**Title**

Receiving the Icon, Releasing the Gift: Toward a Relational Hermeneutic of Divine Simplicity after Jean Luc Marion

Abstract ≈ 250 words  
(unchanged)

Introduction ≈ 1250  
Names the “twin impasse” (static metaphysics / Kantian agnosticism) and shows how Marion’s icon cuts between them. Presents O’Regan’s rule of vision (continuity) and Horner’s kenotic safeguard (excess). Explains the minimal role of Derrida. Previews the constructive payoff: divine simplicity sharpened as *actus donandi* and an agenda for still finer metaphysical precision.  
Answers: What problem, whose tools, what payoff?

I Historical Desire for Relational Precision ≈ 1500  
Traces modern Catholic frustration—manualist predicates, Rahnerian abstraction, phenomenology’s turn to lived encounter—and shows the search for clarity with overflow. Sets Marion as hinge.  
Primary voices: De Lubac, Rahner, *Dei Verbum*.  
Answers: Why keep pressing for “precision” after Heidegger and Derrida?

II Marion’s Phenomenological Triad ≈ 1200  
Expounds saturation, icon, anamorphosis; ends with Marquette line (“Revelation gives itself only as much as it is received, yet always gives more”). Establishes hermeneutical gold standard.  
Primary texts: *Being Given*, *Givenness and Revelation*, Marquette Lecture.  
Answers: What does Marion actually supply?

III O’Regan: Tradition as Rule of Vision ≈ 1000  
Shows how Augustine’s *relatio subsistens* anticipates donation; explains O’Regan’s two‑step method (genealogical clearing, positive unveiling); concludes that Marion reunites phenomenology and dogma.  
Primary: O’Regan 2018; Augustine *De Trinitate*.  
Answers: Where does continuity come from?

IV Horner: Kenotic Safeguard of the Gift ≈ 1100  
Acknowledges Derrida’s double bind, then pivots to Horner’s theology of grace (“God is for the world giver, gift and giving”). Stresses her dictum that recognition passes through forgetting.  
Primary: Horner 2001; minimal Derrida *Given Time*.  
Answers: How is continuity kept from turning into possession?

V Balthasar as Aesthetic Mediator ≈ 1000  
Justifies Balthasar’s role (already shaping O’Regan and Horner). Focuses on three loci:

1. *Theo‑Drama I* §§4‑6—Spirit “off‑stage director.”
2. *Glory I*—beauty as *splendor veritatis* (icon’s contour).
3. *Mysterium Paschale*—Easter as gift and surplus.  
   Shows how Balthasar supplies the language of distance later elaborated by Tóth.  
   Answers: Why do “form” and “surplus” coexist without collapse?

VI Dialectic of Continuity and Excess (“Relational Reading” Defined) ≈ 1000  
Synthesises Sections III–V into one formula: rule (O’Regan) + safeguard (Horner) + aesthetic space (Balthasar) = relational hermeneutic able to host Marion’s icon. Narrates the spiral remember → receive → relinquish → remember deeper.  
Answers: What methodology now guides constructive work?

VII Divine Simplicity Re‑voiced as *Actus Donandi* ≈ 1500  
Constructive core.

1. Classical worries: composition, passivity.
2. Proposal: simplicity is the inseparable circulation of giving.
3. Biblical warrant: John 17, “all mine are thine.”
4. Patristic resonance: Augustine’s gift‑giver communion.
5. Phenomenological fit: saturated love requires “infinite capacity to let be.”  
   Engages analytic Catholic critics (Davies, Leftow) for added precision.  
   Answers: How does the relational hermeneutic pay off doctrinally?

VIII Dialogue with the Contemporary Simplicity Debate ≈ 1250  
Sets *actus donandi* beside two camps:  
• Rigorous Thomists (Emery, White) fearing relational erosion of immutability.  
• Process‑leaning revisionists (Jenson, Sanders) abandoning simplicity for love.  
Shows how the proposal honours Thomist no‑parts while avoiding revisionist mutability by relocating change to reception, not God.  
Answers: Why should systematic theologians listen?

IX Operational Heuristics for Relational Reading ≈ 1000  
Introduces the three‑question diagnostic (contour, surplus, distance). Walks Luke 24:30‑35 through the grid. States that Sections X‑XI depend on these heuristics.  
Answers: How do we make the method teachable and testable?

X Enduring Risks, Necessary Safeguards ≈ 1000  
Recasts five tensions (fixation, drift, quietism, enchantment, complacency) in light of the heuristics and lists brief practices—prayer before study, community peer reading, aesthetic‑ethical pairing, missionary audit—to keep them active.  
Answers: How do we stop our own proposal from ossifying?

XI Horizon: Toward Phase‑Two Precision in Simplicity ≈ 800  
Maps open metaphysical questions left by *actus donandi*: grounding of modes, relative identity, uncreated exemplarity, analytic criteria for “non‑part” status. Sketches how Marion’s saturated icon and Benovsky’s modal primitives could supply the tools. Signals a future agenda—not liturgy or pneumatology, but deeper articulation of simplicity itself.  
Answers: Where must the next round of work push further?

Conclusion ≈ 600  
Returns to Marion’s axiom; affirms that the relational reading tradition—rule, safeguard, distance—delivers a Catholic confession of divine simplicity that is both phenomenologically alive and metaphysically exact. Ends by committing Phase‑Two research to sharpen simplicity further along the lines sketched in Section XI.

Bibliography (select)  
Marion (six works); Augustine; Balthasar (four volumes); O’Regan; Horner; minimal Derrida; Thomists (Emery, Davies, White); simplicity critics (Jenson, Sanders); analytic metaphysics (Brower, Benovsky); recent articles on relational metaphysics. 35–40 entries max.

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Essential Texts

1. Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Theo‑Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. Vol. 1, Prolegomena.* Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988. (Orig. German 1973.)
2. Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Theo‑Logic. Vol. 1, Truth of the World.* Translated by Adrian J. Walker. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000. (Orig. German 1985.)
3. Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter.* Translated by Aidan Nichols. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990. (Orig. German 1969.)
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6. Marion, Jean‑Luc. 2013. *Givenness and Hermeneutics.* Milwaukee: Marquette University Press.
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8. O’Regan, Cyril. 2018. “The Return of the Theological in the Thought of Jean‑Luc Marion: A Reading of *Givenness and Revelation*.” *Nova et Vetera* 16 (3): [page range].
9. Tang, Man‑to. 2023. “A Theo‑logy Without *logos*: On Jean‑Luc Marion’s Axio‑meonto‑theology.” *Sophia* 62: 359–380. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841‑022‑00927‑y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841%E2%80%91022%E2%80%9100927%E2%80%91y).
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