



Jerzy Szymik

University of Silesia in Katowice
ORCID: 0000-0002-1065-5647

The Son as a Torn Veil: The Mysteries of Jesus According to J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI¹

Abstract: J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI relates theological cognition to following Jesus and going in His footsteps. He emphasizes the inseparable, mutual, servant-like relationship between academic theology and Christian *praxis*, Christological hermeneutics with the existential basis of faith. Intellectual and spiritual understanding of the mystery of Jesus depends on intimacy with Him and grows on this path: only the Son can show the Father because he knows Him in a way that defines his existence as the Son. The eternal inter-Trinitarian conversation with the Father – the prayer of the Son, His sonship-obedience – finds its corporal expression in history, and the humanity of Jesus, whose culmination is the cross, remains His prayer. The earthly life, and finally the Passover of Jesus, introduces into the human, vague concept of God the experience of the loving Father, thus making the course of history definitively meaningful and fulfilling, and the faith legitimate. Ratzinger defends Christology as a conceptual understanding of the truth of the Gospel, the depth and integrity of which Christology guards and to which it refers. Disregarding in faith the cognitive achievements and heritage of systematic theology leads to depriving faith of its most important contents, without which it starts to look in the dark for justifications which are subjective as well as fuzzy.

Keywords: Christology, fundamental theology, the theology of J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI, Incarnation, God's sonship

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In one of the most shocking and penetrating sentences of his theological thought Ratzinger writes: *Abba* können wir nur zusammen mit Christus sagen, nur in der Gemeinschaft mit ihm wird der Grund der Welt so erkennbar, dass er zustimmungsfähig wird. Ohne den Sohn bleibt der Vater zweideutig und unheimlich [...]”² (We can only say *Abba* together with Christ, only in community with Him the foundation of the world becomes recognizable in such a way that it can be approved. Without the Son, the Father remains ambiguous and incredible [terrible, terror-inspiring]” – Author’s translation). It is very accurate, isn’t it? Right in the middle of the target of the spiritual and intellectual struggles, in the point where the truth of the Revelation seeks a place in the midst of the darkness of what we may call a problem with God; a problem not just contemporary, but contemporary in particular.

Therefore, “putting Christ on the sidelines” or even “putting Him outside the margin,” which John Paul II accuses the European Enlightenment and its followers of,³ results in the rejection of religion and, as a result, a permanent experience of fear and a sense of horror. We are concerned, then, with the very essence of Revelation and the essence of the present day – and thus the essence of the problems of fundamental theology, which constitutes the core of this article. Which is that only He, the Son – Incarnate, Crucified and Risen – shows the true God who turns out to be the Father, *Abba*. Only the curtain of the tabernacle, unveiled in incarnation and torn during the Passover, (from top to bottom, through the middle, into two – Matt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45) – the Son – allows us to recognize in this unveiling/tearing the truth about God who reveals himself as the almighty love of our common Father. Without Christ it is impossible.

He is enough for us, we do not need anyone else or anything else. The Apostle Philip represents us all, of yesterday, today and tomorrow: “Lord, show us the Father, and that is enough for us.” “Philip, whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. No one comes to the

² J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum. Bekenntnis – Taufe – Nachfolge*, 812 [GS 4].

³ John Paul II [Jan Paweł II], *Dekalog*, 326.

Father except through Me” (cf. Jn 14:6–11). That is enough for us. We see the Father in the Son and that is enough for us.

1. The Method

The theological treatise on the mysteries of Jesus’ life has a long and rich history. It was given the most classic form by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*.⁴ As Ratzinger wrote in the early 1970s in the *God of Jesus Christ*, “the devotion of the Middle Ages and early modernity in the reflection on the humanity of Jesus was keen [...] to speak of ‘the mysteries of Jesus’ life’, having in mind the individual phases of Jesus’ earthly historical path”⁵ – childhood, Nazareth, hidden and public life, passion, death and resurrection. Alois Grillmeier in *Das Mysterium und die Mysterien*⁶ presents the most important presentations of this issue. At the end of the 1980s, I myself was a student of a lecture under such a title – “Mysteries of Jesus’ earthly life” – given by Archbishop Professor Alfons Nossol at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Lublin. As I remember, Nossol discussed and interpreted in the key of the “mysteries of Jesus’ earthly life” fragments from Karl Rahner’s *Schriften zur Theologie*. In his texts Ratzinger mentions several times that this subject of Christological mysteries is close to him, and, as an example, the second volume of *Jesus of Nazareth* “shows quite a few affinities with this treatise.”⁷ He points out, however, that his Christological texts are created in a specific historical-spiritual context (that is: they are immersed in contemporary issues and evangelization involvement *hic et nunc*) and, as a consequence, have a different orientation and structure in comparison with the mentioned classics.⁸

Any theological reflection on the Christological mysteries in the writings of J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI is always consistently subordinate to a methodology that could be called a method of

⁴ *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 27–59 (cf. J. Ratzinger, *Jesus von Nazareth. Beiträge zur Christologie*, 419 [GS 6/1]).

⁵ J. Ratzinger, *Jesus von Nazareth. Beiträge zur Christologie*, 795 [GS 6/2].

⁶ A. Grillmeier, *Mit ihm und in ihm*, 716–735.

⁷ GS 6/1, 419.

⁸ *Ibid.*

accompanying and imitation. Ratzinger points to the absolute necessity of the existential following of Jesus in order to be able to understand and express anything truly theo-logical from His words and actions, from the mystery of His life and death, His resurrection and His person. In short, the retired Pope believes that it takes an *imitatio Christi* to get to know – whether it is the Mystery of Jesus or the individual mysteries of his earthly life: “The story of the disciples going to Emmaus (Lk 24:13–35) describes the journey we have travelled together, the conversation we have had together and the search we have had together as a process in which, by accompanying Jesus on the way, the darkness of the soul slowly brightens.”⁹ This is an evangelical cognitive paradigm. It is a process of searching and maturing – with Him, at His side, in Him – which allows us to understand. This element of theological hermeneutics, especially in relation to the Mystery of Jesus Christ, is crucial for J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI.

The “darkness of the soul” (*die Dunkelheit der Seele*), referred to in the previous sentence, can be understood not only as suffering, but also as ignorance, or more precisely painful ignorance, suffering born of ignorance of what is most important. The solution is a bond with Him, following the Master. Then – with Him, at His side, in Him – the word and events (the Word of God and the events of salvation history, also personal) explain and illuminate each other, acquire a sense which, when recognized as truth, embraces existence – illuminates the darkness of the soul. In Christ, the words and events, the mysteries of Jesus and of the cognizing person become reality, they become understandable in the spiritual, intellectual and, above all, salvific dimension. This is the process of learning Christ, and thus of oneself, which the Church continues at every stage of her own history and the history of the world.¹⁰

The unique role – as far as methodology is concerned – belongs in this process to the Mystery of the Cross (the cross of Jesus and the cross of His disciples). The correct hermeneutics of the mysteries of Jesus’ life and the life of His disciple(s) cannot be opened without the key of the Cross. This pattern of interpretation is repeated several

⁹ GS 6/1, 568.

¹⁰ Cf. GS 6/1, 568–569.

dozen times in the New Testament: each time Jesus must help others to understand anew that the power of God is different, that the Messiah must himself enter the glory through suffering and introduce others into it.¹¹ Not force, not power, not political victory (“It will never come upon you” – Matt 16:22), but humbling oneself as deep down as to the cross, as the hour of the Glory of God and Jesus, the humility of the disciple/follower instead of the heroism of the hero, the learning to walk in God’s ways which are not ours (Is 55:9) – this is, according to J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI, not so much a devotional as a methodological necessity of the correct Christology.

2. Content

As soon as in J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI’s monographs, treatises, essays or homilies the issue of individual mysteries of the earthly life of Jesus or, in general, the humanity of the Son of God or, more broadly, *Mysterium Incarnationis* as a theological and ontological phenomenon appears, then the title “Son” turns out to be the key concept. The Christological reflection of the author of the trilogy Jesus of Nazareth heads – with its multiplicity of paths – for the following conclusion: The “Son” is a title that summarises the essence of the event (person and work) of Jesus Christ, and the starting point of the theology of sonship is Incarnation as the historical-salvific, landmark centre of Christian faith. He writes so:

“The article on the incarnation of God is the most important sentence of the Christian Creed. It is the focus of the thought of theologians of all ages who, in its mirror, try to understand something of the mystery of God and man.”¹² The incarnation is understood by Ratzinger – after Psalm 40 and its interpretation in the tenth chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews – as a prayerful and an intra-Trinitarian process, where prayer is understood broadly, as the supreme reality and involvement of the whole existence, initiated by a conversation and consisting in self-giving: “Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of

¹¹ Cf. GS 6/1, 362–375.

¹² GS 6/2, 794.

the book.” (Ps 40; Heb 10:7).¹³ The Son’s obedience is incarnated here, which in this incarnational, “supreme fulfillment is no longer just listening [obedience, author’s note], but incarnation. The theology of the word becomes the theology of incarnation.”¹⁴ The body of Jesus, the humanity of Jesus – “is the fruit of obedience and the responsive love of the Son.”¹⁵ The Son’s humanity is therefore, in a way, His prayer – made concrete, translated into the reality of existence. This is the deepest mystery of Jesus’ life, the culmination of all mysteries – the Son of the Father.

Let us stress it, because the issue is crucial for the Christology of J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI at all stages of its development: “the most important theological title of Jesus is ‘Son’.”¹⁶ Everything in Him: the person, the direction of His life, His fundamental attitude, His goal – is a reference to the Other, whom he calls the Father, *Abba*.¹⁷ Childhood – including being a child as a way of life and a model of existence – occupies such a privileged place in His teaching because it is most closely linked “to his most personal, inner mystery – to his sonship.”¹⁸ The Gospel according to St. Luke describes this mystery through the prism of Jesus’ prayer, which for the Author of *Behold the Pierced One* is the central Christological category, essential for the person of the Son in both its natures: “what Chalcedon expressed in a formula taken from the Greek ontology, in Luke’s case is said by means of an entirely personal category, based on the historical earthly experience of Jesus; in substance, it is completely in line with the Chalcedonian formula.”¹⁹ The content of His sonship and the very glory of the Son is “to immerse the depths of his existence in conversation with the Father.”²⁰ That is precisely why the interruption of this conversation – “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46; Mk 15:34) – is the proper cause of His death and the essence of its

¹³ GS 6/2, 792.

¹⁴ GS 6/2, 793.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ GS 6/2, 797.

¹⁷ Cf. GS 4, 220–224.

¹⁸ GS 6/2, 797.

¹⁹ GS 6/2, 804.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

atrocious. This is also why the deepest reason for His resurrection lies in this conversation: His humanity is immersed in the Trinitarian dialogue of eternal love which, on that side of death, begins anew and reaches its fullness.²¹ The term “Son,” rooted in the prayer of Jesus, is not an image, a comparison, a metaphor – it is a verbal reality, it describes the truth of His very self, the very irreducible core of His Person: The Son is a Son for real; it is a reality as such and not just a lofty thought trying to express it. This truth – guarded by the Nicene and Chalcedonian *homoousios* – is accepted by Christians with all the literal simplicity, which for this reason contains a shocking greatness, moving and exceeding human comprehension.²² But not the ability to imitate – as we will explain in a moment.

In this way we find ourselves in the very heart of the Christological disputes of the last two centuries. For, if the experience of being a Son is the quintessence of the earthly mysteries of Jesus, if the content of Jesus’ life consists in His remaining in a bond and exchange with the Father, thanks to which He does not only receive His way, but also Himself (!), then it means that this relationship *de facto* exhausts Him (and everything else is only a more or less important addition).²³ This also means that Jesus is neither a revolutionary, nor a traditionalist, nor a liberal, nor a communist, nor a non-conformist, nor a feminist, nor an ecologist, nor a conservative, nor a “God’s spokesman,” nor a “people’s liberator” – He is a Son. As Ratzinger brilliantly put it in the formula written in 1973, “both His freedom and His austerity flow from the same centre: from prayerful communion with the Father, from the personal knowledge of God, on the basis of which Jesus separates the centre and the periphery, the will of God and the works of man.”²⁴ He does this as the Son. And this is what he teaches as the Son: sonship, relationship with the Father and the power of faith that flows from it, from which everything else follows. Being a Son is an

²¹ GS 6/2, 804, 805.

²² GS 6/2, 810–812.

²³ J. Ratzinger, *Glaube in Schrift und Tradition. Zur Theologischen Prinzipienlehre. Erster Teilband*, 487.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 493.

expression of the total “relativity” of His existence”²⁵ – a complete, yet free, relationship with the Father.

Sonship is expressed in particular as total obedience to the Father, for being total, it is the full acceptance of one’s own existence and the whole path (i.e. history) from the hands of the Father, and is the most characteristic feature of the Son as a Son.²⁶ The Son’s humanity in such obedience to the Father “feeds on the fact that He lives from the Father, and thus becomes open and free.” There is an anthropological lesson for us to be learned from this intra-Trinitarian theology: human openness and freedom are directly proportional to submission to God the Father. Of course, neither Jesus’ nor our obedience removes us from the way of the Cross; on the contrary, Jesus’ humanity, in its unconditional readiness to give Himself, finds its culmination ultimately in the Cross.²⁷ “Not my will, but Yours, be done” (Lk 22:42b).

3. Implications

What are the implications of the fact that Jesus is the Son of the Father? What are the consequences of such Christology, of this focusing of the reflection on Jesus’ mysteries around His sonship?

3.1. Cosmic Christology

Some of the conclusions have already been mentioned above, and they mainly concerned filial (childlike) Christian spirituality (which will be mentioned again in greater detail). Here, let us draw attention to one of the metachristological implications (although in its existential effects it is undoubtedly related to spirituality and ethos), which is most prominently conveyed by Pauline cosmic Christology and, consequently, the Christology of cosmos. Namely, from the Christocentric perspective of the Christian faith, with the (f)act of the Incarnation, history has entered its final phase, and Jesus Christ marks the fundamental caesura in the history of the universe as its

²⁵ GS 4, 221.

²⁶ J. Ratzinger, *Im Gespräch mit der Zeit. Dritter Teilband*, 1008.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 996.

starting point and goal – He, the *anakephalaiosis tōn pantōn*, the head-making of everything, that is, of what is in the heavens and what is on earth (cf. Eph 1:10). Directing ourselves towards Him, we come to the end, to the fulfilment.²⁸ But who is He and what does it mean to be directed towards Him? Well, it is He who is the Son, and to turn to Him is to be a son in the Son. The path is clearly marked out – it leads through the Son to the Father. He is the Destination Point – He is the Head as the Son.

In this sense, salvation has a cosmic dimension, a Christological structure, which precisely means filial, “heading-for-the-Father” – the Son and the whole reality is a “child of the Father.” In this sense, we are talking about the cosmic dimension of Christocentric soteriology (Christ’s salvation) which goes beyond the strictly “ecclesiastical province.” *Ecclesia ab Abel*, the whole, all-embracing, has a Christological structure, answers the question of every man of all times and places, for the Son is the Son of the Father of all, the Father of all things. History lives in its entirety “with the holiness of that narrow streak of light which begins with Abraham, and in Christ appears as the true light for everyone”²⁹ and for everybody, for everything. For it is the light radiating from the Son of the Father of all and everything.

3.2. Visibility of the Invisible

However, the most important result of the revelation of the Son, of His Incarnation and of the Paschal tear is what was mentioned in the starting point of our reflection: the visibility of the Invisible – the Father thanks to the Son, through the Son, through the Paschal tear of the Son – the curtain. “Whoever has seen me has also seen the Father” (J 14:9b). And then he has seen that the basis of the world is the Father, that God is love.

Already St. Irenaeus, one of the founders of Christian theology, in *Adversus haereses*, said that the Son “is the Visibility of the Invisible and that this paradox, together with the simultaneity

²⁸ J. Ratzinger, *Im Gespräch mit der Zeit. Erster Teilband*, 453.

²⁹ J. Ratzinger, *Zur Lehre des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils. Formulierung, Vermittlung, Deutung. Erster Teilband*, 172–173.

expressed in it, remains the *summum* of Revelation.”³⁰ This is the quintessence of our reflections, the central mystery of all Jesus’ mysteries: “In him the curtain of the temple was indeed torn and the inner reality of God became visible. Because then God, one and only, becomes visible not as a monad, but as a Trinity.”³¹

Therefore whoever sees the Crucified One (the torn Son), also sees the Father, and together with Him the whole Trinitarian mystery.³² Seeing the Crucified One is possible thanks to the mysteries of Incarnation, Passion and Death, but there is, obviously the necessary Christ’s Resurrection as the leaven and at the same time fullness of the new creation; Christ’s Resurrection which gives the mortals the access to the Father.³³ By the power of these Christ’s mysteries we enter “behind the curtain” (Heb 6:19), which we would not be able to draw aside ourselves. It is Him, the Arch-Priest Jesus, who enters there for us, but also with us, allowing to be torn for us. Also our hope pervades through the torn curtain – for we see who our God is and what He is like – becoming a safe and strong anchor of the soul (cf. Heb 6:19–20).

3.3. Sons in the Son

By revealing the Father to us, Jesus – the Son draws us to participate in His sonship.

Because by revealing His and our Father to us, he reveals the truth about us: we are children of a loving Father. I – “Just This and No Other Self” – in all my uniqueness and freedom, I am a child, I do not come from myself. My life is not an “obscene wandering of

³⁰ H.U. von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik*, Vol. 1: *Schau der Gestalt*, 291: “für wen der Vater im Sohn noch nicht sichtbar genug ist, der hat nicht hinreichend bedacht, dass der Vater sich im Sohn geoffenbart hat, *dem Ausstrahl seiner Herrlichkeit und Ausbild seines Wesens*, dem *Gesamterben* nicht nur seiner geschichtlichen Offenbarung, sondern seines *Weltalls* (Hebr 1,3). Er hat nicht genügend bedacht, dass der Vater nach diesem Wort, das das Alpha und Omega ist, der Welt nichts weiter mitzuteilen hat, weder in dieser noch in der künftigen Weltzeit.” *Ibid.*, 290–291.

³¹ GS 6/2, 981.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ H.U. von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik*, Vol. 1: *Schau der Gestalt*, 628.

coal” (as Friedrich Reinhold Duerrenmatt thinks) or “the eternal repetition of nothingness and indifference” (as Samuel Beckett writes; to stay with the most well-known playwrights of the 20th century), and my birth is not guilt, but grace, a gift from the Father. “It is good to live, even if I do not always notice it. I am wanted, I am not a child of chance and necessity, but of will and freedom.”³⁴ Of good will and good freedom. I am, because Love wanted me. *Amor ergo sum*. My life has a meaning and a mission. It is not hopelessly situated in the devastating conflagration of liberty, but is subjected – through love – to the criterion of truth.³⁵

The resemblance to the Father (God) is not self-sufficiency (autonomy, emancipation, etc.), but – these are Ratzinger’s brilliant phrases – “we become God by participating in the way of the Son’s existence.”³⁶ And then Ratzinger explains: “We become God when we become a ‘child’ – a Son; this means that we become Him by joining Jesus’ dialogue with the Father and by that dialogue with the Father penetrating the fabric of our daily life: ‘You created my body’.”³⁷ What else does that mean? Jesus is the Son, that is to say, the One Who Prays, is constantly open to the Father, living from the depths of the Father – “The Son does not plan [...] his own existence, but assumes it from a deep dialogue with God.”³⁸ This relationship is absolutely central to His essence and existence, person and work, even when it means struggling (“Father, if you wish, take this cup from me! But not my will, but yours!” – Lk 22:42). This is “participation in the way of the Son’s being.” So it is – addressed to each of Jesus’ disciples, to the baptised person – an ec-static life project, where the focus of life is beyond us: in the Father. But if the fruit of *amor* is to be *amor*, then “without going beyond oneself and without self-giving, there is no true love [...] and only where one risks giving oneself to another,” where this life is given to another, “it is where great love can develop.”³⁹

³⁴ GS 4, 807.

³⁵ Cf. GS 4, 807–808.

³⁶ GS 6/2, 794.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ GS 4, 482.

³⁹ GS 4, 483.

4. The Fundamental Task of Theology

What does this mean for theology, also (and perhaps especially) for fundamental theology? The fundamental mystery of Jesus is the mystery of being the Son. What does it mean for contemporary theology?

J. Ratzinger-Benedict XVI proposes something very simple and obvious to theology in the light of these theses: a return to the Son. A return to trust in the Church's interpretation of the New Testament, an interpretation expressed in the Christological dogma. A return to the true Jesus of the true Gospel, this "truly coherent figure that is not our invention," which is not only a "reflection of ourselves" and of the (post)modern ideas that are close to us, but which breaks our walls and "leads us to something greater."⁴⁰

The true Jesus Christ is the Son. Not someone else; all His other titles are secondary to being the Son, and they take their fundamental value and proper meaning from his Sonship. Without Him, they can be lead into error (heresy, which almost always involves shifting the focus from the essence to the periphery). In his presentation of his book *Unterwegs zu Jesus Christus* in Regensburg on 16 January 2004, Ratzinger gives examples of titles that draw theology to the periphery, referring to the great figures of theology in the German-speaking area: a great moralist, individualist and liberal, critical of institutions (Adolf von Harnack); an existentialist anticipating Heidegger's philosophy (Rudolf Bultmann); a man who competently shapes the future according to the Marxist idea of hope (Jürgen Moltmann inspired by Ernst Bloch). And he comments tartly: "one's own views are presented as a true story."⁴¹

The evangelical Jesus, writes Ratzinger in the preface to *Unterwegs zu Jesus Christus*, "cannot be reduced to the level of a gentle friend of the people, [...] who requires nothing, never punishes everyone and accepts everything, who only confirms us in everything," and who must be cut into a format that does not in any way question our image of the world, which is the only correct one."⁴²

⁴⁰ GS 6/2, 1097.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² GS 6/2, 1088.

And he stresses with force: “Jesus who agrees with everything and everyone, Jesus without his holy anger, without the severity of truth and true love – such a Jesus is not the true Jesus as presented in Scripture, but a caricature worthy of pity.”⁴³ And he reminds us in many places his theological work: “The freedom of Jesus is not the freedom of a liberal. It is the freedom of the Son, and thus the freedom of a truly devout man,”⁴⁴ as a twelve-year-old “in the Temple, he finds himself not as a rebel against his parents, but as the one who is truly obedient, with the same obedience that leads to the Cross and Resurrection.”⁴⁵ And we must not “spontaneously read” His supposedly “modern-liberal position” from words about the Sabbath, because he is not a modern guru setting the rules of the game in his own way, but a Pra-Word of God having authority.⁴⁶ He does not cross out the Law as a rebel or liberal, but fulfils it as a “prophetic Torah interpreter”⁴⁷ and all his activity comes not from anarchy but from prayer.⁴⁸

The caricatures of Jesus lead to a worrying regress of the meaning of Christology,⁴⁹ which then, with its indeterminacy, can be filled with any content as long as it is fashionable and politically correct. Yet, the significance of Christology – as a theological sub-discipline being a key for understanding and communicating the truth about God, the truth available only in a torn Son – is unquestionable. It is also the inalienable foundation of anthropology: the deeper into the Christological truth, the closer to the questions, anguish and suffering of modern man, who, by asking and seeking God in the darkness of his age and his own life, will find solace only as a son, as a child of the Father.

⁴³ GS 4, 459.

⁴⁴ GS 6/1, 122.

⁴⁵ GS 6/1, 124.

⁴⁶ GS 6/1, 390.

⁴⁷ GS 6/1, 235.

⁴⁸ GS 6/1, 240–241, 152.

⁴⁹ GS 6/2, 1088.

Therefore theology, in fact, takes part here in the war for hope. The 50-year-old Ratzinger put it this way during a broadcast on Bavarian radio in 1977: “It would be something disastrous if theology betrayed its highest task, which is to maintain open-mindedness, and by being too submissive to what is supposedly scientific, would limit the observation space. Theology should be *the* theory that awakes in us the criticism towards all kinds of superstitions, including scientific superstitions. It should help us to distinguish the structure of the mystery [*Mysterium Jesu Christi!* – author’s note] from the structure of our fantasies and keep us open to Someone greater, who is looking for us to lead us towards himself and thus towards us.”⁵⁰

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⁵⁰ J. Ratzinger, *Glaube in Schrift und Tradition. Zur Theologischen Prinzipienlehre. Zweiter Teilband*, 768.

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