

# Visualising Christology: *Llama de amor viva* and the Resurrection

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If Paul meant what he said – «I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me» (Gal 2,20) – then to see Paul living was to catch sight of the living Christ. This man Paul, who has let his mind be turned around (*metanoia*), who has become so imbued with Jesus' Spirit that his prayer is "Abba, Father", and who lives now in service of «the Gospel of Christ» (Gal 1,7), this man has been so taken over by Christ that his life declares Christ more than it declares Paul. This is lived Christology; and to know Paul is to get help in visualising Christology, getting some picture of what Christology means, of the actual significance for the world of Christ's being risen.

As with Paul, so in later ages: a way to know Christ is to contemplate those who follow him. Treating of how the Church celebrates her faith in liturgy, the *Catechism* affirms: «The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ»<sup>1</sup>. Those, then, in whom «the Spirit» is at «work» will model for us «the life of the risen Christ».

San Juan de la Cruz puts the Spirit's working into words. His writing is a testament to just how risen Christ is. What we want to do in this article is to explore how the most explicitly pneumatological book of Juan de la Cruz, *Llama de amor viva*, the *Living Flame*, discloses to us the reality of Christ's resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), §1091.

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ABSTRACT: The article seeks in Juan de la Cruz light on what it means for Christ to be risen; what that means for humanity, and what for Christ himself. We concentrate on the writing *Llama de amor viva*, consider its experiential quality, and identify “the Bridegroom” there as Christ in the Trinity. This enables us to gather from *Llama* global impressions of Christ’s power and vitality. We then look to *Llama* for evidence of how Christ establishes his lordship in Juan; and for evidence of how *Llama* discloses something of the risen Jesus’ praise of his Father.

KEYWORDS: Christ; resurrection; Holy Spirit; Bridegroom; paschal mystery; flame; poetry; experience.