The Parish Paper
OF
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

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Divinized Humanity and Humanized Divinity

According to the fifth-century Creed of Saint Athanasius, the union of divine and human natures in the person of Christ does not consist in the "conversion of the Godhead into flesh," but in "the taking of the Manhood into God." The mystery announced at the Annunciation therefore reaches its fullest expression not in Bethlehem, but in the Ascension. Christ does not merely bring God down to us; he carries our humanity into the very life of God.

This is the great Christian hope: the divinization of humanity. What is realized first in Christ is communicated to his people by the Holy Spirit, so that they become, in the words of St. Peter, "partakers of the divine nature." After Christ himself, the chief image of this hope in Christian tradition is the post-biblical doctrine of the Dormition ("falling asleep") and bodily Assumption ("taking up") of the Blessed Virgin Mary (a feast observed on August 15th). In her bodily assumption, the Church sees, not an isolated privilege, but the destiny of all the redeemed. Because God has made our humanity his own in Christ, humanity is destined to share in his divine glory.

If this is the Christian understanding of humanity's destiny, we should not be surprised that it leaves its mark upon Christian art. The changing way Christians portrayed Christ and the saints reflects changing ways of contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation. When Christian art first emerged from the symbolic imagery of the catacombs into public life during the fourth century, it did so in a world where pagan art itself had already turned away from the naturalism of classical Greece and Rome toward more abstract and stylized forms expressive of transcendent realities. Christianity naturally adopted this visual language. The humanity of Christ and the saints is presented, not in its ordinary earthly appearance, but as transformed by heavenly glory—what we might call *divinized humanity*.

This is seen above all in the great images of the Virgin and Child. Because divine and human natures are united in the one person of Christ, the Council of Ephesus in 431 affirmed that Mary is rightly called *Theotokos*—"God-bearer," the human mother of the one who is truly God. Images of Mother and Child soon became the defining icon of Christian civilization. Christ sits enthroned upon his mother's lap, a sign of his true humanity, yet he appears as the eternal Wisdom, bearing the insignia of divine authority. Mother and Son are upright, stern, and frontal, their eyes fixed upon the eternal horizon, images of otherworldly majesty.

Yet around the turn of the first millennium, another development gradually appears. The emphasis shifts—not away from divinized humanity, but toward what we might call *humanized divinity*. Artists begin to recover the tangible reality of human life. Light and shadow suggest solid form. Drapery falls with convincing weight. Figures begin to move. Faces reveal tenderness, sorrow, and affection. The Mother turns toward the Child; the Child reaches toward his Mother. The humanity of Christ is explored with increasing richness, yet without surrendering the glory of his divinity. Although this transformation first appeared in the Christian East, it was in the flourishing cities of medieval Italy that it found its fullest artistic expression —Florence, Siena, and Pisa, where artists such as Duccio, Cimabue, and

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The Rt. Rev. Paul E. Lambert [Retired] ..... (931) 327-5489
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Upcoming Holy Days

Saturday, August 15
Dormition of the Virgin Mary
11 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Monday, August 24
St. Bartholomew, The Apostle
Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Saturday, August 29
The Beheading of St. John' The Baptist
11 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Tuesday, September 8
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Upcoming Worship

Week of Trinity 10

Online Morning Prayer
8:15 a.m. Monday to Friday

Monday, August 10
No services today

Tuesday, August 11
Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel
5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

Wednesday, August 12
Noon *Holy Communion*, Church
5 p.m. *Evening Prayer*, Chapel

Thursday, August 13
Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel
5 p.m. *Evening Prayer with Holy Communion*, Chapel

Friday, August 14
Noon *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Saturday, August 15:
Dormition of the Virgin Mary
11 a.m. *Holy Communion*, Chapel

Sunday, August 16:
The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity
8 a.m. *Said Holy Communion*, Church
9:15 a.m. *Nursery*, 1st Floor, Cranmer Hall
9:30 a.m. *Fr. Dunbar's Class*, Chapel
10:30 a.m. *Sung Eucharist*, Church/Online
with a children's activity in the chapel during the sermon

NOTE: The Church office will be closed at noon on Fridays during the summer.

p.a.c.k.
people of action caring for kids

Wednesday, August 26, 4–6 p.m., 4 Mall Terrace, Savannah

St. John's volunteers will begin their packing sessions on Wednesday, August 26, followed by their next packing day of Sept. 16. They will then resume their regular schedule, meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 4–6 p.m. There are volunteer roles for all ages and abilities! Contact Stuart Clifford: stuart@comcast.net.

Assisting in Worship

Vestry Offering Chair
8 a.m. Mr. B. Ray Summerell
10:30 a.m. Mr. Wiley A. Wasden III

Ushers
Mr. Robert L. Sparks
Mr. Robert B. Turner (Bart)

Choir
Choir of Adults

Coffee Hour
Mrs. Mark D. Stevens (Chambliss)

Chancel Society
Mrs. Timothy E. Coy (Dorothea)
Mrs. Jayne G. Holland
Mrs. Carter C. Hubbard, Sr. (Barbara)
Mrs. B. Ray Summerell (Melanie)
Mrs. Nohl A. Braun, Jr. (Alyce)
Mrs. John G. Bradshaw (Sally)
Mrs. Susie H. Fawcett
Mrs. Jeanne H. McMillan
Ms. Linda H. Pounds
Laura C. Wimbish
Mrs. Charles B. Compton, Jr. (Alva)
Mrs. Ronald C. Berry (Caroline)
Mr. and Mrs. E. Brian Culver (Kerri & Brian) and Family



COME AND FIND YOUR VOICE!

Music • Community • Worship • Friendship

As summer comes to a close, our choirs are preparing to begin a new season—and we'd love for you to be part of it. Whether you're an experienced singer or simply enjoy making music with others, there's a place for you.

Choir of Adults

Rehearsals are **Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**, beginning this month. This choir sings roughly every other week at one of our Sunday liturgies and joins a professional orchestra for our annual Christmas concert. Previous musical experience is preferred.

Chorister Program

- **Choir of Girls:** Rising 4th–12th grade
- **Choir of Boys:** Rising 3rd grade through changed voice

Rehearsals are **Tuesdays, 6:00-7:15 p.m**. Choristers sing every other week at one of our Sunday liturgies, perform annually with a professional orchestra, and participate in regional and international tours. Upcoming opportunities include the Duke Chapel RSCM Course in 2027, and an East Coast Tour in 2028 to include singing at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

No previous musical experience is necessary. We provide a complete musical education, including voice training, music reading, and ensemble singing, in a supportive environment.

This Sunday at St. John's

Summer schedule runs until Sept. 6th.

The nursery (infants to five-year-olds) is available on the 1st floor of Cranmer Hall from 9:15 a.m. until after the 10:30 a.m. service.

8 a.m. Said Holy Communion, Church
breakfast in Cranmer Hall after 8 a.m. service
Introit: Psalm 55, BCP pp. 406–408
The Collect, BCP p. 203
The Epistle and Gospel, BCP pp. 203–204

9:30 a.m. Fr. Dunbar's Class, Chapel
The Book of Common Prayer and Holy Communion

10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, Church/Online
with a short children's talk during Morning Prayer

11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour, Green-Meldrim

Flowers for Sunday

The flowers this Sunday are given to the glory of God, and in loving memory of Dr. Albert J. Kelley, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Compton, by the Compton family.

And in loving memory of John E. Roller on the occasion of our 62nd wedding anniversary, by his loving wife Christie Roller.

And in loving memory of James B. Mercer, by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph O. Mercer and family.

And to the glory of God and on the occasion of the baptism of Owen Wilton Plowman.

In celebration of the wedding of Anna Brigid Brown & James Lawrence Robertson Moody on Saturday, August 8, 2026.

To offer flowers for the altar, call the Church office. After Sunday, the flowers are delivered to the sick, sorrowing, and shut-ins.

Giotto were recovering volume, movement, and emotional realism: an artistic revolution that culminated in the Renaissance and Baroque.

What matters most, however, is that this movement toward humanized divinity does not replace or reject the earlier vision of divinized humanity. It depends upon it. The history of Christian art mirrors the pattern of the Gospel itself. There is, one might say, a death and resurrection of humanity. In turning away from classical naturalism, early Christian art embodies St. Paul's words: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Humanity disappears into divine glory. Yet what dies in Christ is raised again. Out of that glory emerges a new humanity, radiant with grace.

The renewed naturalism of the High Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque is therefore not a simple revival of pagan classicism, as though Christianity had temporarily forgotten the human form and then rediscovered it. Humanity returns, but it returns transfigured. The body that reappears in Christian art is no longer merely the measure of earthly beauty; it has become the dwelling-place of divine glory. The finite, once surrendered into the infinite, is restored from within the infinite itself, until, as St. Paul says, "God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

The history of Christian art is therefore more than a succession of changing styles. It is a visual meditation upon the Gospel itself: first humanity hidden with Christ in God, then humanity restored and glorified in him. As painters and sculptors gradually rediscovered the beauty of the human form, they were not abandoning the theology of the Incarnation but unfolding its deepest implications. Christian art thus bears witness to the whole mystery of the Incarnation: humanity taken up into God, and God made visible in human flesh. In that union lies both the meaning of Christian beauty and the destiny of the redeemed creation. – GGD

The anthem at the offertory on Sunday, August 9th is offered to the glory of God and in loving memory of Martha Dennison (Denny) Somoskey, wife of Frank Somoskey, who died August 4, 2020. The anthem is a setting of George Herbert's poem *The Call* taken from *The Temple (1633)* and set to music by Richard Lloyd.