



Crossroads Cultural Center

in collaboration with

The Department of Art History and Music

present:

Peguy and the Cathedral of Chartres **A LOVE STORY**

Pope Auditorium, Fordham University, New York, NY

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Crossroads: Good evening, and welcome on behalf of the Crossroads Cultural Center. We would like to thank the co-sponsor of tonight's event, the Department of Art History and Music at Fordham University, and Radius, the Fordham student club that helped organizing it. It is a great pleasure to be here with all of you a few days before Christmas. It is also a great pleasure to be, so to speak, in the company of Charles Peguy a few days before Christmas because it is impossible to approach the figure of Peguy without being immediately reminded in the most carnal, direct way of what Christmas is about: *This marvelous, unique, extraordinary, unbelievable, eternal temporal eternal, divine human divine story, that point of intersection, that unique, marvelous encounter of the temporal in the eternal, and reciprocally of the eternal in the temporal, of the divine in the human, and mutually of the human in the divine... Here is Christianity. Everything else, my friend...let's say that everything else is very good for the history of religions...* For Peguy, truly Christianity was never an intellectual system or a moral code: it was a dramatic event, a new life breaking through into the fallen world. At Crossroads we have always looked at him as a witness and an example of how a Catholic should look at the world, and in particular at culture. Because this "*involvement of the temporal in the eternal and of the eternal in the temporal*" has taken place, it is possible to value and to save whatever is good in everything and in everybody. There is no need to be afraid.

I am very honored to introduce Prof. Francis Greene, along with our special guests Mr. Tony Hendra and the Choir of Communion and Liberation under the direction of Maestro Christopher Vath. Dr. Greene began teaching at St. Francis College in September, 1968 in the Department of Fine Arts and Foreign Languages. Over the past 30 years he has taught courses in French language and literature, fine arts, and international studies. Since 1980 he has served as Chair of the department which now includes a major in international cultural studies, which he establish almost a decade ago. In Fall 1999, Dr. Greene was named Outstanding Professor in New York State by the Carnegie Foundation. He is frequent speaker at academic conferences throughout the US and has published extensively in the areas of history, architecture, and French literature.

To accompany his presentation of Peguy and the Cathedral of Chartres (he will tell us why there is this combination), we have the choir of Communion and Liberation directed by Christopher Vath. The Choir is composed of high school and university students and adults. Their a cappella repertoire extends from Gregorian chant to the 20th century and spans many countries and languages. Formed in 1994, the choir has performed both its Christmas Lessons and Carols and its Lenten choral meditation around the New York metropolitan area. They perform yearly at the Way of the Cross over the Brooklyn Bridge on Good Friday.

Christopher Vath was born in New Orleans. He attended North Texas State University where he received a Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Performance with Joseph Banowetz. He has worked as composer, arranger, and pianist in the field of commercial music. Since 1996, he has been "Talking Music", a lecture concert series, which attempts to lead the listener to the ultimate questions of humanity through great works of music. In 2005,

in addition to his Weill Hall debut, he gave a private performance for Pope Benedict XVI at his papal summer residence.

Mr. Tony Hendra, born in England, was a member of the Cambridge University Footlights revue in 1962, alongside the likes of John Cleese, Graham Chapman and Tim Brooke-Taylor, and moved to America a few years later, where in 1970 he became one of the founding editors of *National Lampoon* magazine. In the early 1980s Mr. Hendra helped create the British television puppet show *Spitting Image*. He also edited *Spy Magazine* for a period in the 1990s. His most notable acting role was in *This Is Spinal Tap*, as the band's manager, Ian Faith. Mr. Hendra received acclaim for his 2004 memoir *Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul*.

And now, I am delighted to hand the microphone over to Dr. Greene.

Greene: Charles Peguy was born in 1873 in Orleans, France, of working class parents. A superior student, Peguy received a scholarship to the Lycee d'Orleans where he studied primarily the humanities, including Latin. He excelled in philosophy and gravitated early to groups of students who, like himself, were deeply interested in social issues, particularly concerning poverty and justice. By the age of 18 he had associated himself with several socialist groups, and began writing articles on the topics which most consumed his thinking, including the Dreyfus Affair which divided almost all of France at that time. His early publications were well received and he discovered his vocation as a writer. Throughout his career he founded a number of journals and periodicals, most notably les *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, which he directed, edited, and published from 1900 until 1914. An independent thinker from his childhood, by 1903 he broke with and critiqued traditional socialism for what he saw as its shortcomings and shortsightedness—particularly its frequent anti-clericalism. Peguy remained, nonetheless, an active socialist, *a sa facon* as the French say, and wrote passionately throughout his life on all matters relating to living conditions, class distinction, poverty, and all forms of injustice. It is said that, at the time of his philosophy studies in 1891 at about the age of 18, he lost his faith. It is more likely that, like many young people today, in university, he focused on other issues, more pressing to him at the time, and lost his interest in the basic challenges posed by religious inquiry. In any event, in 1908 at the age of thirty-five, he experienced a deep personal conversion and rediscovered the intellectual and spiritual treasures of his Catholic faith. He also began to develop a deep love for his country, not a blind, chauvinistic affection, but a profound appreciation of the historic reality of *La France*. Thus, three themes mark his writing and reflection for rest of his life: social justice, Catholicism, and *La France*.

As the spiritual and patriotic dimensions of Peguy's thinking emerged, he discovered a new avenue of expression—poetry. Many of his poems are expressions of the depth of his religious faith and hope, most notably the series of poems entitled *Les Mysteres* and *Les Tapisseries*. Throughout the rich outpouring of poetic and religious fervor which mark his *oeuvre* there emerge four archetypal figures, all women -- Eve, Saint Joan of Arc (Patroness of France), Saint Genevieve (Patroness of Paris), and the Virgin Mary to whom he had the deepest devotion.

Peguy married in 1897 and had four children. In June 1912, in thanksgiving for the healing of his son from serious illness, Peguy made a pilgrimage on foot from Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris to Chartres Cathedral, some ninety miles away. This was the first of many more that he would make to this ancient pilgrimage site. Chartres and the Virgin occupied a primary place in his poetry of this period. Having served his tour of duty in the army in 1891 at the age of 18, Peguy was called up as a Lieutenant in the reserves in 1914 at the outset of the First World War. He died in the Battle of the Marne on September 5, 1914, at the age of forty-one.

It is his poetry, some of which you will hear tonight, that reveals both the content and depth of his religious faith. As intellectual as he was, for Peguy Christianity was not merely a series of dogmas and ideas, important

as these aspects may be. For Him Christianity was primarily an encounter with a fact—with an event, the birth of Jesus Christ, and through an encounter with that fact, Christianity becomes an encounter with a living person, Jesus Christ. Thus the Incarnation is central to all Peguy's religious thought and his poems often highlight the entrance of the eternal into the temporal, or as the French say, *l'insertion du spirituel dans le charnel*. There is strong emphasis on the action of grace in the believer's life. It was the philosopher Henri Bergson whose ideas helped Peguy better understand how grace operates and brings about change. It was in Bergson's theories of "becoming" and of what Bergson called "creative spontaneity" that Charles Peguy found the insights he needed to deepen his understanding of the faith to which he had returned.

Another important element of Peguy's thought and spirituality concerns his view of the "Theological Virtues," Faith, Hope, and Love. It might be said, parenthetically, that, although they are called virtues, they are also gifts given by God to the individual person. In any event, Saint Paul's position, as expressed in I Corinthians 13, was that the greatest of them is Love. Peguy, on the other hand, maintained that Hope was, by far, the most important, with all due respect to the importance of Faith and Love. You will hear this position clearly enunciated in some of the poetry read this evening.

Now, a word about my discovery of Peguy. As an undergraduate at Saint Peter's College, the Jesuit College of New Jersey, I first read Peguy in a survey course on 20th century French literature. As I read selections from his prose and poetry, at the tender age of 19, there were several lines which particularly struck me and which I underlined in the text. In an essay entitled *Note Conjointe* Peguy wrote that sin is the weak point in our armor through which grace can finally enter in and change us. Peguy went on to say that, in his experience, some of the worst criminals have come to be saved specifically *because of* and *through* their crimes. Since I was student who had only recently begun to read philosophy and theology seriously, these ideas were new to me and not what I had encountered in more traditional, perhaps even more orthodox spiritual writing. Yet it made perfect sense to me, and I thought immediately that Peguy was a man of some considerable perceptiveness. I knew that I wanted to plumb his thinking beyond the few selections that were printed in our survey textbook.

Some years later when I became a serious student of Chartres Cathedral, I encountered Peguy once again in terms of his famous pilgrimage on foot to Chartres for the first time in 1912. Peguy deeply loved his wife and children, and in his poem *Le Porche du Mystere de la Deuxieme Vertu*, he tells us how, one day, worried about his children, their security and health, he entrusted them totally into the care of the Virgin Mary:

I calmly placed them into the arms
Of her who is already burdened with all the world's sorrow
Into the arms of her
Whose arms are already filled
For Her Son took upon Himself all sins
But the Mother took on Herself all sorrows!
(Marie, la Mere, a pris toutes les douleurs!)

When, in 1911, one of Peguy's sons fell seriously ill he once again entrusted the child to the Virgin Mary, and his son recovered and regained his health. The following year, 1912, Peguy set out from Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, on foot, to Chartres, some 90 miles away, a journey which took him three days. He left Paris after praying before the statue of the Virgin which was then and still is to the right of the sanctuary, almost at the right entrance to the ambulatory—before this statue which is the only original Gothic era sculpture surviving in the cathedral interior. His prayer completed, he set out. In his beautiful poem entitled *Presentation de la Beauce a Notre Dame de Chartres*, he recounts a part of his journey:

We are coming to you from far away Paris
For three days now we have left behind our shops

And the study of archeology and of semantics
And the Sorbonne as well as its students

Others will come to you from Beauvais
But we have left behind, for three days now, all our business dealings
And the overwhelming noise of the big city
Others may come to you from Combrai

But we are coming to you from Paris, the Capital
It is there that we have our government
And there too our wasted hours
And our total freedom—so deceiving and disappointing

We are coming to you from the other Notre Dame Cathedral
From the one that rises up in the heart of the big city
Decked out in its royal robe and in its majesty
And in all its magnificence

I wish to alert you to the rhythms of Peguy's poetry, even in English translation. Peguy is a technician of words who worked and reworked his verses for maximum effect. Given his classical training, Peguy believed, as did the Ancient Greek and Roman poets, that the best poem was one which "smelled of midnight oil." Of course that image suggested a poem that had been worked on and reworked technically by the poet for so long throughout the night that, in the morning, the parchment smelled of the oil that had burned all night long to permit the poet to see the text he was reworking. In that sense Peguy's poems smell of midnight oil—but decidedly not in the sense that the workmanship shows; it does not. They can be read in an almost effortless manner, but deceivingly so, for they were not forged without great effort. You will notice also that often, though not always, the rhythm of his poems suggests the movement of a procession, step by step, or perhaps I should say the slow, determined forward progression of a pilgrimage. There is much that is liturgical in Peguy's poetic rhythms, as his verses and his ideas advance slowly, step by step, with many litany-like repetitions.

The poem we have just read brings us to the doors of his beloved Chartres Cathedral. In arriving there as a pilgrim Peguy joined the ranks of many previous visitors, most unknown to history, but some quite illustrious, such as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Thomas Beckett of Canterbury, Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Vincent de Paul, and Saint Louis de Montfort. For Peguy the choice of Chartres as his destination was an inevitable decision. Although many of France's cathedrals are named Notre Dame, Chartres had always been the quintessential shrine to Mary, at least in France. It had long been, also, for the sick, what Lourdes may represent today—the ultimate destination to pray for healing. In the Middle Ages infirm pilgrims were housed and cared for in the crypt for a period of nine days. But beyond the issue of healing, Chartres had always been the principal pilgrimage destination in France because it was a stopping point for those from all over Europe who were on their way to Saint James of Compostella in Spain—the most important pilgrimage destination in all Europe in the Middle Ages. But there is a third association which would draw Peguy, the writer, to Chartres since it was and is considered to be the ultimate example of the Bible in Stone – a concept which Victor Hugo had developed in his Romantic novel, *Notre Dame de Paris* in 1832. That novel, filled with insightful architectural theory, is known to us as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

We are going to look briefly at several elements of Chartres that would have engaged Peguy. One can always recognize the cathedral, even at a distance, because the towers do not match. One had to be rebuilt after a fire and it was executed in a later, or high, gothic style. The façade may seem conservative in its execution in comparison with the sides and rear of the cathedral exterior. It appears almost half Romanesque. This is because

the entire cathedral burned down in 1194 and only the façade and the crypt survived. This façade and the tower bases were incorporated into the new cathedral begun immediately after the conflagration. In terms of the “book in stone” the visually textual instruction begins immediately in the tympana over the portals. The central tympanum is devoted to Christ. This is Jesus of the Book of Revelation—Christ in triumph, not the Christ of the Last Judgment so often found in that position on Medieval cathedrals. A portal is dedicated to Mary, as was traditional, and thus we have, through her, Christ’s Incarnation—the Divine breaking in upon the human, the eternal plunging into the order of the temporal. As I have already mentioned, these incarnational themes are essential to Peguy’s spirituality and to his poetry. You will hear them tonight resonate throughout the selections of poetry to be read as well as in the choir’s renditions. The third portal depicts Christ’s Ascension and thus His return to the Father. In the Ascension panel we find the signs of the Zodiac, the rhythm of the year and of the seasons—just one small example of how Chartres includes almost every aspect of human and spiritual experience in its iconography. Thus Chartres is often called “Creation’s Book.”

There are four pieces of stained glass in the façade—the Rose window and three lancets. We are now going to enter and view them from the interior, from just inside the great portal. Having survived the fire of 1194 these are the oldest of the Chartres stained glass and are considered among the most beautiful examples of this art form ever produced. The three lancet windows appear as if they were pendants hanging from the Rose above which represents Mary, the Mystical Rose. But they are also instructing texts, and Peguy, prose writer and poet, would most certainly have given these three windows his close and prayerful attention. In logical progression from one side to the other they depict the geneology of the Saviour through the image of the Tree of Jesse, then major scenes of the life of Christ, reserving His Passion and death for the third lancet. Immediately after the pilgrim enters the cathedral and turns to view the (Mystical) Rose, the three (Trinitarian) lancets lay out before him or her all the essentials of salvation history.

But the great Rose window is repeated in another circle, this one just below it on the floor, in the labyrinth which greets the pilgrim as he or she turns to face the nave and the sanctuary. Today the labyrinth at Chartres is often obscured by chairs laid out for worshippers. There are days and seasons when it is uncovered, but not always. In the Middle Ages it was never obstructed because each pilgrim would follow its path to its center on his or her knees, enacting a sacred ritual, rich in symbolism. In 1912 Peguy enacted this ancient tradition on his knees. In his poem, *Presentation de la Beauce* which I have already cited, Peguy prays to the Virgin about this pilgrimage experience:

We will feel neither hunger, nor thirst,
Nor all our little sacrifices
Nor will we feel our stiff knees
Nor, under our pants, our swollen legs

As the pilgrim advanced ever deeper into the labyrinth he left behind the day to day world, even the immediate business of the cathedral with all its sometimes noisy pilgrims and slowly advanced toward the flower at the center—toward the New Jerusalem.

As Peguy left the labyrinth and entered more deeply into the nave of the cathedral he would have observed how the very structure of the cathedral walls, what we call the side elevation, structurally reflect and embody the Trinity—three yet one, as evidenced in the arcade, the triforium, and the clerestory windows. Shortly this evening you will hear a short poem in which Peguy likens Christ to the structural elements of a Gothic cathedral.

As he advanced further into the nave there are two sites at which Peguy would most certainly have prayed, both devoted to the Virgin. On the right, as one enters the ambulatory, there is the stained glass window of Mary with Jesus, known as the window of the Blue Madonna. It is very early and is said to have survived the great

fire. On the opposite side, just before one leaves the ambulatory is the shrine to Mary where today, as then, pilgrims kneel, light candles and offer their prayers, before this statue of the Virgin dating to the sixteenth century and known as Our Lady of the Pillar. Peguy shares with us the essence of the prayer which he offered on this spot to the Virgin in a simple poem entitled *Prayers in the Cathedral, Prayer of Petition (Prieres dans la Cathedral, Priere de Demande)*.. In the first ten stanzas, the poet tells Mary what he will not ask for and then concludes with this simple petition:

O Queen of the Sea...
 We ask for nothing more than to maintain
 A fidelity stronger than death.
 Une fidelite plus forte que la mort.

As Peguy left the ambulatory and the chapel of the Virgin he would arrive at the North transept, on the left side of the cathedral if one faces the sanctuary. Here the great Rose window is dedicated iconographically to Mary and her mother Saint Anne. Interestingly the window was given by a woman, Blanche of Castille, mother of the future King of France, Saint Louis. The porch outside the transept and under the Rose is also devoted to Mary and Saint Ann. It is said that this North transept and its corresponding porch are devoted to Mary because the Northern exposure receives so little light that it needed a Mother's warmth.

Surely Charles Peguy's observations and prayers did not end at this point in the cathedral, but we shall end here for tonight. We might best conclude, standing in this spot in the cathedral where Peguy once stood, by hearing one last time a part of his prayer to the Virgin, a prayer which, I suspect, he offered near the end of his visit:

When we will have played our last roles on earth,
 When we will have put away our hats and coats,
 When we will have let fall at last the mask and the knife,
 Please remember our arduous pilgrimage.

When we will have returned to the cold earth,
 Just as it was destined for the first Adam to do,
 Oh Queen...
 Please remember our solitary journey

When they will have put us into the grave
 When they will have celebrated our funeral Mass and
 Offered the final absolution,
 Please remember, Oh Queen of Hope
 The long pilgrim's journey we made
 Through La Beauce

.....

Oh Refuge of Sinners, we ask nothing more
 Than the lowest place in your Purgatory
 In order that, there, we might weep over our tragic lives
 And, there, contemplate, from afar,
 Your splendor, ever young.

Second Part (readings and choral pieces)

1. Song: Matin Responsory (Choir)

2. Reading (Hendra)

She wept and wept, and because of it she had grown ugly.
 And the greatest Beauty in the world.
 The mystical Rose.
 The Tower of ivory.
Turris eburnea.
 The Queen of beauty.
 In three days had become dreadful to see.
 People said that she had put on ten years.
 They knew nothing about it. She had put on more than ten years.
 She knew, she felt that she had put on more than ten years.
 She had aged the space of her lifetime.
 Fools.
 By the space of her whole lifetime.
 She had aged by her entire life and by more than her life, by more than a lifetime.
 For she had grown older by an eternity.
 She had aged by her eternity.
 Which is the first eternity after God's eternity.
 For she had aged by her eternity.
 She had become Queen.
 She had become the Queen of the Seven Sorrows.
 She wept and wept, she had grown so ugly.
 She wept and wept. Her eyes, her poor eyes.
 Her poor eyes were reddened with tears.
 And never would see properly.
 After. Since. Afterwards. Nevermore.
 From now on never would she see properly.
 To work.
 And yet she would have to work to earn her living.
 Her poor living.
 Work some more.
 After as before.
 Until she died.
 Mend stockings, socks.
 Joseph would go on wearing out his clothes.
 In a word all a woman has to do in her household.
 You have such a time making a living.
 She wept, she had become dreadful.
 Her eyelashes stuck together.
 Her eyelids, the upper one and the nether one.
 Swollen, bruised, tinged with blood.
 Her cheeks devastated by grief.
 Her furrowed cheeks.
 Her cheeks all seamed.
 Her tears had as it were ploughed her cheeks.
 Tears on either side had worn a furrow in her cheeks.

Her eyes smarted and burned.
 Never had anyone wept so much.
 And yet it was a relief for her to weep.
 Her skin smarted and burned.
 And during that time, on the cross, his Five Wounds burned.
 And he had fever.
 She too had fever.
 And thus shared his Passion.
 She wept, she looked so strange, so dreadful. So dreadful.
 That you would certainly have laughed.
 And you would have made fun of her.
 Certainly.
 Had she not been the mother of the condemned.
 Even the street urchins looked away.
 When they saw her.
 Turned their heads away.
 Turned their eyes away.
 So as not to laugh.
 So as not to laugh in her face.
 And they had set him on his way to death.
 To that death.
 They had a firm hold on him.
 This time.
 And they would not let him go.
 They would never let him go any more.
 And he no longer shone among the doctors.
 Seated among the doctors.
 He did not shine.
 And yet he shone forever.
 More than he ever shone.
 More than he ever shone anywhere.
 And such was his reward.
 You are sometimes strangely rewarded in life.
 You sometimes get strange rewards.
 And they got along so well together.
 The boy and his mother.
 They had been so happy in those days.
 The mother and her boy.
 Such was her reward. Thus was she rewarded.
 For having borne.
 Given birth to.
 Fed at the breast.
 Carried. In her arms.
 Him who died for the sins of the world.
 For having borne.
 Given birth to.
 Fed at the breast.
 Carried. In her arms.
 Him who died for the salvation of the world.
 For having borne.

Given birth to.
 Fed at the breast.
 Carried. In her arms.
 Him through whom the sins of the world will be forgiven.

3. Songs: “Canticle of Mary” and “A Hymn to the Virgin” (Choir)

4. Reading (Hendra)

She wept, she melted. Her heart melted.
 Her body melted.
 She melted with kindness.
 With charity.
 Only her head did not melt.
 She walked on as if against her will.
 She no longer knew herself.
 She no longer bore any grudge against anyone.
 She melted with kindness.
 With charity.
 It was too great a misfortune.
 Her sorrow was too great.
 It was too great a sorrow.
 You can't bear a grudge against the world for a misfortune that is greater than the world.
 It was no longer any use bearing a grudge against the world.
 A grudge against anyone.
 She who in the old days would have defended her boy against wild animals.
 When he was small.
 Today she abandoned him to that crowd.
 She let him go.
 She let everything sink.
 What can a woman do in a crowd. I ask you.
 She no longer knew herself.
 She had changed a lot.
 She was going to hear the cry.
 The cry that never will be quenched in any night of any time.
 It wasn't surprising that she no longer knew herself.
 Because she wasn't the same.
 Up to that day she had been the Queen of Beauty.
 And she never again would be, she would never again become the Queen of Beauty except in heaven.
 The day of her death and her assumption.
 Eternally.
 But today she became the Queen of Mercy.
 As she will be forever and ever.

4. Songs: “Ave Regina Coelorum” and “Byla Cesta” (Choir)

5. Reading (Hendra)

Yet the entire New Testament comes from Jesus.
 It's like a beautiful vault that rises from the two sides to the cornerstone,
 And Jesus is the cornerstone. Such is the vault of this nave.
 And the stone that rises following the curve of this nave,

Deciding, designing, in advance and subsequently, the curve of this vault,
 Forming the curve of this vault,
 The stone that rises from the bottom ardently advances,
 And faithfully, and securely,
 In all sureness, without any uneasiness,
 Since while rising, it knows very well
 That it will find its cornerstone at the appointed time,
 At the correct intersection, at the sacred corner, and the cornerstone is Jesus.
 And together, the entire vault sustains and carries and lifts and supports the cornerstone
 Like an enormous round shoulder which without a neck sustains a single head, yet the cornerstone
 alone, the cornerstone that completes,
 That alone, this way together, is what, alone, does sustain the vault and everything.

6. Song: “Jesus Christ the Apple Tree” (Choir)

7. Reading (Hendra)

One must love these creatures as they are.
 When one loves a being, one loves it like it is.
 And there is no one but me who is perfect.
 It’s also for this reason perhaps that I know what perfection is.
 And that I ask less perfection of these poor people.
 I know it, I, when it is difficult.
 And how many times while they grow so tired in their trials
 Do I wish, am I tempted to place my hand beneath their bellies
 To sustain them with my big hand
 Like a father who teaches his son to swim in the river’s current
 And who is divided between two feelings.
 Since on the one hand if I always sustain him and I sustain him too much
 The child will get attached and will never learn to swim.
 But in addition, if I don’t sustain him at the right moment
 This child will drink a bad gulp.
 This is how I am when I teach them to swim in their trials
 Even I am divided between these two feelings.
 Because if I always sustain them and I sustain them too much
 They will never know how to swim alone.
 But if I did not sustain them exactly at the right moment
 These poor children would perhaps drink a bad gulp.
 Such is the difficulty that is so great.
 And such is duplicity itself, the double face of the problem.
 On the one hand it is necessary for them to work out their salvation alone.
 It is the rule.
 And it is formal. Otherwise it would not be interesting. They would not be men.
 Now I would like them to be virile, be men, and earn on their own spurs.
 On the other hand, it is not necessary for them to drink a bad gulp.
 Having had an immersion in the ingratitude of sin.
 Such is the mystery of man’s freedom, God says,
 And of my governing of him and his freedom.
 If I sustain him too much, he is no longer free.
 And if I do not sustain him enough, he falls.

If I sustain him too much, I expunge his freedom.
 And if I don't sustain him enough, I expunge his salvation:
 Two goods that in a certain sense are equally precious.
 Because this salvation has an infinite price.
 But what would a salvation be that is not free?
 How could it define itself as freedom?
 We want this salvation be acquired by him.
 By man himself. Be procured by he himself.
 That, in a certain sense, come from he himself. Such is the secret,
 Such is the mystery of man's freedom.
 Such is the price we give to man's freedom.
 Because I myself am free, God says, and I created man in my image and likeness.
 Such is the mystery, such is the secret, such is the price of each freedom.
 The freedom of this creature is the most beautiful reflection there is in the world
 Of the Freedom of the Creator.

8. Song: "Adam Lay y-bounden" (choir)

9. Readings (Hendra)

This modern world is not merely a world of poor Christianity – this would be nothing!-, no. It is an un-Christian world, it is a de-Christianized world. What is disastrous is precisely the fact that even our own miseries are no longer Christian.

There were "bad times" under the Romans too. But Jesus came. He did not spend the years of His life complaining or denouncing the "bad times". He cuts it short. In a very simple way. By building Christianity.

He did not end up indicting or accusing anybody. He saved. He did not indict the world. He saved the world.

He did not in fact need us. And even Jesus could have rested peacefully, in the heavens, before this central, crucial part of creation, before the Incarnation, before the redemption, before His incarnation, before His redemption. He was truly peaceful in the heavens and He did not have need of us at all. Why did He come? Why did He come into the world? One must believe that I have a certain importance, I who am nothing. One must believe that the spacing of time, the spacing of time had a certain importance. One must believe that man and creation and man's destination, and man's vocation, and man's sin, and man's freedom, and man's salvation had a certain importance, all the mystery, all the mysteries of man. Differently, on the contrary, it was so simple, and done so quickly. It was already done in advance. What had to be done was only not to create man, not create the world. Then the fall would not have been, the fall would not have been, there would have been neither fall nor redemption. There would not have been a history, there would not have been any nuisance.

The entire world would have remained at home. How is it possible that I am not great if I've messed up so many things, disordered so many things, and such a great world? In order to have started such a tragic history. A God, God went out of His way, God sacrificed Himself for me. This is Christianity.

10. Songs: "Verbum Caro Factum Est", "Bethlehem", "Nowell Nowell Nowell" (choir)