

THEOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS IN THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES: GRACE & SIN, INCARNATION & DISCIPLESHIP

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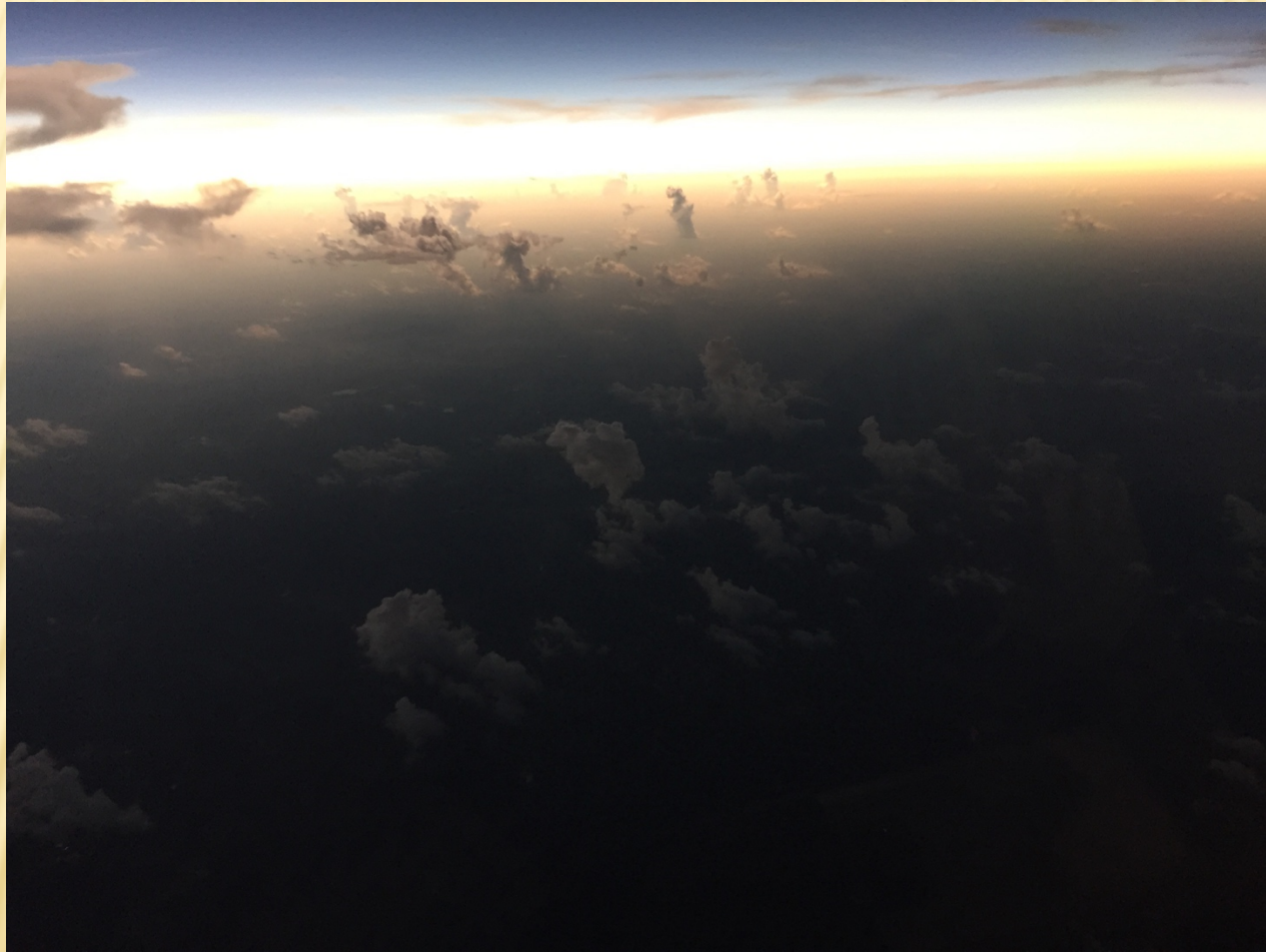
AN IGNATIAN ADVENTURE

- “Ours is not a ‘**lab faith**,’ but a ‘**journey faith**,’ a historical faith.” Pope Francis

- “Our life is not given to us like an opera libretto, in which all is written down; but it means going, walking, doing, searching, seeing.... We must enter into the **adventure** of the quest for meeting God; we must let God search and encounter us. ... God is always a surprise, so you never know where and how you will find him... “I have a dogmatic certainty: **God is in every person’s life**.” Pope Francis

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- **Grace** – the love of God (AGAPE) that we experience; the overflowing of Divine Life within and around us.
 - **Sin** – interrupting the Divine flow; getting in the way of agapic love or **failing** to notice or embrace the goodness of creation.

In the SpEx, both grace and sin are revealed to us
... but grace is primary, foundational



THREE MOVEMENTS OF GRACE

We pray for the grace of:

- ✘ GRACE OF AWARENESS**
- ✘ GRACE OF FREEDOM**
- ✘ GRACE OF GENEROSITY or LOVING SERVICE**

(Corresponding movements of sin: blindness, ingratitude, unfreedom, selfishness or self-preoccupation)

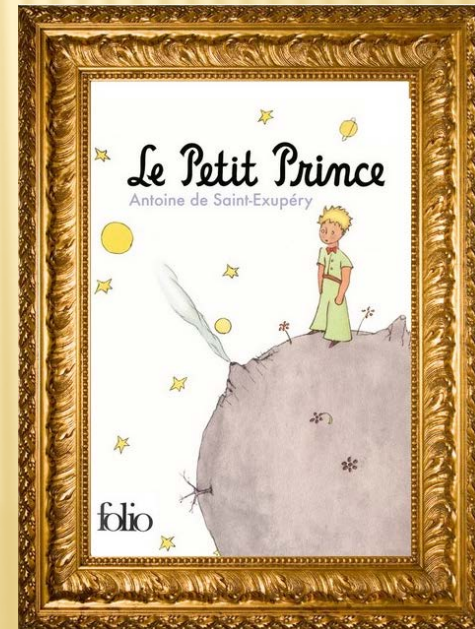
GRACE OF AWARENESS

- ✘ “the world charged with the grandeur of God” (Hopkins).
- ✘ “Earth’s crammed with heaven”
Browning
- ✘ “Finding God in all Things” takes practice, exercise!

SACRAMENTAL IMAGINATION

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery: “It is only with the heart that one sees rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye.”
(The Little Prince)

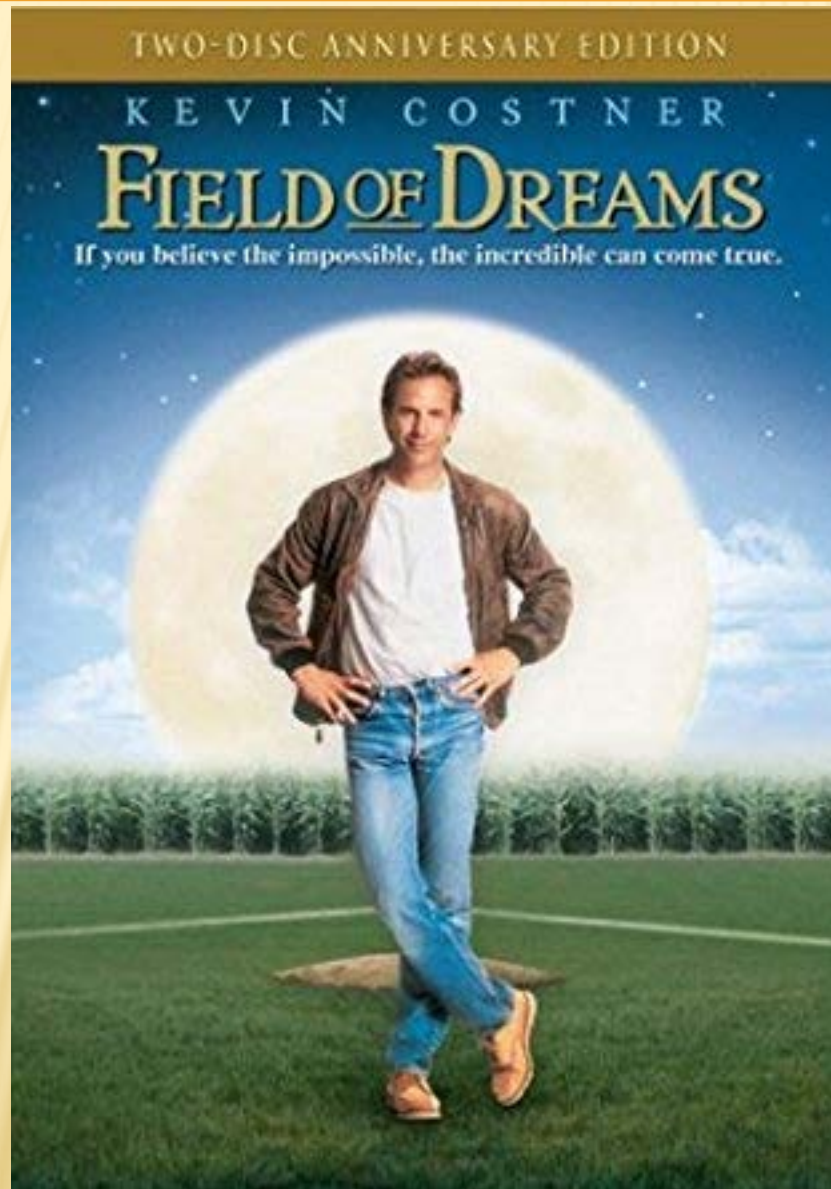
“a long, loving look at the real” (Burghardt)



SEEING, HEARING, FEELING DEEPLY

- ✘ Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, ch. 7: “The name of this **infinite and inexhaustible depth** and ground of all being is God. That depth is what the word God means... He who knows about depth knows about God.”
- ✘ *Seeing the Color Purple*

FIELD OF DREAMS: IOWA AND INDIA



Revelation in Humanity

- Pope Francis: “Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God.” *Evangelii Gaudium*, 272
- Thomas Merton, *the Revelation at 4th and Walnut*

SIN

- Failing to notice: too busy, preoccupied, distracted from present, too compartmentalized
- Leads to ingratitude
- Fear caused by lack of awareness (fear of failure, commitment, rejection)

THE GRACE OF FREEDOM

- ✘ First Week of the SpEx (and P&F)
- ✘ Awareness acts as light casting a shadow, sun shining through glass window

The interplay of grace and sin, light and darkness ...





SAN QUENTIN PRISON: LESSON IN FREEDOM



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Quentin_Prison.jpg

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE: “THIS IS WATER”



GRACE OF LOVING SERVICE

- Freedom FROM – Freedom FOR
- We pray for the grace, “for an interior knowledge of our Lord, **who became human for me**, that I may love him more intensely and **follow him more closely.**” (SpEx 104)
- Incarnation as movement of love (not Plan B because we messed up!)

CONTEMPLATION ON THE INCARNATION: GOD IS IN THE “WONDERFUL COMPLEXITY” OF HUMAN LIFE

- It is as if I can hear the Divine Persons saying
“Let us work the redemption of the whole
human race; let us respond to the groaning
of all creation.”
(SpEx 109)

ACCOMPANIMENT

- “Jesus expects us to stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune, and instead to enter into the reality of other people’s lives and to know the power of tenderness. Wherever we do so, our lives become **wonderfully complicated.**” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 308)



Annunciation, by Henry Tanner, 1898



Robert Anning Bell, Mary in House of Elizabeth (1917)

BECOMING HUMAN SO WE COULD BECOME MORE DIVINE

Vatican II, Gaudium et spes:

“For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin.” (GS 22)

WHAT IS HUMAN IS HOLY

"By virtue of the Creation and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, The Divine Milieu, 66



love actually

ALL MATTER MATTERS ...

Laudato Si: “One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole.”

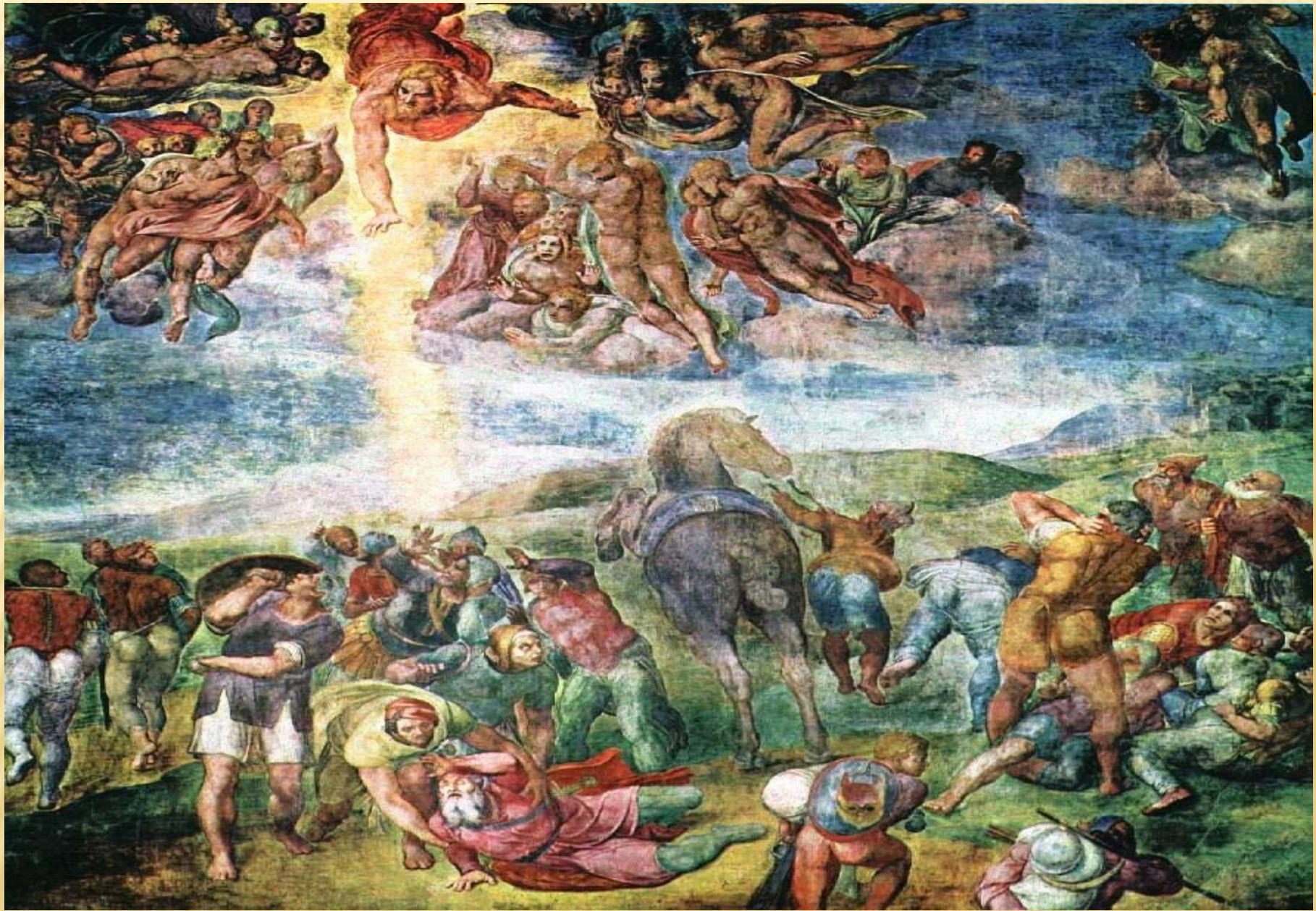
Teilhard: *Divine Milieu*

DISCIPLESHIP

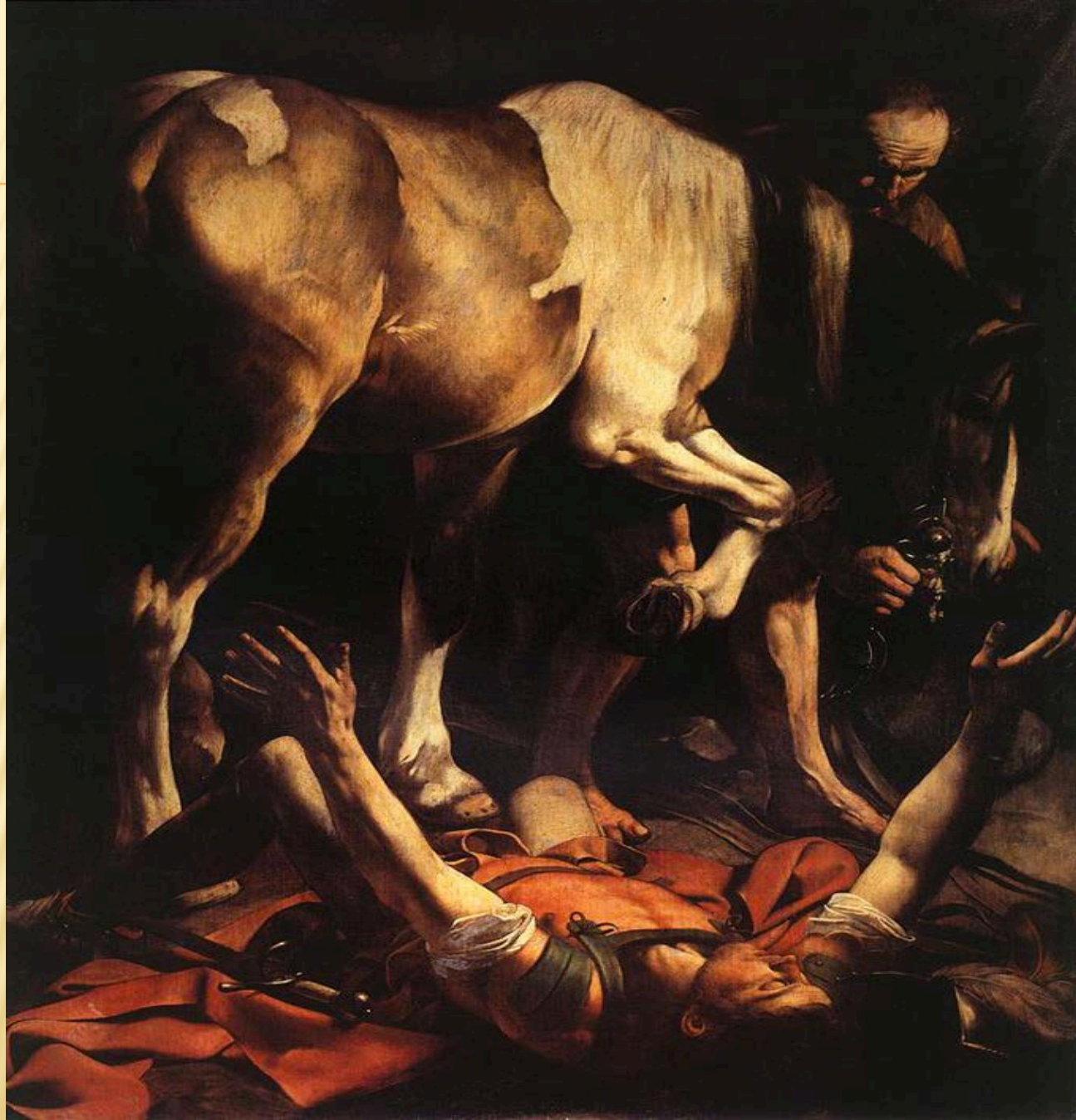
- *“Do we think that the Incarnation is simply a past event that has nothing to do with us personally?” Pope Francis*
- The Call of Christ the King: “Whoever wishes to come with me must labor **with me**, so that through following me in the pain, s/he may follow me also in the glory.”

MOVEMENT OF GRACE WITHIN CHURCH

- ✘ The Church: “the community that witnesses to the graced reality of the world” (Himes)
- ✘ Francis: A Church that is not turned inward but goes to the peripheries and frontiers
- ✘ “We must be unafraid of going into the night,” accompanying people
- ✘ SIEMPRE ADELANTE!



Conversion of Saul, by Michelangelo, c. 1542



Conversion of St. Paul, by Caravaggio, c. 1601



The Calling of St. Matthew, by Caravaggio, c. 1600

GOD'S DESIRE MEETING OUR OWN

