“I More than Others”

“I More than Others”:
Responses to Evil and Suffering

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

ERIC R. SEVERSON

"…every one of us has sinned against all men, and I more than others."
–Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

In a stirring and brief biographical sketch in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky introduces us to Markel, a young man of seventeen whose health was failing and whose death seemed imminent. Despite his immanent death, Markel refused the comforts of both church and family. He would not give confession, take communion, or fast during Lent. He even mocked the comforts that others received from such rituals: "All that is delirium…because there is no such thing as God."[1] However, as Markel's illness intensified, he began to soften to the comforts offered by church and family. But he was clear, at first, about his reasons for engaging in religious rituals: he wanted to comfort his widowed mother. Yet as time passed, and Easter arrived, Markel seemed to undergo a radical transformation. Suddenly his disposition was not colored by rudeness or by resignation to the suffering and uncertainty of his life. To his nurse, who he once forbade to light a prayer candle, he said, “Go ahead, dear nanny, light it. I was a monster before not to let you light it. For that’s your way of praying to God, and watching you makes me happy and in my happiness I pray for you too, which means that both of us are praying to the same God.” But Markel does far more than just reverse a bitter disposition. He appears to over-correct, swinging the pendulum far away from the self-consumed adolescent he had been just weeks before. After Easter he begins to speak of himself as being responsible for the suffering in the world, and not just the suffering he caused his mother, his brother, and his nurse. He embraces responsibility for all the sins of the world. He longs not just to release the household slaves who attend him, but also to become their servant. Markel proclaims an asymmetrical responsibility; he, more than others, is responsible for the tremendous suffering and pain of the world.

In a stirring line that has become the title for this volume, Markel declares, not long before his death, "Every one of us has sinned against all

men, and I more than others."[2] His mother figures that this excessive confession must be a product of his illness. Hadn't this boy recently refused to appear at church and confess the tangible and obvious sins of his young life? Yet after Easter he confesses these sins, and much more. He expresses remorse for his prior wretchedness, and now embraces responsibility for *all* suffering. His concerned mother could only smile and weep, simultaneously, asking him how he could consider himself more responsible than the murderers and thieves who have so obviously caused bottomless suffering in the world. But, Markel replies, "every one of us is answerable for everyone else and for everything." The dramatic change in Markel represents a profound reconfiguration of responsibility. Somehow his newfound spirit is not crushed by this responsibility, but joyful and hopeful. Even as he carries the weight of the world's pain and suffering on his shoulders, he hopes. He hopes in the impossibility of a forgiveness he could never earn.

And perhaps it is no coincidence that Dostoyevsky sets this story across the seasons of Lent and Easter. What is the Christian story of Jesus' passion if not the activity of a man from Nazareth who considered himself asymmetrically and unreasonably responsible for suffering he had not caused?

Markel's story has engendered many reflections on the nature of responsibility. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the philosopher of responsibility Emmanuel Levinas was fascinated by Dostoyevsky's tale. Levinas cited the line "I more than others" at least twelve times in his writings and many other times in lectures and conversations. Levinas was fascinated by the way Markel's responsibility seems to be torn loose of any of the normal rivets that determine where responsibility begins and ends. Is it possible to consider oneself responsible for all suffering? For all evil?

We cannot blame philosophers and theologians for blinking at this suggestion. The danger of masochism looms large, to be sure, when one looks at the suffering of the world through the eyes of Markel. But Markel's joy is found not in his own wretchedness and depravity, but in a forgiveness that washes over him unannounced. In light of this story, and in the wake of the Easter story, how might we come to consider this notion of responsibility? When responsibility is confined to cause and effect, to blame, we can certainly expect that most suffering will lay bare and unclaimed, without any guilty party who volunteers to mend wounds, to soothe burns, to tend to the scorched earth. All too instinctively I recoil from the kind of asymmetrical responsibility that would make me responsible for the sins of others. When Markel says, "I more than others," he moves far past any reasonable escalation of responsibility. He does not

say, after all, "I more than some" or "I am more responsible than my guiltiness implies." He counts himself more responsible than *all* others. This unhinges the sense of responsibility that we normally use to adjudicate disputes, settle claims in court, and lay blame on guilty parties. Markel counts himself more responsible. But should we? More acutely, should I?

And if it is not I that is responsible for the suffering of humankind, than to whom does responsibility fall? This problem is clearly accentuated by the great degree of suffering worldwide and the lack of parties eager to accept responsibility. Who is responsible for the intense suffering in the slums of Mumbai? Who is responsible for the child orphaned by a war waged against terror? Who is responsible for the racism and sexism that undermine efforts for justice and equality? Who will stand up to accept the weight of these pains, these evils? Well, Markel. But he is fictitious, and even in *The Brothers Karamazov* he does not live long enough to incarnate this responsibility for all the suffering and evil on planet Earth.

This volume collects essays that struggle to understand and respond to suffering and evil. I have used Markel's words, "I more than others" for the title of this collection, though it is unlikely that each contributor considers the weight of responsibility in the intonation of Dostoyevsky's character Markel. Still, the essays share a clear concern for the ways that philosophers and theologians should respond to the problems of suffering and evil. The volume has its origins in the relationships and conversations that surrounded a 2009 annual meeting of the Wesleyan Philosophical Society. Traces of this meeting and its interactions can be found in the chapters, where Jack Caputo's keynote address provided a great deal of stimulating conversation. This conference considered evil from a wide variety of angles, from the traditional questions of theodicy to the much-overlooked need to consider the plight of the environment. Not all of the essays in this collection were a part of this conference, but it is this particular gathering that provided a stimulus for this book.

We begin with Caputo's essay "Praying for an Earthier Jesus," which develops themes closely related to Caputo's book *The Weakness of God*. The next two essays, one written by Craig Keen and the other by me, converse with Caputo's work, particularly in relationship to the problems of evil and suffering. The suffering of the "slumdogs" depicted in the film *Slumdog Millionaire* provides a vivid illustration that is sustained across these first three essays.

The volume then turns to two essays, by Christina Gschwandtner and Christopher Caldwell, about the relationship between ecology and suffering. The third section deals with suffering in relationship to hope and

hospitality, and it features essays by Nathan Crawford, Heather Ross, and Joshua Kira. The final section in this volume provides seven perspectives on the nature of evil and the relationship between God and suffering. It begins with Eric Boynton challenging traditional ways of categorizing occurrences of evil and John Panteleimon Manoussakis considering theodicy through the lens of time and temporality. Brint Montgomery, Eric Manchester, Timothy Crutcher, and Thomas Klibengajtis directly address the theological problem of theodicy. Montgomery outlines an analytical foundation for reconsidering the problem of evil. The chapter by Eric Manchester offers an intriguing use of Thomism to defend God's "decision" to create a world that God foreknew would contain evil and privation. Crutcher uses reflections on Augustine's *Confessions* to suggest an ontological framework in which evil can be understood as "irreality." And in the essay by Klibengajtis, suffering is defined as an opportunity to participate with God in the development of the world. The final essay in the collection, by Geoffrey Karabin, puts reflections on evil and suffering to the test by investigating the problem of Islamic suicide bombings. Andrew David deserves thanks and credit for providing a steady, if subterranean, voice across these pages by assisting in the editorial process.

This volume is bound together by the sense that evil and suffering remain an intense problem for philosophy and theology. Evil is an obstacle for belief, for morality, for hospitality, and for hope. The rain may fall on the just and the unjust alike, but in some places it rains far more than others. Suffering is far from equal across the universe, and it seems to provide us with a constant and nagging puzzle. This book struggles to address the particular and strong sense of responsibility that falls on Christians when it comes to understanding and, more importantly, responding to the problems of suffering and evil in the world. If I *am* more responsible than others, and if unlike Markel I have many more breaths to draw and dollars to spend, what now?

Notes

[1] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Andrew H. MacAndrew, trans. (New York: Bantam Books, 1981). This story is found on pages 344-349.

[2] This line has been translated several different ways, and this rendering amalgamates several translations. MacAndrew translates: "we are all guilty toward others and I am the guiltiest of all," 347.

PART I:

SLUMDOGS, FLESH, AND WEAKNESS

CHAPTER ONE

PRAYING FOR AN EARTHIER JESUS: A THEOLOGY OF FLESH[1]

JOHN D. CAPUTO

At a recent meeting of Wesleyan philosophers and theologians, Craig Keen raised a significant objection to *The Weakness of God*.[2] Going back to the work of William Herzog, Keen made a convincing comparison between the "slumdogs" portrayed in the Academy Award–winning film *Slumdog Millionaire* and the short, miserable lives of the people to whom Jesus preached. If the poor with whom Jesus associated were sinners, they were first sinned against, not unlike the slumdog children who were intentionally blinded in order to render them more effective as pitiable beggars.[3] Both were regarded as unclean, expendable, with nothing to sell but their bodies:

> They were the "slumdogs" of his time and place... These are simply people—people who have no reason to expect a way out, who have no reason to expect more than a short and miserable life. Do they need magic? No. Magic has been co-opted by the powers, too, the powers that weigh them down. Do they need resurrection? Yes, that is what they need. But what kind of resurrection would be good news to the poor? It is here that we must ask if *The Weakness of God* provides good news.[4]

But what is resurrection? Keen asks:

> I say now that I do not know. I believe no more than does *The Weakness of God* in a resuscitation of bodies long dead, molecules and atoms dispersed throughout this planet. I do hope for resurrection, however; but unlike *The Weakness of God*, I hope for a resurrection in which bodies long dead come to be saturated by a new life that has no contrast in and no competition with death. I do not know what that is... I hope that the extant order of things will pass away, that fire will fall from the sky, and that new heavens and a new earth will come to shine—without *ex*clusion or *in*clusion or *con*clusion—in the New Jerusalem… And that is why we need an earthier Jesus than I think makes his way through the airy pages of

> *The Weakness of God*. It is because our bodies are being beaten down that the body of a God strong enough to deliver must be beaten down with us—really, not in charade—and with us raised... I am not so sure that the brilliant text before us longs the way I do for the present evil age to pass away. I am not so sure that it remembers vividly enough that we don't *have* bodies, but rather that we *are* bodies. I am not so sure that in the end what this text has is good news for the vast majority of those who live and have lived in this world.[5]

It is a tribute to the acuteness of Craig Keen's analysis of *The Weakness of God* that he has, I am sure without realizing it, identified my current project, a follow-up to *The Weakness of God*, which I have tentatively titled *The Weakness of Flesh*, where my task is to give an account of an earthier Jesus and perhaps, as I suspect, an earthier resurrection as well. I am extremely grateful to have the gift of such insightful commentary. What follows is a digest of such good news as I can offer about an earthier Jesus, a meek offering indeed compared to the mountain of misery upon which Keen is so resolutely fixed in his own work, for which I am deeply indebted.

Doing Evil

In *The Weakness of God*, I think of God in terms of an event of provocation. The provocation of God is not to be imagined as something that God does, as if God were an agent in the sky, but something that takes place in and under the name of God, which is the philosophical wisdom behind the adage "God helps those who help themselves." The provocation of God is something that requires actual, mundane and identifiable agents, whom no one should confuse with God and who, above all, should not confuse themselves with God. There is no more salutary offspring of the theology of events than the recognition that it is not God but human beings who do things in the name of God, which is why the history of religion is also a history of violence. God is not well described as an agent with mysterious powers to do things that for all the world seem to be the doings of more mundane powers. In a theology of the event, God is not a powerful-but-mysterious agent but the powerless power of the event. God does not do, undo, or fail to do anything, but certain things get themselves done in or under the name of God, in response to the event that is harbored there. That is why it is futile to blame God for doing us wrong and why it is unnecessary to exonerate God's ways before human courts. It is human beings who belong in human courts. The name of God is not the name of somebody doing or not doing something, but the name of an event. Events

break open the present, for better or for worse, like life and death, pleasure and pain, joy and sadness, good and evil, constituting beings both aggressive and sympathetic, which is why we are capable both of attacking and defending the weak. In the ambiguity of this unstable middle, the proportionately ambiguous power of freedom makes its wary way. The hoary theological "problem of evil" thus has nothing to do with all the choices that a sovereign omnipotent and omniscient God could have made but failed to, leaving us in our present sorry state. The problem of evil has to do with the ambient play of ambiguous beings, an ambience beyond mere ambiguity, since our choices rarely boil down to two. The weakness of the flesh is at bottom its ambience, and its ambience is its greatest, if riskiest, resource.

In a theology of the event, there is no question of healing the wounds of time with the salve of eternity, but of returning time to its own resources, of recovering the events by which time, or what happens in time, is nourished, of allowing the extremes of dislocation and disjunction to unsettle the settled flow of the present. Imaginative and metaphysically inclined beings that we are, we can hardly resist envisioning an eternal and immaterial sphere outside time and space, or hardly be blamed for picturing some immaterial super agent capable of the most daring and astonishing feats, for it is always necessary to give figure and form to events. But in the end, the name of God is a trace of an event nestled deep within time which forces time outside itself, in an ecstatic exposure to time immemorial and to an unforeseeable time to come.[6] The meditation upon this event, which drives time and language and desire to their extreme limits, driving us to God, driving us to being driven by God, forcing us to ask what we love when we love our God, exposing us to the provocation of God, is what I mean by theology.

That is why I speak of the weakness of God. For events do not do things, and the name of God is the name of an event. Events are not causal factors or agents but the condition of restlessness within things within which causal lines of force are set in motion, which make for movers and doers, both provoked and restless. The event itself, if it had a self, is a provocation, a solicitation, an invitation, an interrogation, a memory or a promise, whatever it is that unsettles the settled present, whatever disturbs, interrupts, disjoins, opens, exposes. The eventiveness of the event is the deconstructive energy or restlessness in things, but it does not, of itself, do something. We do things with words and we do things with things, but we do not do things with events; events are conditions under which things get said and done. That does not set us up as autonomous agents, for our actions are always the action of the other in me, my response to a

provocation from I know not where.

The "tangle" of events, to borrow an excellent image from Craig Keen, makes for an anonymous quasi-transcendental field. The name of God harbors the weak force of an event, the power of powerlessness, the powerlessness of the "perhaps," not the omni-power of a *prima causa*. We might say, following the dizzying exchange between Cixous and Derrida,[7] that the weakness of God turns on the undecidable play of the "might," the suggestive slippage from the powerful "might" of God, the power of God almighty, to the powerless power of the "might" as in "might be" or "might have been," the power of a suggestiveness or subjunctiveness, of a possibility or a perhaps, of an invitation or solicitation. The theology of the event depends upon the grammatological slippage from the indicative mood to the subjunctive mood (and deconstruction is written in the subjunctive, about subjunctions), from the ontological to the de-ontological or me-ontological. What is disjunctive about the event appears grammatically in the subjunctive, which subverts the settled conjunctions of the present. That is why, pace Heidegger's famous analysis of the Anaximander fragment, Derrida locates justice in the disjunction or dislocation of a call, a solicitation, a promise. Disjoining is the work of the event, which does not mean what the event "does," but the way the event provides the conditions under which things get themselves done.

How Earthy Do You Want to Be?

Let us begin the pursuit of an earthier Jesus by taking Christianity at its word, at its Word made Flesh, embracing the claim made in Christianity that it is a religion of the flesh (*sarx*, *caro*, *chair*, *Fleisch*). Let us take our point of departure from the Christian affirmation of the flesh, from the task to adapt a turn of phrase from Deleuze that I think felicitous of "becoming flesh," a phrase that almost perfectly translates John 1:14 (*sarke egeneto*), even as the Germans say *Fleischwerden* as a way to translate "incarnation." I am distinguishing "flesh" as the site of pleasure and pain, suffering and *jouissance*, passivity and mortality, from the "body" as agent, as the site of action and movement. The body tends to mean the body subject, the subject of activity and agency. The body is the "organon" of the soul, intimately conjoined to the soul, its right hand, so to speak. The body is organized, a body of organic functions. The body is the standard subject of Husserlian "phenomenology," even as it appears everywhere without being named by Heidegger in *Being and Time* as being-in-the-world, as the user of tools and the being that knows its way around the world. The body on the whole tends to be hale and whole, male

and muscular, white and Western, even a bit of an able-bodied athlete, sexual and otherwise.

Flesh, by contrast, is a seat of passivity and affectivity, of feeling, self-feeling, and feeling itself felt; flesh is the sight of pleasure and pain, joy and suffering, glory and misery. I would identify flesh as the seat *par excellence* of earthiness. We tend to pass our days in the functioning body tuned to the world, but it does not take much to be drawn back into the flesh. The "reduction" to the flesh, to borrow a term from phenomenology, occurs when we are driven to the extremes of pleasure and pain, pushed to a point where the world itself is suspended and we are reduced to sighing and moaning. Flesh aches with hunger but flesh (*Fleisch*) is also eaten, flesh is meat, flesh is corpulence, flesh is inseparable from blood, flesh is voluptuous, and when we die, it is flesh that rots (first) and stinks (our bones take longer to rot, and who knows when our ceramic hip and knee replacements and dental crowns will rot). Because the "body" is the principle of agency, it is also capable of becoming utterly inert; at death, there is a "body," a *corpus*/corpse, which must be lifted, removed, disposed of, but the flesh has melted away, withdrawn. Dead bodies are bodies without flesh; the body becomes a dead weight.

If I am being indelicate, it is not because I am against delicacy, but because I am emphasizing that the indelicacy, the earthiness, that attends the flesh is a function of its delicacy. People with a "foul mouth" use words that are "dirty" and are told to "wash their mouth out." To speak of the human being as a whole as "flesh" is a metonym that takes its point of departure from a humble and even an embarrassing part of (our) nature. Flesh is not for the squeamish. When people decide to really write about the flesh and not resort to circumlocutions, it leaves everyone shocked and cannot be repeated in polite society.[8] To be sure, nothing is gained by inciting a war between body and flesh or instituting a new form of dualism. My point is exactly the opposite: all flesh is embodied, all the living bodies we have ever run into are enfleshed, and we would sometimes find it hard to sort out one from the other. What I am analyzing here is the almost irresistible lure or dream of a "body without flesh," a living one, not a corpse, and what event is harbored in that figure.

According to Paul's theology of the Incarnation, Christ Jesus, not thinking fleshlessness something to exploit and hold on to (Philippians 2:6), assumes flesh and blood and bone. That is what Paul says just after having decided that, on the whole, unless he is needed here on earth, he would rather have a body without flesh. More baldly put, he is saying he would rather be dead and that life in the flesh is nothing to hold on to either. That raises the question of the status of this bond with flesh, its ana-

status, given a belief in *anastasis*. Is there, as Jean-Luc Nancy suspects, a deep dissatisfaction with our earthy carnality concealed in Incarnation, a "real and secret horror of bodies" lodged there?[9] Might a horror at the prospect of carnal corruption go hand in hand with affirming the advent of the Incorruptible into our "corruptible bodies?" What would it be like to affirm a theology of carnality itself, before or without *In*-carnation, so that carnality is not, need not, be visited from on high? A theology where God does not need to visit or assume flesh but would be always already there? A theology where the divine is characterized not by an advent into flesh but by the event of flesh itself, not a theology of advent, but a theology of the event? Is a genuine theology of the flesh (*caro, carnis*) compromised, betrayed in advance, by a theology of *In*-carnation? What is the effect of this prefix *in*? Is its force actually privative, "in-carnation," as in in-corporeal, in-valid, in-carnal?

Even if we move beyond the classic notion of "atonement," which these days has come under fire and been subjected to radical reinterpretation, even if we move on to say that Incarnation represents the advent of grace and glory beyond nature, raising flesh up to hitherto unsuspected glory, lifted beyond its own natural resources, does this not come too late? Why not say that flesh itself, in all its misery, is already glorious, is glory enough? Why this fear and trembling about flesh itself, without or before Incarnation? Is this not a fear and trembling before death itself? When Paul says he prefers to live with Christ instead of in the flesh, he does not mean what Plato meant in the *Phaedo*, where an incorruptible soul survives the corruption of the body and lives on with the purity of a separate soul. Paul does not distinguish body from soul but body from flesh. He says we will live on in bodily form but with a "spiritual body" (*soma pneumatikon*, I Cor. 15: 44), light as air. That means life without getting sick or dying, without the need to eat and digest food (or the fear of starving or being eaten); without getting tired and in need of a rest and a cold drink; without falling and breaking our necks or worrying about bleeding, freezing, or starving to death; without the need to reproduce; in short, without everything that we associate with the life, with the earthiness of life.

The Risen Body

The body of which Incarnational theology is dreaming is brought out clearly by a revealing episode in Luke. After his appearance on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appeared to the disciples assembled in Jerusalem, seemingly out of the blue, who were startled and "thought that they were

seeing a ghost (*pneuma*)." He reassured them and urged them to look at the wounds in his risen body, urged them to touch him, "for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." This flatly contradicts the words of Paul in I Cor. 15:50, which expressly disallows "flesh and blood" into the kingdom of God. Then, as a *pièce de résistance*, Jesus took a piece of broiled fish and ate it to allay their doubts (Luke 24:36-43), after which he led them out to Bethany, blessed them, and "was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50). Left to stand as it is, this narrative would overwhelm any attempt to account for the risen body. It would imply a functioning digestive tract and consequently the production of waste products, a heavenly food industry requiring farms, a favorable climate, and a waste management industry, to put it all rather circumspectly.[10] Giorgio Agamben, who is less concerned with being circumspect, puts it bluntly: what must be excluded from the risen body is defecation.[11] Defecation marks the difference between this side and the other side. There is nothing more earthy. The line between immanence and transcendence is drawn by defecation. What is foolish, ridiculous, or amusing about this need for a heavenly plumbing industry, of course, is that we have literalized and reified an event, conflated an event with some sort of heavenly or otherworldly fact of the matter. That would be the equivalent of taking seriously what sort of housing, food supply, and waste management system would be required to accommodate Alice's surprising change of size in Wonderland, or where the Mad Hatter purchases his tea or whether he preferred Earl Grey. Can this be how to think about these stories?

Thomas Aquinas proposed a way out of this dilemma by offering a typically ingenious metaphysical gloss on this amazing episode in which he relied upon an analogy adopted from the Venerable Bede about the contrasting ways the earth and the sun consume water.[12] The earth is "thirsty" for water, meaning that it consumes water by absorbing it from defect or need, whereas the sun is higher than or in excess of water, and does not "need" water, and so it consumes water by burning it up or evaporating it. The mortal body is like the earth, it needs food, whereas the risen body is like the sun, it does not need food, but consumes it by evaporating or burning it up. The food is not transformed into the risen body of Christ (which would create the need for heavenly plumbers) but evaporated, reduced from an actual object to its primal potency.

From the point of view of a historical-critical view of the Scriptures, Aquinas actually is not all that far off! But with this difference: the resurrected body is not analogous to a heavenly body; it *is* a heavenly body, of the same stuff. Of course, one large problem here is that, as Dale Martin says, there is "no fixed tradition as to the exact nature of the

resurrected body of Jesus" in the New Testament.[13] Luke and John make a point of emphasizing that resurrection is a resurrection of the flesh; that the hands of Thomas could feel the soft tissues of Jesus' wounded side; that Jesus could eat broiled fish, have breakfast of fish with the disciples on the shores of the Lake Tiberias, and share bread with the disciples in the inn at Emmaus; and that he was no "ghost" (*pneuma*). Paul, who is defending resurrection against its learned despisers at Corinth, explicitly rejects that possibility in advance, almost verbatim, regarding it as just the sort of thing to bring down ridicule upon the whole idea of resurrection as patently mythical and magical, and about that, I think Paul is right. If one took Luke and John literally, one would then face the problem of coming up with something to avoid the paradoxes of heavenly waste disposal.

To avoid such ridiculous consequences, while not giving up on the idea of the resurrection of the body completely, as Martin shows in a close analysis of I Cor. 15, Paul took pains to distinguish the features of corruptible and incorruptible bodies. Corruptible bodies are strictly earthly postlapsarian bodies, made of earthly dirt and water, whereas heavenly bodies are made of a purer, finer astral material of fire and air, a point that invites comparison with contemporary electronic postbiological bodies. Paul does not distinguish between body and soul (Plato), or body and mind (Descartes), but between gross bodies and refined bodies. Human bodies are composed of elements of both, which is why they are so earthy. As descendents of Adam, we are possessed of the lower elements, which Paul characterizes as *sarx*, flesh, the soft tissues of the body responsible for feeling, and *psyche*, a "soul" or in Latin an *anima* that is responsible for its animate vegetative and sentient life, which it shares with the animals on land, sea (fish), and air (birds). Finally, it has the element of *pneuma*, spirit, which is responsible for the higher acts of cognitive and intelligent life, which is nothing immaterial in the modern sense but consists of the finest, most refined and ethereal of material substances, out of which the sun, the moon, and the stars are made (as is also, perhaps, a modern digitalized computer). So the natural place of *pneuma* is not the earth but the heavens; these are heavenly bodies *somata epourania*. The first two elements, *sarx* and *psyche*, are earth-bound and belong to the sphere of *hyle*, which is commonly translated as "matter" but signifies the grosser heavier side of matter, whereas *pneuma* refers to ether, fire, and air, more refined and lighter materialities, as opposed to the grosser earthier ones.

The resurrected body sheds everything hyletic and animate, effectively shedding its grosser materiality and animality and earthiness, while what remains is entirely pneumatic. Thus, while we today would say that fire and air belong to the "material" world, they were not in Paul's vocabulary

hyletic (*hyle*) or "material" (in the "gross" or narrow sense) like wood or dirt. In other words, what Paul is precisely excluding is the hyletic or *earthy* body. In Incarnational theology, the hope for an earthier Jesus goes hand in hand with the hope of an unearthy resurrection. In the resurrected body, it is *pneuma* that survives, but not *sarx* or *psyche*. Death for Paul is not the separation of body and soul, but the separation of body and flesh. The resurrected body is still a body (*soma*), not a gross-hyletic body (an animal body) but a "pneumatic body," one that sheds its grossness and is resurrected in a highly refined ethereal body whose function is one of higher intelligent life but not lower biological or zoological life. This invites comparison with contemporary debates among theoretical physicists who point out that in the sphere of particle physics, one is no longer dealing with "matter" (in the gross sense) because of the minuteness of these particles, by which the physicists do not mean to say that they are studying angels or spiritual substances.

When one compares Paul's account with that of Luke and John, it is clear that in the Synoptic gospels, where earlier sayings are cast into narratives and made to tell a story, a more mythic and magical view of the risen body is struck. The narrative structure permits the implausible notion of palpably risen flesh, with risen but incorruptible and quite useless bodily functions like eating and drinking. The authors of these gospels ignore, if indeed they even knew, the way Paul had forestalled those problems in advance and explicitly ruled out risen flesh from the kingdom of God (I Cor. 15: 51). Paul was not trying to tell a story but to undo one. He was worried about how resurrection held up to ridicule by the Greek philosophers at Corinth. The *hoi polloi* at Corinth would swallow almost anything, but Paul was hearing objections from the educated class. Accordingly, he disallows all such magical concoctions and cleans up the account of the resurrected body by defining it as a body without flesh, effectively without organs, a body made not of earthy but of an astral stuff that even the learned members of the ancient world would agree is incorruptible.[14]

No one today can fail to notice the connection between the eschatological risen body and technological body, between these spectacular scenes in the New Testament and the literature of science fiction, between the miracles of the New Testament and the miracles of technoscience, which is increasingly becoming a techno-eschatology. Has not science long dreamt of transfiguration, resurrection and ascension, and does it not do so even more today when certain impossible things have become possible? We today cannot avoid observing how much of the theological imagination is being progressively realized by medical science

and contemporary bionics and biotechnology; the possibility of moving through the air in flight, miracle drugs to cure disease, straightening and even replacing limbs and organs, sending instant messages across vast spaces, travel guided by digital global positioning devices, et cetera. As Michel Serres has shown, advanced information technology is gradually taking over the classical functions of angelology.[15] We even find a high-tech equivalent of the way the risen body of Jesus was able to appear and disappear instantly, behind closed doors, in the famous "Beam me up, Scottie" scenes in the TV series *Star Trek*, which project the technological possibility of instant bodily relocation. On the horizon of this technobody is the ancient dream of the elimination of death. Is this a dream or a nightmare? Is it an ideal limit to be approached asymptotically; right now we would all settle for an average lifespan of a hundred plus years; and maybe even on a transformed earth, cleaned up and protected from the right wing. There is, moreover, a fascinating parallel between these astral bodies of the first century and contemporary particle physics, where the lines between the material and the immaterial get fuzzy, where we are no longer dealing with gross-hyletic matter but something quite different.

Theology and robotology make a common cause centered on the common foe they find in biology. The robotologists are no less resolved than St. Paul to provide us with light, fast, airy magical bodies, even if such bodies come at the cost of flesh, of the *bios* of life and its biology, of the *zoe* of life and its zoology. The latest most up-to-date version of I Corinthians 15 is being written by contemporary robotologists. They are as prepared and desirous as any Christian to put off corruptibility and to put on incorruptibility, and they are just as ready to leave this earth for some elsewhere in the skies where they will live on and on in very unearthy bodies that are shiny, hot, fast, light, and incorruptible. The one by science no less than the other by Spirit is anxious to refit disabled bodies with shiny new able bodies[16] and then to fit themselves out with bodies that can survive the trip and thrive in the atmosphere of that heavenly city. Robotology and biotechnology are no less than theology in the business of eschatology. They are all assiduously preparing a transfiguration, a resurrection, an ascension. The robotologists are as serious about this as any Bible thumper in Kansas railing against Darwin or any ravished character in *Left Behind*. Both show the same anxiety about dying before the rapture arrives.[17] A theologian equally at home in particle physics offers us a new theory of resurrection. The unholy alliance of John Polkinghorne and Hans Moravec is written in the stars. Seen thus, both robots and risen bodies, both iPhones and angels, all so many bodies without flesh, announcing a future that both excites and terrifies us, the

future concealed in the fate of our flesh.

Weak Theology and the Weakness of Flesh

How then can theology explain its difference from robotology? What is the difference between the bodies to come of theology and the bodies to come of robotology? What are we to make of these speculative forays into what Paul himself calls a *mysterion*, a secret? Are we on the right track?

In order to respond to this, let us go back to *The Weakness of God* where the "power" of the God of the New Testament is portrayed as the power of a weak force, a power without power, like the power of forgiveness, which answers one's enemies with a kiss. The problem with this hypothesis is that the New Testament narratives also portray a very real power, a strong force, emanating from the body of Jesus, a power of healing so great that one need only touch his garment to experience it. Does not Jesus command evil spirits or raise Lazarus by the sheer power of his word? Although it is true that Jesus does not deliver a mighty blow to his enemies, does he not use all his power, expend every resource at his considerable command, on behalf of the least among us, multiplying loaves, raising the dead? It is to slumdogs everywhere—in addition to the slumdog children of Mumbai, one might also think of teenagers in the American slums driven to drugs and the easy money of drug dealing by a system that keeps them systemically poor, this time portrayed in the stunning HBO series *The Wire*—that Jesus announces that he has come to bring good news and among whose bodies his own sacred body mixes and circulates.

Now is not the ultimate good news that Jesus announces, the eschatology par excellence, precisely that the slumdogs will finally be raised incorruptible, when they will put their misery behind them in the most decisive of all imaginable ways, for which we require the might of God Almighty? Here I recommend we proceed with some caution. The temptation to turn to the strong God of a strong theology is never stronger than at this precise moment. What we desire, what we want to believe, which means what we are *lief* (from the German *lieben*) to think, what we would love to think, is that one sent by God comes and stretches out his hand and says, "be gone," and the evil ones scatter, and a reign of justice is established. I do not deny the importance of constructive narratives like that. *Slumdog Millionaire* is something like that, but the larger tale told, more implicitly to be sure, in *Slumdog Millionaire,* is that for the most part these people do not win a million dollars, are not rescued from their desperate plight, and end their lives in misery, destitution, and a degrading

death. The harshness of reality, in fact, intruded into this film when the young actors, chosen from among "real" slumdogs, after picking up their Academy Awards were about to be returned to the very shanty towns from whence they were plucked, at which point the Indian government, overwhelmed with embarrassment, intervened.

The slumdogs, the real, concrete, earthy and incarnate ones, lead ruined lives, damaged beyond repair, irreparably; by the time help arrives, if it ever arrives, they are already blind or dead. Because the melancholy truth overhanging mortal life is that if there is death at all, then there will also be untimely and unjust death; if there is suffering at all, then there will also be needless and unjustified suffering. That is part and parcel of the weakness of flesh and of the ambience of evil. There is nothing we can do to help the dead. There remains only the two-fold opening of the present, of the immemorial and the promise. There remains only the cultivation of the "dangerous memory" of their suffering (Metz), keeping their death alive in our lives, dreaming of ways in which they might have been lifted up, allowing ourselves to be solicited by their death. That means doing the name of God, for the name of God is the name of God is the name of a deed, of a solicitation, doing what is to be done in the name of God, making the truth happen in the lives of the living. The might contained in this name is the might of the subjunctive, meditating on how they might have been saved and how all this injustice might be avoided in the future, not the might of a power mighty enough to reach back into the past and change it, which was the dream of Peter Damian for whom the name of "God almighty" meant the power to alter the past. This might is the power of the subjunctive opened up by the weak messianic power of the memory of the dead, the *revenants*, and the hope of something to come, the *arrivants*. In weak theology, divine might has become the divine "might" (in the subjunctive). The dead possess the might of the might have been; the future has the might of the maybe. But in actuality, these bodies are not going to come back to life.

Unless they do, as indeed they do in strong theology. For the theology of resurrection is the strong stuff of an exceedingly strong and anastatic theology, which intends to come to the rescue of weak and shattered flesh. Not, alas, in the nick of time, but too late, after time, after it is too late for time. Too late, much too late, does resurrection love the living body. Just as Jesus was too late (intentionally, it seems) to arrive in Bethany, which allowed Lazarus to die, which in turn allowed the author of this gospel to have Jesus put on a display of divine power.[18] In some ways, the show of strength of the strong God in the resurrection of the body is more impressive, even stronger, than the show of omnipotence exercised in

originally creating the world in the first place. For however much shock and awe are on display in the creation of the cosmos with a word of his mouth, which is considerable, the spectacular scene of creation still remains at a certain remove, like a vast cosmic spectacle of time long past, before which we are minute and belated spectators. But in the resurrection, we are not spectators but very much on stage. We could not be more intimately and personally involved in the power deployed in the resurrection of the body, where all this divine might is brought home, zoomed in and brought to bear upon our bodies, upon our weak and weary and worn-out flesh. It is clear that *creation ex nihilo* and resurrection go hand in hand and that as far as we ourselves are concerned, re-creation packs every bit as much a punch as *creatio ex nihilo*.

My contention is that it is precisely at this point of resurrection we must take care not to take our eye off the event, to be distracted by the figure, slipping from the "might" of the subjunctive into the might of the almighty. It is precisely at this point that we must not lose our nerve and part company with flesh, with the weakness and earthiness of flesh, turn our face away from flesh, no longer able or willing to traffic in the slums of the world, whose earthiness will have proven too much to bear, especially if it is an earthy Jesus we have in mind. My contention is that strong theology lacks the heart to cope with the weakness of the flesh. Do not mistake my intentions. I am not trying to drum the resurrection out of theology - far from it. I am trying to redescribe it in terms of the earthiness of Jesus. I am trying to describe re-surrection in terms of the re-petition of the event, to preserve the force of the *re-* wherever possible, which sees in these speculative forays, including Paul's, a category mistake: fiery airy bodies is not what this is about. If it is, the robotologists may well win the race with the second coming.

The profundity of Christian theology is that it means to be a theology of Incarnation, where everything turns on the entrance of God into the world, announced by angels, in humble circumstance in an obscure corner of the world. The stroke of genius of Christian theology is that it means to be a theology of the becoming-flesh of God, of the hallowing of flesh, from a humble birth to death most grievous and unjust. The complexity of Christian theology is the way it would entangle God with the tangle of flesh that we are, as Craig Keen has put it so felicitously. Its answer to the great Nietzschean critique is that it is a theology of the Incarnation. But at a certain point the high theology of Christian orthodoxy loses the thread of this entanglement and backs off from the earthy import of what it is saying. Having started from an eternal logos already disentangled from flesh, it then disentangles our bodies from our flesh and has recourse

thereafter to spiritual bodies, mystical bodies, hot, fast, and bright transfigured and resurrected bodies, to mystical, mystified, and mystifying bodies of all kinds. These are nothing less than bodies without flesh, magical bodies that have washed themselves clean of flesh. They no longer get weary and sweaty, bloodied and buried; they no longer suffocate or defecate, and they have replaced our more unpleasant body odors with the odors of sanctity. Compare Agamben's earthy observation that defecation is the crucial dividing line between bodies of flesh and resurrected bodies with the slumdog Jamal plunging into the cesspool, into a sea of defecation, which constitutes a powerful figure of flesh, a pungent representation of one side of flesh.

In strong theology, the slumdogs become millionaires after all. The earthy bodies of the slumdogs are but seeds of the bodies of glory. Fleshy life is a seed, a larval caterpillar that undergoes a glorious metamorphosis into a beautiful butterfly, wings and all. Flesh is an investment in life without flesh, even as the earthy body of Jesus, the body of the earthy Jesus, is metamorphosized into a glorified heavenly one. In weak theology, the commitment to the earthy Jesus is stronger and more earth-bound. The "becoming flesh" of God emblematized in Christianity is not turned into an economy of saving flesh from itself, into a strategy for abandoning flesh when the going gets tough. If we cannot be saved from the weakness of the flesh, that is, from flesh itself, St. Paul says, our faith is in vain. That would make the hallowing of flesh in Christianity into a strictly provisional and economic operation. The redemption of flesh would then become a redemption from flesh. The God comes into flesh precisely in order to make it possible for us to leave flesh behind, to live once again, this time around in bodies without flesh, whose corruptibility causes us so much trouble. This burst of divine power burns off our frail and mortal flesh and turns us into fiery, airy beings, all light and velocity meeting Jesus on a cloud. If this does not transpire, Paul assures us, we are the most pitiable of creatures, that is to say, earthy beings, beings of flesh all the way down. Strong theology offers relief, sublation, redemption, an escape from flesh, displacing our bodies of flesh with magical fleshless ones. Otherwise, it is all in vain. In weak theology, on the other hand, we set out to be more faithful lovers of the flesh, more faithful partners of a pact with flesh that affirms flesh to the end, till death do us part, that embraces the weakness of flesh, that pursues the affirmation of flesh all the way down. Weak theology is a more patient reader of stories about bodies of light and air eating fish, where metamorphosis is a passage from earth to earth.

What do these stories affirm? Theological thinking, like all thinking

worthy of the name, begins and ends, if indeed it ever ends, in affirmation, and if it is not affirmation we are about, then we are about nothing. Thinking means saying yes, amen, *oui, oui*. A theology of the flesh is constituted by a double yes, the repeated affirmation of the flesh made in weak theology, the two-fold axiomatic of a theology of the flesh. Firstly, flesh itself is what we are, not what we have but what we are, yes, all the way down, so that if flesh is burned off, then all that is left of us is ash and cinder. That is the anomaly of attributing eternal life to those rotting in their graves. What death and eternal life have in common is a lack of flesh, which means the affirmation of eternal life requires the negation of flesh. Secondly, flesh itself is of itself something saving, yes, not something needing to be saved; flesh itself is of itself hallow, not in need of being hallowed.[19] Yes, yes. Flesh is healed and hallowed by flesh, as time is healed by time, and space by space, and life by life.

The hypothesis made in weak theology is that we get the best results by facing up to the worst, that the weakness of the flesh is met by embracing this very weakness, affirming it, not relieving or replacing, not metamorphosizing or transcending it by rendering it *aufgehoben* in hot white fleshless bodies. The hypothesis is that the frailty and mortality of our being is healing of itself. To seek to be healed of our mortality is to seek to be healed of life itself. Mortality is itself a form of life, *vita mortalis*, not of death, and our vitality is not compromised by mortality but constituted or fashioned by it. Our life is sculpted by mortality, the way a statue is etched by and at its limits. The beauty of life includes the patina of our mortality. If flesh, like the flesh of the slumdogs, needs salvation, then such salvation as is available is forthcoming from flesh itself. It does not come from something higher or older or prior to flesh, something odorless and colorless that descends among our smelly colored bodies, something that comes into flesh to save it but ends up by finally purifying our bodies of flesh.

So if in a more radical theology of flesh, a more radically earthy one, we say the word comes into flesh in order to redeem it, that is a figurative way of portraying what is redemptive, salvific, saving, and restorative about flesh itself, a way of placing a halo of divinity around flesh itself. It is a figure not of some actuality prior to carnality by which carnality is saved, but of an archi-carnality, the verbum as an anonymous quasi-transcendental field, the virtuality of the event, the textuality of the archi-text—whose realization or actualization is what is saving. Flesh is not fallen and then saved; rather, falling and saving are movements taking place within the sphere of carnality, as carnal events, carnalizing events, where the flesh incarnates not some divine being but the events taking

shape as flesh. It is just when flesh is driven to an extreme by these events that we notice the divine glow flesh gives.

The Working Church: Are There Any Slumdog Millionaires?

There is something undeniably amusing about this discussion of hot, fast and fiery bodies. Every such discussion ends by declaring that it is all a mystery, but not without first trading jokes about what sort of body we will have, like the medieval hypothesis that we will all be thirty-somethings. We have to do here with figures of the sort that can only be found in literature or painting or today a digitalized animated film. That should be enough to alert us that something is amiss, that we are on the wrong track if we mean to understand what is afoot, if I may say so, in these stories of bodies without flesh. Theology is not, cannot be, about this. Robotology, perhaps, but not theology. What then is theology about? To address this, let us come back to the lead we are following in Craig Keen's hypothesis about the slumdogs.

Theology must take every precaution neither to be panicked by death nor to allow its salutary indignation at the injustice dealt to the slumdogs to trick it into making a desperate grab for life, so that if life and justice are to be had at the cost of flesh, then so be it. But if that is so, what becomes of the slumdogs in weak theology, all of them, past, present, and to come, the long and countless dead and those who are to come, all those who have, and will have, lived and died as slumdogs and never become millionaires? If the name of God is the name of an event, of something unconditional but without force, if it is not the name of a super being who can rush to our rescue with a mighty show of strength but of the things that are done and undone in the name of God, then what then of the grave, of the gravity of death, where death is the fate of all flesh? What of all the nameless and innumerable dead whose lives were short and brutal, whose deaths were cruel and unjust? What justice is there for them?

But where is it written that justice is always served? Justice is a promise not an assurance, a solicitation not always answered, a hope always vulnerable and at risk. Justice, too, is earthy, like flesh itself. Nothing is guaranteed. *Slumdog Millionaire*, we recall, is about a quiz show turning on the question: how did an uneducated slumdog know the answer to all those questions? The answer is not that he cheated, not that he was lucky, not that he drew the answers from a vast stock of knowledge, not stealth, luck, or knowledge, but "it is written," fate. On that account, of course, the fate of all the others is rather more heartless

and unhappy, so why bother? But fate, too, is just more strong theology. In a theology of the event, what is written is the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are not books of fate but words of promise, words that well up without guarantees. Words are solicitations and what happens depends on the response. Promises are always risky business, and nothing ensures that they will be fulfilled.

The name of God harbors the event of a promise (which is no less a risk) of justice, of messianic peace. The hope of peace, the dream of a messianic coming, that is the substance of these figures of resurrection. We might of course say these are figures of the unfigurable, representations of the unrepresentable, ways to imagine the unimaginable, of portraying some kind of life beyond life of which no one, St. Paul included, should be expected to say very much. These are figures of the impossible. That may well be and no one has authorized me to waylay that; I would only say that it is a bit of double dealing to continue to proclaim that hope under the name of flesh inasmuch as it takes leave of flesh in a way that could not be more decisive. We do not know what kind of life this would be, but we do know what kind it would not be. Be careful when you ask for an earthier Jesus; you may get it, along with an earthier resurrection.

In my view these are stories of a promise, a call, a solicitation, a provocation, where it is precisely incumbent upon us to respond, to make the truth come true, to do the truth, to make peace happen, to make the Kingdom of God (the body of God) come true. That we may or may not do. There is no magic coming from the sky to do it for us, no magical bodies into which we will be transformed so that we may live on and on. The miracle of the impossible has nothing to do with magic but with impossible people who make the impossible happen just because of their faith in the impossible. The key for me lies in what Keen, referring to the works of Alexander Schmemann, describes as a performative, martyrological church, which is very much like what I call, following a Catholic priest who serves the slums of North Philadelphia, the "working church," the operative one, not the inoperative one![20] The Scriptures do not map a path to another world but portray what it would be like to visit the shock of the Kingdom upon the only world we know, portraying a life of *metanoia*, of forgiveness and healing, which gives us hope and asks for our faith.

It is the performative or working church that I would say marks the difference between theology and robotology. The church is interested in making justice, mercy, and love flow like water over the land, whereas robotology is interested in longevity. Robotology wants *us* to live forever,

whereas theology wants *love* to live forever. Theology does not, or ought not, have anything to do with having hot, fast, and fiery bodies—that is robotology not theology—or with investments in celestial funds that pay eternal dividends—that is economics not grace. Theological truth is *theopraxis*: doing the truth. The name of God is the name of a deed. Do justice, make love happen, make the body of Christ happen in the world, make the Incarnation a reality, and where you see death all around, make life. That is all we earthlings know on earth and all we need to know.

We may take such comfort as is available from the consideration that there is in fact a working church, that there actually are such people, that the history of those who make the truth come true, who do the impossible, is as old as history itself. Inside and outside what calls itself religion and the church? The name of God is fire indeed, inflaming hearts and searing bodies. Religion is a flammable substance and doing theology is playing with fire. It would take a careful and elaborate historical study to decide whether more people have been saved by these sacred names or simply seared, sacrificed, scorched, and consumed by their fires. Religion is as likely to reduce the world to ashes as to inflame our hearts with justice. We can no more prune or purify religion of its dangers than we can purify fire of its heat. Religion is irreducibly a matter of excess, which is why it makes for a volatile mix with politics, for better and for worse, why it might be another name for politics, politics by another name. Try as we might, and I am not saying don't try, we never get to keep "good" religion and jettison the bad, for it is the same extremism, the same being driven to the extreme, the same intensity, and the same passion that is found on either side, *religion* serving as a name for the most extreme and radical resources in our natures. Religion is an undecidable (one of many).

So for all the blood spilled in the name of God, it remains the case that there are men and women whose dedication to God translates into the unselfish service of the wretched and the outcast, into a lifelong vocation among the slumdogs. The shakers and doers who work the slums are impossible people who will not be put off; they are the people of the impossible. They incarnate the impossible, allowing the name of God to make its entrance into the world and to pitch its tent among the tents of the slumdogs. There is a long history of such "fools"—whether "for Christ" or for the "great compassion"—and under many others names, people who are mad for justice, who are driven by a passion for the impossible, intent upon making the impossible happen. There is a long history of it happening wherever the fires of religion flare. What needs to be recalled, of course, is that in a theology of the event, this happens inside and outside of "Christianity" or of the biblical faiths, among those who are religious

with a religionless faith, inside and outside of what we in the West call in Christian Latin "religion." It happens wherever anyone burns with a passion for the impossible. In a theology of the event, the distinction between what is inside and outside religion is undercut by doing the truth, undercut by the event. That is the greatest strength of weak theology. Whatever you did for the least of mine you did for me; that is all we need to know of "Christianity." There we find Christianity in the flesh. My idea is not to find the essence of Christianity but its flesh.

The acid test of the lovers of the impossible is, as is entirely in order, I think, the impossible itself. I refer to what is called in classical theology *resignatio ad infernum* ("resignation to hell"), the notion, itself based on another word from Paul (Rom 9:1-3), that if the love of God required it, if the service of the slumdogs required it, the people of the impossible (known in religion as "saints") would prefer *per impossibile*, as we say so tellingly, to be consigned to hell, that is, to be *forever* separated from the love of God rather than to go to heaven while letting the slumdogs bury the slumdogs. The lives of those who serve the slumdogs are indeed something of a miracle, but this miracle has nothing to do with magical powers; their lives are indeed lives of grace, but this has nothing to do with having supernatural gifts and powers; these people are indeed saints, but there is nothing in the power of a church that can sanctify them. It is they who sanctify the church, not the church who sanctifies them. The church does not sanctify flesh, thank you very much, but the service of the flesh lends the church such sanctity as it has. Without them, there is no excuse for the churches and all the trouble the churches cause in our lives. The miracle, the grace, the sanctity lies in doing the impossible, responding to the provocation of the name of God, to the event harbored in this name, in whatever name it is embodied, inside or outside religion or Christianity. The miracle, the grace, the sanctity are invisible and powerless powers, weak powers, too weak to show up among the powers of this world, like the power of forgiveness. That is the subject matter not of high theology, nor of metaphysics, but a certain theopoetics of the weakness of God.

These people bear witness to the name of God, but they do not "verify" some theological proposition about the *filioque* or the *homoousios*, which picks out a being bearing the name of God. They do not verify the event of Incarnation; they let it happen in their flesh. They incarnate the name of God, giving it flesh and blood. Nor can they guarantee a successful outcome of their labors, which are all too often thankless, obscure, and futile, so when one of them, like Mother Theresa, becomes a celebrity, it is exceedingly odd! They themselves simply answer the solicitation, respond