

God as Mother



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Catechism n. 239

‘God’s parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood’.

God as Mother

We reflect upon an ancient tradition in the Christian community which speaks of God and of Christ as our Mother.

Saint Augustine in his commentary on Psalm 101:7 (Hebrew Psalm 102:7) 'I am made like to the pelican in the desert' writes: 'Christ exercises fatherly authority and maternal love just as Paul is also father and mother ... through his gospel preaching.' Augustine is referring to Paul's statement to the Thessalonians:

God as Mother

‘We were gentle among you, like a mother tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. You remember our labour and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God ... As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children’(1Thessalonians 2:7-11).

God as Mother

Saint Anselm in his Prayer to Saint Paul writes:
'You, too, good Jesus, are not you also a mother?
Is not he a mother who like a hen gathers his
chicks beneath his wings? Truly, Lord, you are a
mother too.'

He is referring to Jesus' words in regard to
Jerusalem: 'How often have I desired to gather
your children together as a hen gathers her brood
under her wings, and you were not willing!'

(Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34).

The motherhood of God and of Jesus is a favourite theme of Saint Julian of Norwich:

‘I saw that God rejoices that he is our Father, and God rejoices that he is our Mother, and God rejoices that he is our true Spouse, and that our soul is his beloved wife. And Christ rejoices that he is our Brother, and Jesus rejoices that he is our Saviour’(Showings, chapter 52)

‘In our making, God almighty is our loving Father, and God all wisdom is our loving Mother, with the love and the goodness of the Holy Spirit, which is all one God, one Lord. And in the joining and the union he is our very true spouse and we his beloved wife and his fair maiden, with which wife he was never displeased; for he says: I love you and you love me, and our love will never divide in two’(Showings, chapter 58).

‘In our making, God almighty is our loving Father, and In our almighty Father we have our protection and our bliss, as regards our natural substance, which is ours by our creation from without beginning. In the second person, in knowledge and wisdom we have our perfection, as regards our sensuality, our restoration and our salvation, for he is our Mother, brother and saviour (Showings, chapter 58).

In our good Lord, the Holy Spirit we have our reward and our gift for our living and our labour, endlessly surpassing all that we desire in his marvellous courtesy, out of his great plentiful grace ... In our Mother Christ we increase, and in mercy he reforms and restores us ... In our Father, God almighty we have our being, and in our Mother of mercy we have our reforming and our restoring, in whom our parts are united and all made perfect man, and through the rewards and gifts of grace of the Holy Spirit we are fulfilled'(Showings, ch. 58).

‘Jesus Christ is our true Mother. We have our being from him, where the foundation of motherhood begins, with all the sweet protection of love which endlessly follows ... Our great Father, almighty God, who is being, knows us and loved us before time began. Out of this knowledge, in his most wonderful deep love, by the prescient, eternal counsel of all the Trinity, he wanted the second person to become our Mother, our brother and our saviour. From this it follows that as truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother. Our Father wills, our Mother works, our good Lord the Holy Spirit confirms’(Showings, chapter 59).

‘And therefore it is our part to love our God in whom we have our being, reverently thanking and praising him for our creation, mightily praying to our Mother for mercy and pity, and our Lord the Holy Spirit for help and grace ... And so Jesus is our true Mother in nature by our first creation, and he is our true Mother in grace by his taking our created nature. All the lovely works and all the sweet loving offices of beloved motherhood are appropriated to the second person, for in him we have this godly will, whole and safe forever, both in nature and in grace, from his own goodness, proper to him’(Showings, chapter 59).

‘We are brought back by the motherhood of mercy and grace into our natural place, in which we were created by the motherhood of love, a mothers love which never leaves us ... Our true Mother Jesus, he alone bears us for joy and for endless life, blessed may he be. So he carries us within him in love and travail, until the full time when he wanted to suffer the sharpest thorns and cruel pains that ever were or will be, and at last he died. And when he had finished and had borne us so for bliss, still all this could not satisfy his wonderful love ...(Showings, chapter 60).

He could not die any more, but he did not want to cease working; therefore he must needs nourish us, for the precious love of motherhood has made him our debtor.'(Showings, chapter 60).

‘The mother can give her child to suck of her milk, but our precious Mother Jesus can feed us with himself, and does, most courteously and most tenderly, with the blessed sacrament, which is the precious food of true life; and with all the sweet sacraments he sustains us most mercifully and most graciously ... The mother can lay her child tenderly to her breast, but our tender Mother Jesus can lead us easily into his blessed breast through his sweet open side, and show us there a part of the Godhead and the joy of heaven, with inner certainty of endless bliss’(Showings, chapter 60).



I am with you



I am with you on the journey

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I am with you on the journey
and I will never leave you



I am with you on the journey
always with you





I am with you on the journey
and I will never leave you.

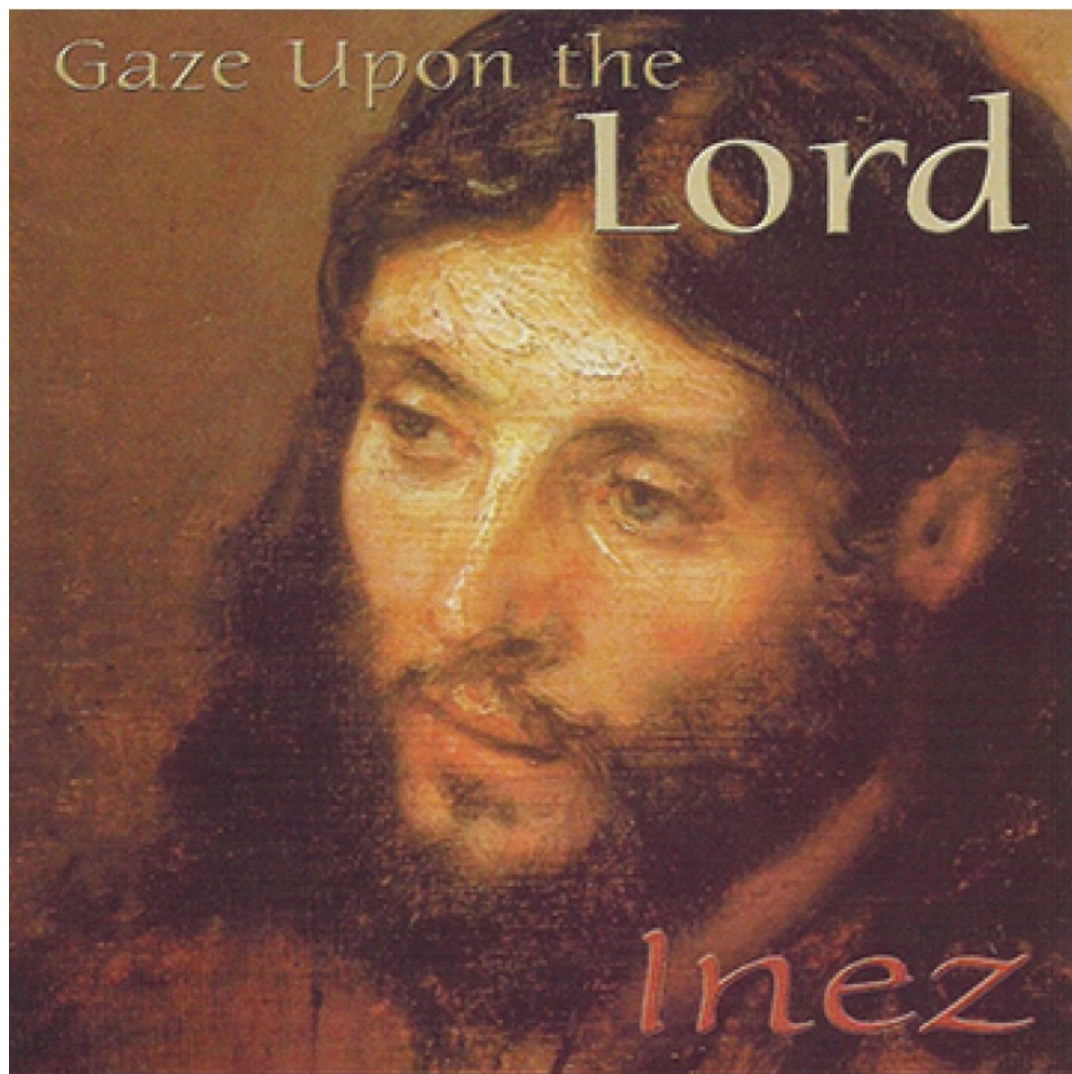


I am with you on the journey,
always with you.



I am with you on the journey
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with you



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