ABSTRACT
PERSON AND SOCIETY:
THE TRINITARIAN ANTHROPOLOGY OF HENRI DE LUBAC

Sara Hulse, B.A., M.T.S.
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This dissertation argues that the Trinity is central to the theological anthropology of Henri de Lubac. Although the Trinitarian dimension of his thought receives scant attention in secondary scholarship, de Lubac insisted on the centrality of the Trinity to anthropology from his first public lecture through his final, post-conciliar works. This dissertation further illustrates how de Lubac’s Trinitarian anthropology shapes his anthropological works, concluding that he deserves to be counted among the Trinitarian thinkers of the twentieth century.

To make this argument, Chapter One defines Trinitarian anthropology as the application of the Trinitarian mystery to the human person, and sketches the development of Trinitarian anthropology from the time of Christ through Pope Francis in order to situate de Lubac’s project. It also raises potential objections to Trinitarian anthropology and considers a way through them. Chapter Two introduces de Lubac’s own Trinitarian anthropology and organizes it into a “grammar,” that is, a set of rules de Lubac relies upon when applying the Trinitarian mystery to anthropology. On the basis of these rules, the remaining chapters apply de Lubac’s Trinitarian anthropology as a hermeneutical key to his broad anthropological works.

Chapter Three demonstrates that de Lubac’s Trinitarian anthropology shapes his critiques of Western and Eastern atheisms. Whereas de Lubac’s Trinitarian anthropology preserves the person and the whole without sacrificing one pole to the other, these atheisms vacillate between individualism and collectivism. Outside of Trinitarian faith, they are unable to uphold both poles. Chapter Four interprets his view of the relationship between nature and grace according to his Trinitarian anthropology, a relationship he contends ought to be interpreted in reference to the Trinitarian circumincession. Chapter Five demonstrates that de Lubac’s Trinitarian anthropology shapes his view of the relationship between the person and society at the levels of nature, grace, and glory. In each, both poles of person and whole are maintained without compromise, in contrast to the societies of atheist humanism considered in Chapter Three. As de Lubac’s considerations move from nature to grace to glory, the unity and distinction between the poles intensifies to mirror and participate in the Trinitarian life.