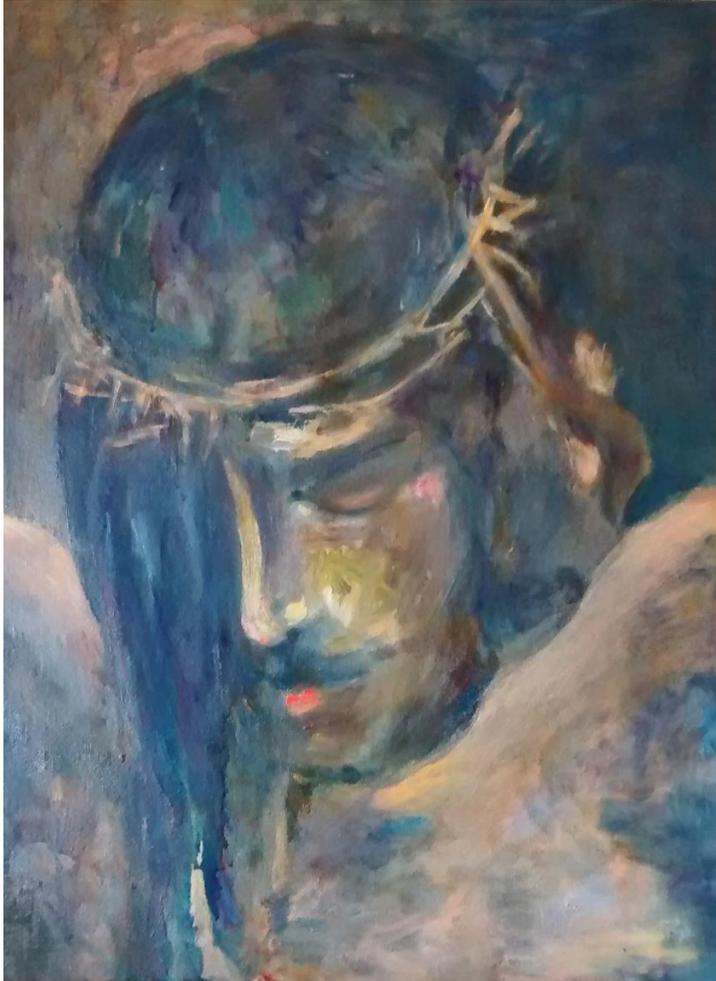
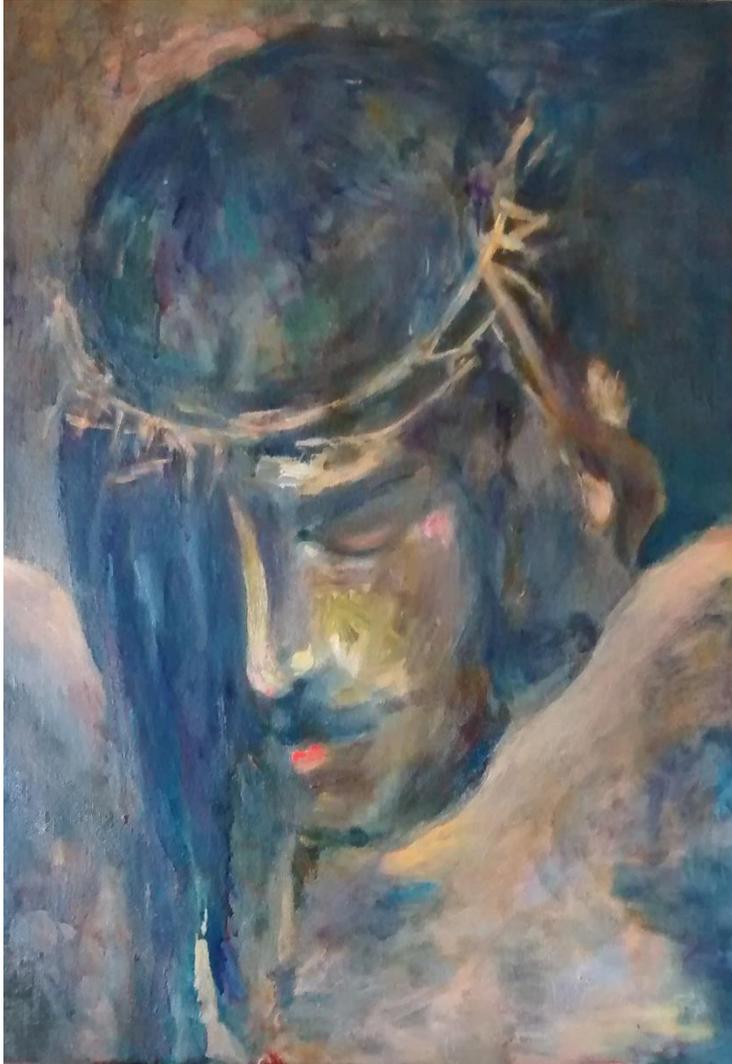


Beauty's Freedom and the Importance of Questioning From Whence the Creative Leaders of the Future?



Dr Maeve Louise Heaney VDMF
Australian Catholic University
Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy
Melbourne, 2018

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Steps of Keynote...

1. *Young people: Past to present to future*
2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and a space for the Spirit to speak, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.
3. *Beauty, the arts, and music*, in human life and Christian faith and their importance in for the lives and leadership of those we help educate.

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Your mission statements are really clear

- “Catholic schools were founded to proclaim *Jesus’ message* of God’s love for all.
- Our Catholic faith calls us *to embrace the contemporary world with a Catholic imagination*, and a particular *hope-filled view* of the human person and all of creation.

HOW?

- Catholic educators invite students *to make sense of their world and their lives* within a faith community that is faithful to the mission of Jesus.”

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Your mission statements are really clear

Religious Education...as *critical*....

- It *deliberately attends* to the spiritual development of each person, acknowledging and celebrating the Holy Spirit at work, inviting relationship with God and a Christ-like stance towards others.
- At the same time, it is a *disciplined process of 'faith seeking understanding'*, where the *questions of God, beliefs and life are articulated and explored in dialogue with the Catholic Tradition to develop students' faith lives and stimulate a search for meaning and truth.*
- It is *interpretative by nature* and deepens learning when students are invited to explore cross-curricular connections.

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Your mission statements are really clear

- At the same time, it is a *disciplined process of 'faith seeking understanding'*, where the questions of God, beliefs and life are articulated and explored in dialogue with the **Catholic Tradition to develop students' faith lives and stimulate a search for meaning and truth.**
- It is *interpretative by nature: by helping them make sense of things...themselves, life, God.*

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Theology

Faith Seeking Understanding

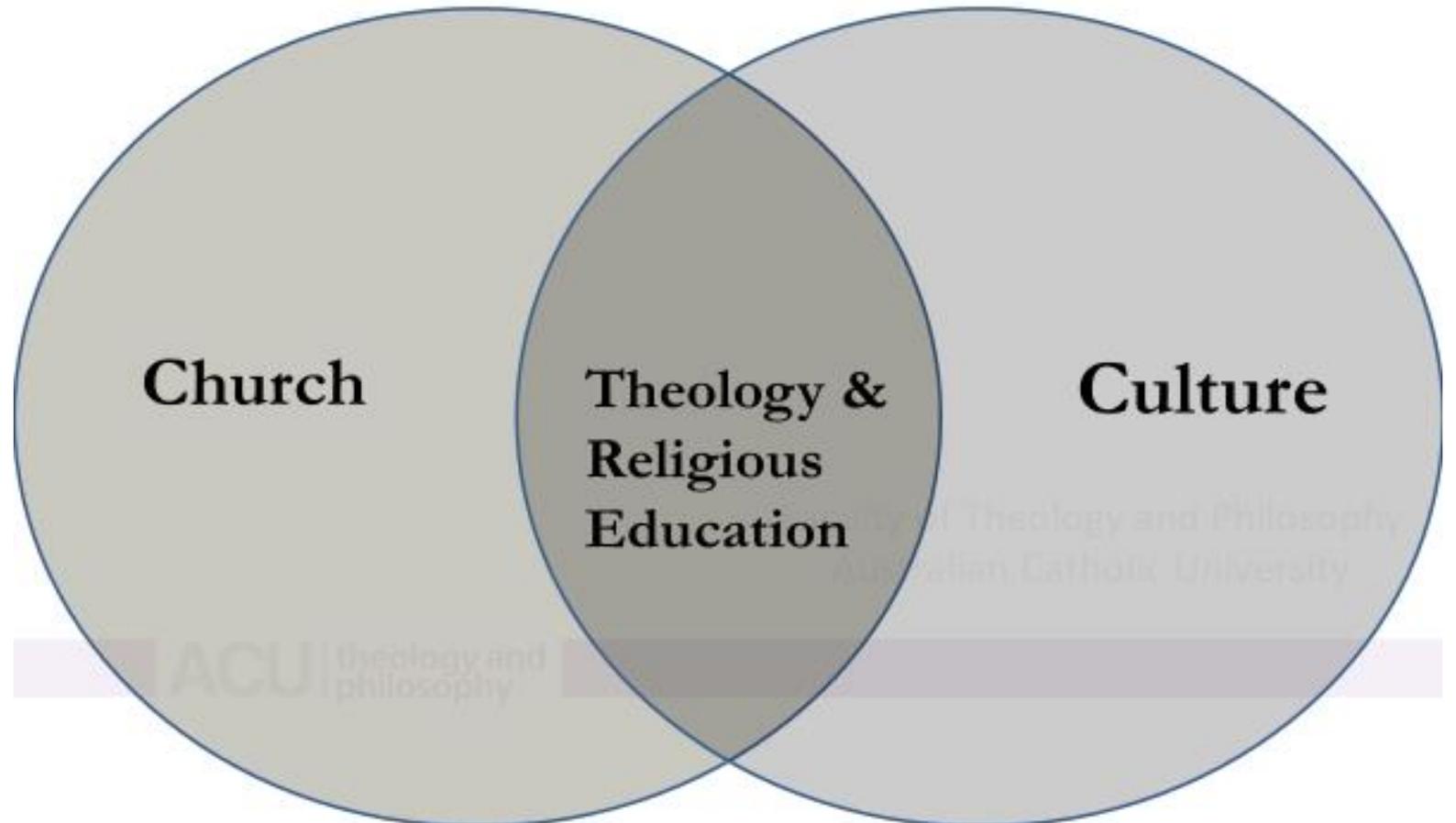
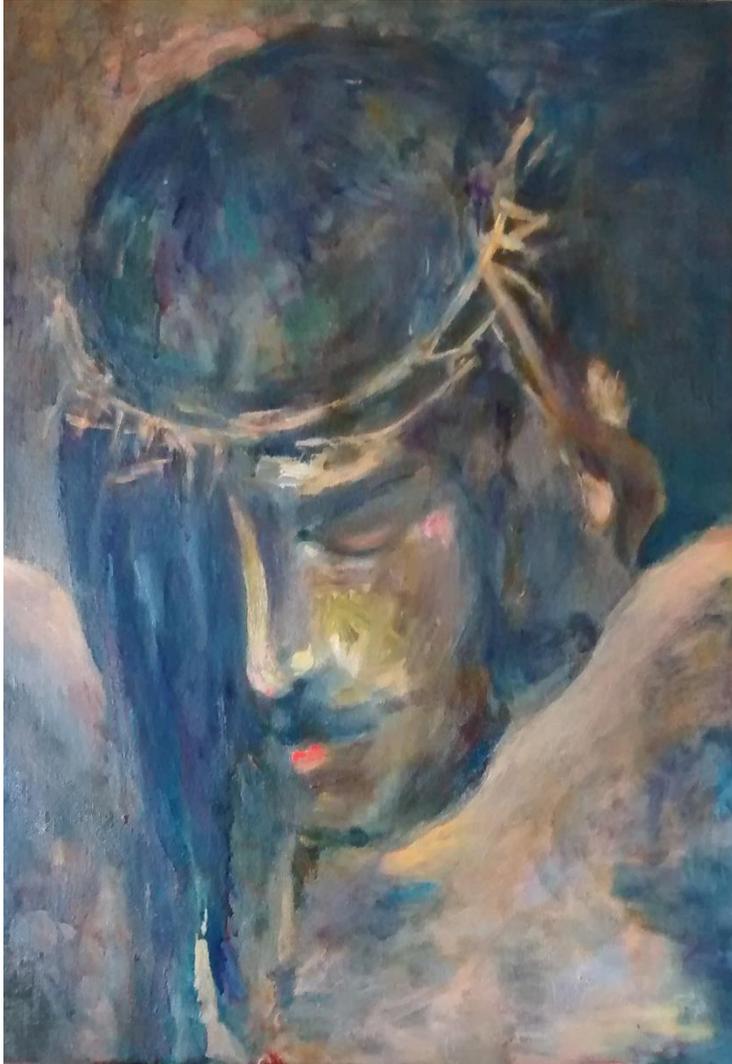
St Anselm XII Century

“Christian theology bridges between a given cultural context and the meaning and role of a religion in that context.”

Adapted from Bernard Lonergan

Christian theology is “faith seeking an understanding” of itself and its beliefs so as to bridge between a given cultural context and the significance and role of a religion in that context.”

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Both of these spaces are sources of meaning for
us...

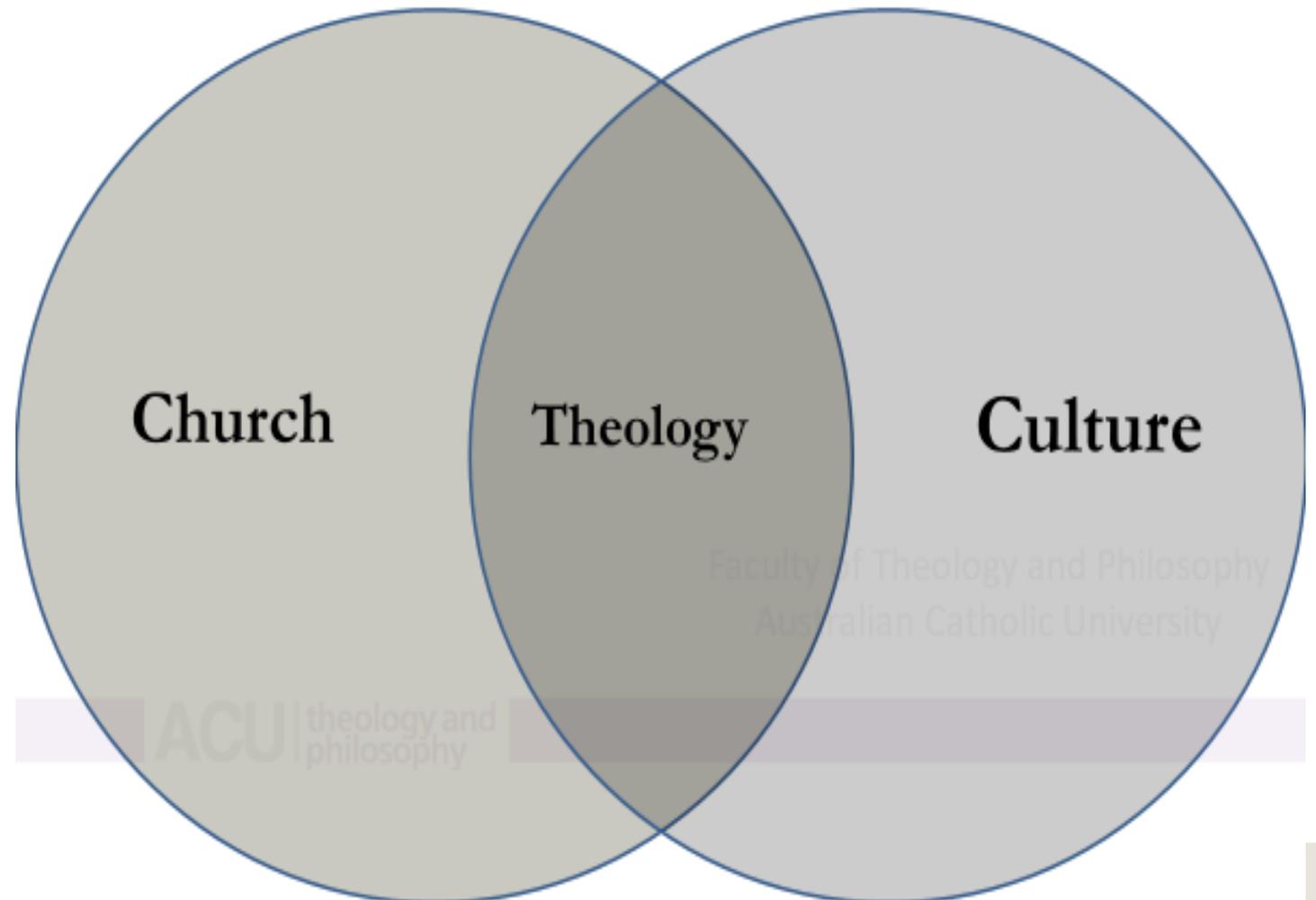
Theology moves in two directions.

- 1. The first is that of the study of the word of God:** the word set down in holy writ, celebrated and lived in the living tradition of the Church....
- 2. The second direction is that of the human person, who converses with God:** the person who is called "to believe," "to live," "to communicate" to others the Christian faith and outlook."

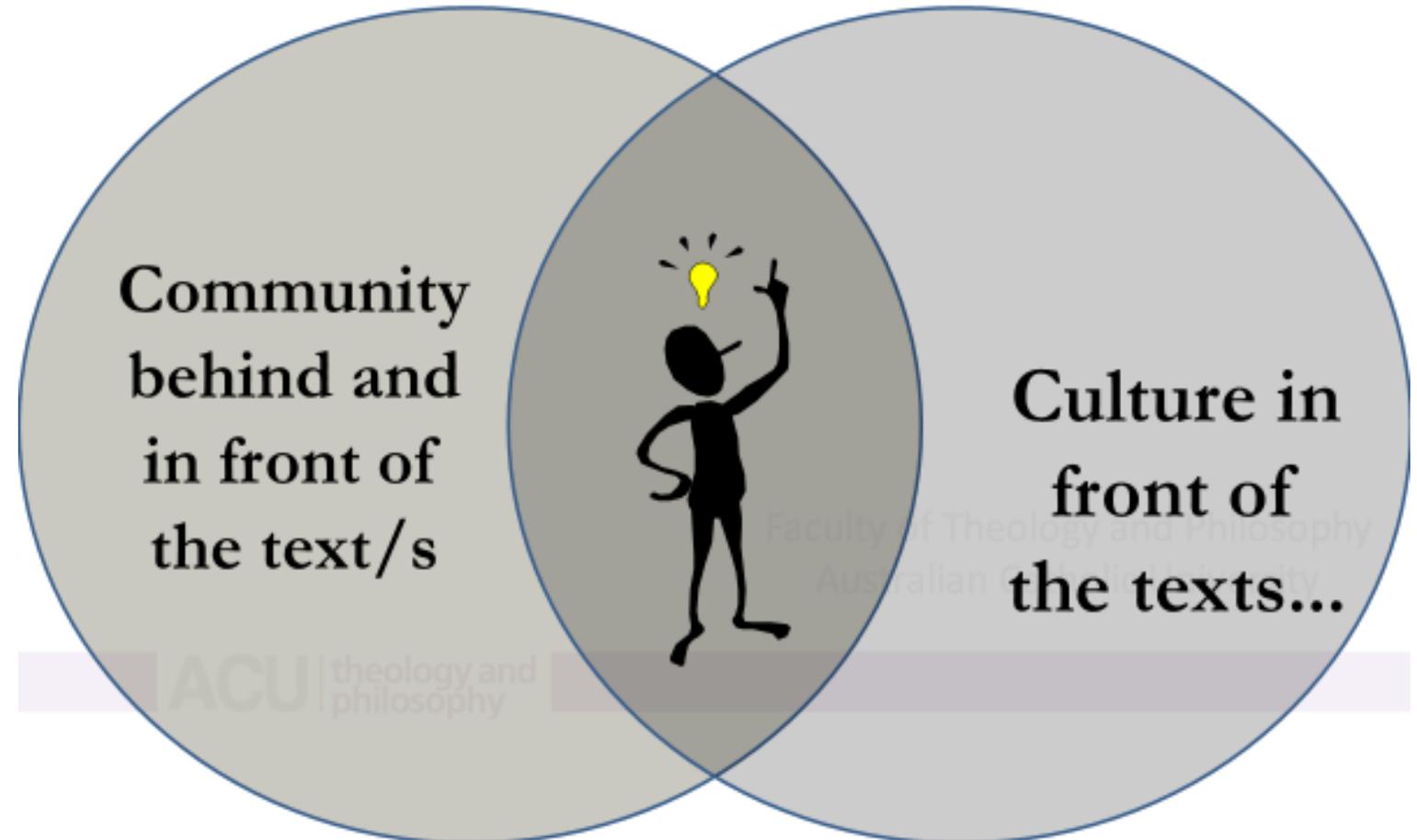
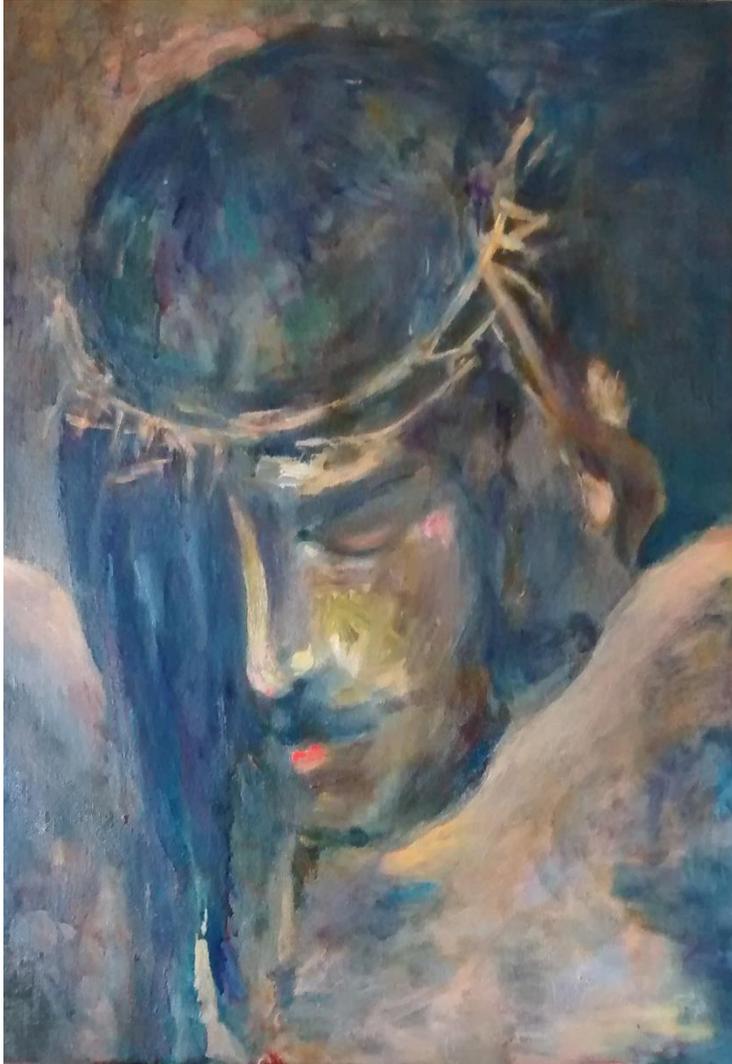
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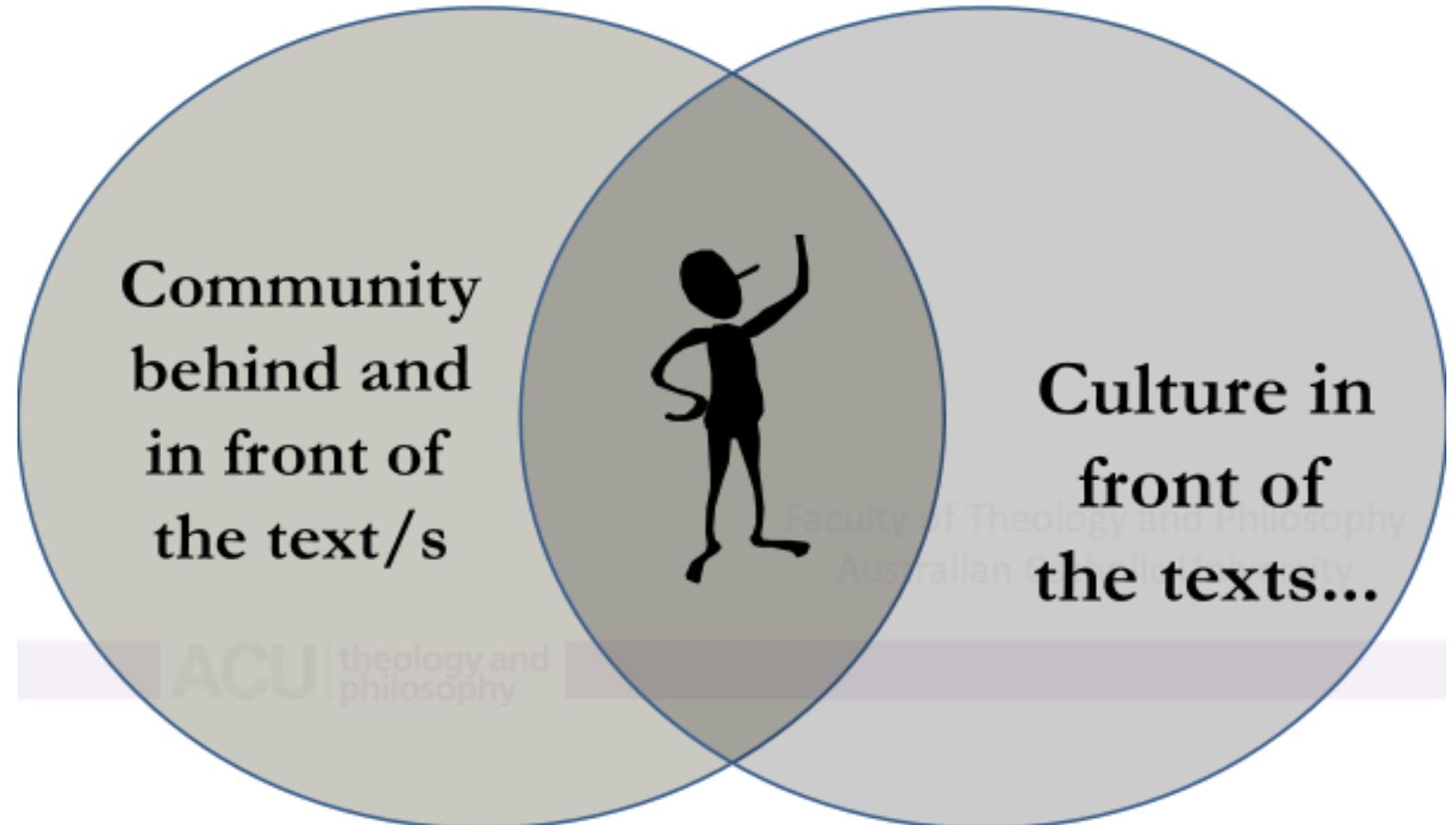
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Stages of meaning in Western Culture

Common sense – Theory – Interiority

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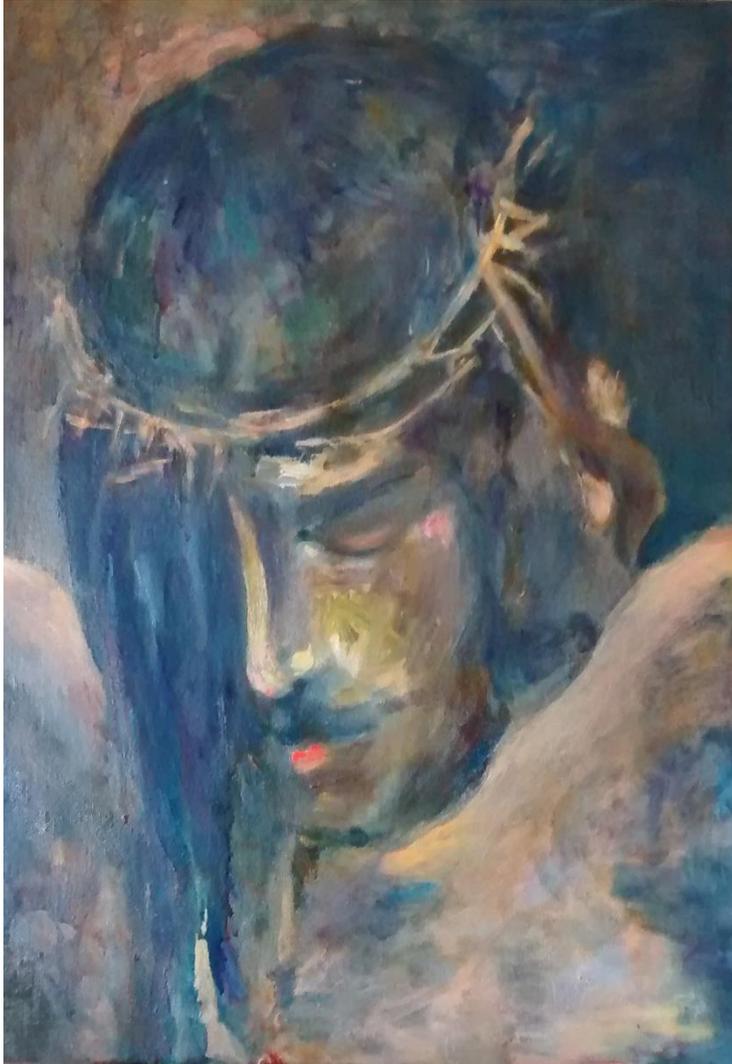
“Christian faith is no longer understood for what it is. It’s as if we must rediscover and explore the remote landscapes of faith by now obsolete, strange to current mentality.”

Elmar Salmann, *Presenza di Spirito*

“Many no longer know either how to decipher their own feelings: they don’t know if they love well or not, they don’t know what they are scared of, they don’t know what makes them euphoric at one moment and depressed at the next, they don’t even know if they believe or not. They ‘try out’ [provono] all these feelings (“experiences” they say, but more than anything they are “experiments” they do with themselves) and they are not capable of deciphering them.”

Pierangelo Sequeri

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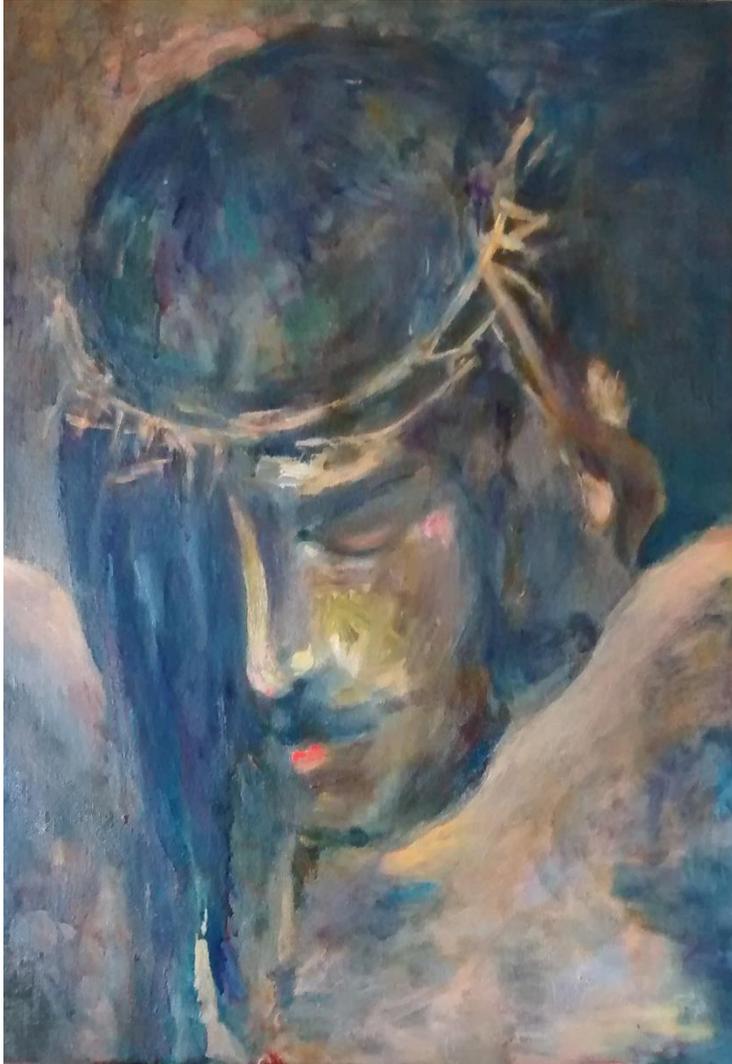


Time of the Epilogue

“It is my belief that the contract is broken for the first time, in any thorough and consequent sense, in European, Central European and Russian culture and speculative consciousness during the decades from the 1870s to the 1930s. ***It is this break of the covenant between the word and the world that constitutes one of the very few genuine revolutions of spirit in Western history and which defines modernity itself...*** My question is: what is the status of meaning after meaning, of communicative form, in the time of the ‘after – word’?”

George Steiner, *Real Presences*

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There are strengths

- Solidarity (even where isolation is a problem);
- Balancing reason with affectivity and a quest for “spirituality”
- From “isms” to humility;
- Value of friendship;
- Awareness of marginalised groups (women, race, sexual, disability...);
- Ecological sensibility
- Beauty
- Narrative – How do the people I teach make sense of their world? What are their worlds of interpretation?

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

“The religious dimension acknowledges the sacred in the everyday, the mystery of God and the immeasurable possibilities of human destiny. It **keeps the big questions of God, and the ‘why’ of life and living always to the forefront**, as it encourages students to grapple with who God is and how God acts in my life.

The Catholic Tradition and the life, death and resurrection of Christ **guide students to navigate the deep questions.**

Across all curriculum areas, the religious dimension invites dialogue, challenges worldviews and promotes critical reflection and discernment.”

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

Between certainty and certitude.... Navigating faith.

Truth is “stranger than it used to be...”

.

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language.”

Letters to a Young Poet, Rainer Maria Rilke

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

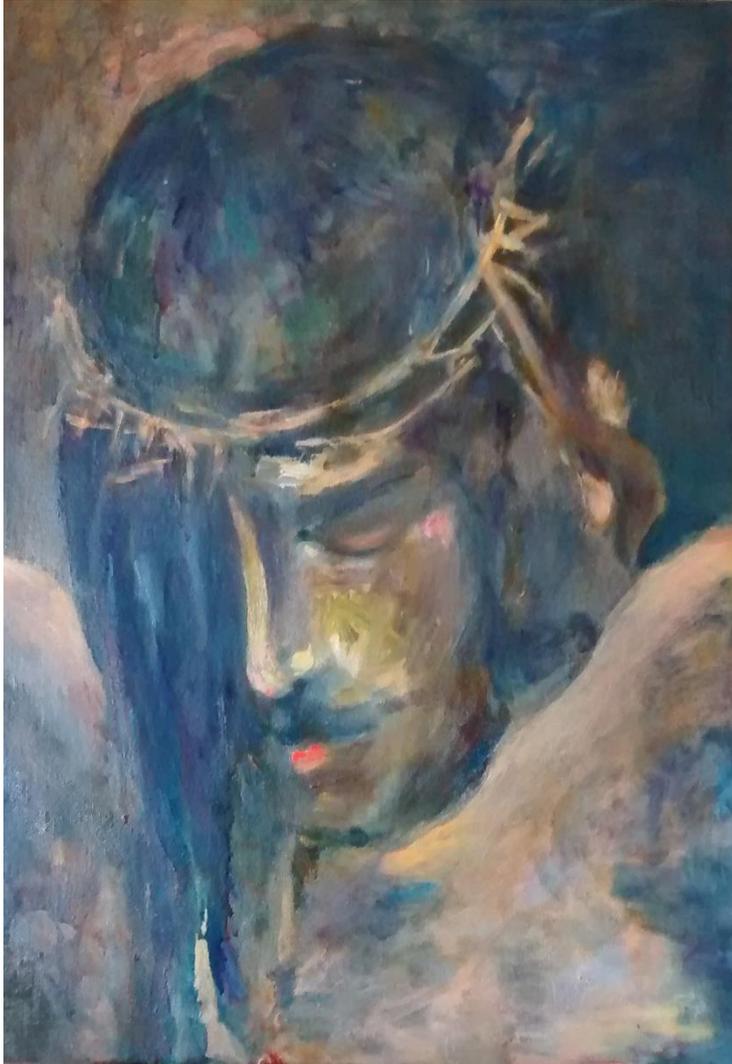
Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language.”

Letters to a Young Poet, Rainer Maria Rilke

Time is greater than space... “enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results... to accept the tension between fullness and limitation...initiating processes rather than possessing spaces.”

Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 222-223.

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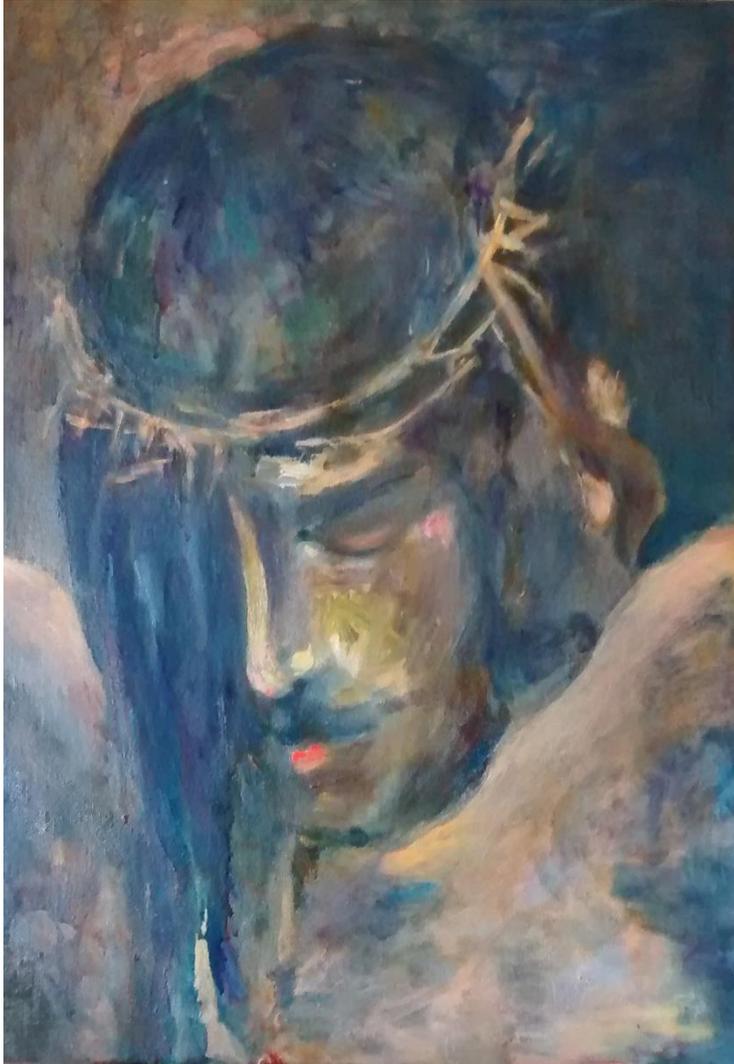


2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

Two theological examples:

- The fate of our beloved unbelievers and Rahner
- The validity of Scripture for women (Sandra Schneiders)

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.
 - The fate of our beloved unbelievers and Rahner “All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all people of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all, and since the ultimate vocation of humanity is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every human person the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.”

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

In my mind's eye, I can see a dream come true.

In my life, what I want to do.

Don't you sometimes feel, that you dream your life away,
Living for tomorrow but you lose today.

**Don't it make you wonder what you will discover when
you leave this world behind?**

Then will all your dreams come true?

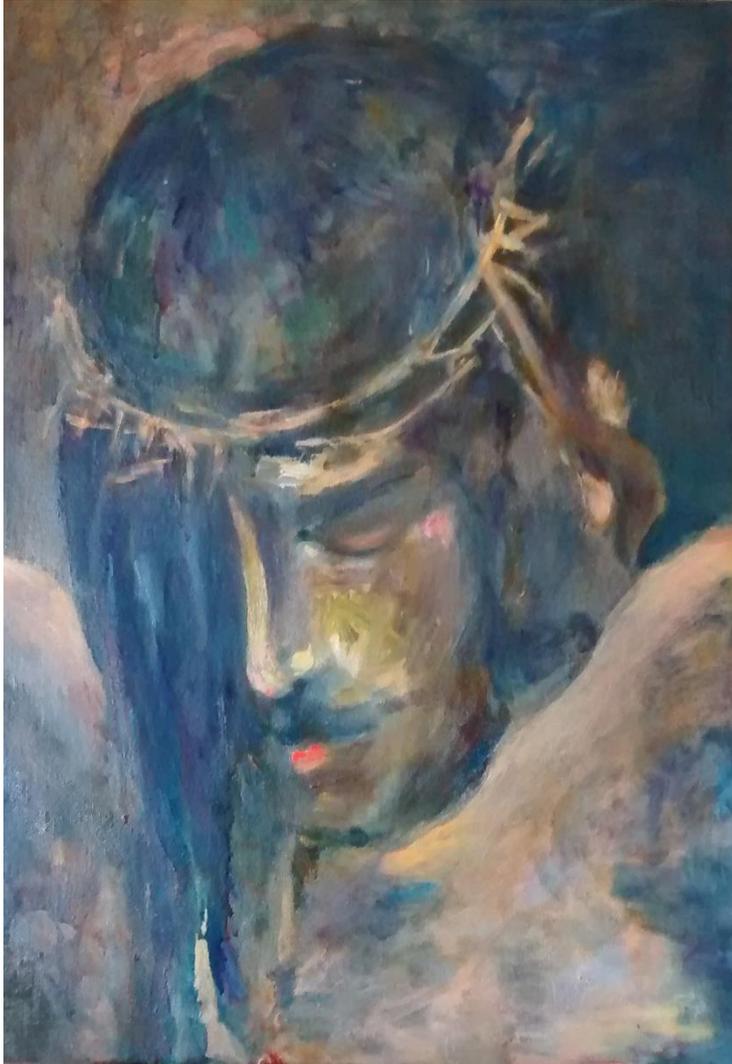
Or will the dreams that you believe in simply fade away?

People say to you

But I say to you

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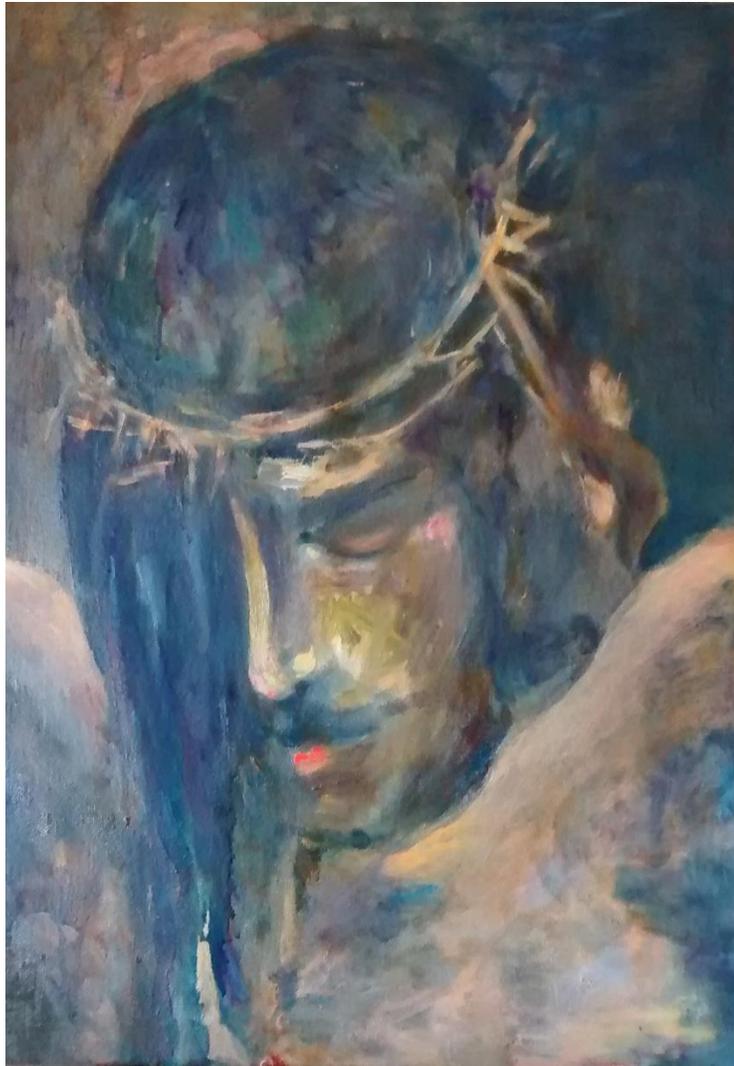


2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

It is also consistent with our theology of faith...

1. To believe God: *Credere Deum* of *fides quae*
2. To believe in God (trust): *Credere Deo fides qua creditur*, the faith by which we believe
3. *Credere in Deum*: to believe into God; practical

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2. *Questioning* as a sign of the times, and an essential aspect of our theology of faith.

Which does not mean it is easy...

“A gift”

Just when you seem to yourself
nothing but a flimsy web
of questions, you are given
the questions of others to hold
in the emptiness of your hands,
songbird eggs that can still hatch
if you keep them warm,
butterflies opening and closing themselves
in your cupped palms, trusting you not to injure
their scintillant fur, their dust.
You are given the questions of others
as if they were answers
to all you ask. Yes, perhaps
this gift is your answer.

by Denise Levertov

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3. *Beauty, the arts, and music*, in human life and Christian faith and their importance in for the lives and leadership of those we help educate.

As educators, you are aware that...

- There are different “patterns of understanding” or of “awareness/consciousness” by which we make sense of life...
- “Music has long been, and continues to be, the unwritten theology of those who lack or reject any formal creed.”
Steiner, *Real Presences*

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3. *Beauty, the arts, and music...*

Because it works differently ...

You are made in the image and likeness of God...loved and beautiful ...

“Beautiful, beautiful... you are.”

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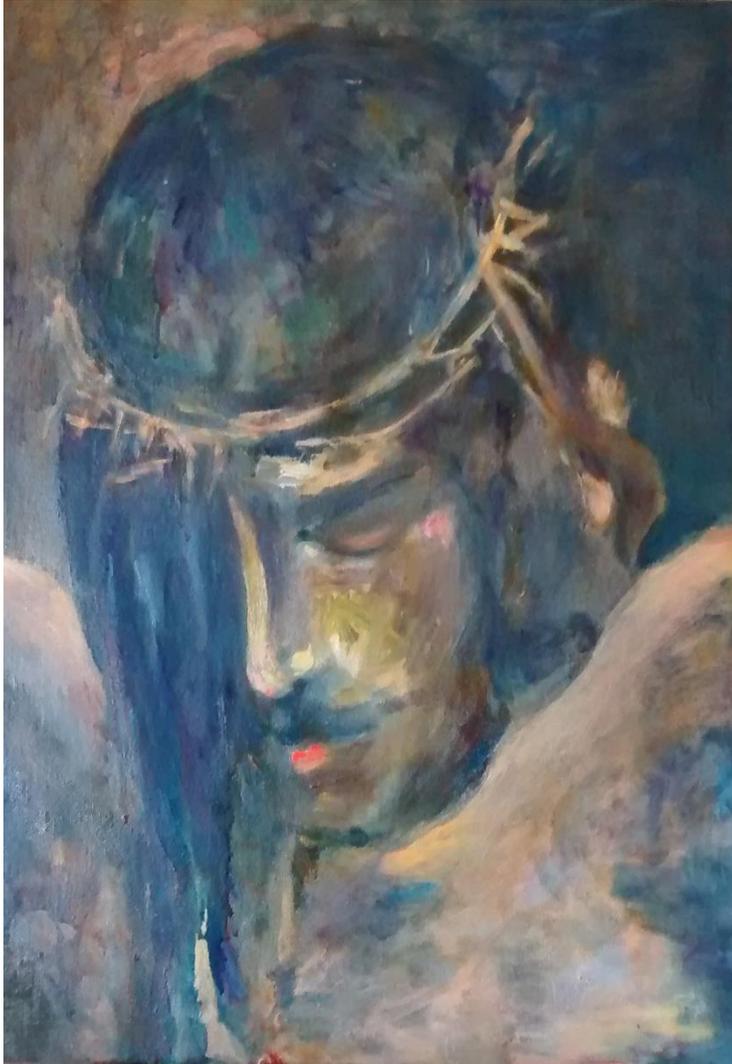
3. Beauty....

Beauty is the disinterested one, without which the ancient world refused to understand itself, a word which both imperceptibly and yet unmistakably has bid farewell to our new world, a world of interests, leaving it to its own avarice and sadness.

In a world without beauty [...] in a world which is perhaps not wholly without beauty, but which can no longer see it or reckon with it: in such a world the good also loses its attractiveness, the self-evidence of why it must be carried out.

Hans Urs von Balthasar

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3. *Beauty....*

“What kind of beauty will save the world?”

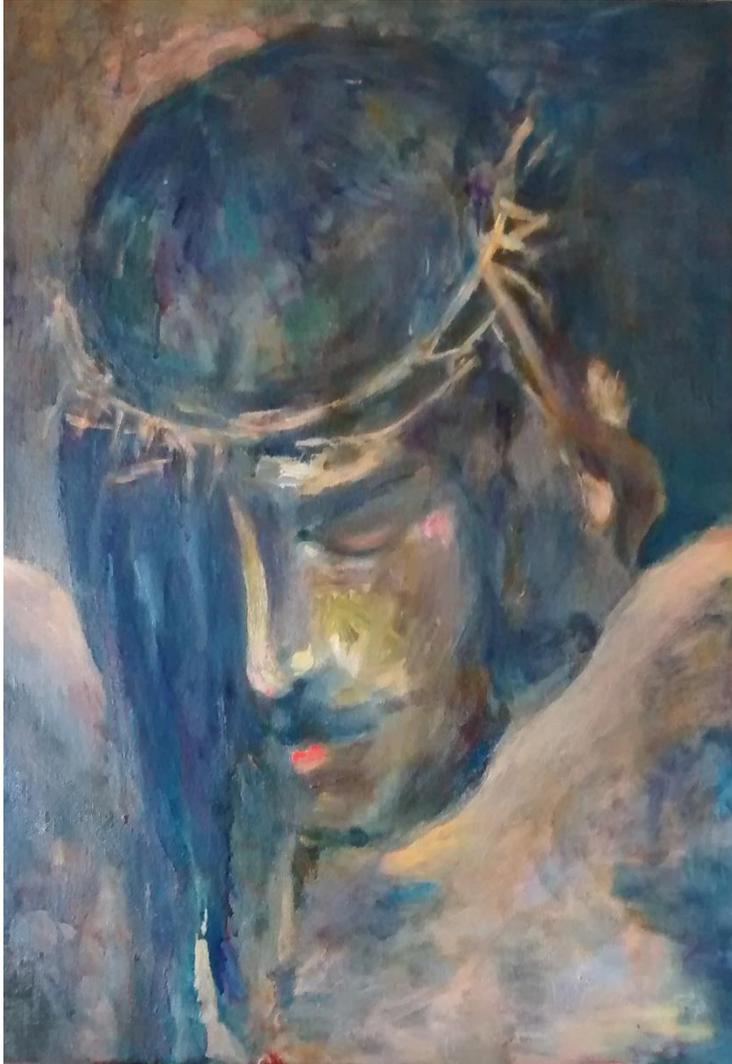
Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*

Beauty as God's glory manifested in Christ

From Whence the Creative Leaders of the Future?

Beauty's Freedom

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3. *Beauty, the Arts and Music*

Art is free. It may, or may not exist...

And as such it echoes something of who God is...

“I stand at the door and knock...”

Rev 3: 20

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3. *Beauty, the Arts and Music*

Revelation as Interruption

Metz/ Boeve

“What do you feel, what do you think of the possibilities of your life, of the alternate shapes of being which are implicit in your experience of me, in our encounter? [...] The encounter with the aesthetic is ...of the most ‘ingressive’, transformative summons available to human experiencing. The shorthand image is that of the Annunciation, of a “terrible beauty” or gravity breaking into the small house of our cautionary being [...] the house is no longer habitable in quite the same way as before.”

Steiner, *Real Presences*

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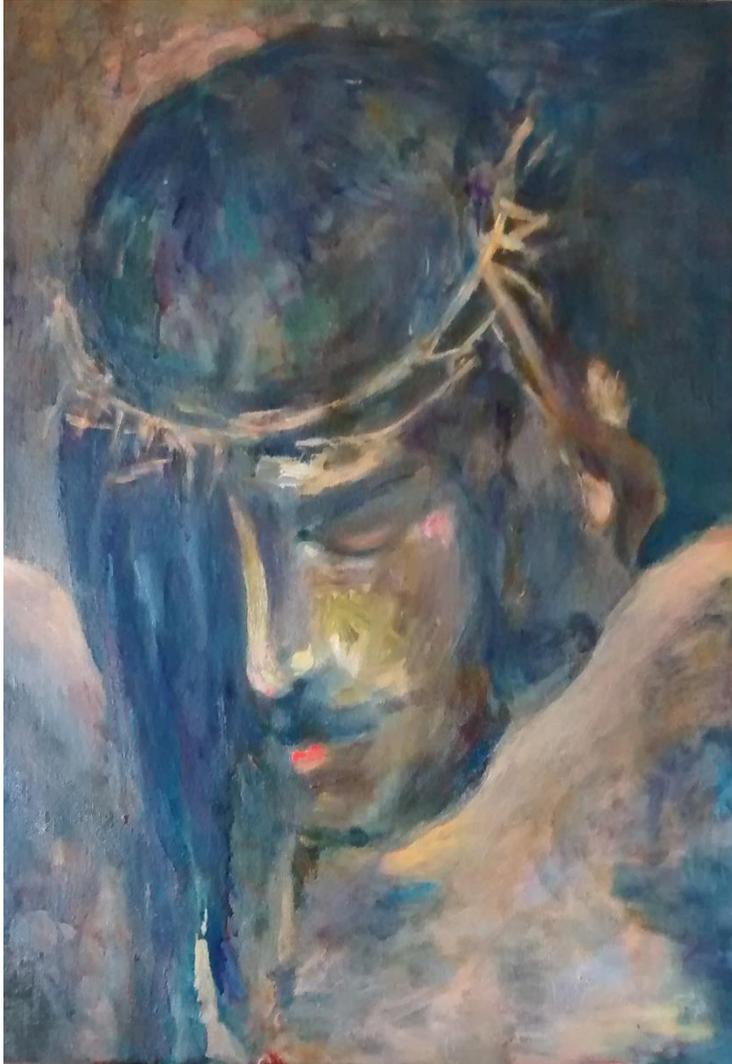


3. *Beauty, the Arts and Music*

After the grain of wheat has died
After loving you with every living breath...
Every moving light recalls your name
After all is said and done,
It is in losing You have won
It is in giving we receive,
In being broken we perceive your wholeness
Holy, You are holy!
Glory to You!

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3. *Beauty....*

It's a strange life... Are you alright?

Sorry may be hard to say... til you try goodbye..

Take your time! You gotta slow right down to get things right
Be yourself! You're the only one who can work that out!

No one in a hundred thousand years has ever looked like you
No one in this universe can do the things that you might do
One life... Can't buy...extra time; Heartbeat, hold me near!

Close your eyes...

Life is too real to not imagine what it's meant to be...
Life is way too short to waste on anything except your dreams

Strange life... we try... to walk in style; Beauty, help me feel!

Take your time....

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