar 138-139).

“In traditional words, the Son is generation and the Spirit proceeds from the Source. The whole universe is engaged in the process. In Christian language, the whole of reality is Father, Christ, and Holy Spirit. It is not only all the divine mysteries but likewise the whole mystery of creation that is held within this Christ—in a process of growth and maturation” (Panikkar 139).

“To sum up, the mystery of Christ is the mystery of the whole of reality—divine, human, cosmic, without confusion yet without separation. Christ would not be Christ were he not divine, were he indeed not God. The divine cannot be splintered into parts. Were he not human, were he not the whole of humanity, Christ would not be Christ. Yet this humanity, distended in time, is not yet nor ever will be finished as long as time is time.... And Life is precisely this novelty or constant creation” (Panikkar 140).

“Perhaps the most theological expression that corresponds to the philosophical formulation according to which transcendence can be discovered only in immanence is to say—reflecting the patristic tradition—that God can be seen only in the Spirit....In order to grasp the living reality of symbols, we need the third eye” (Panikkar 140).

“Matter is part of reality, together with the other ‘two’ dimensions, in infinite interpenetration. In Jesus Christ Christians see this symbol as a radiant point that, in blinding us, makes us glimpse—and therefore not ‘see’ but rather ‘feel,’ ‘live,’ enjoy—the experience of Light on Mount Tabor in its totality” (Panikkar 140).

“We cannot understand mysticism in the third person, nor even in the second. But the first person, in order to break the silence, must have someone to talk to. This someone, however, cannot be an imaginary reader: he must be a Thou, an istadevatā who, in turning everything upside down, as it reveals the fact that the Word emerges out of Silence by virtue of Love. The Word, as we have already said, is nothing other than the ecstasy of Silence” (Panikkar 139-140).
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Part 3, Nine Sūtra

“I use the word sūtra rather than thesis because the deductive method is not valid for the sūtra, which speaks to us from within a level of consciousness that must already have been attained before we can grasp its meaning….These nine sūtra are not theses to be defined….These threads should link us to the past and open us to the future” (Panikkar 143).

#1, Christ is the Christian Symbol for the Whole Reality
#2, The Christian Recognizes Christ In and Through Jesus
#3, The Identity of Christ Is Not the Same as His Identification
#4, Christians Do Not Have a Monopoly on the Knowledge of Christ
#5, Christophany Transcends Tribal and Historical Christology
#6, The Protological, Historical, and Eschatological Christ Is a Unique and Selfsame Reality, Distended in Time, Extended in Space, and Intentional in Us
#7, The Incarnation as Historical Event is also Inculturation
#8, The Church is Considered a Site of the Incarnation
#9, Christophany is the Symbol of the Mysterium Coniunctionis of Divine, Human, and Cosmic Reality

#1: Christ Is the Christian Symbol for the Whole Reality

“…[T]his sutra…employs the word ‘symbol’ in the same sense in which Christian tradition refers to the sacraments” (Panikkar 144).

“Christ is ‘that light which illuminates all those who come into this world’ (John 1:9); ‘everything has been made through him’ (John 1:3), and ‘in him all things subsist’ (Colossians 1:17); ‘he is the only born’ (Revelation 1:8), the beginning and end of all, the ‘Son of God’ equal to God, the ico[n of all reality, the ‘head of the body’ (Colossians 1:18) still ‘in becoming in the pain of childbirth’ (Romans 8:22)” (Panikkar 145).

The adventure of reality is a spatial and temporal egressus (‘going out’) from God and a regresus (‘return’) to the source, constantly proceeding beyond, to the infinite—by the ‘work’ of the Spirit, with ‘prevents’ reality from becoming duality….The ‘return’ does not carry us back to the point of departure inasmuch as God is not a geometrical point but an actus purus (pure actuality, dynamism). This extension (spatial) and distension (temporal) are united in the (human) tension of man as he ‘grows to the full awareness of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:13). ‘God becomes man so that man may become God,’ as I have said before, in the light of patristic tradition” (Panikkar 145).

“This ‘becoming’ is a way that does not lead anywhere else inasmuch as God is everywhere. Jesus’s phrase, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6) is not to be understood necessarily in an objective nor even conceptual sense. The way is precisely the truth of our life. Although the meaning of the way does reside in the goal, it is on the road of life itself that the goal is found—and found in every step that is authentic….We are talking about the symbol ‘Christ,’ which Christian culture has often identified as goodness, truth, and beauty” (Panikkar 145).

“It is not christocentrism precisely because the Trinity has no center and nothing human and created stands outside that Word through which all things were made—intuitions that have been expressed in many traditions” (Panikkar 147).

“Salvation means full realization or, in traditional terms, divinization, and divinization occurs only in union with the divine—whose symbol in Christian language is Christ. If this theōsis is not an illusory aspect but a real ‘participation in the divine nature’ (2 Peter 1:4), it is realized only if we become one with Christ—that is, if we become part of the Christus totus so as to be ipse Christus (Christ himself)” (Panikkar 147).

“The Roman liturgy for centuries has chanted, Per ipsum, cum ipso, in ipso (‘Through him, with him, in him’) all the dimensions of reality meet and ‘all things hold together in him’ (Colossians 1:17). The whole universe is called to share the trinitarian perichōrēsis, in and through Christ” (Panikkar 147).
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#2: The Christian Recognizes Christ In and Through Jesus

“It is known that ‘Christ’ is a Greek name that translates the Hebrew word mashiah, which simply means ‘anointed’” (Panikkar 149).

“The Christian revolution manifested itself in the First Council of Jerusalem, which abolished circumcision (Acts 15:1ff), the primordial pact of God with the Jewish people. This revolution consisted not in supplanting the Jewish Messiah with a condemned Jew but in recognizing in Jesus the man in whom ‘the whole fullness of divinity lives corporeally’ (Colossians 2:9), and the revelation of the ‘heir of all things...who sustains the whole universe with his word of power’ (Hebrews 1:3)” (Panikkar 149-150).

“In other words, it is in Christian revelation that the Christian discovers the living Christ through whom the universe was made (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). He who believes that ‘Jesus is the Christ’ is a Christian. The existential confession manifests the salvation of whoever professes it. It is a confession, an existential affirmation, not an objective or objectifiable phrase. Nobody is saved by uttering a simply theoretical phrase (for example, the Pythagorean theorem), or a statement of fact (King Asoka existed), or even a prayer (‘Lord, Lord’). The confession of his name is the same as the personal testimony of having encountered the reality which the name reveals” (Panikkar 150).

“Nobody can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ (Kyrios Iēsous) except through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3)” (Panikkar 150).

“Christ is certainly not Jesus’s surname” (Panikkar 150).

“He must be God of God, Light of Light, God’s Son, the Father’s first-born, only-begotten (prōtotokos, monogenēs). And this Christ is acknowledged as one sole person in which the two natures subsist ‘in an unconfused, immutable, undivided, inseparable way’” (Panikkar 150).

“To assert that ‘the Jesus of history,’ Mary’s son, is ‘the Christ of faith,’ the Christ of our first sūtra, is precisely what constitutes the scandal of Christian concreteness. However, the Christian scandal remains a scandal not only for others but for Christians themselves” (Panikkar 151).

“This statement echoes the entire patristic and medieval tradition. This second sūtra asserts that the Christian encounters Christ in and through Jesus. It is a personal meeting, and ‘existential touch’” (Panikkar 151).

#3: The Identity of Christ Is Not the Same as His Identification

“Although identity and identification cannot be separated, they are not the same thing....We can know all this [about him], but his true identity may still escape us....[I] order to know the identity of a person, love is required” (Panikkar 153).

“Except in certain periods like the ‘Enlightenment,’ philosophy has never pretended to be an exclusive work of reason (opus rationis)....Philosophic meditation is the conscious companion of man’s pilgrimage on earth, and this pilgrimage is religion. If a contemporary reflection on Christ is to be faithful to the real—and not only conceptual content—it must reflect Christ and not limit itself to the exegesis of texts; it must seek the identity of Christ and not be content with his identification” (Panikkar 154).

“The relation between identity and identification presents a particular tension in Christian history....We speak of tension, not a split, because the great Christian figures have maintained the creative polarity between the human and divine dimensions. Appropriately, it was Origen who first wrote a Christian commentary on the Song of Songs; John of the Cross, the disciple of Teresa, the great lover of the humanity of Jesus, penetrate the depths of his divinity, where nothing more exists; in his Summa theologiae Thomas Aquinas cites Dionysius more than anyone else; William Law was converted by reading Jakob Böhme. In recalling the last verse of the Divine Comedy, ‘the love that moves the sun [of the intellect] and the other stars [of the heart,]’ we are reminded that bhakti (‘devotion’) and jñāna (‘knowledge’) cannot be separated...” (Panikkar 155).
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#4: Christians Do Not Have a Monopoly on the Knowledge of Christ

“My book *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964) was dedicated to the unknown Christ as a parallel to the ‘unknown God’ of whom St. Paul speaks (Acts 17:23)” (Panikkar 156).

“The fact that Christians do not have full knowledge of the symbol they call Christ shows that they are not masters of Christ and confirms that Christ transcends all understanding….This requires a change of perspectives for Christians, because a true understanding among the various religions can never be a one-way street” (Panikkar 157-158).

“It is affirmative in the sense that Christ—symbol of reality’s ultimate mystery—implies a certain aspiration for the universal, which is common to virtually all religions….Nevertheless, it has often been received with a certain reticence, on one hand, because the mystical dimension in Christian life and theology has been forgotten, and on the other, because of the thought patterns (the *forma mentis*) of the Mediterranean people” (Panikkar 159).

#5: Christophany Transcends Tribal and Historical Christology

“The task of Christians—perhaps our *kairos*—may be the conversion—yes, conversion—of a tribal christology into a christophany less bound to a single cultural current” (Panikkar 162).

“I would like to pay homage to the idea of tribe. Westerners have attributed to it, and to so many words that refer to different civilizations and religions, a certain contemptuous meaning. To begin with, tribe is more primordial than the idea of a people. The idea behind tribe is not just ethnic. Christian ethnocentrism is on the way to becoming transcended, at least in theory. But the tribal vision has more profound roots….Although a tribal Christology is not necessarily completely illegitimate, christophany cannot be reduced to it” (Panikkar 162).

“Christophany does not contest the historicity of Jesus. It merely affirms that history is not the only dimension of the real and that Christ’s reality is thus not exhausted with Jesus’s historicity” (Panikkar 162).

“Although the concept of the Trinity was a necessary premise for understanding the incarnation, the trinitarian experience did not enter into common Christian experience—-with some laudable exceptions in every period….It is significant that the concept of the mystical body of Christ has been forgotten. The reason is obvious. Monotheism fears that the incarnation might lead to pantheism” (Panikkar 163).

“*Pneuma*, on the other hand, the functioning of spirit, does not seem as bound to the flux of history….Instead it belongs to another level of reality. Similarly, the ‘today you will be with me in Paradise’ (Luke 23:43), which the ‘good thief’ heard from the lips of the Crucified One, annulled and transcended in an instant the thief’s entire historical past, and his entire negative *karma* vanished” (Panikkar 164).

#6: The Protological, Historical, and Eschatological Christ Is a Unique and Selfsame Reality, Distended in Time, Extended in Space, and Intentional in Us

“Christophany makes sense only within a Trinitarian vision, since it is in Christ that we find the full manifestation of the Trinity” (Panikkar 165).

“Christ as creator constitutes an abuse of language within a rigid monotheism, where God alone is creator” (Panikkar 166).

“To sum up, although we are temporal, we know we are also ‘more’—eternal. Although we are spatial, we know we are ‘more’—spiritual. Although we are conscious, we know we are capable of always knowing ‘more’—infinite. We are suspended between being and nothingness” (Panikkar 167).

“And although the triple action has been attributed, respectively, to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, it has likewise been underscored that we cannot compartmentalize any divine action” (Panikkar 167).
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“Christ is a symbol of union, friendship, and love, not a wall that separates. Jesus is certainly a sign of contradiction, not because he separates us from others but rather because he heals our hypocrisies, fears, and egoism, while leaving us as vulnerable as himself. Instead of rejecting others because they are pagan, nonbelievers, sinners—whereas we are righteous and justified—Jesus impels us toward others and makes us see the negative which is in us too’ (Panikkar 168).

“You have done it to me’ (Matthew 25:40) is no simple moral exhortation to do good; it is rather an ontological assertion of Christ’s presence in the other, in every other, in the smallest of the small—not for the purpose of discovering an ‘other’ hidden in the neighbor but in order to discover the neighbor as part of ourselves” (Panikkar 168).

“As St. Augustine said, the Christian religion is traceable to the dawn of humanity (Retractationes. 1, 12)” (Panikkar 168).

“We should also remember that creation is continuous (creation continua, as the scholastics say), not something that happened ‘at the beginning of time’—a phrase that makes no sense, since ‘beginning’ is already temporal. It is not a simple cosmological assertion as to where to place the big bang. Creatio is at the basis of all temporal existence, the foundation on which time—the concrete time of every instant—rests” (Panikkar 169).

“The protological Christ, at times improperly called preexistent, is one with and the same as the historical Christ, and the historical Christ is inseparable from the Eucharistic and resurrected Christ. The eucharist, we have said, is the continuation of the incarnation and so makes it possible for us to speak of an incarnation continua. In an analogous sense, the eschatological Christ, in his last coming or parousia, is inseparable from the Eucharistic and risen Christ” (Panikkar 169).

“It is in this sense that christophany helps us to live consciously our tempiternal life, the fullness of a life that has integrated past, present, and future (the trikāla of certain Indic traditions) so that we may live in fullness (John 10:10)” (Panikkar 169).

#7: The Incarnation as Historical Event is also Inculturation

“History must not be absolutized” (Panikkar 170).

“Let me try to clarify this. Christianity is a historical religion. If we abolish history, we destroy Christianity. But Christ, the Christ in whom historical Christianity claims to believe, is more (not less) than a historical reality, in the sense in which Semitic culture has understood history” (Panikkar 173).

“Christophany includes pneuma, spirit” (Panikkar 174).

“A ‘chemically pure’ christology from which we can deduce Christian ideas and a Christian praxis does not exist. No Christian life, no Christian theology and, in our case, no christophany is the conclusion of a syllogism. Jesus Christ himself warned us that he would become a ‘sign of contradiction….It means only that we cannot absolutize our interpretations and enthrone a particular christology with universalist pretensions” (Panikkar 175).

“We should distinguish experiential Christianness from cultural Christianity and doctrinal Christendom” (Panikkar 175).

“Human beings are not marionettes in the hands of God, Destiny, or Providence. Divine freedom is constrained by neither physics nor metaphysics, and we are co-creators of our own destiny, which is inseparable from that of the universe” (Panikkar 175).
#8: The Church is Considered a Site of the Incarnation

“In the first fifteen centuries, in contrast, Christians were virtually unanimous in believing in what today is called the ‘cosmic church’...—although immersed in secular affairs that it considered sacred....Vatican II (Lumen gentium, 1) underscored again this ampler understanding of the church, returning to the traditional notion of the church as ... (mystērion tou kosmou) or the sacramentum mundi—that is, the mystery of the universe. With this affirmation, the church shows its consciousness of being the place where the Holy Spirit is active and thus an integrating element of the unique Trinitarian act of Christian faith: ‘I believe’” (Panikkar 176).

“In Tertullian’s bold formulation, the church is ‘the body of the Trinity’s three persons,’ and ‘wherever the three are, that is to say, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there is the church which is the body of the three’....” When Origen (PG 12:841) and St. Cyprian (PL 4:503), toward the middle of the third century, formulated the celebrated statement extra ecclesiam nulla salus (‘Outside the church there is no salvation’)—which found virtually universal acceptance until a short time ago—ecclesia was understood as locus salutis (‘the place of salvation’), so that wherever salvation occurred, there was the church. ‘Where Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church,’ maintained Ignatius of Antioch (Ad Smyrnaeos, VIII, 2; PG 5:713)” (Panikkar 177).

“This cosmic and soteriological understanding is the primary meaning of the Greek word katholikē—the church that coexists with the universe. It would be misleading to identify this church directly with an institution, as Pius XII made clear....The church is the ‘spouse of Christ’ or, as Irenaeus said, the place of the Spirit: ‘Where the Spirit is, there is the church’” (Panikkar 177).

“To sum up: salvation consists in reaching our plenitude—that is, in sharing the divine nature, since nothing finite can ever satisfy the being that is capax Dei....Generated by the ‘source and origin of the whole of divinity,’ not only does Christ create everything but he divinizes everything by the grace of the divine Spirit, so that, after the spatiotemporal adventure of creation, the divine life of the Trinity will pervade everything and God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28)....The place in which this process occurs is the church; it is also realized in the ‘visible church’ despite all her human shadows and sins. The church is the very place in which the whole universe pulsates until its final destiny” (Panikkar 178).

“In order to grasp the profound meaning of this sutra, we must recapture the scholastic intuition of creatio continua, and extend it to incarnatio continua. We find timid hints of the latter in the writings of a few mystics, such as Maximus the Confessor and Meister Eckhart. Just as God’s creative activity in every moment takes nothing away but makes creation from the ‘beginning’ stand out more profoundly, so the continuous incarnation of the Son in every creature does not diminish the central place of the incarnation of Jesus (John 1:14). Rather it allows us to become conscious of what was from the beginning (Romans 16:25-26; 1 John 1:1-3). It is here that the title of Son of man which the Son of God gave himself reveals its innermost depth” (Panikkar 179).

#9: Christophany Is the Symbol of the Mysterium Coniunctionis of Divine, Human, and Cosmic Reality

“The entire cosmotheandric experience is implicit here—the divine, the human, and the world” (Panikkar 181).

“Jesus Christ is pure transparence, the Way....From the historic-religious point of view the figure of Christ could be described as that of a person who reduces to zero the distance between heaven and earth, God and man, transcendent and immanent, without sacrificing either pole—which is precisely the principle of advaita” (Panikkar 181).

“Without entering into the heart of that discussion now, I would like to underscore again the difficulty that Western thought has experienced in admitting that an a-dualism could exist between monism and dualism....It is worth saying the nondual advaita to which I refer is neither a dialectical negation of duality nor a secondary act of the intellect—or perhaps better, the human spirit. Rather it is a direct vision that transcends rationality (without denying it)” (182).

“The constitutive relational nature of reality—or, better, its correlationality—cannot be characterized as either unity or duality. In fact, both the latter are no more than what human thought requires when it breaks out of the primordial silence from which it originates” (182-183).
Conference 3 Readings

“The way in which the radical Trinity manifests itself in Christ presents us with the nondualist unity between the divine and the human (the *theandric* mystery of Eastern theology). But the human being, too, constitutes a nondualist unity between spirit and body….The ‘three’ (the ‘divine,’ the ‘human,’ and the ‘material’) go together with neither confusion nor separation. I have called this experience the *cosmotheandric* or the *theanthropocosmic* intuition” (183).

“Again, Christ remains the central symbol. Christ is one, and not a union of ‘three’ elements, even though we can and must acknowledge this tridimensionality in him, as well as in the whole of reality” (183).

“Maximus the Confessor writes that in Christ the five great ‘conjunctions’ are realized: the masculine with the feminine (Galatians 3:28), the world of the damned with paradise (Luke 23:43); the terrestrial world with heaven (Acts 1:9-11), the sensible with intelligible things (Ephesians 4:10), created with uncreated nature….Rather than a *coincidentia oppositorum*, Jesus Christ has been described as the reconciliation between the divine and the universe, the one who has called upon those who believe in him to act in ‘the service of reconciliation’” (Panikkar 182-183).
Living the Human Experience in Its Fullness
“We have repeated several times in these pages that the experience we have called christophanic is a concrete form of living the human experience in its fullness” (Panikkar 187).

Truth and Justice
“As we have already said, the way of truth is one and the same as the search for justice—and vice versa. To separate the truth, the truth that makes us free, from its incarnation in life—that is, from justice—represents the rupture of human life into a theoretico-conceptual and a practico-temporal world, a rupture that bears mortal consequences…Although truth can perhaps be translated into concepts, it itself is not a concept any more than orthodoxy is a doctrine…Truth is one and the same as the spirit of truth” (Panikkar 123).

Love and Forgiveness
“Jesus neither asks Peter if he repents, nor does he say that he forgives him: he asks if he loves him. It is then that he will be forgiven, for love alone cancels sin: ‘Her many sins are forgiven because she has loved much...’ (Luke 7:47)….We have the power to forgive, to cancel the offense only if we love—that is, if we have the Spirit, which is Love. It is the Spirit that enables us to forgive” (Panikkar 127).

Light in Darkness
“In other words, christophany is not an idyllic vision of either reality or the human condition but a phania, a light that appears as light insofar as we are wrapped in darkness” (Panikkar 187).

Dualism Destroyed
“The sociopolitical implications of this vision should be clear. Jesus Christ destroys all our dualisms” (Panikkar 188).

Homeomorphic Equivalences
“The Christian faith is confirmed when we find homeomorphic equivalences in other traditions” (Panikkar 186).

Living the Present in Communion with Others
“We have tried to demonstrate that two millennia of human experience partake of our common patrimony and that we should neither relegate it to a museum nor accept it uncritically. My intention has been not so much to present the past from a new angle of vision as to live the present ‘in communion with the others,’ like all those pilgrims to whom we have dedicated this study” (Panikkar 187).

“A Final Word
--Ephesians 3:19: “...to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”
--“In order that we may fill up the fullness of God in all” (quoting St. Bonaventure, who cited Ephesians 3:19, Panikkar 190).