

Handout #1

The Pattern of Kenosis, Part I

⁵Cultivate this mind-set {see 2:1-4} in your community, which is in fact a community in Christ Jesus, who, ⁶**Although** being in the form of God, **did not** consider his {or this} equality with God as something to be exploited for his own advantage, ⁷**but** emptied himself, by taking the form of a slave, that is, by being born in the likeness of human beings. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on a cross. [Phil 2:5-8, translation by Michael Gorman]

PATTERN OF KENOSIS	X	Y	Z
	<i>...although [Status]</i>	<i>...not [Selfishness]</i>	<i>...but [selflessness]</i>
Philippians 2:6-8	<i>...although [in the form of God] 2:6a</i>	<i>...did not [exploit equality with God] 2:6b</i>	<i>...but [emptied himself... humbled himself...] 2:7-8</i>

The *preexistent Christ's* self-emptying, self lowering incarnation/enslavement finds a parallel action in the *human Jesus's* self-humbling, self-lowering obedience to the point of death by crucifixion. *The fundamental character of the actions taken by the "form of God" and the "form of a slave," by the preexistent one and the incarnate one, is the same: downward movement.* [Gorman, p. 17]

This downward movement is one of love descending... it is the movement of grace and help coming from on high to those who dwell in the valleys of death, despair, struggle, loss and darkness. It is why we look to the mountains, from whence shall come our help. It is the movement of the dawn from on high breaking upon us, it is the motion of heaven's justice leaning down to kiss the earth.

This downward movement is that of a mother who stoops down to pick up her child who has fallen and bruised her knee.

This downward movement is one of humility and compassion. It is the movement of God descending so that humanity may rise. It is the movement from power and prestige (status) to humility and weakness (selflessness)... and this movement not only reveals to us what divinity is, but it is also a movement or gesture which itself is defined by divinity.

"In the Mediterranean world, the cultural obligation upon everybody is to maintain one's status and do nothing to jeopardize or lessen it." John J. Pilch, *The Cultural World of Jesus*, Sunday by Sunday, Cycle B, p. 161

... two fundamentally different senses about what is being conceded [in Phil 2:6] are possible. One implies that Christ's condescension was a *contravention* of his true identity, while the other implies that it was the *embodiment* of his true identity. Option one would be something like this:

- Although Messiah Jesus was in the form of God, a status that means the exercise of power, he acted *out of* character--in a shockingly ungodlike manner, contrary in fact to true (imperial) divinity-- when he emptied and humbled himself.

In this reading, Christ, in effect, renounced his deity, or at least some aspect of it. He acted abnormally for one possessing equality with God. That is, the form of God that Christ had (and thus also essential divinity) is in fact one that would never condescend to the humiliation of incarnation and crucifixion. To do so would in fact be ungodlike.

Option two would be something like the following:

- Although Messiah Jesus was in the form of God, a status people assume means the exercise of power, he acted *in* character--in a shockingly ungodlike manner according to normal but misguided human perceptions of divinity, contrary to what we would expect

but, in fact, in accord with true divinity-- when he emptied and humbled himself.

Mark Dean, OMI



To the left is a sculpture of the Mayan god known as the Descending or Diving God, who leapt down from the heavens to bring the gift of maize or corn to the people.

Christ, who is the Bread of Life and the Bread from Heaven, and who, like the grain of wheat which must first fall to the ground and die, so that he might rise to abundant life, is for us our Descending or Diving God.

Handout #2

The Pattern of Kenosis, Part II

Texts from **Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology**, by Michael J. Gorman. (C) 2009 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:

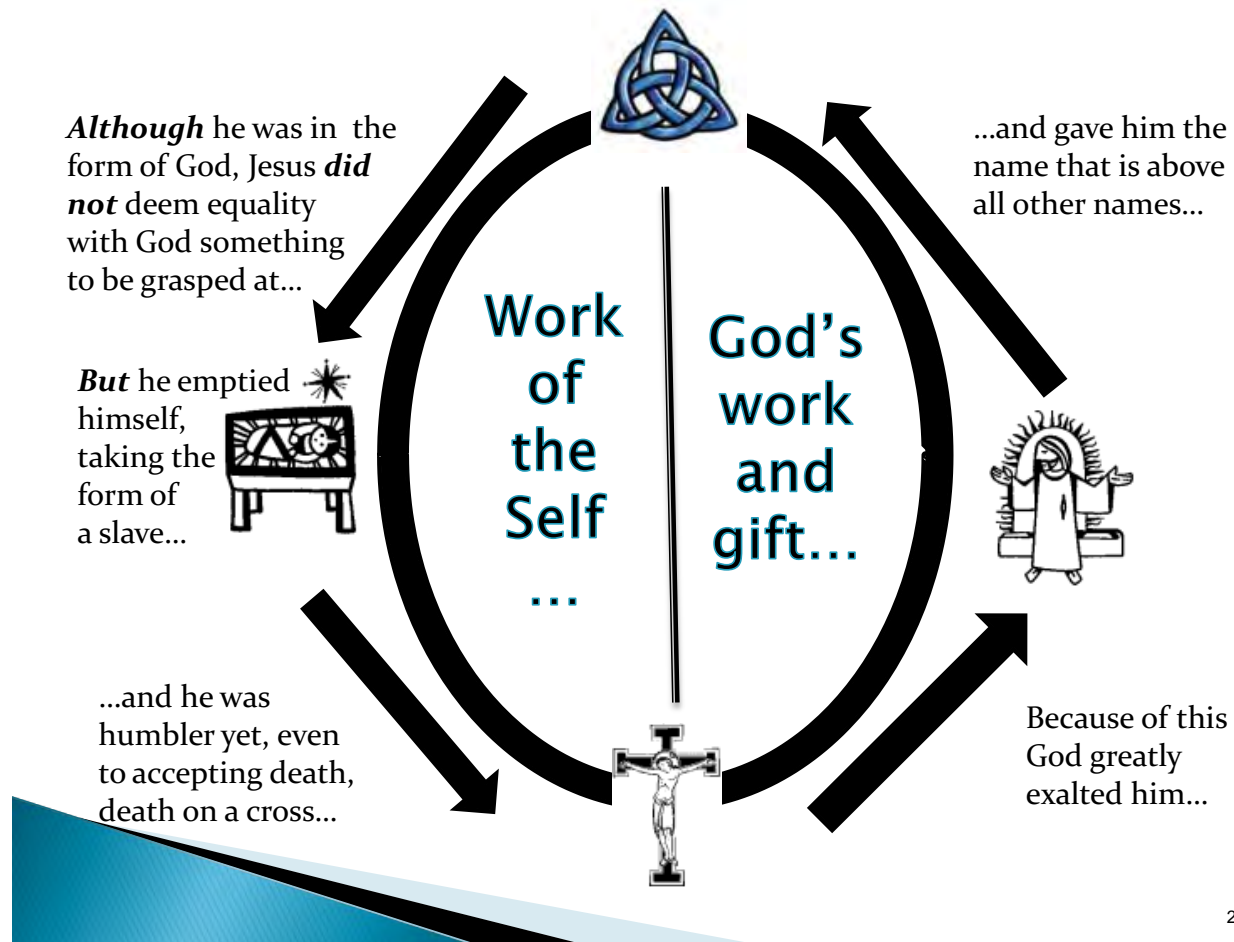
God is not a god of power and weakness but the God of power in weakness. ... we must always keep divine activity and divine attribute together: God's actions are self-revelatory, the expression of God's essence or character. (32-33)

...what happened on the cross is a revelation of the shape of what God is, and of what God does, in the total drama of history. ... The eternal Word condescending to put himself at our mercy, the creative power behind the universe emptying itself, pouring out itself into the frail mold of humanity, has the same shape as Jesus. God has the same shape as Jesus, and he always has had. ... Here we must emphasize that the cross is not just one theophany among many; it is the *definitive* theophany. ...If we know God in the cross, then we should also know that God's majesty is one of power-in-weakness. (34)

...that the "normal" "civil" god of power and might is an idol, and it must be named as such. ... The "normal" god of civil religion combines patriotism and power; this is the god of many American leaders and of many Americans in general. ... Most especially idolatrous in light of our exegesis of Philippians 2 is the image of God (and/or of Christ) as military power incarnate, whether in the crusades or in Iraq or at Armageddon. ... the God of George W. Bush ...is a god of military might. That simply is not the God revealed by Jesus. ... In other words, military power is not the power of the cross, and such misconstrued notions of divine power have nothing to do with the majesty or holiness of the triune God known in the weakness of the cross. The "civil" god, though perfectly "normal," is not only unholy; it is an idol. (34-35)

To be fully human is to thus be Christlike and thus Godlike... in more traditional Western theological language, *imitatio Christi* is really *imitatio Dei*. (36)

Thus we are most like God when we act most like Christ... which is to say, kenotically. As Gorman would emphasize, Kenosis is theosis. To be like Christ crucified is to be both most godly and most human. ... The goal of the Christian community is to allow the life and Spirit of this God, rather than the imperial spirit of domination and acquisition, to flow in and through it-- to participate in God. (37)



23

Reflection Questions...

- What patterns of *kenosis* have you noticed in your own life, and in the lives of those around you?
- How does the church today, and my community, embody the power of the Crucified Christ... power-in-weakness...?
- Which image of the Crucified Christ speaks to me most... and why?
- What images of God have been speaking to me lately?
- To what am I clinging... and what am I being asked to pour out or empty myself of?

NB:

Red numeration markings in the text... this indicates the Power Point slide number which corresponds to the text.

Talk "1

Talk #1: **[SLIDE 1] The X-Y-Zs of the Patterns of Kenosis: Part I [---]**

Today I would like to share with you some insights and work by Michael Gorman, who has written extensively on Pauline theology, from which we have the Kenotic hymn of Philippians 2, which is the foundational scriptural passage of this retreat.

I want to look at a pattern displayed in the Philippian hymn, often referred to as the Kenotic Hymn because of the Greek word *kenosis* it contains, which means "to empty" or "to pour out", and see how that kenotic pattern is found not only throughout Pauline literature, but also throughout our lives. This pattern reflects, we shall see, both the loving nature of God, and also the pattern of our own growth in Christ.

[SLIDE 2]

The text we are working with here, **Phil 2:5-8**, is translated by Gorman as reading:

[SLIDE 2- CLICK]

[⁵Cultivate this mind-set {see 2:1-4} in your community, which is in fact a community in Christ Jesus, who, ⁶**Although** being in the form of God, **did not** consider his {or this} equality with God as something to be exploited for his own advantage, ⁷**but** emptied himself, by taking the form of a slave, that is, by being born in the likeness of human beings. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on a cross.]

One thing I want to point out about this translation is that it makes clear that in his letter to the Philippians, Paul is addressing a community of faith, and not a group of individual believers. It is within the context of community that our response to God is made. It is within the context of community that we come to understand just how much God loves us, and just what that love will demand of

us, and what our response to love will cost us. In the title screen of this Power-Point presentation we saw Kenosis being briefly defined as "*Self-sacrificing Love*"... and both the terms *love* and *sacrifice* imply the existence of community or the Other. Love is focused on the Beloved, and self-sacrifice is done on behalf of others. When selfishness turns our focus inward to ourselves, then the movement of love and self-sacrifice is impeded. Thus the dynamics of kenosis, of being poured out in self-sacrificing love, is always in the context of community... it describes how we offer ourselves to God through our relationship and service to neighbor.

And now, on to the ABCs (or XYZs) of the Pattern of Kenosis.

Notice that in our text before us I have highlighted in **bold** three words or phrases... **Although**, **did not**, and **but**. The word *Although* sets up within us a certain expectation of what will follow. We expect that what will follow will somehow contradict what is indicated by the *although* phrase. The use of *although* sets us up to suspect a surprising or disappointing turn of events, or a course of action which goes against what we could normally expect to happen. For example:

[SLIDE 3] click for each bracketed [...] phrase.

[Although] [he did his best, ...] [he failed miserably.]

[Although she smiled,] [she was angry.]

[Although I love opera,...] [I do not wish to sit through *La Traviata* this weekend.]

[In regards to our plan for a picnic today... although it is raining,...] [we are still going!]

Although sets us up to expect one thing to follow, but something else happens instead. This pattern is expressed in the three highlighted words of our text... **although**, **did not**, and **but**. Sometimes the middle part of this pattern is implied or understood, and so the expression will be voiced as an *although/but*

construction. Yet logically all three aspects are there. Going back to our examples before us, we can rephrase them to more explicitly show this kenotic pattern of **although, did not, and but**.

And so...

"he did his best... he failed miserably" becomes: [Although he did his best, he did not succeed but (rather) failed miserably.]

"Although she smiled, she was angry." becomes [Although she smiled, she was not happy but rather she was angry.]

"Although I love opera, I do not wish to sit through La Traviata this weekend." becomes [Although I love opera, I do not wish to sit through La Traviata this weekend but will sit home instead.]

The statement about picnicking in the rain now becomes: [In regards to the picnic we planned for today, although it is raining we are not staying home but rather we are going!]

Let us now look at our text from Philippians 2 and see how it reflects this pattern.

Here again is the heart of our text:

[SLIDE 4.]

And here is how Michael Gorman charts out the kenotic pattern of this text...

[CLICK]

Michael Gorman sees in Philippians 2:5-8 this pattern of movement from going against what is expected to an action or condition that is not expected or that does not flow logically from where we began. He finds that the word **although [X]** introduces a statement of status, followed by the negation of what could be expected, leading into a new action or condition. He speaks of this pattern as being movement from **status**, to letting go of privilege or self-serving behavior [**Y**] (which he refers to as **selfishness**) and then moving into a **selfless response, [Z]** expressed in the notion of self-sacrifice.

Notice that in our text here there are really two components of the pouring out or kenotic action. The pre-existent Son of God emptied himself by being born human and taking the form of a slave, and the incarnate Christ humbled himself by undergoing the death of a common criminal. Gorman comments on this double action and says: **The *preexistent Christ's* self-emptying, self lowering incarnation/enslavement finds a parallel action in the *human Jesus'* self-humbling, self-lowering obedience to the point of death by crucifixion. *The fundamental character of the actions taken by the "form of God" and the "form of a slave," by the preexistent one and the incarnate one, is the same: downward movement.*** (17)

[SLIDE 5]

This downward movement is one of love descending... [it is the movement of grace and help coming from on high] [to those who dwell in the valleys of death, despair, struggle, loss and darkness.] [It is why we look to the mountains, from whence shall come our help.] [It is the movement of the dawn from on high breaking upon us,] [it is the motion of heaven's justice leaning down to kiss the earth.]

This downward movement is reflected in a passage from the ancient epic, the **Gilgamesh**. [SLIDE 6]

As stated in Herbert Mason's verse narrative of the **Gilgamesh**,

It is an old story/ But one that can still be told/ About a man who loved /

And lost a friend to death/ And learned he lacked the power/

To bring him back to life. / It is the story of Gilgamesh / And his friend Enkidu.

... Gilgamesh was called a god and man;

Enkidu was called an animal and man.

It is the story/ Of their becoming human together.

This epic is older than the Bible, and it contains in it an account remarkably similar to the Biblical account of Noah and the flood. Listen now to the account of the aftermath of the flood, given by Utnapishtim, the man who, like Noah, survived the flood by building an ark for himself and his family at the direction of his gods.

[SLIDE 7]

Utnapishtim speaks and says:

**[When the seventh day
Came, the flood subsided from its slaughter
Like hair drawn slowly back
From a tormented face.]**

[I looked at the earth and all was silence.]

**[Bodies lay like alewives dead
And in the clay. I fell down
On the ship's deck and wept. Why? Why did they
Have to die! I couldn't understand.]**

[SLIDE 8] I asked

Unanswerable questions a child asks
When a parent dies—for nothing.

**[Only slowly
Did I make myself believe—or hope—]**

**[{that} they
Might all be swept up in their fragments
Together
And made whole again]**

[By some compassionate hand.]

[But my hand was too small

To do the gathering.]

[SLIDE 9] I have only known this feeling since

When I look out across the sea of death,]

[This pull inside against a littleness—myself—]

[Waiting for an upward gesture.]

(Gilgamesh: A Verse Narrative by Herbert Mason, pp 78-79.)

An upward gesture carried out by a descending merciful hand.

[SLIDE 10] This downward movement is that of a mother who stoops down to pick up her child who has fallen and bruised her knee.

[This downward movement is found in the image of the Mayan God known as the Diving or Descending God, who leapt down from the heavens to bring to the people of the earth the life-giving gift of corn or maize.]

[This downward movement is reflected in Psalm 85 which states: Loyalty will spring up from the earth, and Justice will lean down from heaven. (Ps 85:11-NJB)]

This downward movement is one of humility and compassion. It is the movement of God descending so that humanity may rise. It is the movement from power and prestige (status) to humility and weakness (selflessness)... and this movement not only reveals to us what divinity is, but it is also a movement or gesture which itself is defined by divinity. We shall return to this point shortly.

Let us now, however, return to our chart which depicts this kenotic pattern in conjunction with our text from Philippians 2 and see why what is said here is counterintuitive: [Slide 11]

The statement "Although being in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at, but rather he emptied himself into the form

of a slave..." is counterintuitive for us because we do not expect God to act this way. The world seems topsy-turvy when kings act like peasants and teachers sit down in the student's desk.

After Peter acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, as God's Chosen One, he did not want to hear Jesus talk about the suffering that was to come. It is unseemly that God's Chosen One should suffer! When someone of high status comes into our midst, we want them to have the best place at table, the best chair in the TV room, the best guest room we have. Look at how dignitaries, movie stars, and sports heroes are treated when they visit our town.

Status carries with it expectations. This is especially true in the Mediterranean world in which Jesus and Paul lived. Every had their place or status in life as assigned by God, and everyone was obligated to respect and remain in their God-given role in life. As scripture scholar John Pilch mentions: **["In the Mediterranean world, the cultural obligation upon everybody is to maintain one's status and do nothing to jeopardize or lessen it."]** John J. Pilch, *The Cultural World of Jesus*, Sunday by Sunday, Cycle B, p. 161

That God would stoop so low as to become one of us is simply a scandal! God is the almighty, the all powerful, the all knowing, the Immortal One... why would She possibly deign to enter our humanity, our weakness, our ignorance, our death???

[SLIDE 12] Our images of God are often based on an imperial model of governance. **[God is Sovereign, Almighty,] [Powerful One,] [Lord of All,] [Ruler and King]**. The dignity and gravitas of such a high office should be respected and held to, and thus the King or Emperor or God should not step down from the dias of the throne to become as one of the serfs or peasants.

[SLIDE 13] Yet how might our understanding of God change or shift if it were modeled on a maternal image. (Have you read *The Shack* lately?) **[God, the one who not only births us,] [but stoops to raise us up, to kiss our skinned knees,] [to change our diapers, to put our kindergarten art work on the refrigerator door.]** Perhaps if this is how we see God, Philippians 2:5 might not be so shocking... and

we would say not "**although** he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at..." but rather "**because** he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at...".

This is a point which Michael Gorman makes, as he argues that :

[SLIDE 14] ... two fundamentally different senses about what is being conceded [in Phil 2:6] are possible. One implies that [Christ's condescension was a *contravention* of his true identity], while the other implies [that it was the *embodiment* of his true identity.] Option one would be something like this:

- [Although Messiah Jesus was in the form of God, a status that means the exercise of power, he acted *out of* character--in a shockingly ungodlike manner, contrary in fact to true (imperial) divinity-- when he emptied and humbled himself.]

In this reading, Christ, in effect, renounced his deity, or at least some aspect of it. He acted abnormally for one possessing equality with God. That is, the form of God that Christ had (and thus also essential divinity) is in fact one that would never condescend to the humiliation of incarnation and crucifixion. To do so would in fact be ungodlike.

Option two would be something like the following:

- [Although Messiah Jesus was in the form of God, a status people assume means the exercise of power, he acted *in* character--in a shockingly ungodlike manner according to normal but misguided human perceptions of divinity, contrary to what we would expect but, in fact, in accord with true divinity-- when he emptied and humbled himself.]

In this reading Christ *exercised* his deity. What is *out of* character for normal divinity in our misguided perception of the reality of the form of God is actually *in* character for *this* form of God. That is, although Christ was in the form of God, which leads us to certain expectations, he subverted and deconstructed those

expectations when he emptied and humbled himself, which he did *because* he was in the form of God. (26-27)

Kenosis, therefore, does not mean Christ's emptying himself of his divinity (or of anything else), but rather Christ's exercising his divinity, his equality with God. ... If this line of reasoning is correct, then we must translate the participle *hyparchon* in [Phil] 2:6 as "because" in addition to "although". (28-29)

Here, then, is the pattern of Kenosis. The X-Y-Zs, if you will, of love being poured out. And because it is the pattern of love, it is also the pattern of God.

Recall now how this kenotic hymn begins... here are some various translations:

[SLIDE 15]

⁵Cultivate this mind-set [see 2:1-4] in your community, which is in fact a community in Christ Jesus,... [Gorman]

³[Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.]

⁵[Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:] ... [NIV]

³[Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity; instead, out of humility of mind everyone should give preference to others, ⁴everyone pursuing not selfish interests but those of others. ⁵Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus...] [New Jerusalem Bible]

Paul tells us, as a community, to put on the mind of Christ, to think like Christ... and as my old philosophy professor Martion O Vaskey, SJ would always remark to his students, **[SLIDE 16] "Thought precedes action as dawn does the day."** To put on the mind of Christ is to also be prepared to act like Christ.

As we put on the mind and actions of Christ through this pattern of self-sacrificing love, we find that we ourselves are being transformed. We become not actors playing a part, but rather instruments through whom Christ lives, [so that with Paul we can say it is no longer I or We who live, but rather Christ living in me/Us.]

We will resume with this point...

Talk #2

[SLIDE 17]

[Talk #2: The X-Y-Zs of the Patterns of Kenosis: Part II]

[A brief re-cap of what we said earlier:]

Taking the hymn from Philippians 2 (esp. vs 2-8) as our primary text, we have been looking at the pattern or shape of the kenosis, the emptying out of Christ, displayed especially in both the Incarnation and Crucifixion, and have seen it as a pattern of self-sacrificial love, whereby although one can claim status and privilege, one freely lets go of this in service to good of others. Michael Gorman describes this pattern as being three-fold, as expressed by the formulae:

[**although [X], not [Y], but (rather) [Z].** This pattern expresses a movement from **status [X]**, to letting go of privilege or self-serving behavior [**Y**] (which Gorman refers to as **selfishness**) and then moving into a **selfless response, [Z]** expressed in the notion of self-sacrifice.]

[We also noted the downward movement of kenosis,] as exemplified in incarnation of Christ and in his freely accepting his death on a cross as he was humiliatingly executed as a common criminal, innocent though he was.

This downward movement, which we described as love descending, is not in contradiction to God's nature, but rather flows from the nature of Love. The phrase "***She stoops to conquer***" could truly be applied to God and to the Incarnation/Crucifixion of Christ. But the conquering power of God is not found in force and violence, but in mercy, forgiveness and self-sacrifice. [God's power is not one of military might, but of power-in-weakness.] (And here is a new point I am making:) As Michael Gorman points out: **God is not a god of power and weakness but the God of power in weakness. ... we must always keep divine activity and divine attribute together: God's actions are self-revelatory, the expression of God's essence or character.** (32-33)

[SLIDE 18] ...what happened on the cross is a revelation of the shape of what God is, and of what God does, in the total drama of history. ... The eternal Word condescending to put himself at our mercy, the creative power behind the universe emptying itself, pouring out itself into the frail mold of humanity, has the same shape as Jesus. God has the same shape as Jesus, and he always has had. ... Here we must emphasize that the cross is not just one theophany

among many; it is the *definitive* theophany. ...If we know God in the cross, then we should also know that God's majesty is one of power-in-weakness. (34)

Thus to imagine God as being a ruler along the lines of civil or imperial power structures is to imagine God falsely... or certainly, in any case, as very different from how Jesus spoke of God, his Abba. Again, Gorman pulls no punches as he affirms, **[SLIDE 19] ...that the 'normal' "civil" god of power and might is an idol, and it must be named as such. ... The "normal" god of civil religion combines patriotism and power; this is the god of many American leaders and of many Americans in general. ... Most especially idolatrous in light of our exegesis of Philippians 2 is the image of God (and/or of Christ) as military power incarnate, whether in the crusades or in Iraq or at Armageddon. ... the God of George W. Bush ...is a god of military might. That simply is not the God revealed by Jesus. ... In other words, military power is not the power of the cross, and such misconstrued notions of divine power have nothing to do with the majesty or holiness of the triune God known in the weakness of the cross. The "civil" god, though perfectly "normal," is not only unholy; it is an idol. (34-35)**

We concluded our previous session by noting that Paul lays forth this kenotic hymn describing the self-emptying of Christ because he is encouraging the Christian community to "put on the mind of Christ", so that we might more and more be transformed into instruments of Christ's action. **It is here that we resume.**

As we put on the mind and actions of Christ through this pattern of self-sacrificing love, we find that we ourselves are being transformed. We become not actors playing a part, but rather instruments through whom Christ lives, so that with Paul we can say it is no longer I or We who live, but rather Christ living in me/Us.

As we enter into this pattern of kenosis, of letting go of status and pouring ourselves out in self-sacrificing love for others, we find ourselves also being lifted up, as Christ was. And in being so lifted, we become united with God and like God. This becoming like God is, of course, the fulfillment of the human destiny. We are created in the image and likeness of God, and Christ embodies and reveals what it is to be truly human, truly and fully in God's likeness.

[SLIDE 20] To be fully human is to thus be Christlike and thus Godlike... [in more traditional Western theological language, *imitatio Christi* is really *imitatio Dei*.]
(36)

Thus we are most like God when we act most like Christ... which is to say, kenotically. As Gorman would emphasize, **[*Kenosis is theosis*. To be like Christ crucified is to be both most godly and most human. ... The goal of the Christian community is to allow the life and Spirit of this God, rather than the imperial spirit of domination and acquisition, to flow in and through it-- to participate in God.]** (37)

This becoming like God is, of course, God's work in us. For us alone such a task is impossible, but for God, all things are possible. **[SLIDE 21]** As Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us:

[To be conformed to the image of Christ is not an ideal of realizing some kind of similarity with Christ which we are asked to attain. It is not we who change ourselves into the image of God. Rather, it is the very image of God, the form of Christ, which seeks to take shape within us.] (Gal. 4.19). **[It is Christ's own form which seeks to manifest itself in us. Christ does not cease working in us until he has changed us into Christ's own image. Our goal is to be shaped into the entire form of the incarnate, the crucified, and the transfigured one.]** --Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Discipleship. [quoted by Gorman, p. 169]

And further more **[SLIDE 22]** **...whoever, according to God's promise, seeks to participate in the radiance and glory of Jesus must first be conformed to the image of the obedient, suffering servant of God on the cross. [Whoever seeks to bear the transfigured image of Jesus must first have borne the image of the crucified one, defiled in the world.] [No one is able to recover the lost image of God unless they come to participate in the image of the incarnate and crucified Jesus Christ.] [--Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Discipleship. [quoted by Gorman, pp. 169-170]]**



Thief Behind the Mask: Story of being transformed by putting on the mask (and even more importantly, the personae) of a just, kind and honest person.

Once upon a time... there was a princess whose aging father announced that she could not ascend to the throne until she had found a suitable prince to help her in her tasks as ruler of the kingdom. The princess thus announced a ball for all eligible bachelors in the kingdom. At the end of this ball she would select a man who would be her “prince in waiting”, and if after one year of courtship she felt he was suitable as her helpmate and husband, they would be officially engaged and wedded.

Now there was in the kingdom a clever thief who wanted to attend the royal ball and win the hand of the princess. But the thief was rather ugly in appearance, so much so, that he made it a rule to avoid looking into mirrors, so as not to be reminded of his own ugliness. He knew he would never be allowed into the ball as he was, so he went to a mask maker, and, with money he had stolen, paid the mask maker to make him the most handsome mask ever made. The mask maker, being a gifted artisan in his trade, made the thief a rather handsome mask indeed.

The thief went to the ball, and pretended to be a man of royal bearing, of generous heart, and of kind manners. The princess was impressed with this man, as were many others who met this handsome stranger. At the end of the ball it was the masked thief that the princess chose to be her “prince in waiting” for the coming year. At first the thief was delighted with his good fortune, but then he quickly realized his dilemma. The princess had chosen him based on his good looks and pretended manners. If he were to unmask himself now and behave as the thief he really was, she would feel cheated and fooled, and in anger have him beheaded. The thief realized that he would have to keep wearing the mask in the presence of the princess and the people, and he would have to continue playing the part of a well-mannered, kind and capable ruler.

Which is what he did. The masked thief would accompany the princess on all her social functions and royal engagements. He greeted with kindness the widows and orphans of the villages, and helped to decide matters of justice between disputing neighbors. He behaved as a man worthy to be a ruler should behave... with kindness, fairness, compassion and integrity. Not only did the princess learn to love this man, but so did all the people in the kingdom.

Now the trial year was over, and the princess announced that she would take the masked thief as her prince and husband, and they would be married in a fortnight. At the end of fourteen days the thief realized he had no choice, but to confess his treachery and deception to the princess. For he realized that once he was married to the princess, and was to spend his first wedded night with her, that he would not be able to keep his secret from her. She would see his mask, take it off and see him as he really was. So just before the wedding he confesses to the princess, “My Lady, I have a confession to make. I am not the man you believe me to be. I am not the handsome prince I appear to be. I am really an ugly thief. It is but a mask you see. I am sorry I have deceived you for so long, but I was afraid of your anger. But now I can no longer keep up the deception.”

The princess was astounded and upset by this news. She was ready to call in the guards and have the imposter thrown in the dungeon. She said, "For this deception I should have your head, but before I hand you over to the jailer, I want to see you as you really are. Remove your mask!"

Trembling, the thief did so. The princess gazed at him, first with a look of anger, then surprise, and finally she laughed. "My beloved," she said, "I do not know what you mean by this joke. You almost had me believing you." This was not the reaction the thief was expecting to hear. He asks her, "What do you mean, my Lady?" The princess held out a hand-mirror to the thief and said, "You tell me!" The unmasked thief gazed into the mirror and to his astonishment he saw a handsome face, one which looked just like the mask he had been wearing.

Circle of Kenosis/Theosis... [SLIDE 23]

If we were to chart out the pattern of kenosis/theosis, the pattern of self-sacrificing love by which we become more like God, it may look like this:

[Although he was in the form of God, Jesus **did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at...]**

[But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave...] notice that here we are referring to the Logos or pre-existent Christ taking on flesh through the Incarnation...

[...and he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross...]

[This half of the circle is the Kenosis part... the descending, downward movement. It is the work which we do. The gospel texts are clear, and Eucharistic Prayer II mentions it specifically, that Jesus freely accepted his death. AND...]

[Because of this God greatly exalted him...]

[...and gave him the name that is above all other names...]

[This half of the circle, the Theosis part which describes the ascending or being lifted up side of the circle, is God's work and gift.]

Let us now look at the pattern of kenosis as found in various scripture texts, as well as in lived situations... **[SLIDE 24]**

PATTERN OF KENOSIS	X ...although [Status]	Y ...not [Selfishness]	Z ...but [selflessness]
Philippians 2:6-8	...although [in the form of God] 2:6a	...did not [exploit equality with God] 2:6b	...but [emptied himself... humbled himself...] 2:7-8
1 Thess 2:6-8 ¹	...although we [might have thrown our weight around as apostles]	...we did not [seek honor from humans,	...but we [were gentle among you and were pleased to share with you not only the gospel, but our own selves.
1 Cor 9 [text to right is a paraphrase of summary of 1 Cor 9:1-23-- cf Gorman, ICG p. 23]	...although [as an apostle I was free, and had the right to take a wife along with me and the right to be paid for my ministry,]	... I did not [make use of any of these rights]	...but rather [enslaved myself to all in multiple way, including self-support and adaptability to different kinds of people...]
[SLIDE 25] 2 Cor 8:9	...although [the Lord Jesus was rich]	[... <i>he did not remain so...</i>]	...(but) [he became poor for your sake...]
Rom 15:1-3	[It is for us who are strong...]	... not [to please ourselves...]	...but [to bear with the susceptibilities of the weaker ones...]

[Matthew 27:40]	X ...although [he was the Son of God]	Y ...he did not [come down from the cross...]	Z ...but [hung there in humiliation]
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[Mark 14:32-36]	X ...although [he was saw what was coming and feared his death, praying that the impending suffering be taken away from him]	Y ...he did not [cling to his life or seek to run from his approaching death...]	Z ...but [prayed "Thy will be done, not mine."]
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¹ 1 Thess 2:6-8: ...nor have we ever looked for honour from human beings, either from you or anybody else, when we could have imposed on you with full weight, as apostles of Christ. Instead, we lived unassumingly among you. Like a mother feeding and looking after her children, we felt so devoted to you, that we would have been happy to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, so dear had you become. [The New Jerusalem Bible]

[SLIDE 26]

1 [Cf: Mark 6:3 & Luke 15:2]	X ...although [he was of "middle class". being the son of a tradesman, and although he was seen to be a man of God]	Y ...he did not [keep himself to his own class of people...]	Z ...but [dined and feasted with sinners.]
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2 [Isaiah 53:7]	X ...although [he was innocent, like a lamb led to the slaughter]	Y ...he did not [open his mouth in his defense...]	Z ...but [remained silent...]
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3 [--]	X ...although [he was the Provincial of the Province and had much to do...]	Y ...he did not [walk away after supper was finished...]	Z ...but [stayed with the novices and helped them do dishes.]
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[SLIDE 27]

4 [--]	X ...although [she was the superior of her community and had just been given a lethal chemo-therapy dose by mistake, and thus knew that her congregation could easily have sued the responsible doctor for great financial gains...]	Y ...she did not [allow his sisters to do so...]	Z [...but [instructed them to bring no lawsuit against the doctor or hospital, but rather allow him to continue his research for the benefit of others.]]
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5 [--]	X ...although [she dearly loved her ministry and placement and community]	Y ...she did not [refuse a new obedience...]	Z ...but [allowed herself to be placed in a new assignment after discernment with her superiors.]
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[SLIDE 28]

6 [--]	X ...although [life in New Orleans was great]	Y ...she did not [return to the city after Hurricane Katrina...]	Z ...but [moved into a new community, saying "not my will, but your will be done, O Lord."]
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7 [--]	...although [her husband entered the school room and killed several of the children]	...The Amish community did not [shun the widow of the killer...]	...but [reached out to her in her humiliation and grief]
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8 [--]	...although [the young boy had only a quarter, and wanted to have a scoop of ice cream with chocolate sauce...]	...he did not [order chocolate sauce, which would have made his bill a quarter even...]	...but [had plain ice cream instead, which cost only \$0.20, so that he could leave a nickel tip for the waitress]
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[SLIDE 29]

9 [--]	...although [the Swiss guard was a pariah, having murdered his commander, the commander's wife, and then himself...]	...the Vatican did not [shun him...]	...but [held a joint prayer service for all three deceased, with all three caskets side by side in the Vatican.]
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[--]...although [their house was worth \$300,000 on the market...]	...they did not [ask the market price]	...but [sold it for only the money they needed for a smaller home-- \$100,000, thus making the home available to a family in need of a larger home, but not able to afford the price.]
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[SLIDE 30]

Reflection Questions...

- **[What patterns of *kenosis* have you noticed in your own life, and in the lives of those around you?]**
- **[How does the church today, and my community, embody the power of the Crucified Christ... power-in-weakness...?]**
- **[Which image of the Crucified Christ speaks to me most... and why?]**
- **[What images of God have been speaking to me lately?]**
- **[To what am I clinging... and what am I being asked to pour out or empty myself of?]**

[SLIDE 31] Praised be Jesus Christ...