THEOLOGY OF
EUCHARIST

ALPHA INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE
Thalassery, Kerala, India - 670 101
Ph: 0490 2344727, 2343707, +91 8086312826
Web: www.alphathalassery.org, Email: alphits@gmail.com

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Office Assistance: Bro. Praveen George
Mrs. Jeshitha Vijesh
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Chapter 1

Eucharist in the OT

John Henry Newman once compared Scripture to an inexhaustibly rich wilderness - never failing to reward the faithful explorer with thrilling new discoveries yet always beyond his ability to master it completely: It cannot, as it were, be mapped, or its contents cataloged; but after all our diligence, to the end of our lives and to the end of the Church, it must be an unexplored and unsubdued land, with heights and valleys, forests and streams, on the right and left of our path and close about us, full of concealed wonders and choice treasures (*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 71).

The Eucharist is among those 'concealed wonders and choice treasures' in the Old Testament. At first, with the obvious exception of the manna heaven that rained down on the Israelites, it seems that there is little in the Old Testament that foreshadows the extraordinary new

reality that is the Eucharist. But Newman invites us to venture deep into the hidden valleys and the secret gardens of the Old Testament. When we do, it turns out the Eucharist is everywhere from the Pentateuch to the prophets.

Part I:
OT Imageries of Eucharist

1. The forbidden fruit. The forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden seems like the last place one would see a foreshadowing of the Eucharist. But medieval commentators saw the Eucharist as the "antidote to the poisonous effects of the apple," according to Ann Astell, in *Eating Beauty*. Just as eating of the forbidden fruit was a sin of pride, avarice, gluttony, or disobedience, so the Eucharist was seen as inculcating the corresponding opposite virtues: humility, poverty, abstinence, and obedience, according to Astell. The parallel goes even deeper: in eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve brought death into the world while those who partake in the Eucharist are promised eternal life.

2. Fruit of the Tree of Life. The connections between Eden and the Eucharist are reinforced in the last book of the Bible. First a reminder: there were actually two types of trees in Eden. The one that gets most of the attention is the tree of knowledge of good and evil—it is the fruit of this tree that Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat. But, when the pair are banished, a second tree is mentioned: "See! The man has become like one of us, knowing what is good and what is bad! *Therefore, he must not be allowed to put out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life also, and thus eat of it and live forever*" (Genesis 3:22). In Revelation, John indicates that, through Christ, we will be able to eat of the fruit of this second tree.

In Revelation 2:7, John writes, "To the victor I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that is in the garden of God." Ten verses later we read: "To the victor I shall give some of the hidden manna"—a clear reference to the Eucharist. (I'm particularly indebted to Deacon Sabatino Carnazzo for this reading.)

3. The blood of Abel. This is another one that seems an odd type for the Eucharist. But Scripture links the blood of Christ with Abel. In Genesis 4:8, after Cain has slain his brother, God speak to him, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!" In Hebrews 12:24, St. Paul draws a connection with Christ, calling Jesus "the mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel." St. Gregory the Great writes: "The blood of Jesus calls out more eloquently than Abel's, for the blood of Abel asked for the death of Cain, the fratricide, while the blood of the Lord has asked for, and obtained, life for his persecutors." When we receive the Eucharist, St. Gregory adds, we too must cry out and proclaim our faith in Jesus. "The cry of the Lord finds a hiding place in us if our lips fail to speak of this, though our hearts believe in it," he concludes.

4. Sacrifice of Melchizedek. In Genesis 14, after Abraham rescues Lot and his relatives who had been seized in an invasion of Sodom, a most strange figure bursts into the scene: Melchizedek, the king of Salem comes out to greet him. We are told in Genesis that he was a priest of "God Most High"—long before the institutional priesthood of Israel was established. And, ages before the gospel was brought to the Gentiles, Melchizedek had somehow come to know God. Later in Scripture we read that he was "without father, mother, or ancestry, without beginning of days or end of life, thus made to resemble the Son of God" (Hebrews 7:3). Melchizedek is thus portrayed in Scripture as one who foreshadowed Christ, Himself

true king and perfect priest. The parallels go even further: in Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek offers a sacrifice of "bread and wine,"—a foreshadowing of the Eucharist.

5. Joseph Story: The story of Joseph in Genesis is filled with Eucharistic imagery. The entire deliverance segment of his life is shrouded in the typology of the sacrament. While in an Egyptian prison, Joseph was joined by Pharaoh's baker - of bread and the cupbearer - of wine. The baker was sentenced to die but the cupbearer was to live. Because of this, we see both death and resurrection linked to the Eucharist typology. Finally, it was through Joseph's relationship with these two that he is delivered from the dungeon. The cupbearer, who lived, pleaded Joseph's cause to Pharaoh. As a result, Pharaoh released Joseph, giving him his life back. The typology provides bread and wine, death and resurrection, and a new life for Joseph, all elements of the Eucharist. Minus the "Eucharistic events" in this story, Joseph was destined to rot in prison.

There is Eucharistic typology employed in how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. Joseph placed his cup (a device for holding wine) of divination into the grain (a form of bread) sacks of his brothers. It was through this act that Joseph would draw his brothers back to him. They were accused of stealing the cup that was buried in the grain. Through this "crime" Joseph had them escorted into his presence where they confessed their sins. The typology in this scene provides bread, wine, confession and reconciliation, all elements of the Eucharist. Minus the "Eucharistic events" in this scene, this family would never reconcile.

Finally, Eucharistic typology is employed when Joseph saves the world with the bread of Egypt. When the people were starving they went to Pharaoh. Pharaoh told them, "Do whatever he (Joseph) tells you" . The people are told to go to Joseph, hear from Him what

is to be done, and as a result be fed with life giving bread. Eating the bread saved them. The typology in this scene provides first hearing the Word and then the eating of bread, all elements of the Eucharist in the Mass. Minus the "Eucharistic events" in this scene, the world perishes.

6. The todah. As Catholics we know that the Passover was the primary Old Testament sacrifice that is the backdrop for the Eucharist. But another important one was the *todah*, a sacrifice offered in ancient Israel after a person had been saved from a life-threatening situation. Here's how the sacrifice is described: "The lamb would be sacrificed in the Temple and the bread for the meal would be consecrated the moment the lamb was sacrificed. The bread and meat, along with wine, would constitute the elements of the sacred todah meal, which would be accompanied by prayers and songs of thanksgiving. …" Does this not immediately call to mind the Eucharist? In Hebrew, *todah* means thanksgiving, which is exactly the literal translation of the Greek word*eucharista*. Indeed, both are sacrifices of thanksgiving for salvation.

7. **Manna**: The manna was tied in with Jewish expectations of the Messiah. It's the food of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt, the food for the journey. It stops once they arrive in the Promised Land (Exodus 16:35). And significantly, this food comes down from Heaven.(Psalm 78:24), and it's the food of angels (Psalm 78:25). In the New Testament, Christ is clearly presented as the New Manna. For example, in John 6:48-51, Jesus declares: I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

And in the Lord's Prayer, we're to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11). That immediately sounds like the manna. But it gets better. As Pitre noted, in the English, instead of asking for our bread for "this day," or our "daily bread," we're asking for our daily bread this day. It's strangely redundant. It turns out that the Greek word here for "daily" is a neologism — we know of no use of it prior to Mt. 6:11 itself. And it turns out that it literally means "super-substantial." So a more accurate translation would be like St. Jerome's translation of these words into Latin, in which we ask for our daily, super-substantial Bread. That makes clear that the new Manna we're to eat is supernatural food. It also is in keeping with the rest of the Our Father, which consists of six other spiritual requests.

8. The Bread of the Presence: Exodus 25 called for the creation of a special Table in front of the Ark of the Covenant in which to place what's commonly called the "Showbread." A more literal translation is "Bread of the Presence," so the NASB translation of Ex. 25:30 reads, "You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times." It was apparently called this because it was placed in front of the Presence of God, so anyone who saw this bread saw something which was perpetually before Him. Four times a year, on special Jewish holidays, the priests would bring it out to show the people, as a reminder of God's love for them.

There are two features which make the Bread of the Presence significant. First, despite the Sabbath prohibition against any work, the Bread of the Presence was offered up every Sabbath by the priest (1 Chronicles 9:32). Second, it was at the heart of a fascinating account in 1 Samuel 21. David's troops are hungry and go to the Temple for bread. The priest replies, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." (1 Sam. 21:4). In other words,

David's men could partake of the Bread of the Presence, provided that they had been celibate from women over a specific timeperiod. That's because the bread was to be consumed only by the priests (Leviticus 24:9), who were required to be celibate during Temple service. So David and his troops are being treated as priests.

In the New Testament, we see Christ creating a New Priesthood through the image of the Bread of the Presence. Specifically, in Matthew 12, the disciples were eating grain they'd plucked while they walked. The Pharisees rebuked Jesus for letting His Disciples "work" on the Sabbath. Mt. 12:3-8 then relays Jesus' response:

He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Interestingly, the first two examples both involve the Bread of the Presence. The first is the example I just mentioned, from 1 Samuel 21. The second example is that the Bread of the Presence is offered on the Sabbath. Together, we see Christ treating His Disciples as priests, able to partake of the Bread of Presence on the Sabbath, with the Lord of the Sabbath Himself. Because the Eucharist is tied so fundamentally with the notion of the Priesthood, it's striking that Jesus draws that connection through the Bread of the Presence here.

Of course, more fundamentally, the whole notion of a Bread of the Presence at all is intensely Eucharistic. Catholics refer to the Eucharist as the Real Presence of Christ. That is, instead of bread that

perpetually sits before the Presence of God, as under the old Covenant, it's bread that is miraculously turned into the Presence of God.

7. The Book of Ruth and the Eucharist: The book of Ruth is a beautiful love story. The story revolves around a Naomi (a widow), Ruth (her daughter in law) and Boaz. The story depicts how Ruth and Boaz fall in love, are married and become the great-grand parents of King David and eventually ancestors of Christ. All of the major events in the story revolve around the barley harvest and eventually the threshing floor. The Eucharistic typology serves as the context for key events.

- Naomi and Ruth return to Israel after fleeing a famine, during the barley harvest.
- The two women reside near Bethlehem, the house of bread.
- Ruth first meets Boaz while gleaning in a field during the harvest.
- At the threshing floor Ruth expresses a desire to marry the other.
- Boaz reciprocates by presenting Ruth with six measures of barley (an excessive amount).

Eucharistic imagery served as the context for each major event in the book. Minus these Eucharist events, the Messianic chain is broken as Christ descended from this union .

8. Elijah in the desert. In 1 Kings 19, Elijah flees from Jezebel into the wilderness. After wandering for a day, he sinks down by a lone tree and begs God to let him die. Instead, he is sent an angel who brings a "hearth cake and a jug of water." But this was not normal food—it was enough to sustain him on a 40-day journey to Mt. Horeb where he had a profound encounter with God in the "whistling of a gentle air." Catholic interpreters have long seen this super food given to Elijah as a type of the Eucharist.

9. Isaiah's coal. Once we arrive in the prophetic books, we encounter some truly extraordinary and provocative types of the Eucharist. First, in Isaiah 7, the prophet envisions God sitting on a throne, flanked by the seraphim angels. "And one of the seraphims flew to me, and in his hand was a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: Behold this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquities shall be taken away, and thy sin shall be cleansed" (Isaiah 7:6-7). In Church liturgies, particularly in the Orthodox tradition, the fiery coal prefigures the Eucharist. The Liturgy of St. James describes Communion as "receiving the fiery coal" and, in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the priest says, "Lo, this has touched your lips and has taken away your iniquity." The parallels couldn't be clearer: like the fiery coal, the Eucharist comes to us from the altar and cleanses us of sins (specifically venial sins, but it also fortifies us against mortal ones).

10. Ezekiel's scroll. Another extraordinary foreshadowing of the Eucharist is in Ezekiel 2. Like Isaiah, the prophet has a vision of God and the Spirit of the Lord enters him. Then, in verse 8, he hears these words, "open thy mouth, and eat what I give thee." "And I looked, and behold, a hand was sent to me, wherein was a book rolled up: and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without: and there were written in it lamentations, and canticles, and woe." In the next chapter he describes his eating of this book: "And I did eat it: and it was sweet as honey in my mouth" (verse 3). Catholic interpreters over the centuries have seen this sweet scroll that was eaten as another sign of the Eucharist. The episode illustrates well what we experience in the two liturgies of the Mass. In the first, we consume the Word, in the readings of Scripture and the homily that is preached on them. Then, in the second liturgy, we consume the Eucharist, which, as the Body of Christ, is the Word made flesh.

The Shekinah: Figure of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

The mystery of the Incarnation and the substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist—Body, Blood, soul and divinity—was prefigured in the Old Covenant in a special presence of God manifested at certain times by a visible glory overshadowing the holy place. This overshadowing presence of God is referred to by Jews as the shekinah, which is derived from the Hebrew verb shachan: "to dwell or abide." The shekinah was manifested first on Mt. Sinai in a cloud of glory and a devouring fire, out of which God spoke to Moses.16 The cloud of glory marking God's "dwelling" with Israel later covered the Tent of Meeting that housed the Ark of the Covenant.

The liturgy of the Old Covenant centered on the Ark of the Covenant, which was a magnificent type of Christ and His presence in the Eucharist, for it contained the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and the rod of Aaron that blossomed as a sign of his election to the high priesthood. The tablets of the Law prefigure Christ as the living Torah who reveals the will of God not in abstract commandments, but in every aspect of His life, and particularly in His Passion. The manna prefigures Christ who is the true Bread from heaven who gives life to the world. The rod of Aaron prefigures Christ who is true High Priest, but according to the line of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 9:2–7 gives a description of the Tabernacle housing the Ark: For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables

of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

The Tabernacle housing the Ark of the Covenant, also called the Sanctuary or Tent of Meeting, was to be the privileged place in which God dwelt with His people. In Exodus 25:8, God says to Moses: "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it."

Exodus 29:43–46 speaks of the Tent of Meeting as the place of Israel's encounter with the personal presence of God dwelling among them: There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory; I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate, to serve me as priests. And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God.

When the Tent of Meeting was finished and consecrated (1400 BC?), Exodus 40:34–38 describes how the glory of the Lord visibly descended on it and remained, except when they were to travel: Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would go onward; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they

did not go onward till the day that it was taken up. For throughout all their journeys the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel. Through the presence of the sanctuary, the whole of Israel was sanctified with God's indwelling presence. In Numbers 35:34, God says: "You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel." During the time of Eli, the high priest, the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines. The special presence of the Lord was manifested no longer in visible glory, but rather in the destruction of the Philistine idols and in a plague on the Philistines.

When Solomon constructed the Temple in Jerusalem (c. 1000 BC), the Ark of the Covenant was installed in the Holy of Holies, which was the heart of worship in the Temple. When Solomon dedicated the Temple, the glory of God descended on it: When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.17 The visible manifestation of God's presence in the shekinah was one of the glories of Israel, showing the nearness of God to Israel. As Moses said to Israel: "What great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon Him?" (Deut 4:7). God's mysterious indwelling in the Tent of Meeting and in the Holy of Holies in the Temple was a figure of the supreme indwelling that is totally unique: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). It is not by accident that John chose the word "dwell" (from the root skhnh), which literally means to "dwell as in a tent." This term recalls the dwelling of God with His people through the shekinah in the tabernacle (translated into Greek by the term skhnh) that housed the Ark.

Joseph Ratzinger, in Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives, comments on John 1:14: The man Jesus is the dwelling-place of the Word, the eternal divine Word, in this world. Jesus' "flesh," his human existence, is the "dwelling" or "tent" of the Word: the reference to the sacred tent of Israel in the wilderness is unmistakable. Jesus is, so to speak, the tent of meeting—he is the reality for which the tent and the later Temple could only serve as signs. And since the humanity of Jesus is truly and substantially contained in the Blessed Sacrament, the Tent of Meeting is a sign prefiguring not only the Incarnation, but also the Eucharist and every church housing the Blessed Sacrament through which Christ "dwells" with the entire Church militant.

Jesus demonstrates that the Temple is a type of Him in John 2:19–21 when He was asked for a sign for chasing out the money-changers from the Temple, and He answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John clarifies that "he spoke of the temple of his body." Through the Eucharist, this Temple of Christ's Body is made present in every tabernacle containing a consecrated host. Every church with the Blessed Sacrament is infinitely holier than the Temple in Jerusalem, for that was but a type or figure of the Real Presence of the Word Incarnate.

The Temple is also the type of the Christian who receives Christ in Holy Communion and of the divine Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the souls of the just. St. Paul speaks of the Temple with reference to the Christian in 1 Corinthians 6:13–20: The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. . . . Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one

spirit with him. . . . Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a great price. So glorify God in your body.

The Temple is also a type of the unity of the Church. The unity of the Church's sacrifice was prefigured in the Mosaic Law which stipulated that all sacrifice was to be done in the Temple in Jerusalem. This commandment, on the one hand, was a great difficulty for the Jewish people, requiring them to travel to Jerusalem three times a year. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, this commandment meant that the entire sacrificial system of Mosaic Judaism could no longer be observed.

Why did God command that all sacrifice be offered in the Temple? First of all, the Temple was a visible symbol of the unity that God wanted in His liturgy. Secondly, it helped preserve the unity of faith and worship in Israel, since all sacrifice was offered in one place under the oversight of the High Priest. Beyond these reasons, however, the precept that all sacrifice had to be offered in the Temple was a great symbol prefiguring the unity of worship in the New Covenant. Although sacrifice is offered everywhere in the Catholic world, from the rising of the sun to its setting,20 nevertheless, the worship of the Church is even more unified than that of Israel. Everywhere in the Catholic Church, one and the same sacrifice—the sacrifice of Calvary—is offered until the end of time in the Holy Mass. In Israel, many animal sacrifices were offered in only one place (the Temple), whereas in the Church, one and the same sacrifice is offered in every place under the sun.

Part II
Eucharist and OT Sacrifices

The nature of sacrifice in the Old Testament can be explained by looking at the different types of sacrifices that are found in it. Among the types of sacrifices that appear in the Old Testament, the following are the most noted: gift sacrifice, communion sacrifice, expiation sacrifice and Passover sacrifice. The idea of sacrifice as a gift, which in its original meaning carries an understanding of bribing the deity, finds no parallel in the Old Testament where everything is seen as belonging to God and where God cannot be coerced by human efforts. Sacrifice as gift in the Old Testament has therefore come to be understood as an expression 'of gratitude to God and of joy for his presence .... ' (Pfeiffer). This view is confirmed by a number of other authors (see Von Rad; Courtman; Wenham).

When one looks at the context of the gift sacrifice in the Bible, however, at least some of them, the idea of bribery and bargaining with God, which these authors are trying to disprove, seems to be present. This is particularly true of all distressful situations where a sacrifice is promised to God in return for a favour (Gen. 228:10-22; Jg. 10:30; Sam.15:7-9). Considering the issue in the wider context of the Bible however, where the idea of bribery is denounced by law (Deut. 16: 19) and the prophets, the conclusion of these authors about the nature of gift sacrifice is probably right. The accounts that seem to suggest gift sacrifice as a bargain with God can best be explained as belonging to the earlier stage of the evolution of the Jewish idea of sacrifice. For now we could conclude with Thurian that the main idea behind gift sacrifice is to give thanks to God (cf. 1960:40).

In the Old Testament, communion sacrifice was offered to celebrate conviviality between Israel and God, it was closely related to the

idea of covenant between God and Israel. 'It signified community of life between God and His faithful servants'. The main part of gift and communion sacrifices was the burning of the whole flesh of the victim in case of the former and only part of it in case of the latter, and the other part was consumed by the offerer. This suggests a sharing of a meal between God and worshipers, but this is not to be understood literally. 'The Israelites were as aware as anyone that God did not physically eat food, but eating is a rich symbolic resource for theological reflection'.

Expiation sacrifice was a sacrifice that concerned itself with the restoration of a broken relationship with God. It is regarded by some authors as the most important in the Old Testament (see Von Rad 1962:258 and Daly 1978:13). This is confirmed by the detailed explanation given by Leviticus on the regulations for this type of sacrifice. Ashby explains that expiation sacrifice probably gained more prominence during the exile period 'as a result of a stronger emphasis on community repentance instilled into the reformed Israel by the teachers of the period such as Ezra and Nehemiah' (1988:31-32). The popularity of expiation sacrifice is further confirmed by the division of this type of sacrifice into three kinds, i.e., purification offering, guilt offering and atonement offering. The main part of expiation sacrifice in general was the manipulation of the blood according to the different rites of the sacrifices falling under its category. The animal was important for its blood, which was the most important element of the sacrifice. Thus it was not the actual killing of the animal that was important but its blood. The importance of the blood in sacrifice, particularly in expiation sacrifice, was due to the fact that blood was seen as possessing the life of the sacrificial animal (Von Rad 1962:270). If blood was seen as an important element of the sacrifice because of its life force, it would seem that sin is seen as bringing death, which is then reversed by the sacrificial blood.

The Passover sacrifice was a re-living of the liberation from Egypt (cf. Mackenzie 1968:644 and Saldarini 1984:5) and an anticipation 'of the eschatological salvation event to come at the last day (cf. Isa. 31:5; Hos. 2:16; Jer. 23:7 ...)' (Daly 1978:40). There are different theories about the origin of this type of sacrifice (see. Ashby 1988, Alexander 1995), but there is no doubt about the sacrificial character of the Passover in its Jewish setting. According to Saldarini, in Jesus' time, the Passover meal was eaten 'with a sacrificial animal ... in Jerusalem after the animal was slaughtered and offered in the Temple' The prescriptions and rituals of the Passover that Saldarini describes certainly put it in the category of sacrifice.

For the purpose of clarity, we have tried here to explain sacrifice in the Old Testament by distinguishing different types of sacrifices found in it. When one reads about them, however, the distinctions that we have made here are not that obvious. Von Rad explains that the reason for this is that 'whenever sacrifice was offered, several motives were involved, and these imperceptibly passed over into one another .. .'. Jenson, also confirms Von Rad's observation: 'it is often difficult to relate a general idea exclusively to a particular kind of sacrifice because of the overlap between sacrificial rituals' .

If a single definitive answer to the purpose of sacrifice as whole in the Old Testament were to be given, one could say that it serves to keep the covenant. Any type of sacrifice in Israel had a covenant-related purpose: if it did not seek to make up for its disruption through expiation offering, it sought to renew and to strengthen it in communion, gift and Passover sacrifice.

The agents of sacrifice in the OT : In a general way one could say that the people of Israel as a whole were the agents of sacrifice since its practice was motivated by the overall consciousness of being God's people. By agent here is meant the one who carries out

the sacrifice. In a formal way, it was the priest who was the agent of sacrifice. The role of the priest in the sacrificial offering was to act as mediator between the offerers and God. He did this by prescribing the required animal victim 1 and carrying out the rite of sacrifice. He acted as the mouthpiece of God in declaring the acceptance or the non-acceptance of the sacrifice. This is because 'the priest was deemed to be a gift from God to Israel (Num. 18.6-7); that is why he remained responsible to God and to Israel (Deut. 18.2; Josh. 13.33; Ezek. 44.28)'.

The conditions for the acceptance of sacrifice: One thing clear in the Old Testament, especially in the prophetic literature, is that the internal disposition and corresponding deeds of the offerer were of great significance for the meaning of sacrifice. There must be congruence between the external act of offering and the attitude and behaviour of the offerer towards God and fellow human beings. Hosea (6:6) tells us that if a sacrifice is not accompanied by steadfast love and knowledge of God, then it has no meaning before God. The popular text of Isaiah (1 : 1-17) and other similar texts tell us that sacrifices that are not accompanied by concern for justice and for the needy are not accepted by God.

The manner in which the Prophets presented their challenge about sacrifice, e.g. 'God does not want sacrifice but mercy', can easily lead to an understanding that they totally rejected cultic sacrifice in favour of spiritual sacrifice, yet it was more the integration of the two they wanted. 'Integrate' is the operative word, because as Lucas notes, the condemnation of sacrifice by the Prophets is not done 'because sacrifice is wrong, but because it is meaningless unless accompanied by obedience to God's moral commands' (1995:62). The condition, then, for the acceptance of sacrifice is the integration of the act of sacrifice with a proper spiritual disposition of obedience to God that should result in corresponding deeds towards the neighbour.

Chapter 2

NT Notion of the Eucharist

Conversely, when we read the New Testament, perhaps our eyes are drawn to the beloved passages that deal most directly with that most beloved part of Catholic life: the Mass. We turn to the moment when Jesus instituted the Eucharist: when he took bread and pronounced it to be his body, then took a cup and pronounced it to be "the new covenant in his blood." We turn to the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, the famous Bread of Life Discourse: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.... Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you" (Jn 6:51, 53). It is almost impossible for a Catholic to imagine one without the other. Yet history asks us to do so, if only for a moment on the time line. Allow me to explain.

Eucharist: The New Testament

Let's focus for a moment on the phrase "New Testament." All Christians agree, of course, that it is a foundational term in our religion. We use it to describe the second and smaller part of the Bible. But to the first Christians— and to Jesus—the term had a different and larger meaning, a meaning that is evident even in the book we call the New Testament. To the first Christians, the word we translate as "testament" was supremely important. In Greek it is "*diatheke*." In Hebrew it is "*b'rith*." St. Jerome, in the fourth century, rendered it in Latin as "*testamentum*." In English, it has been translated inconsistently, sometimes as "testament" and sometimes as "covenant."

For the Jews of Jesus' time, the word described not a book, but a relationship—a family relationship, usually sealed (and renewed) by an oath, a sacrifice, and a meal. The ritual created a family bond where none had existed before—in marriage, for example, or adoption. God used the term to describe his special relationship with Israel. We know of only one instance when Jesus used the phrase we translate as "New Testament," and he used it not to describe a book, but the Mass! St. Paul provides the earliest historical record of the event, perhaps twenty years after the Last Supper: "In the same way [Jesus] also [took] the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'" (1 Cor 11:25). Read it closely. The New Testament should change the way we have perhaps been reading the term "New Testament."

According to the New Testament itself, the Eucharist is the New Testament. Long before anyone ever sat down to write a book called the New Testament, Jesus had given the chalice as the New Testament in his blood (see Lk 22:20). Years before the New Testament was a

document, it was a sacrament, the most foundational Christian rite, instituted by Christ and given to the Church. The Mass is the meal and the sacrifice that renews the *kaine diatheke*—the New Testament— and that is our family bond with God. In Holy Communion with Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, we are God's children now: "the children share in blood and flesh" (Heb 2:14). Catholics have spoken of the Mass in these terms—covenantal terms—since the Church's earliest days, the generation that received the faith from the Apostles.

Eucharist Sacrifice

St. Ignatius of Antioch, who died around AD 107, provides history's earliest instance of the phrase "the Catholic Church." In his letters, he habitually referred to the Mass as "the sacrifice." Even before St. Ignatius, however, a document called the Didache, attributed to the Apostles, speaks of the Eucharist as "the sacrifice." Recent scholars argue that the ritual sections of the Didache are older than the earliest books of the New Testament. Yet non-Catholics sometimes ask how the Eucharist can be a sacrifice if Jesus' Death was the once-for-all sacrifice. If the sacrifice was his Death, and his Death was "once for all," as we read in St. Paul (Rom 6:10) and St. Peter (1 Pt 3:18), then why does the Church celebrate Mass every day, many times a day? It's a fair question, and it should lead us to ask another question: What is it that made Jesus' crucifixion a sacrifice?

To us, after two thousand years of Christian formation, the idea seems self-evident. But to a first-century Jew, it would probably have seemed absurd. Sacrifice was permitted in only one city, the holy city, Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified outside the city walls. Sacrifice 3 could be offered in only one place in the holy city, in the Temple, on the altar, by an ordained priest from the tribe of Levi.

Calvary was far from the Temple, and it had no altar, no offering priest. To even the most careful observer, it would have appeared to be a profane event, a fairly unremarkable Roman execution. A sympathetic soul might have judged Jesus' Death to be martyrdom, like the deaths recounted in the histories of Maccabees, but not a sacrifice.

What made it a sacrifice? It was the eucharistic offering at the Last Supper. Jesus presented the bread and called it his Body. He presented the chalice and deemed it the "blood of the covenant." This is sacrificial language. This is a sacrificial offering. Jesus is echoing the declaration of Moses as he sprinkled sacrificial blood over the Israelites, thus ratifying God's covenant with them (Ex 24:8). It is St. Paul who connects all the dots for us. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, after introducing the "message of the cross" (1:18), he calls Christ "our paschal lamb" who "has been sacrificed" (5:7). Thus, he makes the connection between the Passover celebrated as the Last Supper and the crucifixion on Calvary. Indeed, it was that first Eucharist that transformed Jesus' Death from an execution to an offering.

At the Last Supper, he gave his Body to be broken, his Blood to be poured out, as if on an altar. The Last Supper was the necessary first act of the drama of the Passion. It was like an opera's overture that establishes all the important themes. As Paul retold the story of the Last Supper (1 Cor 11:23-25), he spoke of the event in sacrificial terms. He quoted Jesus' echo of the words and action of Moses. He recounted that Jesus had called the Supper a "remembrance," which was a technical term for a specific type of Temple sacrifice (the memorial offering). And just in case we missed any of those connections, Paul compared the Christian Supper (the Mass) with the sacrifices of the Temple (1 Cor 10:18) and even with pagan sacrifices (1 Cor 10:20). All sacrifices, he said, bring about a

communion, a fellowship. The offerings of idolatry bring about a communion with demons, but the Christian sacrifice brings about a communion with the Body and Blood of Jesus (1 Cor 10:19-21).

Eucharist and the Sacrifice at Calvary

Thus, Jesus' Death on Calvary was not simply a brutal and bloody execution. Jesus' Death had been transformed by his self-offering in the upper room. It had become the offering of an unblemished Paschal victim, the self-offering of a high priest who gave himself as a victim for the redemption of others. "Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma" (Eph 5:2).

The Eucharist infuses that love into us, uniting our love with Christ's, our sacrifice with his. St. Paul preached, "I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). Note that he speaks of "bodies" in the plural, but "sacrifice" in the singular. For we are many, but our sacrifice is one with Jesus', which is once for all. This is what Jesus willed when he made his offering and then commanded his apostles to repeat the action as his memorial sacrifice: "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:24-25).

The document we call the New Testament presents the rite we call the New Testament as something central to Christian belief and life. Redemption, as Christ accomplished it, makes little sense apart from his eucharistic offering.

We see this in the frequency of the New Testament's explicit discussions of the Eucharist. The institution of the sacrament is recounted four times: three times in the so-called synoptic Gospels (Mt 26, Mk 14, and Lk 22) and once in St. Paul's letters (1 Cor 11:25). We should note that this is the only real narrative overlap

between the evangelists and St. Paul. Though St. Paul was Jesus' most prolific interpreter, he rarely quoted his Master. Yet here he carefully narrates a scene and reports Jesus' words at some length. Moreover, the apostle takes pains to emphasize that he is not the origin of the Tradition. He is simply passing on what has already been well established in the Church. "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread" (1 Cor 11:23).

How well established was this? Well, the Acts of the Apostles conveys the worship of the earliest Christians in a compact statement: "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). The Church in every succeeding age observed those four elements in one action: the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

There are many other eucharistic scenes in the New Testament, less explicit, perhaps, but no less vivid. St. John's Gospel treats the subject theologically in the Bread of Life Discourse (chapter 6), but also dramatically, in the same chapter, as it tells the story of Jesus' multiplication of the loaves. The early Church Fathers believed that Jesus' act of transubstantiation at Cana—changing water to wine—was a symbolic foreshadowing of the Mass. Consider St. Luke's account of Jesus' Resurrection appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus walked with them, but they did not recognize him. Then, "at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight . . . he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread" (Lk 24:30-35). St. Luke could hardly be clearer in connecting this event with the supper recounted two chapters earlier. Jesus' actions are almost identical. They reprise the theme introduced in the overture and bring his Passion to a fitting resolution.

The Eucharist, instituted on the night he was betrayed, was the Savior's first order of business when he rose from the dead. It was the Church's constant concern as it went out from Jerusalem to the whole world. Once we see how central the Eucharist was to the life of the early Church, we begin to see the New Testament with new eyes. What else could the Epistle to the Hebrews mean when it describes the Church's heavenly-earthly worship? "No, you have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and countless angels in festal gathering, and the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven, and God the judge of all, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel" (Heb 12:22-24).

What else could the Book of Revelation mean by the "wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9)? You don't have to be Catholic to see how the New Testament documents presume and depend on the New Testament sacrifice and the New Testament meal. Over the last fifty years and more, many Protestant biblical scholars have noted what Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy has called "the Eucharistic provenance of the New Testament." The movement that began with scholars such as Oscar Cullmann, F. J. Leenhardt, and Ernst Kasemann continues today in the work of John Koenig, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Arthur Just. What these scholars recognize is that the documents we call the New Testament were written to be proclaimed in the context of the meal we call the New Testament. They are to be read aloud in the assembly (Rev 1:3). Thus, they use terms that were ordinarily, in the ancient world, associated with priesthood, sacrifice, and liturgy. They contain hymns and doxologies and sudden insertions of ritual formulas. They are sometimes lost on us, like the original meaning of the phrase "New Testament" itself, because we have covered them over with centuries of interpretation

and homiletic use. But a good study Bible can sensitize us to the meanings that have been hidden by subsequent history.

St. Paul opens his First Letter to the Thessalonians by assuring them, “We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly” (1 Thes 1:2). The verb he uses for “give thanks” is “eucharistoumen.” Similarly, the First Letter to Timothy prescribes the offering of eucharistias, which is often translated as “thanksgiving.” In firstcentury Judaism and Christianity, these terms referred not just to generic categories of prayer, but to specific types of sacrifice. Did St. Paul intend the terms to be read that way? We cannot know for sure, but we should be open to the possibility. The rest of the New Testament documents might incline us to see still more of the New Testament sacrament or, better, to hear more of it, when the Scriptures are proclaimed, as ever, in the course of the Holy Mass.

Chapter 3

Patristic Theology of Eucharist

This chapter will mainly unveil the original texts of the early church fathers on the sacrament of Eucharist.

The Fathers of the Church give a united testimony regarding the Eucharist, although expressed in differing ways. They emphasize above all the reality of Christ’s Body and Blood, the fact that it is the sacrifice of Christ, and a sacrament which brings about interior unity in the Mystical Body of Christ, and which thus must be celebrated in union with the bishop. Let us look in this talk at the first two centuries of Church Fathers, who offer a rich defense of the faith of the Church and show the beginnings of a homogeneous development of the doctrine of transubstantiation. This doctrine was in the deposit of faith from Christ and the Apostles, but there is a development of the Church’s reflection on that

deposit of faith, in the course of which the doctrine has been made clearer, thus generating a more perfect terminology. We shall continue to look at this development in the next talk, which will examine the works of the Church Fathers of the following two centuries.

1. The Didache

Perhaps the earliest description of the celebration of the Eucharist outside the New Testament is from the *Didache* 14, which many argue is from the second half of the first century.

And on the Lord's Day, after you have come together, break bread and offer the Eucharist, having first confessed your offences, so that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one who has a quarrel with his neighbor join you until he is reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled.1 For it was said by the Lord: "In every place and time let there be offered to me a clean sacrifice, because I am the great king"; and also: "and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles."2

Although brief, the text is important, first of all, for associating the solemn celebration of the Eucharist with the "Lord's Day," which corresponds with Sunday, also referred to as the "first day of the week" by St. Justin (see below). Secondly, the text clearly refers to the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Third, the text connects the ability to offer a clean sacrifice with interior purity, which requires reconciliation with one's neighbors and confession of sins. In support of the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist and its connection with interior purity, the *Didache* quotes the prophecy of Malachi 1:11, which will be quoted extensively by the Fathers. Malachi 1:10–14 says:

> I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. /For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name,

> and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.... For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name is feared among the nations.

2. The Eucharist in Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*

Of course, Irenaeus' insistence on the importance of Eucharistic doctrine was not unprecedented. Ignatius of Antioch, whose death is usually placed around A.D. 117, also turns his attention to the Eucharist when he contrasts the teaching of the orthodox church with that of the heretics:

"Certain people ignorantly deny [Jesus], or rather have been denied by him, for they are advocated of death rather than of the truth. . . Now note well those who hold heretical opinions about the grace of Jesus Christ that came to us; note how contrary they are to the mind of God. They have no concern for love, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the oppressed, none for the prisoner or the one released, none for the hungry or thirsty. They abstain from Eucharist and prayer because they refuse to acknowledge the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father by his goodness raised up" (Letter to the Smyrnaeans, 5:1, 6:2; taken from Michael Holmes, The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations [3d. ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 254-255).

Note the following:

1. Ignatius, like Irenaeus, seems to suggest that the Eucharist plays a formative and central role in theology. To be wrong on the Eucharist is not to simply go astray on a minor technical theological point.

2. The heretics abstain from the Eucharist because they deny what the Christians affirm: that it is the "flesh of our savior Jesus

Christ"—that very flesh "which suffered for our sins and which the Father by his goodness raised up." Ignatius doesn't give us much more about what his opponents believe, but it seems clear that he is contrasting a "realist" Eucharistic theology with a vision that denies that the Eucharist is indeed the flesh of Jesus.

3. Irenaeus on the Eucharist

Here's what he wrote on the Eucharist in his famous *Against Heresies, c.* A.D. 180:

Directing His disciples to offer God the first-fruits of His own creation—not because He stood in need of them, but that they themselves might be neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, 'This is my body' [Matt 26:26]. And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant. This the Church has received from the Apostles, and offers now to God throughout all the world...

Then how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the Body of the Lord and with His Blood, goes to corruption and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly, so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity (*Against Heresies* 4.18.5).

A few points to highlight:

1. Irenaeus assumes that the Eucharistic doctrine is well known. His argument depends on the assumption that the heretics believe in the importance and validity of the Eucharistic celebration. It also assumes that they—at least, in some way—share his understanding of the Eucharist.

2. Irenaeus' argument is directed chiefly against the Gnostics, who deny the resurrection and who do not believe that the material word was created good. His point seems to be: if matter is evil, why does Jesus employ it, i.e., using the bread and the wine at the Last Supper?

3. Irenaeus' doctrine could be said to be Eucharistic-centric: "But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and *the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion*." Strong words!

4. Irenaeus argues that the body will be transformed and made incorruptible by appealing to the belief that the bread is also transformed in some way in the Eucharistic celebration: "For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, *is no longer common bread* ... " In fact, he states the bread is changed in such a way that it now has both a heavenly and earthly reality. Of course, the later definition of "transubstantiation" states something similar: the Eucharist has an earthly dimension (i.e., it looks like bread, tastes like bread, smells like bread, etc.) and a heavenly one (it is transformed into the Body of Jesus).

4. Ephraem of Syria (306-373):

Syriac writers saw in the Old Testament "not merely records of Israel's past experience of God and expectation of the future, but

'mysteries' of God's purposes, now revealed to the eye of enlightened faith." Ephrem's vision depended on the belief that the entire Old Testament pointed to Christ. Types, symbols, sacramental mysteries are all elements of his theology of revelation. Raza or mystery became the word for the "Christ-bearing" sense concealed in Old Testament figures, and which could also be conveyed by the idea of "type." Christ being the fulfillment is the "truth" or "reality." Ephrem and the other Syriac writers use type, symbol, and mystery to express the reality of God in Creation. They use the term "mystery" for any religious symbol (especially Old Testament "types"), for sacramental rites, and in the plural for the Eucharist.

A vivid example of the Syriac understanding of mystery, type, and sacrament is seen in their view of the mystery reflected in the Divine Liturgy. With the beginning of the anaphora, the eucharistic prayer, the faithful believe that beyond the sensible appearances and the terrestrial signs of the Divine Liturgy, there is an invisible and celestial reality that is being accomplished. The celebration of the earthly sacrifice is a participation in the unending heavenly liturgy.

In the mind of Ephrem, the work of divinization and salvation continues as an extension of the Body of Christ. Ephrem observes in the *Homily on our Lord 11.2*: "He spat on his fingers and put them in the deaf-mute's ears. And he made mud with his saliva, and applied it to the blind man's eyes, so we would know that just as there was a deficiency in the pupils of that blind man from his mother's womb, so too, there was a deficiency in the ears of this deaf man. So, with yeast from the body of the one who completes, the deficiency of our creation was filled up. It would not have been appropriate for our Lord to sever a part of His body to fill up the deficiency of other bodies. He filled up the deficiency of the deficient with something He was able to separate from Himself. Just as mortals consume Him by means of something edible, in the same way He filled up

deficiency and gave life to mortality. So we should learn that the deficiency of the deficient was filled up from a body in which fullness resided. And life was given to mortals from a body in which life resided."33 Robert Murray observes: "[Ephrem] provides material for us to find an implicit ecclesiological argument which could be summed up by saying that the whole dispensation of salvation has its source in the human body of Christ; that same body in which he healed men and rose again, he gave us in sacramental form (in "mystery") to heal us, to incorporate us in him in the Church, and to give us a pledge of his Resurrection."

James of Saroug relates God's revelation to creatures to the establishment of the Eucharist. He describes revelation as a process of descent, wherein God manifests himself first to the angels but then "he made the Secret descend; he arranged by it that his account should come to the world. And in the midst of the world, he established the altar for bodily creatures, and he became a body from whom they should eat, their dwelling place."38 Ephrem teaches: "In the Church he implanted the Word which causes rejoicing with its promises, which causes fear with its warnings. . . . The assembly of saints bears resemblance to Paradise. In it each day is plucked the fruit of him who gives life to all; in it, my brethren, is trodden the cluster of grapes, to be the Medicine of Life."

5. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-387)

Cyril writes on the mystery of Eucharist as follows: We pray God to send the Holy Spirit on the gifts laid here, to make the bread the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ. For the Holy Spirit sanctifies and transforms all that he touches.

6. Gregory of Nyssa (330-395)

What then is this remedy? Nothing other than that glorious body which showed itself stronger than death and has become the source

of life for us. Just as a little leaven, according to the Apostle's words, is mixed with all the dough, so the body that was raised by God to immortality, once it is introduced into our body, wholly changes it and transforms it into his own substance…

The Word of God…once it became incarnate…provided his body with the means of subsistence in the usual suitable ways: he maintained its substance with the help of…bread. Even in normal conditions, when one sees bread, one sees in a sense the human body, since bread absorbed by the body becomes the body itself. So here, the body in which God had become incarnate, since it was fed on bread, was in a sense identical with the bread–the food transforming itself, as we have said, to take on the nature of the body. It was recognized, in fact, that this glorious flesh possessed the property common to all human beings: like them it was maintained with the help of bread. But this body partook of the divine dignity because of the indwelling of the Word. We are therefore entitled to believe that the bread hallowed by the Word of God is transformed to become the body of the Word…

As the bread transformed into that body was thereby raised to divine power, a similar change happens to the bread of the Eucharist. In the former case the grace of the Word hallowed the body that drew its substance from bread, and in a sense was itself bread. Likewise in the Eucharist the bread is hallowed by the Word of God and prayer…It is transformed at once into his body…as expressed in these words: "This is my body"…

That is why, in the economy of grace, he gives himself as seed to all the faithful. His flesh composed of bread and wine is blended with their bodies to enable human beings, thanks to their union with his immortal body, to share in the condition of incorruptibility.

7. Ambrose (334-397)

You here it said that every time the sacrifice is offered, the Lord's death, resurrection and ascension are represented, the forgiveness of sins is offered, and yet do you not receive this bread of life every day? Anyone who is wounded looks for healing. For us it is a wound to be liable to sin. Our healing lies in the adorable heavenly sacrament…

If you receive it every day, every day becomes for you Today.

If Christ is yours today, he rises for you today. Today has come.

8. John Chrysostom (344-407)

On high, the armies of the angels are giving praise. Here below, in the Church, the human choir takes up after them the same doxology. Above us, angels of fire make the thrice-holy hymn resound magnificently. Here below is raised the echo of their hymn. The festival of heaven's citizens is united with that of the inhabitants of earth in a single thanksgiving, a single upsurge of happiness, a single chorus of joy.

Just as the head and the body constitute a single human being, so Christ and the Church constitute a single whole…This union is effected through the food that he has given us in his desire to show the love he has for us. For this reason he united himself intimately with us, he blended his body with ours like leaven, so that we should become one single entity, as the body is joined to the head.

Do you wish to honor the body of the Saviour? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honor it in church with silk vestments while outside you are leaving it numb with cold and naked. He who said, "This is my body", and made it so by his word, is the same that said, "You saw me hungry and you gave me no food. As you did it not to

one of the least of these, you did it not to me." Honor him then by sharing your property with the poor. For what God needs is not golden chalices but golden souls.

Conclusion

The first two Christian centuries, although sparsely documented, give us a rich insight into the centrality of the Eucharist in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic age, both in the aspect of the Real Presence and the aspect of sacrifice that is offered throughout the catholic world.

Chapter 4

Eucharistic Origins: From The New Testament To The Liturgies Of The Golden Age

Many a liturgical theologian has inwardly groaned on Holy Thursday upon hearing the assembly sing "At that first Eucharist ..." or upon hearing the homilist proclaim that we are "doing what the Lord did at the Last Supper." It is, of course, a theological commonplace that the Eucharist, in the full sense of the word, is the high point of both the expression of and the inchoative realization of the Church's marital covenant relationship with God. The center of this Eucharist is the Church's ritual action and prayer in which the assembly, led by its duly appointed minister, addresses God the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, praising and thanking God for the salvation-historical gifts of creation, covenant, and redemption, especially redemption in Jesus Christ, and asking God

to send the Holy Spirit in order to continue, by means of the transformation of the eucharistic gifts, the transformation of the community and its individuals toward their eschatological destiny as the true Body of Christ. The ritual celebration culminates in the assembly coming forward to receive, as Augustine put it, "what you are," the Body of Christ. But this, of course, is still just the beginning. The full realization of the ritual celebration continues beyond what takes place in church. It continues as the assembly is sent forth to live out this eucharistic mystery in the world of everyday life. And it will finally be completed only at the *eschaton* when the universalistic hope expressed in the prophetic proclamation has been fulfilled: "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9).

Is this what Christ did at the Last Supper? Was the Last Supper a Eucharist in this full sense of the word? Obviously not. This does not deny that Jesus instituted the Eucharist. What Jesus did at the Last Supper is obviously at least the generative moment of the institution of the Eucharist. But Eucharist in the full sense we have just described? No, that was still to come. The Holy Spirit had not yet been given to the Church, nor had the trinitarian theology yet been developed that is at the heart of the classical Eucharistic Prayers. Thus the Church, the assembly of those who address the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, was not yet constituted at the Last Supper. The Eucharist that Christians now celebrate is what the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of the risen Jesus, and over the course of generations and centuries, learned to do as it celebrated table fellowship with its risen Lord.

John Meier helps bring precision to this issue when he asks two questions: "Is it historically true that Jesus held a last Supper with his disciples?" "Is it historically true that, during that supper, Jesus did and said certain things regarding bread and wine that form the basis

of the later Christian celebration of the eucharist?"[1] To both of these historical questions, Meier answers with an unequivocal "yes." But one needs to note that there is considerable nuance contained in the way he phrases these questions. For he adds something with which most students of eucharistic origins will agree: "We must appreciate that the Last Supper and eucharist are not the same thing pure and simple."[2]

If that is the case, how does one move from the dominical instituting moment with Jesus at the Last Supper to the full-fledged eucharistic celebration that one can find, for example, in the anaphoras associated with the names of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great that were developing by the end of the fourth century in the "golden age" of patristic theology? That story has not been fully told, nor is it within the purpose and competence of my article to try to tell it. Actually, unless a lot more data from the first Christian centuries can be recovered than is presently available, that full story may never be told.[3] The available evidence indicates that it is a misconception, although a common one, to assume that there is *one* story, one relatively unified line of development from the Last Supper to the fully developed Eucharist. "Eucharist" is, of course, not an equivocal concept. But neither is it unqualifiedly univocal. For as one looks back and looks around, one sees that there have been and still are many different ways of celebrating the Eucharist. The exegetical and historical data indicate that this seems to be true *right from the beginning*. The starting point of this article is the apparent fact that the New Testament gives witness to a number of different Eucharists, or, more precisely perhaps, different practices of religious table fellowship that can be called Eucharists.

The first main part of my article outlines some of the major developments over the last century in the history and theology of eucharistic origins. This is done primarily, but not exclusively, from a

Roman Catholic or high-church sacramental point of view. In a second section, using as a foil the exegetical research and interpretations of Bruce Chilton, I sketch out what one can know and what one can surmise about the different "Eucharists" in the New Testament. The third and concluding section begins to explore the significance and consequences of this for theology, ecclesiology, liturgical theology, and ecumenical theology.

Before beginning, let me be open about the fact that one of the purposes of this article, as I have come to realize in the course of writing it, is apologetic. I mean apologetics not in the sense of defending Christianity against attacks from without, but defending Christianity from that internal undermining that takes place when Christian theologians do not deal adequately with facts that are generally accessible to serious scholars. For example, Elizabeth Johnson, reviewing John F. Haught's *Deeper Than Darwin* (Westview, 2003), a book that she describes as "an apologetics without rancor," writes: "One reason why scientifically educated people today have little interest in formal religion is the failure of theology to integrate the revelatory experience of a personal God into an expansive cosmological setting."[4] Analogously, one reason why people educated with a historical awareness have difficulty today taking the Church seriously is its failure, and the failure of pastoral liturgical theology, to integrate into its official forms of worship both the insights of modernity—let alone post-modernity—and the generally accessible facts of history and culture.

Major 20th-Century Developments In Eucharistic Theology

The 20th century saw several paradigm shifts in the interpretation of the eucharistic texts of the New Testament.[5] At the beginning of the century, Protestant-Catholic polemical positions dominated. Each side tended to read the texts as supporting its own particular position. Catholics saw them as supporting its understanding both of the

transubstantiated real presence and of the eucharistic celebration itself as a sacrifice. Protestants generally claimed the opposite. However, even then, the development of liturgical studies and the inexorable advance of the historical-critical method indicated that the days of respectability for such polemically driven exegesis and interpretation were numbered. The work of Dom Gregory Dix in 1945 was a singular sign of this development away from the polemical. His particular findings, however adopted or modified by others, remain a striking example of liturgical research that is acclaimed for its value to a broad range of scholars and theologians across the ecumenical spectrum.[6]

But the first significant breakthrough might well have been what was taking place from the mid 1930s in the work of Joachim Jeremias on *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus?* Jeremias drew expertly on the resources of modern philology in the effort to recover, at least conjecturally, the *ipsis-sima verba Jesu.* Even critics who questioned the validity of the venture had to respect the enormous scholarship at work.[8] On the other hand, more conservative scholars, among them Catholic exegetes still struggling under the restrictive instructions of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, found the method and results congenial.[9] Jeremias argued that behind the four extant accounts of the institution of the Eucharist, Mark 14:22-25, Matthew 26: 26-29, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, as well as John 6:51b-57, there can be discerned a "primitive Semitic tradition... traceable back into

the first decade after the death of Jesus with the assistance of exact philological observation."[10] However, the meaning of the reconstituted *verba* could still be debated. For, as Chilton put it: "the debate between those who see them [the Gospels] as literally true reports and those who see them as literary fictions remained unresolved."[11] Sometimes this debate circles around the category of

"cult legend." In terms of literary genre, it is un-problematic to read such narratives in the Gospels as cult legends, as long as one understands cult legend in the neutral sense. But if one understands a cult legend as necessarily having no historical basis, the debate is on.[12] Jeremias provided strong support for those who favored the historical side of the debate. However, the available evidence, embedded as it is in faith-documents, does not allow, as exegetes now more readily admit, for definitive scientific conclusions. In addition, as indicated above and as the body of my article demonstrates, the idea that there is just one line of development in the early history of the Eucharist seems to be a misconception.

Another significant breakthrough in this trajectory of development took place in the 1950s in the work of exegetes such as Heinz Schurmann and theologians such as Johannes Betz.[13] These scholars and others like them brought to bear all the resources of the increasingly sophisticated methods of historical criticism and historical liturgical studies in order to work from the New Testament texts back toward the probable shape and meaning of the words of institution in a very early Christian Eucharist. However,

rather than a major paradigm shift, this was more of a continuation of the attempt, a la Jeremias, to work back toward an (i.e., "the") original form of the Eucharist. The result was what Betz called the " Antioch-Palestinian Account," a reconstruction of the probable wording of the eucharistic celebration in Antioch within ten or fifteen years of the original Last Supper. This reconstruction reads (with the more conjectural elements in parentheses):

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed
took (taking?) bread, and, having said a prayer of thanks,
he broke [it] (and gave [it] to them) and said:
this is my body which is given for many;

(do this in memory of me.)
In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying:
this cup [is] the (new?) covenant in my blood;
(do this in memory of me.)[14]

This reconstruction, it was claimed, even with the removal of its more conjectural elements, contains, at least virtually, a remarkably well developed theology of the Eucharist. It also lies chronologically so close to the historical Jesus that it cannot easily be written off as due primarily to the process of community formation. Finally, it allows one to sketch out both a reliable picture of the at least implicit eucharistic theology of the first generation and some clear indications of what Jesus probably had in mind in instituting the Eucharist.[15] But all this still suffered under major limitations. Left unresolved was the debate between "literally true reports" and "literary fictions," as can be seen in Betz's debate with Willi Marxsen and with the more radical form critics.[16] It also continued to assume, what is now challenged by more recent liturgical scholars such as Paul Bradshaw [see n. 3 above], that there was a kind of linear development in the earliest

Eucharists. The work of Rudolf Pesch, who took the Last Supper account in Mark as, in effect, a preferred historical source, has not been widely accepted, and in any case it fails to break out of the methodological history-vs.-fiction impasse.

The Six "Eucharists" In The New Testament

In this ongoing search for eucharistic origins, the work of Bruce Chilton suggests that we have come to a significant paradigmatic breakthrough.[18] This breakthrough has been prepared by a half-century of New Testament redaction criticism and the continual refinement of critical methods that have made scholars more sensitive to the sometimes irreducible particularities of the biblical texts. To be able to "find"[19] in the New Testament *six* different ways of

celebrating what Christians came to call the Eucharist, and to locate each of these in its own specific socio-religio-political setting, each with its own theological implications and thus, cumulatively, with massive theological implications, brings one paradigmatically into an entirely new situation. If Chilton's exegetical findings are accurate, indeed even if they should be only approximately accurate, leaving details to be argued about, this would seem to make irrelevant, or at least to sublate, a number of time-honored scholarly approaches of the kind I have been describing. Fundamental to these traditional scholarly approaches (to which I myself have also adhered) was, first, the importance given to the already mentioned "literally true" vs. "literary fictions" debate, and, second, the assumption that there was a somewhat unified line of development that one could trace from the established Eucharist of later centuries back close to the time of the historical Jesus. History and exegesis now seriously question the hegemony of such assumptions.

Jesus' Practice of Table Fellowship

Jesus joined with his followers in Galilee and Judea, both disciples and sympathizers, in meals that were designed to anticipate the coming of God's kingdom. The meals were characterized by a readiness to accept the hospitality and the produce of Israel at large. A willingness to provide for the meals, to join in the fellowship, to forgive and to be forgiven, was seen by Jesus as a sufficient condition for eating in his company and for entry into the kingdom.[20]

Jesus' view of purity was doubtlessly quite lax in the estimation of the rabbis of his time, for the carefully guarded purity rules defined who could share in meals, the primary marker of social grouping in first-century Palestine. Jesus' "rules" were distinctive in that they did not seem to restrict purity—access to meals with him, which seemed to imply anticipatory access to the kingdom he was proclaiming—to any already existing religious, family, or social group.

It is not that he was unconcerned with purity, but his approach to it was distinctive in its inclusiveness. For Jesus, the primary markers of purity, the primary requirements for table fellowship in the kingdom were: Israel as forgiven and willing to provide of its own produce. Chilton sees this as the first type in the development of the Eucharist. Thus far, few, if any, would disagree with at least the major thrust of such findings.[21]

The "Last" Supper

Despite the controversy involved with these lapses in ritual purity, Jesus could have continued this practice indefinitely. But, in the incident referred to as the Cleansing of the Temple, he also sought to influence or reform purity practices associated with the Temple. Given the importance of the Temple, this attempt to "occupy" it—i.e., to change its purity rules—might have been enough to bring about his execution. But the authorities did not act immediately, and Jesus, apparently realizing that he had not succeeded, took a significant further step. In his meals, as he shared wine, he started referring to it as the equivalent of the blood of an animal shed in sacrifice, and in sharing bread, claiming that its value was that of sacrificial flesh. "Here was a sacrifice of sharings which the authorities could not control, and which the nature of Jesus' movement made it impossible for them to ignore. Jesus' meals after his failed occupation of the Temple became a surrogate of sacrifice, the second type of Eucharist."[22]

Against the many voices that will protest that this massively over-interprets the exegetical and historical evidence—and I do agree that there is over-interpretation here—let me make two immediate observations and a request. First, I will come back later to some of the exegetical data and arguments that can support Chilton's position on this point. Second, the theological implications of there being a number of different "Eucharists" in the New Testament (i.e., at least

types of religious table fellowship) which constitute the main purpose of this article, do not stand or fall with one's agreement or non-agreement with any particular detail, or with this particular interpretation of Jesus' Last Supper. Thus, I ask readers to suspend temporarily their possible skepticism on this point while I work out the rest of the exposition.

Petrine Christianity: The Blessing/Breaking of Bread at Home

In this stage of Eucharistic development, the *berakhah* prayer of Judaism seems to have become a principal model of Eucharist. Bread took precedence over wine, and, as Acts 1:12-26, 2:46, and 3:1-4:37 clearly describe, a double domestication took place. Instead of seeking the hospitality of others, as the itinerant Jesus seemed to do, adherents of the movement, under the leadership of Peter and/or the Twelve, gathered in the homes of colleagues where they "broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people" (Acts 2:46-47). In addition, apparently they also acknowledged the validity of sacrifice in the Temple. In doing this they seemed—if the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper and this account of very early Christian worship have significant historical content—to be changing the nature of the meal and the memory of what Jesus had said at that meal. For example, there is no mention of wine, nor does there, in this account of the earliest Christian gatherings, seem to have been any sense of being in tension with the officials of Judaism or its religious practices.[23]

These facts and inconsistencies cry out for an explanation. Chilton's hypothesis, actually supported by what meager historical evidence is available, offers such an explanation, namely, that in the years immediately following Jesus' death, the cultic regulations of the Temple had temporarily shifted to something much closer to what Jesus had been agitating for. At the very least, whatever

hypothesis is followed, this Eucharist (or pre-Eucharist) of the primitive Church described in Acts seems to have been quite different from the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper, and the reflection of those found in John 6. However, in terms of eucharistic origins, this was anything but a phase to be passed through and then forgotten.

For, from this phase of the development came two additional constitutive features of the Christian Eucharist: the construal of the supper as a sacrifice of sharings with specifically covenantal meaning, and the repetitive, ritual character of the Christian meal.[24]

The Passover, the Circle of James

The tendency to domestication is here pursued further, for the Eucharist is now seen as a Seder meal, open only to Jews in a state of purity, and to be celebrated only once a year, at Passover, in Jerusalem, as prescribed in Exodus 12:48. The effect of this Jacobean program—a possible antecedent to the later Quartodeciman practice?—"was to integrate Jesus' movement fully within the liturgical institutions of Judaism, to insist upon the Judaic identity of the movement and upon Jerusalem as its governing center," but without actually replacing Israel's Seder.[25]

Paul and the Synoptic Gospels

Paul, locating the Last Supper on the night on which Jesus was betrayed (1 Corinthians 11:23), vehemently resisted Jacobean claims. He also emphasized the link between Jesus' death and the Eucharist, and he accepts what Chilton calls the Hellenistic refinement of the Petrine type that presented the Eucharist as a sacrifice for sin.[26] This is also what we find in the Synoptic Gospels which use words to suggest that Jesus' blood is shed in the interests of the communities for which those Gospels were composed: for the "many" (in Damascus?) Matthew 26:28 and (in Rome?) Mark 14:24; on behalf of "you" (in Antioch?) Luke 22:20. The Synoptic Gospels also

emphasize the heroism of Jesus such as to make the meal an occasion to join in the solidarity of martyrdom. In addition the Synoptics have two miraculous feeding stories which symbolize the inclusion even of non-Jews within the Eucharist understood as a sort of philosophical symposium (see Mark 6:32-44; 8:1-10 and parallels).[27]

The Gospel of John

Jesus identifies himself in John 6 as the manna, a motif already found in Paul (1 Corinthians 10:1-4), but now developed to construe the Eucharist as a mystery in which Jesus, not literally but sacramentally, offers/gives his own personal body and blood in Eucharist. This would probably not be a totally new idea to Hellenistic Christians who followed synoptic practice. But Johannine practice now makes this meaning explicit. It was, as is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, an unambiguous, clear break with Judaism. For with this development, Eucharist has become a "sacrament" understandable only in Hellenistic terms, and involving "a knowing conflict with the ordinary understanding of what Judaism might and might not include."[28]

To sum up. Chilton's purpose in laying out the evidence for these different Eucharists in the New Testament is to free us from such "ideological regimens which will have the Gospels be either only historical or only fictive, [and thus] starve the reader of the meanings that generated the texts at hand." The generative exegesis of eucharistic texts that he proposes does not allow one to conclude to "a single meaning that is alleged to have occasioned all the others," nor, in this approach, does the initial meaning determine the final meaning.[29]

Theological Implications

As I noted earlier, the theological implications or consequences of these findings do not depend on full agreement on all the exegetical

details and interpretive reconstructions that Chilton lays out. There is significant debate, and in some cases significant disagreement, about certain details of Chilton's interpretations. Despite this, it is my assumption that there is a consensus among critical exegetes and liturgical historians that what Chilton attempts to do is what they attempt to do. I argue that his findings, even if reduced by many grains of salt, are sufficiently similar to findings common among exegetes and historians so as to require serious attention. There is enough there to oblige theologians across a wide spectrum of sub disciplines—theology, ecclesiology, liturgy, ecumenism, and pastoral theology—to sit up and take notice. But allow me now to formulate some further remarks about Chilton's methodology.

Methodology

When one stands back and looks at the large picture, one can see that over the past century there has been a series of ever more sophisticated refinements in the historical-critical method. For the purposes of this article, one of the most significant of these developments has been the general acceptance of *Redaktionsgeschichte* and the now broadly recognized need to attend to the specific context and purposes of each biblical author. These refinements are now increasingly being applied to the study of pa-tristics, church history, liturgical history, and as here, the history of eucharistic origins. Fifty or sixty years ago, Chilton's whole approach could easily have been dismissed as reductionism by mainstream theologians. Now, only a fundamentalist or biblical literalist could so dismiss them. However, though not rejected, findings such as those of Chilton have not yet been appropriated and seriously dealt with by the common body of main stream Christian theologians (as distinct from exegetes and historians). It is by theologians, especially by ecclesiologists, that they are likely to be seen as new and upsetting. I single out two points where Chilton's findings and

exegetical reconstructions are especially likely, for theological reasons, to encounter strong resistance.

The first of these is his reconstruction of what Jesus did at the Last Supper.[30] First, few exegetes would contest the general thrust of Chilton's characterization of Jesus' practice of inclusive table fellowship. Nor would they seriously contest that at the meal of Jesus commonly called "last,"— or, by extension, in his final few meals with his disciples—something special, something new took place, after which he was immediately arrested and executed.[31] What one can obviously contest are the details of Chilton's interpretive reconstruction to the effect that Jesus was probably saying something like: "this bread [that is available to any and all] is what serves for me—for you, for us—as the flesh of sacrifice"; and "this wine [that is available to any and all] is what serves for me—for you, for all—as the blood of sacrifice." Many will obviously find this to be an overly conjectural and minimalist reconstruction. For those committed to viewing the Eucharist that is now celebrated as "doing what the Lord did the night before he died," it is an unacceptably minimalist reconstruction.

But in defense of such a reconstruction one can point out that it has notable explanatory power. It, or something like this, helps to explain why the authorities, who apparently did not act immediately after Jesus' action in the Temple,[32] now act quickly. It also helps set up the context of the Eucharist in the circle of Peter (see Acts 2:43-47) that apparently, at least as Chilton interprets it, "changed the nature of the meal and the memory of what Jesus had said at the 'last supper.'"[33] Breaking bread "in their homes" and going "to the Temple area together every day" (Acts 2:46) is not the kind of challenging, or revolutionary activity that even our minimalist reconstruction suggests, let alone a maximalist reconstruction. If the community of Acts 2:43-47, even according to a minimalist

reconstruction, was doing what Jesus did the night before he died, it would hardly have been "having the good will of all the people" (Acts 2:47).

Notice the methodological shift that is taking place here. In contrast to traditional theologies of eucharistic origins, this approach is not an attempt to find in the various words of the New Testament a line of development (at times awkwardly harmonized) that would enable one to explain the more developed theology and praxis of the Church's Eucharist. Instead of that, this approach tries to identify/reconstruct the praxis that explains the words that have come down to us in the New Testament. There is, of course, some circularity here, as there necessarily is in any such interpretation of limited data. For one first has to use the words that have been handed down to us in order to reconstruct the praxis that explains the words. The result is that reconstructing in this way, a way that makes better use of modern historical-critical tools, reveals a pluriform eucharistic practice in the New Testament Church and, in our case, the six types of "Eucharist" (or the practice of table fellowship that might be called "Eucharist") that Chilton finds there.

A second (but related) point where Chilton's findings and reconstructions are likely to meet theological resistance is the place where he locates what theologians, especially in the Western Church, tend to see as the heart of eucharistic theology: the autobiographical identification of the meal elements of bread and wine with the body and blood of Jesus. Chilton locates this explicitly only in the sixth (Johannine) type of the Eucharist, and only implicitly or inchoatively in the fifth (Pauline and Synoptic) type. Historical criticism does not allow one to trace this all the way back to the historical Last Supper. But traditional theological approaches still use that criticism in an attempt—a la Jeremias, Schurmann, Betz, and more recently, Meier—to trace it back as far as possible. But careful attention to

the exegetical evidence *in its own right and in its own context*, suggests that this approach, especially the use to which it is put by much traditional theology and preaching, may owe more to Procrustes than to the Holy Spirit.

Theology

The Eucharist, the central sacrament of the Church, was instituted by Jesus Christ. It is not the "that" but the "how" of this affirmation that is in question here. We do not know and cannot reconstruct in precise detail what Jesus did at his "Last Supper." The New Testament itself remembered and interpreted what Jesus did in quite different ways. Attending to these differences undermines the assumption that there is a single line of development that runs from Jesus to the later Eucharist of the Church, and that can be traced back by us toward Jesus. And indeed, if by Eucharist is meant what is now done in the Church, the farther back one goes, for example, to the "Eucharists" of James, Peter, and Jesus, the farther one gets from the Eucharist of the present. Indeed, if an exact reconstruction of what Jesus did at the Last Supper were possible, it would probably look quite different from what Christians now celebrate.

Where then, does that leave us? How should one react to this loss of what was formerly thought to be the sure foundation of Eucharistic theology? One way would be to succumb to the temptation to react the way so many did over Galileo's hypotheses, thinking that the Bible really does teach us how the heavens go instead of how to go to heaven. That is why so many want to read the New Testament as teaching them how to celebrate the Eucharist, instead of reading it as revealing something about the different ways in which Jesus and some of his earliest followers celebrated table fellowship, ways that have grown (with the Holy Spirit guiding) into the somewhat different ways in which today's Christian churches celebrate the Eucharist. But if these are the alternatives, the Christian theologian

is left with the unsettling question: Is there any anchor, any port of refuge from the Scylla of an uncritical dogmatic fideism and the Charybdis of a reductionist relativism? Let me suggest two.

First, theologians must renew their faith in Jesus' promise to be with his Church, and their faith in the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church and world. The Eucharists that we now celebrate are what the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Jesus, learned to do over the course of the first few centuries as it celebrated table fellowship in memory of Jesus. Eucharists, not to undercut the affirmation of the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity (at least in hope), but simply to point out that Christians have significantly different ways of celebrating Eucharist, as the recent Roman Catholic recognition of the Chaldean Anaphora of Addai and Mari reminds us.[34] In other words, one does not need to be able to trace eucharistic praxis and the exact text back to the historical Jesus or even to the New Testament in order to legitimate it.

A second suggestion is to rephrase or relocate the question that is being asked. Instead of asking only how the earliest Eucharists can teach us anything at all - if we have so little data with which to reconstruct them, and if the reconstructions are so different and at times so contradictory to each other - perhaps it is a very different question that needs to be asked: Where, for example, do Christians now meet God? Where and how do Christians, as living stones in God's Temple (see 1 Peter 2:5-10) offer sacrifice? How do they enter into, become ritually, sacramentally, and really present to the Christ-event? They do this both by celebrating Eucharist together and, in an extension of that liturgical act, make that Eucharist real by living it out in their daily lives. In the eucharistic celebration, a Christian assembly with its duly appointed presider prays to the Father through the Son, asking the Father to send the Holy Spirit to transform the eucharistic gifts and, through that transformation, to continue to

transform the eucharistic assembly into the Body of Christ. This is a marital covenant event in which is actualized the closest relation possible between the Church and the Church's divine partner.[35] On the part of the members of the eucharistic assembly, their participation in the offering of Christian sacrifice is a dynamic, interpersonal reality that begins with the self-offering of the Father in the gift of the Son, continues with the totally free and loving self-offering response of the Son in his humanity to the Father and for us, and then, finally, becomes "Christian sacrifice" when the Christians themselves, in the power of the same Spirit that was in Jesus, are transformatively (at least inchoatively) taken up into that trinitarian real-ity.[36]

This, in the full theological sense, is what is happening when one celebrates Eucharist. If it is not happening, both liturgically and in one's everyday life, one must challenge, as Paul did in his context (1 Corinthians 11:17-30, esp. v. 20) whether it is indeed the Lord's Supper that is being celebrated. It is critically important to realize that the theological developments that make possible this sketch of the Eucharist were spread out over the first four Christian centuries. This was the time that it took for the theology of the Trinity to reach some maturity, and for that theology to become embedded in the classical Eucharistic Prayers that are associated with the names of Chrysostom and Basil. In other words, for a true understanding of the Eucharist, one must look primarily to what has developed in the Church rather than to fragile reconstructions of the earliest Christian Eucharists.

Ecclesiology

My exposition has already located the Eucharist as a church event, indeed the Church event par excellence. So, what does ecclesiology have to say? There is a curious irony here. Many of the implications and consequences of what I have been developing

challenge the adequacy of a number of aspects, even recently emphasized aspects, of official Roman Catholic magisterial teaching. But, on the other hand, this same development powerfully elevates the centrality and role of the Church, in the development of eucharistic praxis and theology. This tension is palpable in the very title of the Holy Thursday encyclical of John Paul II: *Ecclesia de Eucha-ristia* (April 17, 2003). The dynamic line of development that the pope presumably has in mind is the traditional Catholic way of conceiving that Christ/God ordains the priest to act *in persona Christi* in confecting the Eucharist, and from that comes the Church: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. However, the dynamic line of development that lies behind this article, and that corresponds to the conceptions of most contemporary liturgical theologians is that Christ and the Church are in a dynamic (covenantal/marital) relationship out of which comes the Eucharist. In this conception, the priest is perceived as being more *in persona Christi capitis ecclesiae* (in the person of Christ, head of the Church), and indeed not as a kind of mediator between Christ and the Church, but as embedded in the Christ-Church relationship.[37]

There are significant differences between these two conceptions and their various theoretical and practical consequences. If these are to be worked out peacefully, the official magisterium and the theologians of the Church will have to call much more earnestly upon the Holy Spirit of wisdom, understanding, forbearance, and charity, than perhaps they have in the past. In that Spirit, I suggest that the approach of this article with its powerful emphasis on the role of the Church in the patristic development of the classical Eucharistic Prayers should find some positive resonance with the official magisterium. It should enable the magisterium to think complementarity not only in terms of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* but also in terms of *Eucharistia de Ecclesia.*

Liturgical and Ecumenical Theology

"Liturgical" and "ecumenical" are consciously placed together in this section, reflecting the reality that the academic study of liturgy has long since become ecumenical, and that this ecumenical richness is already having its effect on the liturgical worship and practices of the different Christian churches.[38] But the main focus of my article has been, first, on the fact

cultures. In other words, there is need to recognize and validate the experience of the Sacred, the Holy, the Transcendent that can take place when Christians share in—or even merely come close to—the worship of people who "do it differently." 40

Pastoral and Homiletic Implications

This may be the most delicate and, in practical terms, most important part of my study. Most of what has gone before could be categorized as theory and thus left for a relatively few theologians to argue about. Guardians of magisterial orthodoxy, if they become aware of it, might see it as the kind of annoying thing that theological journals sometimes publish, but not something to get deeply concerned about, since so few people read such journals. Still, if it is improper to sing "At that first Eucharist ..." and misleading to preach simplistically about "doing what Jesus did the night before he died," one needs then to teach and communicate responsibly the more complex development of the Eucharist to the Christian faithful.

First, and my enumeration is not intended to suggest priority, one must be sensitively aware that this new paradigm for studying eucharistic origins and their implications will seem, to some, to be directly threatening the basis of their belief in the Eucharist. Therefore, in homiletic and catechetical situations one should first of all avoid anything that seems to be a frontal attack on traditional theological and religious assumptions. Rather than trying to pull people through

one's own door, i.e. by explaining more or less directly, as my article tries to do, what a more adequate theory of eucharistic origins might be, one should explore the possibilities of "entering through their door." For example, analogous to what I have suggested as pastoral strategy for "unveiling" Christian sacrifice,[41] i.e., by not using the easily misunderstood terminology of "sacrifice" until people have been alerted to the authentic experience of Christian sacrificial living in their own lives, one should attempt, *mutatis mutandis,* to do the same here.

Second, teachers and preachers should work to reconceive and rephrase their teaching and preaching about the eucharistic mystery in order to avoid doing and saying those things that seem to support—or worse, seem to absolutize—the old paradigm. For example, while not challenging traditional belief in the transformation of the eucharistic gifts, one can find ways to emphasize that the most important transformation is the one that is taking place in the Christian faithful as they celebrate and go forth to live the Eucharist. In other words, one needs to find helpful ways to stress that the most important transformation is not the one that takes place "without," on the altar, in the physical realm, however important that really is, but the one that takes place "within," in the spiritual realm of grace.

Third, teachers and preachers must constantly be attentive to how people react to new emphases, and be ready to comfort them in their disorientation. It can help to point out that Peter, James, and Paul had quite different ideas about Eucharist, not all of which could be harmonized. There are things that they did that have not become part of our eucharistic praxis, and there are things in our eucharistic praxis that were not part of theirs. One needs to remind people that it took the Holy Spirit about three centuries to bring the Church—or, more accurately, perhaps, some of the Christian churches—to an understanding of the Eucharist that approximates our understanding

of the Eucharist. And also one needs to remind the faithful that, as the whole Christian tradition teaches and as Vatican II showed and taught, Jesus is still present to the Church, and the Holy Spirit is still at work in the Church.

Finally, while the Church has and must have a major concern for order, and in this case for appropriate liturgical "conventions," this Church is also, and apparently going right back to Jesus himself, the Body in which developments, and sometimes conflicting and apparently irreconcilable developments, have taken place. Some of these conflicts are abuses and scandals which one must, in charity, learn to move beyond, as is now finally being done with many of our traditional Protestant-Catholic conflicts. Other conflicts are more internal. We must deal with the conflicts in fidelity, wisdom, patience, and—above all—charity, so that they may also be a source of learning as well.

End Notes

1 John Meier, "The Eucharist and the Last Supper: Did it Happen?" *Theology Digest* 42 (Winter, 1995) 335-51, at 347.

2 Ibid. 348.

3 Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (2nd ed., New York: Oxford University, 2002) points out that the presently available historical information about liturgy in the first few centuries is but a fraction of what would be needed to sketch out a reliable history of it.

4 Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., in: *America* 189 (November 17, 2003) 18.

5 Much of what follows in the next few pages is a summarizing update—and also correction—of what I wrote in "The Eucharist and Redemption: the Last Supper and Jesus' Understanding of His Death," *Biblical Theology Bulletin 9* (1981) 21-27.

6 Dom Gregory Dix, O.S.B., *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre, 1945).

7 Joachim Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960, first ed. 1935); ET: *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* [with author's revisions to 1964 ed.] (London: SCM, 1966; repr., Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977)

8 Critical scholarship recognizes that the New Testament eucharistic words of institution are already the result of community formation. Working back to their likely formulation in Aramaic does not necessarily bring us back to the *ipsissima verba Iesu.*

9 In those early years, before the "Magna Charta" of Catholic biblical scholarship, the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1947), Catholic exegetes found it safer to focus more on philological exegesis than on the more "radical" aspects of the historical-critical method such as source criticism and form criticism.

10 Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (1964) 196.

11 Bruce Chilton, unpublished paper: "Eucharist: Surrogate, Metaphor, Sacrament of Sacrifice." This paper recounts many of the findings of Chilton's earlier works: *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1992) and *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johannine Circles* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994).

12 See Meier, "The Eucharist and the Last Supper" 336.

13 Johannes Betz, *Die Eucharistie in der Zeit der griechischen Voter. 1/1: Die Aktualprasenz der Person und des Heilswerkes Jesu im Abendmahl nach der vor-ephesinischen griechischen Patristik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1955); II/l: *Die Realprasenz des Leibes und Blutes Jesu im Abendmahl nach dem Neuen Testament* (1961, 2nd ed. 1964); "Eucharist (I. Theological)," *Sacramentum Mundi* 2 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968) 257-67. Heinz Schurmann, "Die Semitismen im Einsetzungs-bericht bei Markus und bei Lukas (Mk 14, 22-24; Lk 22, 19b-20," *Zeitschrift fur katholische Theologie* 73 (1951) 72-77; "Lk 22,19b-20 als ursprungliche Textuber-lieferung," *Biblica* (1951) 364-92, 522-41; *Der Paschamahlbericht Lk 22, (7-14) 15-18,* Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 19/5 (Munster: Aschendorff, 1955); *Der Einsetzungsbericht Lk22,19-20,* Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 20/4 (Munster: Aschendorff, 1955); "Die Gestalt der urchristliche Eucharistiefeier" *Munchener theologische Zeitschrift 6* (1959) 107-31; "Eucharistiefeier (urchristliche)," *Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche* (2nd ed., 1959) 1159-62.

14 Betz, *Die Eucharistie* II/l, 18. Meier, some 35 years later, makes basically the same move, a bit more reserved in his reconstruction of the *verba,* but also a bit more bold in his openness to see them as *ipsissima verba Iesu:* He writes: ""The closest we can get to the earliest form of the narrative is this: "[Jesus] took bread, and giving thanks [or: pronouncing a blessing], broke [it] and said: This is my body.' Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying: 'This cup is the covenant in my blood.' Obviously, the words spoken by Jesus would be older than the narrative surrounding them. At least the very "words of institution," as we call them, may well go back to Jesus himself"" (Meier, "The Eucharist and the Last Supper" 347).

15 See Daly, "The Eucharist and Redemption" 22-23.

16 See Johannes Betz, *Die Eucharistie,* II/l, 215-18. Betz is challenging Willi Marxsen, *Das Abendmahl als christologisches Problem* (Giitersloh: G. Mohn, 1963); ET: *The Lord's Supper as a Christological Problem* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970).

17 Rudolf Pesch, *Das Abendmahl und Jesu Todesverstandnis,* Quaestiones Dis-putatae 80 (Freiburg: Herder, 1978); "Die Abendmahlsuberlieferung," in *Das Markusevangelium. Zweiter Teil Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27—16,20.* Herders theolo-gischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 2/2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1977).

18 Regarding the scare quotes ("Eucharists") in the heading to this section: Although I am following Chilton as a convenient guide, I am aware that his exegetical findings, especially his interpretation of the data, may be out of step with that of other exegetes. Is it accurate, for example, to label as "Eucharist" all identifiable instances of New Testament table fellowship? I claim, nevertheless, that Chilton's findings are sufficiently close to what historians of the liturgy and other exegetes find in order to justify the kind of reflections I offer in the third part of this article.

19 "See" or "read" would be more accurate words, for what Chilton "finds" has always been there in the texts for anyone to see—granted, of course, that Chilton sees there much more than many others see.

20 Chilton, "Eucharist: Surrogate ..." For the exegetical details see *A Feast of Meanings,* esp. chap 1, "The Purity of the Kingdom" 13-45.

21 Few will dispute that Jesus' "rules" for table fellowship seemed to be distinctive in their inclusiveness. But to specify these "rules" as, simply, "Israel as forgiven and willing to provide of its own produce" can be seen as interpreting beyond the evidence.

22 Chilton, "Eucharist: Surrogate ..." For the exegetical details, see *A Feast of Meanings,* esp. chap. 2: "The Surrogate of Sacrifice" 46-74.

23 Ibid. esp. chap. 3: "The Covenantal Sacrifice of Sharings" 75-92.

24 Ibid. 88-89.

25 Ibid. esp. chap. 4: "The Passover" 92-108.

26 To call this a "Hellenistic refinement" is a bit puzzling, since there would seem to be at least as much evidence to suggest calling it a specifically Jewish refinement. See the section "Sin Offering and Atonement" in Robert J. Daly, S.J., *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 25-35; and the multiple references to sin offering in the index of Robert Daly, *Christian Sacrifice,* Studies in Christian Antiquity 18 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1978).

27 Ibid. esp. chap. 5: "The Heroic Hata'at: Pauline and Synoptic Symposia" 109-30. But I also ask here the same question (as in n. 26 above): Do not the Jewish traditions regarding the messianic/eschatological banquet provide as much, if not more, background than Hellenistic ideas of a philosophical symposium?

28 Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings,* esp. chap. 6: "The Miraculous Food of Paul and John" 131-45.

29 Chilton, "Eucharist: Surrogate ..." (see n. 11 above). Chilton goes on: "The meanings conveyed by words must be the point of departure for a generative exegesis, because those meanings are our only access to what produced the texts to hand. But having that access, it becomes evident that Eucharist is not a matter of the development of a single, basic meaning within several different environments [as I myself have previously assumed—RJD]. Those environments have themselves produced various meanings under the influence of definable practices. Eucharist was not simply handed on as a tradition. Eucharistic traditions were rather the catalyst that permitted communities to crystallize their own practice in oral or textual form. What they crystallized was a function of the practice that had been learned, palpable gestures with specified objects and previous meanings, along with the meaning and the emotional response that the community discovered in Eucharist. There is no history of the tradition apart from a history of meaning, a history of emotional response, a history of practice: the practical result of a generative

exegesis of Eucharistic texts is that practice itself is an appropriate focus in understanding the New Testament."

30 See above, my section on: The "Last" Supper.

31 *Post hoc*, however, does not necessarily mean *propter hoc*.

32 Chilton reads this action in the Jerusalem Temple not as a direct attack against the Temple cult, but as an attempt (not without precedent in the action of other rabbis) to change its purity regulations in order to make the sacrificial cult more easily accessible to ordinary Israelites. This made Jesus all the more a powerful nuisance whom the authorities would like to be rid of, but not yet the kind of direct threat that required immediate "neutralizing" action. This is, of course, a hypothetical reconstruction. Its main merit is not that it fills in the blanks and tells us with certainty what actually happened, but that it lays out a possible scenario. *Something* like this must have happened. Paradoxically, or ironically, this imaginative reconstruction—which sails closer to the line of "literary fiction" than "literal history," relies on the historicity of the chronology implied in these "fictions."

33 Chilton, "Eucharist: Surrogate..." (see n. 11 above).

34 What is, for a traditional point of view, particularly startling about this is the official Roman Catholic affirmation of the validity of a Eucharistic Prayer that does not contain the words of institution. For an introductory account, see Robert F. Taft, "Mass without the Consecration?" *America* 188 (May 12, 2003) 7 ff. For a more detailed and scholarly account, see Taft's "Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001," *Worship* 77 (2003) 482-509.

35 See Edward J. Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology,* ed. Robert J. Daly, S.J. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998) 346.

36 See Robert J. Daly, "Marriage, Eucharist, and Christian Sacrifice," *INTAMS Review 9* (Spring 2003) 56-75, esp. 56-60; "Sacrifice Unveiled or Sacrifice Revisited: Trinitarian and Liturgical Perspectives," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003) 24^2; "Sacrifice: The Way to Enter the Paschal Mystery," *America* 188 (May 14, 2003) 14 ff. Those familiar with recent developments in liturgical theology will recognize both in this article and in my recent work on Eucharist and sacrifice the towering influence of Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. See especially his "The Catholic Tradition of Eucharistic Theology: Towards the Third

Millennium," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 405-57, and, especially for this Trinitarian understanding of sacrifice, *The Eucharist in the West* 381-82.

37 See Robert J. Daly, "Robert Bellarmine and Post-Tridentine Eucharistic Theology," *Theological Studies* 61 (2000) 239-60.

38 Obvious instances of this are, to list a few: (1) what the Roman Catholic liturgical reform has learned from the Orthodox and Eastern churches about the epiclesis, and from Protestants about the centrality of the Word in worship; (2) and from the other side, what the mainline Protestant churches have been learning from the Episcopalian, Catholic, and Eastern churches about the broad richness of the liturgy; (3) the ecumenical membership, including their working groups and seminars, of the Societas Liturgica and the North American Academy of Liturgy; (4) the ecumenical structure and content of practically all recent hymnals; (5) the obvious (and acknowledged) ecumenical influence on the content and structure of the North American Presbyterian and Methodist worship books that also make them, in some respects, seem more "Catholic" than the Roman Catholic Sacramentary. For more on this, see Robert J. Daly, S.J., "Ecumenical Convergence in Christian Worship" in *Jesuits in Dialogue: "Ecumenism: Hopes and Challenges for the New Century," Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue* (Conference at Alexandria, Egypt, 4-12 July 2001); papers available from Curia S.J., C.P. 6139, 00195 Rome Prati, Italy.

39 See *Dialogue of Origen with Heraclides and His Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul,* Ancient Christian Writers 54 (New York: Paulist, 1992) 57-61.

40 This is one of the major points of the impressive body of literature in "comparative theology" being produced by researchers such as Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

41 See the articles listed above in n. 36.

Robert J. Dally SJ (*Theological Studies*, 2005)

Chapter 5

The Theology of the Eucharist

Introduction

The Second Vatican Council states in the Constitution on then Sacred Liturgy that the Eucharist is the true *center of the whole Christian life* for both the universal Church and the local congregation of that Church. It equally sustains that it is *the summit* of both the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ, and *the worship* which Christians offer to Christ and which through him they offer to the Father in the Spirit[1]. Maintaining such a claim means that the Eucharist is really important for our life as Christians. In that sense, to deepen the theology that is behind the sacrament of the Eucharist is, on the one hand, to let ourselves be embedded in the mystery of Christ, our Passover and living bread in which we discover the full manifestation of his boundless love. On the other hand, it leads us to draw our strength and energy from the source of Christ

himself so that we come to the true adoration of his presence among us in the sacrament for which we are ministers.

I. The Eucharist as a Mystery of Faith

What we celebrate in the Eucharist is not an event we can apprehend with our merely human senses; it is a mystery of faith. St Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11, 23-26: "For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me". In the same way also the cup, after the supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me". For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

According to these words of St Paul, the Eucharist is profoundly marked by the event of the Lord's passion and death, of which it is not only a *reminder* but the sacrament of *re-presentation*. This truth is well expressed by the words of the priest after the consecration when he says, "This is the mystery of faith". To which the assembly responds, "We announce your death, O Lord…"

The Church has received the Eucharist from the Lord Jesus as the gift par excellence of himself, of his person in his sacred humanity, as well as the gift of his saving work. When the Letter to the Hebrews (13, 8) says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever", it reminds us that what Christ has done by leaving us the Eucharist is perpetually present in time as an expression of his saving act for the salvation of the world. If so, the Eucharist is not confined to the past; it is not just something that is related to a remembrance of a past event. It is a making present, right now, of an event that historically speaking took place a thousand of years ago. The Eucharist transcends all times and makes us participate – any time it is celebrated – in the divine eternity.

When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, which is the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection, this central event of our salvation becomes really present and "the work of our redemption is carried out"[2]. This sacrifice is so decisive for our salvation that Jesus offered it and returned to the Father only after he had left us a means of sharing in it as though we had been present there. It follows, then, that each member of the Christian community can take part in it and inexhaustibly gain its fruits. This is the faith from which the generations of Christians down the ages have lived.

The following texts can provide us with some clues to understand what we mean when we talk about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharistic bread and wine. For instance John 3, 1-21 describes the story of Nicodemus and how he went to see Jesus in the night and asked him a question about the outcome of eternal life. When Jesus told him he had to be born again, his reaction was immediate: how can an old man go back in the womb of his mother to be born again? Because, he misunderstood Jesus, the latter corrected him by telling him that it was about being born in the Spirit.

We have a similar case in John 11, 1-44 about the death of Lazarus. In fact, Jesus who had previously received a message about the illness of Lazarus told his disciples that their friend was asleep. The disciples who thought it was about a real sleep reacted that he would be saved. Because there was a misunderstanding, Jesus told them openly that Lazarus was dead.

However, we see a different reaction from Jesus in John 6, 22-59. When he told the Jews that he was the bread of life from heaven and the bread he gives is flesh for the life of the world, these reacted negatively. Rather than to correct them as he did in the case of Nicodemus and Lazarus, he let them take it literally as they understood.

II. The Eucharist as the Memorial of the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus

In instituting the Eucharist, Jesus did not simply say: "This is my body, "this is my blood", but he went on to add: "which is given for you", "which is poured out for you" (Lk 22, 19-20). By examining closely these words, it clearly appears that there is a link between the Last Supper and the sacrifice of the cross. As a matter of fact, Jesus did not simply state that what he was giving them to eat and drink was his body and blood; he also expressed its sacrificial meaning and made sacramentally present his sacrifice which would soon be offered on the cross for the salvation of the world.

It that sense we can say, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church sustains, that "the Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the *sacrifice* of the Cross is perpetuated, and the sacred *banquet of communion* with the Lord's body and blood"[3]. These two dimensions are bound up together and cannot be separated except for the reason of description. It is from this sacrifice that the Church constantly draws its strength. The Church approaches it not only through faith-filled remembrance, but also through a real contact, since this sacrifice is made present ever anew, sacramentally.

End Notes

1 S. C., # 6
2 *Lumen Gentium, # 3*
3 *Catechism of the Catholic church, # 138*

Rev. Felician I. Mbala (*Eucharist*, 2010)

Chapter 6

The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist - History and Evidence

The Eucharistic celebration was one of the most significant actions in Jesus' ministry and redemptive mission - similar in importance to His incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Gift of the Spirit. As we shall show, Jesus unequivocally intended that the Eucharistic bread be His real body (given on the Cross at Calvary and in its risen form) and the Eucharistic wine be His real blood (given on Calvary and in its risen form). He further intended that the grace coming through this gift would bring healing, transformation in His heart, forgiveness of sins, unity with all believers, and ultimately, eternal life in Him. The reality and effects of His Eucharistic celebration are so important, that the early Church considered it to be its central spiritual activity—real communion with its Savior, Jesus Christ. We will divide our explanation of this claim into three sections:

Section I—Jesus' intention and action at the Last Supper Section II—Transubstantiation

Section III— The Eucharistic Commemoration in the First Century

I Jesus' Intention and Action at the Last Supper

Jesus' Eucharistic words explain His plan to love the world into redemption.1 Jeremias attempted a reconstruction of the original tradition of Jesus' Eucharistic words from the four New Testament traditions: I Corinthians 11:23-26; Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:26-29; and Luke 22:17-20. Notice that there are two distinct strands of tradition: The Mark-Matthew strand (constructed for liturgical purposes) and the Paul-Luke strand (constructed for a Gentile audience). Jeremias prefers the Mark-Matthew strand for the rite over the bread (body) and the Paul-Luke strand for the rite of the wine (blood). Using literary constructions and Semitisms as clues to resolve other differences within each strand, Jeremias concludes that the rite of the Last Supper probably took the following form.2

Jesus gathered with His disciples before the feast of the Passover and indicated to them that He longed to celebrate this Passover with them, but instead of doing so, fasted while the other disciples celebrated.3 After drinking one of the four Passover cups while they were eating the Passover meal (or an adapted Passover ritual), Jesus initiated the ritual of the bread, identifying it with His body: "Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take; this is my body.'" Then, after the completion of the Passover meal, Jesus initiated the ritual of the wine which He identifies with the covenant in His blood. He took a cup of red wine, gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This cup is the covenant in my blood4 which is poured out for [the] many."5

Sometime either prior to or after this (perhaps both), Jesus gives a command to repeat the ritual: "Do this in remembrance of me."

When He says, "This is my Body which will be given up for you," the Greek word used to translate His Hebrew (*zeh baœari*) or Aramaic (*den bisri*) was *sôma* instead of *sarx*. *Sarx* means "flesh" and would certainly refer to Jesus' *corporeal* body given on the cross, while *sôma* is much broader and refers to the *whole* person (mind, soul, will, as well as corporeal body). Thus, *sôma* is much like the word "body" in "everybody" or "somebody" in English. It might, therefore, be roughly translated as "person" or "self." If we substitute the word "self" for "body" in the Eucharistic words, we obtain "This is my whole self given up for you." This is remarkably similar to Jesus' definition of unconditional love in John's Gospel — "gift of one's whole self" ("greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" – John 15:13). Thus, in the Eucharist, Jesus is not only giving us His whole self – His whole person – He is also giving us His love, indeed, His *unconditional* love – that is, a love which cannot be surpassed.

This unconditional love is corroborated by the gift of His blood (which, according to Jewish custom, is separated from the body of the sacrificial offering). When Jesus offered His blood separately from His body, He showed Himself to be making an intentional self-sacrifice.

Blood (the principle of life for the Israelites) was the vehicle through which atonement occurred in sin or guilt offerings. Jesus' reference to His sacrificial blood would almost inevitably be seen as the blood of a sin-offering – with the notable exception that the sin-offering is no longer an animal, but rather, Jesus Himself, "the Beloved One of the Father." Jesus humbled Himself (taking the place of an animal – a sacrificial sin-offering) to absolve the sin of the world forever.

Jesus goes beyond this by associating Himself with the paschal lamb. He intentionally coordinates His arrival in Jerusalem with the Passover feast so that His sacrifice will be associated with that of the Paschal lamb. He loved us so much that He desired to become the new Passover sacrifice, replacing an unblemished lamb with His own divine presence.

The blood of the Passover lamb (put on the doorposts of every Israelite household) was the instrument through which the Israelite people were protected from death (the angel of death passing over those houses) which enabled them to move out of slavery into freedom (from Egypt into the Promised Land). When Jesus took the place of a sacrificial animal, He replaced the worldly freedom offered by the Passover—freedom from slavery in Egypt—with an unconditional and eternal freedom from sin and death. Thus, He made His self-sacrifice the new vehicle for protection from *every* form of sin and death for all eternity by outshining sin and darkness with His unconditionally loving eternal light.

There is yet a third dimension of Jesus' use of blood which He explicitly states as "the Blood of the covenant." A covenant was a solemn promise that bound parties to a guaranteed agreement. When Jesus associates His blood with the covenant, He is *guaranteeing* the "absolution from sin," "freedom from slavery and darkness," and eternal life given through His unconditional love. By referencing the Blood of the *covenant*, Jesus makes a solemn and unconditionally guaranteed promise to give us eternal life and love. If we put our faith in Him, trust in His promise, and try to remain in His teachings, His unconditional love will save us.

Jesus intended His sacrifice on the cross to be universal, and to be the power of love and salvation for all humankind; but He did not stop there. He also provided a way for us to receive His

unconditionally loving presence (body, mind and soul) throughout the rest of history. He intended to make His loving presence within us a power of peace, reconciliation, healing, and transformation. He did this by making the actions and words of His Last Supper into a ritual, using the simple phrase, "Do this in remembrance of me." This phrase requires explanation.

We need to understand the first century Jewish view of time and memory to grasp the significance of Jesus' ritual (now known as the "Eucharistic celebration"). In this view, time is not an unalterable physical property (as in the "space-time continuum" of the Theory of Relativity). Rather, time was seen as a surmountable and controllable dimension of *sacred* history. 6 As Eliade notes, sacred history was seen as superseding profane history (physical history), and through ritual and myth, prophets and priests could return to the sacred time of history as if profane time were not relevant.7 First century Judaism was no exception to this. Religious authorities believed that the celebration of the Passover Supper was a return to the sacred events of the Exodus, and that reliving this sacred moment would bring them close to the sacred reality (God/Yahweh), which would, in turn, sacralize them – make them holy. 8

As Jesus enters into the sacrificial meal with His disciples, He brings this view of time and history with Him.9 When He says, "Do this in *remembrance* of me," He does not mean, "call it to mind." His view of "remembrance" (translated by the Greek term "*anamnesis*") did not separate "mind" from "heart," or separate a "mental remembrance" from a "ritual reliving."10 For Him, the instruction to "do this in remembrance of me," meant "reengage in this ritual and relive the reality of me in it." To relive Jesus' ritual is to return to it – with Him *really* there. Johannes Betz summarizes this as follows:

Anamnesis in the biblical sense means not only the subjective representation of something in the consciousness and as an act of the remembering mind. It is also the objective effectiveness and presence of one reality in another, especially the effectiveness and presence of the salvific actions of God, in the liturgical worship. Even in the Old Testament, the liturgy is the privileged medium in which the covenant attains *actuality*. ¶ The meaning of the logion ["Do this in remembrance of me"] may perhaps be paraphrased as follows: "do this (what I have done) in order *to bring about my presence*, to make really present the salvation wrought in me."11

It is difficult for us, as 21st century scientifically oriented people, to enter into Jesus' perspective, because it is so dissimilar from the way we conceive time and reality. Nevertheless, if we are going to understand what He was doing, we will have to make the effort – otherwise, His words and actions will be completely masked by our very different worldview. Let me summarize His intention by inserting His view of sacred time into His Eucharistic actions.

"In the Jewish view of sacred time (a view which is not restricted to Jewish culture alone), a prophet could make time *collapse* from the present moment into the future, and from the present moment back into the past. We might find this somewhat curious in today's scientific worldview where space-time in the General Theory of Relativity has definite properties that are not *physically* collapsible in this way. However God transcends time and can take any event in the future or the past and collapse it into an event in the present. This is precisely what Jesus believed and intended at the Last Supper (see the above citations of Jeremias, Betz and Eliade). So what did He intend? When He handed the bread to His apostles at table using the words, 'Take, this is my body,' and then after the Supper handed them the cup of wine with these words, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the many,' He intended to

collapse the time between the Supper and His death on the cross at Calvary (in the future) through His prophetic utterance. His prophetic words were stated in the present tense – as if the future event was in the present. A prophet's words were thought to go into the future and bring back the future reality into the present. So when Jesus says, "Take this *is* my body" he is referring to His body hanging on the Cross in the future which is being brought into the present. Further, when He says, "This cup *is* the covenant in my blood which *is* poured out for [the] many," he is saying that His blood is already being poured out—implying that His future blood is already present at the supper in the cup of the covenant. So Jesus believed that His future body and blood on the cross at Calvary were really present in the bread and wine He offered to His apostles through the efficacious action of His Father, collapsing the future into the present.

That is not all – when Jesus tells His apostles to 'Do this in remembrance of me,' He did not mean that they should call this event to mind – or only to celebrate the Supper as a simple recollection. This is a decidedly Greek view of 'remembrance.' Rather Jesus had a Jewish view which intended that the apostles *re-live* the Last Supper, and when they did so, the time between their celebration of the Supper and Jesus' celebration of the Supper (which includes the real presence of His body and blood in the bread and wine) would *really* collapse. This has the effect of bringing Jesus' bread (transformed into His body on the cross) and Jesus' wine (transformed into His blood flowing from Him on Calvary) from the past into the bread and wine elevated by the priest (who assumes the *prophetic12* power through his ordination) at the altar of celebration (see the above citations from Jeremias, Betz and Eliade).

Thus, every Eucharistic host and Eucharistic cup undergoes two collapses of time at the priest-prophet's words of institution:

1. The priest collapses the time from his present moment to the time of Jesus' Last Supper, bringing the bread and wine that Jesus gives His apostles into the present moment,
2. But the bread and wine that Jesus offers His apostles is not simply bread and wine, because Jesus has collapsed the time between His Eucharistic Last Supper and His future Body and Blood on the Cross at the very moment of His words of institution.

Therefore when the priest says the words of institution, he brings into the present moment the very Body and Blood of Jesus given on Calvary—which is one with the bread and wine He offers to His apostles at the Last Supper.

If we do not impose our view of physical time on Jesus' view of sacred time—or our conceptually biased view of "remembrance" on Jesus' view of "remembrance" as "making *present*" by reliving a sacred event, than His intention of making His body and blood really present to future generations through the actions of a priest-prophet will not seem to be a misrepresentation of fact or history. This is why the Gospel of John states the following so unequivocally in Jesus' Eucharistic discourse:

"This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (Jn 6:50-51)."

Notice that Jesus makes three associations in this one passage:

1. He is the bread that comes down from the Heaven (Jesus and Heavenly Bread).

2. "The bread that I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (the Heavenly Bread is Jesus' flesh).

3. Jesus' flesh (which is the bread of Heaven) will give eternal life.

Therefore Jesus (incarnate in the flesh) is the bread of Heaven which He will give (implicitly at Calvary) for the life of the world and the eternal life of all believers (i.e., those who do not reject Him13).

In sum, the best historical research indicates that Jesus believed He would be *really* present to us in *every* reliving of His Last Supper ritual until the end of time. This intention not only stems from His view of history, time, and ritual, but also from His conviction that He would be raised from the dead,14 and would be present to us in His risen form throughout the rest of human history. Betz characterizes it in this way:

When Jesus approached Jerusalem knowing that He faced persecution and death, He had a plan to save all humankind throughout history by His act of total self-offering (unconditional love). His plan went further – He intended to initiate a ritual to be re-lived by his disciples throughout the rest of history. He would be really present in His self-sacrifice (body and blood), as well as in His risen form, and would convey through this presence, His healing, forgiving, and transforming love to anyone who received His body and blood in this ritual. He would convey the love of complete self-gift; the forgiveness and healing of the ultimate sin-offering; the liberation from darkness, evil, slavery, and death in the ultimate Passover sacrifice; and the eternal life of love in the blood of the new covenant. His plan was to love us unconditionally – both universally (in His complete self-offering in death) and situationally (in the celebration of His Last Supper). After His resurrection in glory, the early Church believed that He was the unconditional love of God with us – who is still with us until the end of time.

II Transubstantiation

In the Middle Ages, theologians – particularly St. Thomas Aquinas – articulated the change that occurs when the bread and wine are consecrated by the priest acting in place of Christ (reenacting and re-presenting Jesus' self-sacrificial words at the Last Supper). Though they were not familiar with Jesus' Semitic understanding of making the bread and wine into His body and blood, they faithfully interpreted the passages of the New Testament (from the gospels in Saint Paul) and the tradition they had received from earlier Church fathers – particularly Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine – which emphasized Jesus' real crucified and risen presence – body, blood, and whole being – in the Holy Eucharist. The metaphysical interpretation they developed is perfectly consistent with Jesus' Semitic understanding of His real presence. In order to see this, we must give a brief explanation of the medieval doctrine of transubstantiation.

The term "transubstantiation," developed by Archbishop Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury in the 11th century, received its first conciliar approval at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The deepest and most nuanced interpretation of this doctrine was given by Saint Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* (III, Q. 75, A-4) using two concepts from Aristotelian metaphysics – "substance" and "accidents:"

> "I answer that, as stated above (Article 2), since Christ's true body is in this sacrament, and since it does not begin to be there by local motion, nor is it contained therein as in a place, as is evident from what was stated above (1, ad 2), it must be said then that it begins to be there by conversion of the substance of bread into itself. Yet this change is not like natural changes, but is entirely supernatural, and effected by God's power alone…

> For it is evident that every agent acts according as it is in act. But every created agent is limited in its act, as being of a determinate genus and species: and consequently the action of every created agent bears upon some determinate act. Now the determination of every thing in actual existence comes from its form. Consequently, no natural or created agent can act except by changing the form in something; and on this account every change made according to nature's laws is a formal change. But God is infinite act, as stated in I, 7, 1; 26, 2; hence His action extends to the whole nature of being. Therefore He can work not only formal conversion, so that diverse forms succeed each other in the same subject; but also the change of all being, so that, to wit, the whole substance of one thing be changed into the whole substance of another. And this is done by Divine power in this sacrament; for the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of Christ's body, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance of Christ's blood. Hence this is not a formal, but a substantial conversion; nor is it a kind of natural movement: but, with a name of its own, it can be called "transubstantiation."[16]

This passage is not intended for philosophical or theological neophytes – so please do not be discouraged if it is not immediately intelligible. First the term "accidents" does not resemble the way we use the term today – it means only those qualities of a natural being that give rise to its appearance – size, shape, color, molecular constituency, atomic constituency, and any other quality that gives rise to detectable or measurable physical attributes. The term "substance" does not mean "a particular kind of matter with uniform properties," but the most fundamental expression of a thing's reality.

Don't get discouraged yet. These technical terms can be made a little clearer. Saint Thomas Aquinas looks at a being from the opposite way a contemporary scientist does. Instead of starting with the appearance of things (which Saint Thomas called "accidents") as scientists do, he begins with the most fundamental dimension of a reality which is necessary for it to be what it is. So what dimension of reality is most necessary for any being – including God? Saint Thomas said it is its *existence*. For him, God is pure existence itself — existing through itself ("*ipsum suum esse subsistens*"). Since there can only be one reality that exists through itself, all other realities must exist through the causation of God – the One uncaused reality. So what is the most fundamental – the most necessary – part of any reality that is *not* God? It must be the existence (*esse*) it receives from God in order to exist. Without *esse,* a thing is merely hypothetical – not real.

Now here is where we come to the concept of "substance" – the essential power or activity that determines what a thing is. For Saint Thomas the substance of God is His pure uncaused existence through itself. He proves that this unique reality must also be an unrestricted act of thinking that creates everything else in reality (see the "Thomistic metaphysical proof of God" cited above). As we noted there, this being is a purely spiritual, self-reflective, unrestricted power or activity – and is therefore the highest of all substances.

Saint Thomas then examines substances other than God. Perhaps the best way of describing "substance" for him is the word "soul" as used by Aristotle. Though we think of "soul" as the transphysical, self-reflective, conceptual, reality that apprehends the five transcendental desires and God's presence to us – the transphysical reality capable of surviving bodily death — Aristotle also conceived of lower levels of "soul" than ours. He called our soul "the rational soul," but he also noticed that animals had consciousness that was

not self-reflective and rational, but nevertheless, capable of awareness needed for self-movement (which he called a sensitive soul or "an animal soul"). He also saw an even lower "soul" that differentiated living beings – such as plants – from non-living beings (which he called a "vegetative soul"). Why call these lower sources of activity "soul"? Because Aristotle (and Aquinas) perceived that animal consciousness and the life principle of plants and other living beings could not be explained solely in terms of physical elements (that are not themselves living or conscious). Each higher level of activity required a greater *sensitivity to itself*. Physical processes – such as atomic and molecular processes — do not give rise to greater interior sensitivity – only more complex extrinsic activities.[17]

Now here is the rub – even though a thing's "soul" gives rise to its most sophisticated activities — its interior sensitivity to itself, which organizes its extrinsic activities – a soul cannot be directly observed or detected by even the most sophisticated instrumentation – like an electron microscope. It can only be known by its *effects*. Thus we know that a bacterium or a plant has sufficient interior sensitivity to itself to react as a whole to outside stimuli (revealing its lower level of soul), but we cannot put the bacterium under an electron microscope to detect that soul. In Saint Thomas' words, we can only see the extrinsic activities (its "*accidents*") that give rise to its appearance. This as we shall see is very important to the notion of the invisibility of transubstantiation which we will talk about below.

Now if you are not completely confused at this juncture, we can now examine the six levels of "invisible" souls that give rise to "interior sensitivity to self" on higher and higher levels – from which we can discern six levels of *substance*. Remember these levels of "interior sensitivity to self" organize the extrinsic activities we observe and detect through scientific experimentation. Let us proceed from the

lowest level of "interior sensitivity to self" and proceed to the highest levels:

1. *A purely natural substance* — no interior sensitivity to self – no soul of any kind (e.g. an atom, a molecule, or any complex set of atoms or molecules giving rise to a non-living reality).

2. *A vital soul* — an elementary sensitivity to self, allowing an organism, such as a bacterium, to react *as a whole* to outside stimuli – giving rise to the search for nutrition (attraction to salutary environments), self-defense (aversion to hostile environments), and reproduction. This vital soul is also present in complex cellular organisms such as plants.

3. *A sensitive conscious soul (e.g. animalic soul)* — a higher sensitivity to self that allows the whole organism to have a sense of self (though not an awareness) of self. This sense of self enables an animal to *feel* pain, pleasure, desire, and self-satisfaction sufficient to awaken perceptual cognitive activities and self-movement to seek biological opportunities and to avoid biological dangers. Higher mammals seem to have an even greater interior sensitivity to self, giving rise to an elementary form of empathy and even desire for affection beyond merely instinctual pack behavior.

4. *A rational self-conscious soul (human soul)* – an even higher sensitivity to self, enabling a person to be aware of his awareness, to formulate conceptual ideas, to desire perfect truth, love, goodness, beauty, and home, and to be aware of God and the numinous.18

5. *An angelic substance* – a purely spiritual substance that is not unified with natural substances – and is capable of perfectly reflexive acts of consciousness and will. Though these beings transcend time and space, they are not unrestricted in consciousness – nor do they exist through themselves.

6. *The divine substance* – complete and unrestricted sensitivity to self within complete and unrestricted existence through itself – a being which must be completely unique, completely present to itself, and present to everything else it causes to exist through its unrestricted creative mentative activity (the one God).

For Saint Thomas, these levels of substance organize all of the other extrinsic activities (that we call "physical processes" today) – which in turn determine the observable and detectable data of appearances that Saint Thomas called "accidents."

Now we are in a position to talk about "transubstantiation" in the Holy Eucharist. Let's go back to the quotation from Saint Thomas cited above. Saint Thomas indicates that the *substance* of the bread is transformed into the substance of Christ's body and that the *substance* of the wine is transformed into the substance of Christ's blood. It might be easier to think about this by translating the genitive "of" to "underlying." Thus we might retranslate Saint Thomas' sentence as follows, "The substance underlying the bread (a purely natural substance) is transformed into the substance underlying Christ Himself (the spiritual substance underlying the unique person of the God-man Jesus Christ) – and the substance underlying the wine (a purely natural substance) is transformed into the substance underlying Christ's blood (the spiritual substance underlying the unique person of the God-man Jesus Christ).

As noted above, this substantial change cannot be directly observed or detected – it can only be known by its *effects* within the human being who receives this transformed substance faithfully into himself. Saint Thomas notes that all of the "accidents" – the extrinsic physical activities giving rise to observable and detectable appearances — remain those of bread and wine – so the host still looks like bread – and if subjected to microscopic and electron microscopic analysis – would still have the same atomic and molecular

constitution. However, the substance – the interior sensitivity to self (the invisible organizing principle giving rise to interior self-sensitive activities) — has changed radically – from a substance with no interior self-sensitive activities (the substance of bread and wine) to a spiritual substance of the highest level of interior self-sensitive activity – the self-consciousness of the unique person of the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Though this substantial change is not observable or detectable (because the extrinsic physical processes have *not* changed), the *effects* of this substantial change on the soul of the human being who receives this transformed substance faithfully is enormous. Saint Thomas says that this substantial change can only occur through the supernatural act of God Himself. Why? Because an effect must have a cause commensurate with it – in other words a purely natural substance cannot produce a spiritual substance, because it lacks the interior self-sensitive activities that would be necessary to produce a spiritual substance. Indeed, no lower level substance can produce a higher level substance, because the lower level substance lacks the very quality and activity necessary to transform it into the higher one. Since the substantial change that occurs in transubstantiation is the most pronounced one possible – from the lowest level of substance (a purely natural substance) to the highest level of substance (the spiritual substance of the self-consciousness of the unique God-man, Jesus Christ), only God can cause it to occur. Even though a priest mediates this transubstantial change by reenacting the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, only God can cause this radical substantial change to occur through the priest's mediative action.

By now the reader may be thinking, "Was all this really necessary to explain how the body and blood of Christ can be present in the bread and wine – without a change in the appearance and atomic

structure of bread and wine?" The answer is pretty much – yes. Strange as it may seem, this metaphysical explanation does show *how* the detectable and observable atomic and molecular constituents do not change while the essence – the substance – moves from the lowest order to the highest order through the supernatural activity of God. The analysis of the six kinds of substance (from no soul to divine substance) is not merely medieval thinking – it recognizes an essential component of reality often overlooked by many natural scientists today – the interior self-sensitive activities that determine the levels of being. It must be emphasized that no scientist has yet discovered an explanation for this kind of interior self-sensitive activity by means of physical processes alone. That is why there is no complete explanation of how to produce life from non-living constituents and processes, how to produce sensate consciousness from non-conscious constituents and processes, and how to produce self-consciousness from non-self-conscious constituents and processes. Indeed, many scientist philosophers – such as Alfred North Whitehead, Michael Polanyi, Bernard Lonergan, Sir John Eccles, Friedrich Beck, Henry Stapp, and David Chalmers – insist that physical processes will never be able to produce these interior self-sensitive activities because they lack interior self-sensitivity altogether. I have written extensively about this (and the thought of these philosophers and scientists) in *The Soul's Upward Yearning*.[19]

Is this metaphysical explanation of transubstantiation consistent with Jesus' Semitically conceived intention at the Last Supper? It certainly is. Jesus' intention at the Last Supper was to make His whole self – his future crucified and risen self – present in the bread and wine of the Last Supper – and in the bread and wine of future reenactments of the Last Supper. The above metaphysical explanation affirms this intention and shows *how* this is possible without altering the atomic and molecular structure and appearance

of bread and wine. By taking seriously the doctrine of transubstantiation, we show that Jesus' intention and claim at the Last Supper – "This is my body" and "This is my blood" is not a vexing, contradictory, or inexplicable act. It is completely consistent with the highest form of undetectable change within the extrinsic exterior activities of the atomic and molecular constituents of bread and wine. Saint Thomas' explanation not only shows *that* Jesus' claim is possible – but *how* it is possible through a metaphysics which is applicable to, complementary to, and needed within contemporary scientific paradigms of physical processes. If readers are interested in how what appears to be bread and wine can affect the most radical kinds of interior transformation by the simple reenactment of Jesus' words at the Last Supper, they will benefit from the time, study, and thought they give to Saint Thomas Aquinas' brilliant and valid explanation.

The Real Presence: Teachings of the Trent Council

The "Decree on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist", in which the Council of Trent dealt with the Real Presence, contains eight chapters and 11 canons. The Decree intends to affirm the Real Presence from the start: "In the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things..." (Chap. I).

From this follows the denial of the Reformation thesis which claimed that Christ is present in the Eucharist only as in a sign or symbol of his power (cf. can. 1). The conciliar text then explains the reasons for the institution of this Sacrament, the real and visible expression of the unfathomable riches that God granted to man in Christ as the spiritual food and nourishment of souls; and as an antidote to sin, the first fruits of eternal life and an effective sign of fraternal communion (cf. Chap. II).

Then, the Decree establishes the difference between the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the presence of Christ in other sacraments. The Sacrament of the Altar, like the other sacraments, is "a visible form of an invisible grace". However, whereas in other sacramental signs the invisible grace is brought about for the first time precisely at the moment when one uses them, in the Eucharist the Author of grace himself is present even before the administration of the Sacrament. The whole of Christ is present, with his Body and Blood, his soul and divinity, under the species of the bread and the wine; just as the whole Christ is also contained under each of the species (by virtue of their natural connection and concomitancy) and under each and every part of the species, after their separation (cf. Chap. III and can. 3).

Moreover, once the unique characteristic of the Real Presence has been established, its causes explained and its difference in comparison with the Lord's presence in the other effective signs of grace noted, the Decree states the necessary logical and ontological presupposition of the Real Presence. This presupposition is the conversion of the whole substance of bread into the Body of Christ and of the whole substance of wine into the Blood of Christ.

From this presupposition derives, as an obvious consequence, the Council's affirmation of the permanence of the species of the bread and wine and the non-permanence of their substance. Moreover, to explain the presupposition of the conversion of the bread and wine, the Council used the term "transubstantiation", henceforth, a traditional and particularly apt classification for identifying this presupposition (cf. Chap. IV and can.2).

In such a way, the Council denied with the concept of "transubstantiation" the doctrine of "consubstantiation", in other words, that the substance of the bread and wine remains in the

species (can. 2), which Luther accepted; the Council defined solely the event of the conversion and avoided going into the question of how this conversion was brought about from a natural and philosophical viewpoint.

The Council's priority was to fix the boundaries between faith and error. Consequently, the Council's use of the term "transubstantiation" to designate the phenomenon of conversion does not mean, as Melchior Cano pointed out in the Council Hall, that this concept is part of the content of faith; nor does it mean, as Karl Rahner says, that the truth of faith expressed by the term "transubstantiation" is jeopardized by the Aristotelian acceptation with which the Council Fathers very probably used the term.[4]

In any case, one thing is certain: despite the fact that the concept of "transubstantiation" derives from a concrete philosophical universe, the Aristotelian universe so debated by modern thought, this concept is a truer expression of faith than the concepts of either "transfinalization" or "transignification", which some people about 10 years ago desired acritically to use instead.

As Paul VI vigorously emphasized in his Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*, the concept of "transubstantiation" — which means neither: "transignification" nor, even less, "transfinalization" — is at the root of the new meaning and purpose that the Eucharistic species acquire once "transubstantiation" has occurred.[5] In turn, the *raison d'être* and ultimate foundation of "transubstantiation" are found in relation to the new goal and new meaning of the species of the bread and wine (O. Semmelroth).

Yet these concepts ("transignification" and "transfinalization") cannot claim to replace the concept of "transubstantiation", since they do not fully express the reality of this word's meaning. Indeed, although they designate the new goal and the new meaning of the

species of bread and wine, already consecrated, they in no way indicate the new constituent and constitutive being of these species one they have been consecrated. This new being of the species — the Body and Blood of Christ — is necessarily inalienable because without it there can be no true Eucharist.

Lastly, in the remaining chapters and canons, the Council draws consequences from the Real Presence: the eating of Christ in Holy Communion not only spiritually but also sacramentally and really (cf. can. 8); the permanence of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist also "*extra usum*" (cf. can. 4); the legitimacy of adoration of Blessed Sacrament with *cultus latriae* (cf. Chap. V and can. 6); the legitimacy of preserving and reserving the consecrated Eucharistic species, and the possibility of administering it to the sick (cf. Chap. VI and can. 7); the need to prepare oneself to receive the Eucharist fittingly by recourse to the Sacrament of Penance, if one is aware of being mortal sin (cf. Chap. VII and can.11); the legitimacy, for the priest celebrant, of receiving Communion himself (cf. can. 10); the obligation to receive Communion at least once a year on reaching the age of discretion (cf. can.9); and the non-reduction of the principal fruit of the Most Holy Eucharist to remission of sins (cf. can. 5).

Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D. (Magis Center - 2014)

Chapter 7

Celebration and Celebrant of Eucharist

Since the time of Christ's resurrection, the Christian Church was obedient to Christ's command to reenact His Eucharistic words within the community. Saint Paul, writing to the Corinthians (around the mid- 50's) implies that the ceremony of the blessing cup and the breaking of the bread – which is a participation in the blood and body of Christ – has been taking place for a long time – presumably since Jesus' resurrection and gift of the Holy Spirit:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread [the Body of Christ] (1Cor. 10: 16-17).

In the 30's and 40's, the Eucharist was celebrated within the context of a supper, but the supper was distinct from the reenactment of Jesus' Eucharistic words which held the same sacrificial meaning with which Jesus intended His own words. Paul's recounting of the Last Supper makes this sacrificial context clear:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you *proclaim the Lord's death* until he comes (1 Cor. 11: 23-26). Thus, the reenactment of the Eucharistic words make present Jesus' body and blood sacrificed for us in His passion and death. The early Eucharistic celebration was therefore a combination of a celebratory feast with the recollection of Jesus' sacrifice which brought the gathered community into communion with Him.

As time passed, however, the reenactment of the words of institution were separated from the supper, and the supper was no longer part of the Eucharistic celebration.20 At this juncture, seven dimensions of Jesus' actions and words of institution were repeated: The Lord took bread; gave thanks; broke it; distributed it with the corresponding words; took the chalice; gave thanks; and handed it to His disciples with the corresponding words.21 This formed the center of an expanded liturgy with four major actions:

1. Preparing bread and wine (with water);
2. The thanksgiving prayer;

3. The breaking of the bread (with the seven repeated actions and words of institution); and
4. The communion.[22]

Once the four-fold Eucharistic action was separated from the supper, the *sacrificial* significance of the reenactment of the Lord's words and actions became the central focus of the assembly. The Eucharistic (thanksgiving) words and actions were closely associated with the sacrificial actions as they had been for Jesus. At this juncture (at the end of the first century), the tables – for supper – were removed from the place of commemoration, and it was transformed into an assembly hall with everyone focused on the one table of Eucharistic and sacrificial reenactment (*anamnesis*).

The prayer of thanksgiving was quite well developed at this time. Though it was not like one of the later full Eucharistic prayers, it had many of its components: thanksgiving for the work of creation and redemption – recalling particularly Jesus' divinity, incarnation, sacrifice,

death, and resurrection. The core of these thanksgiving prayers may be found in the early Christological hymns (dating back to as early as the 40's) recorded in the New Testament Epistles – Colossians 1: 12-22; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; and 1 Peter 3: 18-21. Also, the Johannine hymn (John 1: 1-6), and the prayers of thanksgiving in the Book of Revelation – (Revelations 4:11; 5: 9-14; 11: 17-18; 15: 3-4), as well as John's Farewell Discourse (John 14-17) may also have been included.[23]

The *Didache* (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) – an early work (written toward the end of the first century – c. 90 A.D.) is the first complete catechism of the Christian Church. It contains a wealth of information about church rituals, authority, ethical norms,

disciplinary practices (e.g. fasting), and church organization. It is of great importance to our discussion, because it contains two full early Eucharistic prayers, an identification of the Eucharist with sacrifice, and an identification of who was celebrating this sacrificial reenactment of the Last Supper.

With respect to the identification of the Eucharistic (thanksgiving) commemoration with sacrifice, the *Didache* notes:

Gather together on the day of the Lord, break bread, and give thanks, but first confess your sins, so that your *sacrifice* may be pure.[24]

The *Didache* not only uses the word "sacrifice" to describe the commemoration, it tells how important this interpretation of the commemoration was – for it required the early Christians to insert a penitential rite (a confession of sins) to assure that the celebration of the sacrifice by the congregation was pure – not defiled — in conformity with the pure sacrifice of Malachi (see Mal. 1:11, 14). If the sacrificial meaning of the commemoration had not been essential, there would have been no need for the early Christians to develop a penitential rite at the beginning of the commemoration. This view of the commemoration as sacrifice has remained quite strong throughout the centuries – in the Church Fathers, the medieval theologians, the Council of Trent, until today.

The *Didache* also tells us *who* was celebrating the Eucharistic commemoration in the earliest times — apostles and prophets.25 Evidently the apostles were given authority by Jesus to preside over the Eucharistic commemoration. But why does the *Didache* mention prophets? Prophets are not necessarily people who foretell the future, but rather those appointed by Yahweh to speak on His behalf (Exodus 7:1). Sometimes this involves foretelling the future or initiating a direction of the future, but not always. Prophets in the early Christian

Church were designated as those having a charism of the Holy Spirit to speak for God – delivering messages and teachings for the good of the Church. In Paul's ranking in 1 Corinthians 12, they are listed as second in authority, immediately after the apostles (see 1 Cor. 12: 28). Given their charism to speak in place of God, they were naturally thought to have the charism to speak the words of commemoration on behalf of Christ (along with the apostles). Thus, they were viewed as acting *in the place of Christ* in the reenactment of Christ's self-sacrificial words.

The *Didache* indicates that in missionary territories, itinerant apostles and prophets were probably celebrating the Eucharistic commemoration.[26] However, as churches became more stable, they had their own local authority structure that replaced itinerant apostles and prophets.[27] These local authorities – having the power of apostles and prophets – by ordination – are called Episcopoi (overseers) and Presbyteroi (elders).

In the earliest church organizations, Presbyteroi were *ordained* clergy – having authority to preside over the Eucharistic commemoration as well as teaching authority. In the Jerusalem Church, the Presbyteroi were under James – the head of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 11:30 and 15:22). Paul ordained Presbyteroi for local churches he initiated in Asia Minor (Acts 14:23).28 The proliferation of presbyters for local church assemblies (by ordination) incorporated the prophetic role of presiding over the Eucharistic commemoration into itself, and the word "prophet" disappears as an ecclesiastical ranking, and is replaced by "Presbyteroi" in the Letters of 1 Timothy and Titus (in the early second century).

Throughout most of the first century, the distinction between Presbyteroi and Episcopoi was not clear – and often Presbyteroi were described as having the same overseeing function as Episcopoi (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5-7; and 1 Peter 5:1). However, by the end of

the first century, "Episcopoi" designated bishops (the head of the council or college of Presbyters) while "Presbyteroi" designated "priests who derived their authority from the bishop" (1 Tim 1:3; Titus 1:5, 2:15).

The idea of ministerial priesthood is vague in the New Testament, but this can be explained. As noted above, prophets were leaders in the Church (second only to the apostles) who had the authority to celebrate the Eucharist wherever they wanted (*Didache* 10:7). Furthermore, the role of prophets was assumed into the role of Presbyteroi (elders) who were ordained by the apostles to give stability to local churches. Thus, ordained leaders (prophets — and later presbyters) had the authority to celebrate the Eucharist after Jesus' resurrection – from the inception of the Church.

Yet there is no clear mention of a ministerial priesthood in the New Testament. Though there is reference to the priesthood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7) and the royal priesthood of the faithful (1 Peter 2:9), there is no clear expression of priesthood with respect to Christian ministry. Why didn't the early Church clearly associate prophets and presbyters with "priests" who were designated as "offerors of sacrifice" in the Old Testament? After all, Jesus29 (and His followers30) clearly associated the Eucharist with His self-sacrifice — and the authority to celebrate that sacrifice (the Eucharist) was given to the apostles and prophets, and then to the Presbyteroi.

An implicit answer is given in Hebrews 7 with respect to the ministerial priesthood of Jesus in contrast to the Levitical priesthood of the Jewish synagogue:

If another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared, "You

are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'" Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people.

He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever (Heb.7:15-28).

Though the Letter to the Hebrews is written in about 85 A.D. – when tensions between the Jewish and Christian churches was forcing a formal separation between them – this passage points to themes relevant to the *earlier* church that explain the Church's reticence to associate prophets and Presbyteroi with priests. First, the early church would have had a keen interest to distinguish the animal sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood from the complete self-sacrifice

of the Son of God. As noted above (in Section I), Jesus replaced the sacrificial animal with Himself – as the exclusive Son of the Father – to make perfect, eternal, and unconditional sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, liberation from evil, and sure impetus toward eternal life. The early church, recognizing the perfection and superiority of Jesus' sacrifice (over previous sacrifices), would have wanted to keep them quite distinct.

Secondly, the Jewish priesthood was derived from the lineage of Aaron (Moses' brother and the first high priest of the Israelites). Jesus' self-sacrifice was meant for *all people* – not simply for the Jewish people served by the Levitical priesthood (in the lineage of Aaron). This universal character of Jesus' sacrifice and priesthood would have deterred the early church from making an association of Jesus' priesthood (manifest in the Eucharistic self-sacrifice) with the priesthood of Aaron. Furthermore, Jesus wanted to separate Himself from the Jewish temple (located in Jerusalem and associated with a single people) so that He would become in His own body the new universal temple for all people and all nations.

Thirdly, the Christian Church did not want to associate its apostles, prophets, and Presbyteroi with the lineage of Aaron, because it wanted to become – as Jesus had instructed – a universal Church where those who presided over the Eucharistic celebration could come from every race, people, and nation. As noted above, Paul ordained Presbyteroi in the local churches he initiated. A close association between prophets-presbyters and priesthood (which would have been associated with the Jewish Levitical priesthood) would have contradicted this – or at the very least, confused the issue.

After 80 A.D., when tensions between the synagogue and the Christian Church would force a separation between them, the

Christian Church wanted to establish the superiority of Jesus' high priesthood over that of the Levitical priesthood of Aaron. Indeed, this is precisely the reason why the author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes not only Chapter 7 (cited above) but also the rest of the letter.

So when did the concept of ministerial priesthood become attached to the Presbyteroi who were presiding over the Eucharistic commemoration of Jesus' self-sacrifice? The first clear indication is found in about 180 A.D. in St. Irenaeus' work, *Against Heresies*:

"And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually."[31]

Around 232-235 A.D., Origen associates the apostles and their successors with priesthood:

"So, too, the apostles, and those who have become like apostles, being priests according to the Great High Priest and having received knowledge of the service of God, know under the Spirit's teaching for which sins, and when, and how they ought to offer sacrifices, and recognize for which they ought not to do so."[32]

Cyprian of Carthage (in about 250 A.D.) ordered an interdict against Novation who is claiming to be a valid spokesman of the Church. Cyprian responds by negatively comparing Novation to Cyprian's priesthood:

For the Church is one, and as she is one, cannot be both within and without. For if [the Church] is with Novatian, she was not with Cornelius. But if she was with Cornelius, who succeeded the bishop Fabian by *lawful ordination*, and whom, beside the honour of the *priesthood*, the Lord glorified also with martyrdom, Novatian is not in the Church; nor can he be reckoned as a bishop, who, succeeding to no one, and despising the evangelical and apostolic tradition, sprang from himself.[33]

In about 336 A.D., in a work called *The Canons of Hippolytus*,34 we find well worked out rules for priesthood and the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice:

Of the keeping of oblations which are laid upon the altar — that nothing fall into the sacred chalice, and that nothing fall from the priests, nor from the boys when they take communion.[35]

In this passage, the priest is clearly seen within a sacrificial context – making an oblation (an offering of sacrifice) on an altar – which sacrifice is considered to be sacred.

In sum, we see a clear association of Episcopoi and the Presbyteroi with priesthood beginning in about 150 A.D. (with St. Irenaeus) and a continuous theological development of this association throughout the second and third centuries, culminating in Canons (these rules) for priestly performance of the Eucharistic sacrifice on an altar. This association was strengthened and clarified until the present day.

End Notes

1 This thesis and the contents of this section are explained in great detail in a comprehensive work by Joachim Jeremias 1966 *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM Press). It is also explained in an excellent article by Johannes Betz 1968-70, "Eucharist" in *Sacramentum Mundi*. Ed. by Karl Rahner, Vol. 2. (London: Burns & Oates). pg. 257ff

2 See Jeremias 1966, Eucharistic Words of Jesus pp 171-173, 208-209, 223-224, and 238-243. See also John P. Meier 1991 *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. Vol. 1. (New York: Doubleday). pp 334-337.

3 See Jeremias' convincing argument in 1966, *Eucharistic Words of Jesus* pp. 208-09.

4 Though Jesus identifies the red wine with the "covenant in His blood," it is clear from the red wine, the parallelism with the bread, and the use

of "this cup" that Jesus is identifying the red wine with both His *blood* and the covenant in His blood. Jeremias' notes that the color of the wine is significant here: "The *tertium comparationis* in the case of the bread is the fact that it was broken, and in the case of the wine the red colour. We have already seen…that it was customary to drink red wine at the Passover…. The comparison between *red wine* and blood was common in the Old Testament (Gen. 49.11; Deut. 32.14; Isa. 63.3,6), further Eccl 39.26; 50.15; I Macc. 6.34; Rev. 14.20; Sanh. 70a, etc." (Jeremias 1966, *Eucharistic Words of Jesus* pp. 223-24).

5 Mark-Matthew reports "poured out for many" but Luke reports "poured out for *you*." Jeremias holds that "for the many" is the more original on the basis of linguistic grounds, namely, "for the many" is a Semitism while "you" is not. Jeremias attributes the replacement of "the many" by "you" as having a liturgical purpose where each worshiper feels him or herself to be individually addressed (by "you"), which would not happen with the indefinite "the many" (See Jeremias 1966, *Eucharistic Words of Jesus* pp. 172). The Greek "*to pollôn*" ("the many") is an unusual expression, and is probably an attempt to translate a common Semitic expression referring to "all." This is explained below in this section.

6 Eliade phrases it this way: "In *imitating* the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythical hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time" –Mircea Eliade 1987. *The Sacred and the Profane*: *The Nature of Religion.* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).. First Century Jewish views of time follow Eliade's general form.

7 Eliade 1987

8 Jeremias quotes O. Michel, noting, "God's remembrance is, namely (this is an important fact to which O. Michel called attention), never a simple remembering of something, but always and without exception 'an *effecting and creating* event.' When Luke 1.72 says that God remembers his covenant, this means that he is *now fulfilling* the eschatological covenant promise." Jeremias 1966 *Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, p. 348. See also Betz 1968, pp 260-261.

9 See Betz 1968 "Eucharist", pp 258-262.

10 See Jeremias 1966 *Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, p. 348 and Betz 1968 "Eucharist", p 260-261.

11 Ibid, p. 260.

12 In the early church, the apostles appointed another tier of individuals called "prophets", second only to them in rank—"God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues" (1Cor 12:28). As will be explained below in Section III these "prophets" were the predecessors of what we now call the "ministerial priesthood," and priests (in the 2nd Century) were held to have the prophetic powers to celebrate the Eucharist.

13 In Spitzer 2016 *God so loved the World* (Chapter 7, Section I) I show that the idea of "believers" in John is meant in an inclusive way and not in an exclusive way. This means that "*un*believer" refers to someone who has *rejected* belief— not someone who has *not* had an opportunity for belief or understanding. Thus, someone who has never heard of Jesus or the Eucharist—or has not had an opportunity to understand what He was doing in the Eucharist, should not be considered an *un*believer.

14 Jesus had a strong conviction in the resurrection, following Second Temple Judaism. In this regard he sided with the Pharisees and not the Sadducees (who did not believe in a resurrection – accepting only the *Torah* – the first five books of the Old Testament). Jesus makes clear his belief in a personal resurrection which supersedes that of Second Temple Judaism (a merely bodily resurrection) which is evident in his passion predictions (which include the phrase "and rise again on the third day") as well as his assertion that he would rebuild the Temple in three days (found in two independent sources – Mt 26:61, 27:40 and Jn 2:13-22). If Wright's interpretation of Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin is correct, then Jesus must have said something to warrant the charge of "blasphemy" which probably included his belief in being the eschatological judge who would return to judge the world – "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62). This presumes his resurrection as more than a "resuscitated corpse." (See the previous article on this landing page "Contemporary Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus")

15 Betz 1968-70 "Eucharist", p. 260.

16 Saint Thomas Aquinas 1947, *Summa Theologica*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Providence (New York: Benzinger Brothers) pp. 2449-2450 (Part III, Ques. 75, art. 4).

17 I explain this in much greater detail in Robert Spitzer 2015 *The Soul's Upward Yearning: Clues to Our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press), Chap. 6.

18 For a complete explanation of these powers, see Robert Spitzer 2015 *The Soul's Upward Yearning*.

19 Robert Spitzer 2015 *The Soul's Upward Yearning*. Chapters 3&6.

20 Josef Jungmann, *The Mass: an historical, theological, and pastoral survey* (St. Paul, MN: The North Central Publishing Company), p. 20.

21 See Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid. p. 22.

24 Anon. *Didache* Ch. 14: 1.

25 See anon. *Didache* 10:7 – "But suffer the prophets to hold Eucharist as they will."

26 In *Didache* Chapter 11, a set of rules is given to distinguish true apostles and prophets from false apostles and prophets, with the implication being that there were itinerant apostles and prophets who had to be tested before they would be allowed to celebrate the Eucharist (see *Didache* 10:7) and instruct the faithful.

27 See Ibid.

28 The Greek words "ceirotonhsantes cheirotonEsantes" (literally – "hand-outstretching selecting") means more than "appointment." It refers directly to the laying on of hands which refers to ordination to the Presbyterate (see 1 Tim. 4:14).

29 See Section I above.

30 See *Didache* 14:1 – as explained above in this section.

31 St. Irenaeus of Lyons *Against Heresies* Bk. 4, Chap. 8, par. 3.

32 Origen *On Prayer*, Chapter 18.

33 Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistle 75*, par. 3.

34 Canons of Hippolytus, Canon 28. Though this work is attributed to Hippolytus of Rome, supposedly written around 210 A.D., some scholars believe that it may have been composed by Egyptian Christian authors between 336 and 340 A.D. Other scholars – such as Jungmann – still date it to 210 A.D. I used the more conservative (later) dating here.

35 Hippolytus *The Canons of Hippolytus*, Can 28.

Robert J. Spitzer, S.J.

Chapter 8

Eucharistic Controversies

This chapter will discuss the notable heretical teachings against the sacrament of Holy Eucharist from the NT period to the reformation period.

John 6:64-65, The First Eucharistic Dispute

John 6:63 is often counted to be the first Eucharistic controversy in the Early Christian church. Based on Jn 6:63, "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words I spoke to you are spirit and life," many say that Jesus meant the Eucharist only as symbolic.

This is a perfect example of "proof texting" which means taking something out of context and using it prove some view, even if that view is contradicted by other parts of the Bible or Church teaching. In this case, our Lord was using "Spirit" to speak in terms of that which is redeemed by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and "flesh" to speak of that which remains in its fallen condition. In fact, the text of John 6 is perhaps

the most emphatic, compelling text of all the Bible as to the reality of the Holy Eucharist.

Within the bread of life discourse in John 6, there are 43 verses which elaborate upon Jesus as the Bread of Life, with clear associations with the Eucharist. More than that, within this lengthy text, no fewer than six major, emphatic affirmations by our Lord Himself of the fact that He is the Bread of Life and that if one does not eat His Body and drink His Blood, he has no life in him:

- 6:35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst
- The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” 6:42 They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, —I have come down from heaven’?” 6:43 Jesus answered them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.
- 6:47 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. 6:48 I am the bread of life. 6:49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.
- 6:50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh
- Finally, where else in this Gospel do you find disciples who cease following our Lord, because they find His words so difficult to accept, as we read in this text on the Eucharistic discourse:

- .” 6:59 This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper’naum. 6:60 Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” 6:61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? 6:62 Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? 6:63 It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 6:64 But there are some of you that do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. 6:65 And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.” 6:66 After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him.

Beyond this, we can consider the fact that all three synoptic Gospels relate the words and actions of our Lord at the Last Supper:

❖Mt 26:26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” 26:27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you;

❖Mk 14:21 For the Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” 14:22 And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” 14:23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 14:24 And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

❖Lk 22:15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; 22:16 for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 22:17 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; 22:18 for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 22:19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 22:20 And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

❖ Finally, St. Paul reveals the practice of the early Church with his reference to the Eucharist: 1Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

These NT texts were in a way rejecting the early Christian heresy mentioned in John 6. There are many other texts which bear upon this matter, but if these core texts do not convince a Christian of the central place and even necessity of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and the individual Christian, then no amount of biblical text will. Unfortunately, even today some Christians find our Lord' words as troublesome as those first disciples did who walked away, and so they adopt a form of Christianity devoid of the Bread of Life in the Eucharist.

2. Berengarian Controversy on Eucharist

Berengarius of Tours was Born at Tours about 999; died on the island of St. Cosme, near that city, in 1088. Having completed his elementary studies in his native city, he went to

the school of Chartres in order to study arts and theology under the direction of the famous Fulbert. There he was distinguished by his curious and quick intelligence. It seems that even at this early time his bent of mind and singular opinions were a source of anxiety to his master. (M. Clerval, Les Ecoles de Chartres au Moyen Age, Chartres, 1895.) After the death of Fulbert (1029) Berengarius left Chartres and took charge, as *scholasticus*, of the school of St. Martin of Tours. His reputation spread rapidly and attracted from all parts of France numerous and distinguished disciples, who afterwards held positions of importance in the Church. Among them are mentioned, though there is some doubtabout the first two, Hildebert of Lavardin who became Bishop of Le Mans and Archbishop of Tours, St. Bruno, the founder of the Carthusians, Eusebius Bruno, afterwards Bishop of Angers, Frolland, Bishop of Senlis, Paulinus, dean of Metz. In 1039 Berengarius was chosen archdeacon of Angers by Hubert, bishop of that city. Berengarius accepted this office, but continued to live at Tours and direct his school.

It was about 1047 that the teaching of Berengarius touching the Holy Eucharist began to attract attention. In the Eucharistic controversy of the ninth century, Radbert Paschasius, afterwards abbot of Corbie, in his *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (831), had maintained the doctrine that in the Holy Eucharist the bread is converted into the real body of Christ, into the very body which was born of Mary and crucified. Ratramnus, a monk of the same abbey, defended the opinion that in the Holy Eucharist there is no conversion of the bread; that the body of Christ is, nevertheless, present, but in a spiritual way; that it is not therefore the same as that born of Mary and crucified. John Scotus Erigena had supported the view that the sacraments of the altar are figures of the body of Christ; that they are a memorial of the true body and blood

of Christ. (P. Batiffol, Etudes d'histoire et de théologie positive, 2d series, Paris, 1905.) When, therefore, Hugues, Bishop of Langres, and Adelman *écolâtre* of Liège, discussed Berengarius's teachings on this subject, the latter answered by appealing to the authority of Erigena. It was at this point that Lanfranc, abbot of the monastery at Le Bec, attacked as heretical the opinion of Erigena and defended the doctrine of Radbert Paschasius. Berengarius, in his defense, wrote a letter which Lanfranc received in Rome whither he had gone to take part in a council. The letter was read in this council (1050); Berengarius was condemned, and was ordered to appear at a council which was to be held the same year at Vercelli. King Henry I being titular Abbot of St. Martin of Tours, Berengarius applied to him for permission to go to the council. It is probable that at this time the conferences of Brionne and Chartres were held in which Berengarius unsuccessfully defended his opinions. (Cf. Durand of Troarn, Liber de Corpore et Sanguine Christi, xxxiii, in Migne, P.L., CXLIX, 1422.) The king, for reasons which are not exactly known, ordered Berengarius to be imprisoned, and at the council of Vercelli (1050) his doctrine was examined and condemned.

The imprisonment, however, did not last long. The Bishop of Angers, Eusebius Bruno, was his disciple and supporter, and the Count of Anjou, Geoffrey Martel, his protector. The following year, by order of Henry I, a national synod was held in Paris to judge Berengarius and Eusebius Bruno; neither was present, and both were condemned. At the Council of Tours (1055), presided over by the papal legate Hildebrand, Berengarius signed a profession of faith wherein he confessed that after consecration the bread and wine are truly the body and blood of Christ. At another council held in Rome in 1059, Berengarius was present, retracted his opinions, and signed a formula of faith, drawn up by Cardinal Humbert, affirming the real and sensible presence of

the true body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. (Mansi, XIX, 900.) On his return, however, Berengarius attacked this formula. Eusebius Brunoabandoned him, and the Count of Anjou, Geoffrey the Bearded, vigorously opposed him. Berengarius appealed to Pope Alexander II, who, though he intervened in his behalf, asked him to renounce his erroneous opinions. This Berengarius contemptuously refused to do. He then wrote his *De Sacrâ Coenâ adversus Lanfrancum Liber Posterior*, the first book of which — now lost — had been written against the Council of Rome held in 1059. He was again condemned in the Councils of Poitiers (1075), and of St. Maixeut (1076), and in 1078, by order of Pope Gregory VII, he came to Rome, and in a council held in St. John Lateran signed a profession of faith affirming the conversion of the bread into the body of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary. The following year, in a council held in the same place Berengarius signed a formula affirming the same doctrine in a more explicit way. Gregory VII then recommended him to the bishops of Tours and Angers, forbidding that any penalty should be inflicted on him or that anyone should call him a heretic. Berengarius, on his return, again attacked the formula he had signed, but as a consequence of the Council of Bordeaux (1080) he made a final retraction. He then retired into solitude on the island of St. Cosme, where he died, in union with the Church.

3. Controversy on Double Species

The two forms of Eucharistic Communion (Communion under two species or Communion under one species only) do not in themselves constitute a dogmatic problem. Even if Communion under two species (with the Body and the Blood) is an indispensable part of the integrity of the sacramental sign and corresponds to Christ's mandate in the Institution (cf. Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:19 ff.; I Cor 11:24 ff.), there are other New Testament texts in which

Communion under a single species is also defined as true (cf. Jn 6:51; 6:57-58).

Hence, the Church accepted from the start the validity of Eucharistic Communion under the one form or the other. Although this never in itself posed a dogmatic problem but was merely a disciplinary issue, it became a problem of faith in 1414 when Jacobo da Mies began to preach in Prague that Communion under both species was indispensable to salvation. Da Mies based his argument on Jn 6:53-56; he maintained that this form of Communion derived from a divine mandate (cf. Mt 26:27; Lk 22:17 ff.) and violently attacked the Church for withdrawing this inalienable right from the faithful.

So it was that the Council of Constance, in its 13th Session on 15 Jun 1415, totally rejected the need to reintroduce the practice of giving the chalice as well as the bread to the laity (Communion under both species), and prohibited it, not so much because was invalid in itself, but rather, because of the erroneous assumptions with which Jacobo da Mies was seeking to justify it (cf. DH 1198-1200).

The theologians of the Reformation adopted the error of Jacobo da Mies, going beyond the intentions of the preacher of Prague, whose sole aspiration at the outset had been to rekindle Eucharistic devotion. With their assertion that the practice of the "chalice for the laity" was obligatory, not only did they manifest their desire to remain faithful to the Institution of the Eucharist and to claim the royal priesthood of all the baptized, but also, as Johannes Betz correctly notes, their intention to find theological justification for the suppression of the hierarchical structure the Church.[2]

The Tridentine conciliar Document of the 21st Session expounded this doctrine in four, chapters and as many canons. Coming to grips with the sensitive topic of Communion under two Eucharistic species

or of the "lay chalice", the two forms of Communion that Reformation theologians considered obligatory for all believers, the Council asserted that there is no divine precept concerning the obligation of said form of Communion and that consequently, it is not necessary for salvation (cf. Chap. I and can. 1). Communion under one species suffices.

However, if Communion under one species suffices, it is not only because there is no binding divine mandate on the concrete form of Communion, but also because Jesus Christ, whole and entire, is truly present in each one of the species, in the bread and in the wine. For this reason it should be said that the whole Christ may be received even under only one Eucharistic species (cf. Chap. III and can. 3).

Moreover, since the issue of the two forms in which Communion may be received (under the one or under two species) is not a matter of divine law, it is the duty of the Church, to which Christ gave the power to regulate the discipline of the sacraments but always with respect for what is essential in them, to determine the best way to administer Communion in the form most convenient to those who receive it, and for the veneration that is due to this Sacrament itself (cf. Chap. II and can. 2). The Council also taught that Eucharistic Communion is not necessary for newborn infants (cf. Chap. IV and can. 4).

4. Reformers Controversy on Eucharist

In the early Middle Ages, nominalism and other theological currents that developed from it prepared the ground for the reformers' approach to Eucharistic faith, which focused on points of particular interest: the understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in this Sacrament; the two forms of Eucharistic Communion; and the sacrificial character of Mass. Let us consider these points.

4.1 Real Presence

Reacting to the abuses of a determined exteriorization and to every form of vulgar physical realism and also to the doctrine of the Fourth Lateran Council, which asserted that the identity of the consecrated gifts and the Body and Blood of Christ were the same by virtue of "transubstantiation" (DH 802),[1] Zwingli, Luther and Calvin, despite their considerable theological differences, shared the belief that the Catholic faith in the Real Presence was erroneous.

Zwingli said that after the Ascension, the body of Jesus was to be found in Heaven and thus could not be really present in earthly bread. He claimed that the so-called "consecrated" bread was not the Body of Jesus but only a symbol of it. Accordingly, the "*est*" (= is) that we read in the words of the "Institution" of the Eucharist was to be understood only in a figurative sense; and eating the Eucharistic Body meant merely believing in the sacrificed Body of Christ on the Cross.

Distancing himself from Zwingli, Martin Luther accepted the Real Presence but only as a sort of extension of the Incarnation, a precise presence *pro nobis* (= for us), a presence bringing grace for the forgiveness of sins. In this way, as compared with what Zwingli hypothesized, the prince of the reformers interpreted the "*est*" of the Eucharistic Institution as a real identification. For Luther, in fact, the glorified body of Christ is inseparably united to the divinity in whose omnipresence it shares by virtue of the communication of the properties that exist in the two natures, divine and human, of the incarnate and glorified Word. Consequently, in the Eucharistic Sacrament, Christ unites his Body with the bread and wine (doctrine of "consubstantiation"), thereby making his omnipresence perceptible to us and salvific for us (doctrine of ubiquitarianism).

Therefore, considering the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist from the perspective of his two natures, Luther maintained that after the consecration, the bread and wine retain their own properties, but united with the Body and Blood of the Lord they constitute a true sacramental unity. Thus, Luther categorically denied the ontological mutation of the species of the bread and wine through "transubstantiation".

Furthermore, in line with his own definition of sacrament, which he understood only as "*actio*" and "*usus*", he affirmed that the duration of the Real Presence of Christ *pro nobis* in the Eucharist lasts from the "take and eat" to the "consumption" of the tiny particles of it that have been left over. For this reason, he considered as imperative the obligation to avoid the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, and he in no way accepted its adoration.

Calvin, lastly, not only denied the transubstantiation of the Eucharistic gifts but also any form of real "physical" presence, in the sense of eating Christ in, with and under the tangible forms of bread and wine. He differs in this from Luther who, while he made no reference to it, nonetheless accepted the doctrine of consubstantiation. Moreover, Calvin, as opposed to Zwingli, upheld real participation in the Body and Blood of Christ in Heaven through the Sacrament of the Eucharist. For Calvin, however, the Sacrament was not an empty symbol nor a means or path of grace, but merely a "notification" of God's activity in the sacramental sign through the Holy Spirit.

Calvin claimed, therefore, that the Holy Spirit is the only medium of communication (*vinculum communicationis)* between the communicant and Christ. Calvin maintained that the Spirit did not bring about the present of Christ in the Eucharist but that the Eucharist was only the visible reality through which the Spirit reached the faithful

in order to unite them with the heavenly Christ. This made Christ's presence in the Sacrament an abstraction. In fact, Calvin was seeking to build bridge between the Eucharistic theologies of Zwingli and Luther. In each case, it is certain that the reformers were unable to reach any agreement on the positive content of the Eucharistic gifts. This was the stumbling block to the unity of the Reformation.

4.2 Sacrificial character of Holy Mass

Nonetheless, the differences between the reformers in establishing the positive content of the Eucharistic gifts did not occur in the evaluation of Mass. Reformation theologians, constituting as it were a single opposition front, not only denounced the trivialization and irregularity of the celebration of the Eucharist, but also contested the Catholic way of understanding Mass and its sacrificial nature in particular. In their opinion, the Eucharist was a gift of God to men, a testament. In no way was the Eucharist to be considered a gift of men to God nor, consequently, a sacrifice.

They were of the opinion that making the Mass a sacrifice would have meant making it a "work", an idolatrous act. Faith and thanksgiving in relation to the Eucharist do, of course, come into it but are understood only as a spiritual sacrifice and separate from the Sacrament.

The assumption that underlies this concept is no more than the fundamental principle of Reformation theology: the principle of the "*solus Deus*" and the "*sola gratia*", an axiom that was be rigorously maintained in everything that had to do with salvation. This principle was not only applied to Eucharistic theology but also to Christology.

Not even the unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of the Cross, therefore, received its value from Jesus as a man; it was seen solely as the work and testimony of the mercy that God showed to us poor, condemned sinners. The Catholic "*offerimus*" consequently

wreaks diabolical havoc not on only the inaccessible majesty of God's very being, but also on the fundamental structure of the Crucifixion, whose essence must not be interpreted as Jesus' sacrifice of himself, but rather as the gift that the Father makes of Jesus. Hence, the "*offerimus*", especially if it is understood as an expiatory sacrifice, represents a new attempt at expiation or a presumed complement to the superabundant sacrifice of the Cross: in other words, a work.

By making these assumptions, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli totally rejected the sacrificial character of Mass, the Roman Canon, the so-called "Private Mass" and the application of Masses for the living and the dead.

The Magisterium on the Eucharist of the Council of Trent fits into this theological context.

4.3 Trent's Anti-Reformist Doctrine of the Eucharist

The Council of Trent, which was deeply concerned with the discourse of the Reformation on Eucharistic theology, immediately made this Sacrament one of the most important items on its agenda. It focused first of all on the sacrificial character of Mass and reflected on the Real Presence and the two forms in which Communion can be received. I do not intend, however, to treat these three aspects together, but one by one. For various reasons that Hubert Jedin[3] studied attentively, the Council, at the 13th Session on 11 October 1551 (cf. DH 1635-1661), began by ratifying the Real Presence with the Decree on the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

For a detailed description of the Tridentine argument on Real presence see our chapter entitled "Real Presence." The council emphatically affirmed the fact Mass is a sacrifice.

The Document in which the doctrine and canons on the Sacrifice of Mass are expounded resulted from the 22nd Session of the

Council. It is divided into nine chapters and as many canons. The Council teaches that given the constitutive inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood in offering God a sacrifice that could redeem men and women and bring them to perfection, in the fullness of time and out of love the Father ordained that another priest should rise, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in offering himself once and for all on the altar the Cross, would bring about the redemption of the human race with his bloody death.

However, in order that his priesthood might not end with his death, and mindful of the requirements of human nature, during the Last Supper, "on the night when he was betrayed" (I Cor 11:23), Christ bequeathed to his beloved Bride, the Church, a visible sacrifice through which might be represented his bloody sacrifice which he was to make the following day, once and for all, on the Cross of Calvary; this was also and in order that the memorial of his passion and of his bloody death might endure for eternity and that the salvific efficacy of the passion and death of Christ Our Lord might be applied to the forgiveness of those sins committed every day.

To institute this visible sacrifice, a sacramental anticipation of his bloody sacrifice, Jesus offered on the same night as the Last Supper his Body and his Blood to God the Father under species of bread and wine, and under the symbols of these things themselves he offered them to the Apostles so they might receive them; hence, in that very act, he ordained them priests.

He ordered the Apostles and successors in the priesthood to these things with these words: "Do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19; I Cor 11:24; cf. Chap. I and cann. 1, 2).

Therefore, the Holy Sacrifice of Mass contains an actualization of Last Supper until the Lord's coming, and Christ, who offered

himself once and for all on the altar of the Cross in a bloody way, is here sacrificed in an unbloody way.

The Council thus established that in itself the sacrifice of the Cross, anticipated during the Last Supper, is one and the same as the Sacrifice of the Mass, since the victim is, of course, one and the same. The One who offers himself in the Mass by the priestly ministry is the same as the One who once offered himself on the altar of the Cross. The only difference is in the manner of the offering: then, the bloody oblation without any mediation; now, the bloodless and sacramental oblation, that is, through the mediation of priests and of the same species as at the Last Supper.

Consequently, taking into account this intrinsic unity that exists between the two sacrifices, the fruits of the bloody sacrifice of Christ are obtained in abundance through the unbloody sacrifice that is fulfilled during the Mass, but this in no way diminishes the value of the bloody sacrifice. The Church, therefore, rightly offers the Holy Sacrifice of Mass not only for sins, pains, satisfactions and various other necessities of the living faithful, but also for the deceased members of the faithful who have not yet fully atoned for their sins (cf. Chap. II and cann. 3, 4).

In the ensuing chapters and canons that we are unable to analyze here, the Council illustrates the significance of Masses celebrated in honor of saints (cf. Chap. III and can. 5); the existence and significance of the Canon of the Mass (cf. Chap. IV and can. 6); the significance of the ceremonies in the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass (cf. Chap. V and cann. 7 and 9); and the triple significance of the water that is to be mixed with the wine during the Eucharistic celebration (cf. Chap. VII and can. 9).

With regard to the last two chapters, Chapter VIII comes down heavily on the request to celebrate Mass normally in the vernacular

and urges pastors of souls to explain the meaning of the Eucharistic mystery during the celebration (cf. also can. 9). Certain preliminary observations on the significance of the canons concerning the Sacrifice of Mass are the object of Chapter IX that concludes the doctrinal content of the Document.

Although it is obvious that the Tridentine teaching on the Eucharist was prompted by the anxiety to confront the Eucharistic theology of the Reformation, it definitively established the essential content of the truth of this Sacrament. The Second Vatican Council, which confronted other signs of the times four centuries later, was to have the task, consistent with Tridentine faith, of making the most of those aspects of the Eucharist which had not been explicitly and systematically addressed during that Council. These included for example, the specific participation of lay people and non-ordained Religious in the Sacrifice of Mass by virtue of their real, baptismal priesthood; this does not mean that the Tridentine Fathers were unaware of the existence, meaning and need for this participation.

In fact, in her constant exodus towards the Promised Land of Heaven, the Church never, at any specific moment on her pilgrimage, makes exhaustive pronouncements on the content or multiple implications of an article of faith, but, open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who tells her at every moment what to say, finds in the "*Depositum fidei*" that she has diligently preserved in accordance with God's will the necessary truth to forge ahead without ever losing her way, which her Lord and Master points out to her.

End Notes

1 Cf. H. Denzinger - P. Hünermann, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*. Bilingual version of the 37th edition, EDB, Bologna (2004). I cite this work to justify the DH abbreviation.

2 Cf. J. Betz, L*a Eucharistía*, Misterio *Central*, in *Mysterium Salutis*, Ed. Cristiandad, Madrid (1975), v. IV/2, p. 247.

3 Cf. H. Jedin, *Historia del Concilio de Trento*, Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (1975), v. III, pp. 59-86; 403-436.

4 Cf. K. Rahner, *La presencia de Cristo en el sacramento de la cena del Segnor*, in *Escritos de Teologia*, Taurus Ediciones, Madrid (1964), t. IV, pp. 367-396.

5 Cf, Paul Vi, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*, nn. 11, 46.

Chapter 9

Papal Encyclicals on Eucharist

This chapter will explain the major themes of the papal encyclicals on Eucharist. Even though almost all the encylicals have at least some reference to the mystery of Eucharisr, we opt for the four encyclicals that are exclusively dealing with the theology of Eucharist.

1. Mirae Caritatis

Mirae caritatis is an encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Holy Eucharist given on 28 May 1902. Its theme is mainly the marvelous effects of devotion to the Holy Eucharist in the moral and spiritual life of the faithful. It is one of the principal modern sources of the Church's doctrine on the Blessed Sacrament, along with Mediator Dei of Pope Pius XII and Mysterium Fidei of Pope Paul VI. Its theme is mainly the marvelous effects of devotion to the Holy Eucharist in

the moral and spiritual life of the faithful. The main reason for the troubles in our day, according to Mirae Caritatis, is the lack of charity among people because of their weakening in the love of God. On both counts, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the most effective way to grow in selfless love. The Pope explores several aspects of eucharistic theology, citing the Eucharist as the source of life, a mystery of faith, a bond of charity, and the sacrifice of the Mass.

"For as men and states alike necessarily have their being from God, so they can do nothing good except in God through Jesus Christ, through whom every best and choicest gift has ever proceeded and proceeds."[2] ...whereas God has subordinated the whole supernatural order to the Incarnation of His Word, in virtue whereof salvation has been restored to the human race, ... the Eucharist, according to the testimony of the holy Fathers, should be regarded as in a manner a continuation and extension of the Incarnation.As in previous encyclicals, Leo continues his call for social renewal, which source is found in the Holy Eucharist. He maintains that the sacrament fosters mutual charity that will promote Christian brotherhood and social equality.

Having extolled the many benefits of the Eucharist, Leo hen encourages frequent reception of same, a matter that was the subject of some debate at the time: "Away then with the widespread but most mischievous error of those who give it as their opinion that the reception of the Eucharist is in a manner reserved for those ... who rid themselves of the cares of the world in order to find rest in some kind of professedly religious life. For this gift, than which nothing can be more excellent or more conducive to salvation, is offered to all those, whatever their office or dignity may be, ..."

Leo's successor, Pope Pius X, reiterated this in his 1905 moto proprio Sacra Tridentina Synodus, and the 1910 Quam singulari,

which established the "age of reason" (about seven years of age) as the threshold for children to be admitted to the sacrament.

The expression mirror of charity itself was popularized by Ailred of Rievaulx during the Middle Ages. Leo XIII's encyclical was cited by Popes Pius XII and Paul VI in their own teaching documents, respectively Mediator Dei and Mysterium fidei.

2. Mediator Dei

Mediator Dei is a papal encyclical issued by pope Pius XII on the sacred liturgy in 1947. This encyclical tackles issues on liturgy especially the celebrative and pastoral liturgy. It suggests new directions and active participation instead of mere passive role of the faithful in the liturgy. There is an emphasis in the Eucharistic cult; and with regards to the liturgy, it stresses the importance of the union of the altar and sacrifice. In this encyclical, pope Pius XII defends the liturgy as an important and sacred sacrament. He implies that the liturgy is more than the liturgical actions and prescriptions put together. It is an error to see the liturgy as mere outward and visible part of divine worship. However, in this encyclical, the theology of the liturgy is contained, both the pastoral and celebrative praxis. In this work, I will attempt to trace the theology of the liturgy, the pastoral and celebrative praxis as contained in this encyclical.

The encyclical is divided into four major parts, which are also divided into different chapters. These four parts deal with:

1. The nature, origin and development of the liturgy: 11-69
2. Eucharistic worship: 70-145
3. The divine office and the liturgical year: 146-183
4. Pastoral instruction: 184-223

At the Last Supper Jesus celebrates a new Pasch with solemn rite and ceremonial, and provides for its continuance through the divine institution of the Eucharist. On the morrow, lifted up between heaven and earth, He offers the saving sacrifice of His life, and pours forth, as it were, from His pierced Heart the sacraments destined to impart the treasures of redemption to the souls of men. All this He does with but a single aim: the glory of His Father and man's ever greater sanctification. In Holy Week, when the most bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ are put before us by the liturgy, the Church invites us to come to Calvary and follow in the blood-stained footsteps of the divine Redeemer, to carry the cross willingly with Him, to reproduce in our own hearts His spirit of expiation and atonement, and to die together with Him. Christ the Lord, Eternal Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, loving His own who were of the world, at the last supper, on the night He was betrayed, wishing to leave His beloved Spouse, the Church, a visible sacrifice such as the nature of men requires, that would re-present the bloody sacrifice offered once on the cross, and perpetuate its memory to the end of time, and whose salutary virtue might be applied in remitting those sins which we daily commit, offered His body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father, and under the same species allowed the apostles, whom he at that time constituted the priests of the New Testament, to partake thereof; commanding them and their successors in the priesthood to make the same offering.

The august sacrifice of the altar, then, is no mere empty commemoration of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, but a true and proper act of sacrifice, whereby the High Priest by an unbloody immolation offers Himself a most acceptable victim to the Eternal Father, as He did upon the cross. It is one and the same victim; the same person now offers it by the ministry of His priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner of offering alone being

different. For by the "transubstantiation" of bread into the body of Christ and of wine into His blood, His body and blood are both really present: now the Eucharistic species under which He is present symbolize the actual separation of His body and blood. Thus the commemorative representation of His death, which actually took place on Calvary, is repeated in every sacrifice of the altar, seeing that Jesus Christ is symbolically shown by separate symbols to be in a state of victimhood.

3. Mysterium Fidei

Encyclical letter, "Mystery of the Faith," promulgated by Pope Paul VI on Sept. 3, 1965. In light of the initiative of the Second Vatican Council to reform the sacred liturgy of the Church, Mysterium fidei provides clarification and direction concerning the doctrine and worship of the Eucharist.

The introduction establishes that when treating the reform of the liturgy, Vatican II "considered nothing to be more important than urging the faithful to participate actively and with sound faith and with utmost devotion in the celebration of this most holy mystery; to offer it with the priest to God as a sacrifice for their own salvation and for that of the whole world, and to find in it spiritual nourishment" (no. 2). Following these points, the pope affirms, "the mystery of the Eucharist is at the heart and center of the liturgy itself" (no. 3). He explains that with regard to the Eucharist the council "wished to make evident the indissoluble relationship between faith and devotion" (no. 4).

In part 2, "Reasons for Pastoral Concern and Anxiety," Paul VI registers alarm at "opinions" about the Mystery of the Eucharist that circulate "in written or spoken word" (no. 10). As a corrective to these judgments, he decrees that the following interpretations are "not allowable": "to emphasize … the Mass 'of the community' to

the extent of disparaging Masses celebrated in private; or to stress the sign value of the sacrament as if the symbolism … expresses fully and exhaustively the meaning of Christ's presence; or to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning the changing of the … bread …and wine … as stated by the Council of Trent; or finally, to propose and to act on the opinion according to which Christ the Lord is no longer present in the consecrated hosts left after the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass" (no. 11).

Part 3, "The Holy Eucharist Is a Mystery of Faith," highlights the concept of mystery : the Eucharist is a "very great mystery" and a "Mystery of Faith" (no. 15). Believers must approach the Eucharistic mystery with "humble respect, not following human [rational] arguments … but adhering firmly to divine revelation" (no.16). Investigations of this unparalleled mystery should be guided by "the magisterium of the Church" (no. 22). In addition to "safeguarding" the integrity of the Eucharistic mystery itself, its "proper mode of expression" (no.23) must also be safeguarded. Thus, the Church has established a "rule of language," which it has "confirmed… with the authority of the councils" (no. 24).

In part 4, "The Mystery of the Eucharist Is Verified in the Sacrifice of the Mass," the pope reviews traditional Catholic doctrine related to the Mass. Here, he indicates that "the whole Church … in union with Christ in His role as Priest and Victim, offers the Sacrifice of the Mass and is offered in it." He also underscores, "the distinction between the universal priesthood and the hierarchical priesthood is one of essence and not merely one of degree" (no. 31). Explaining the "public and social nature of every Mass," the pope says, "Mass is not something private; it is an act of Christ and of the Church." As such, "every Mass is offered not for the salvation of ourselves alone, but also for that of the whole world" (no. 32).

In part 5, "In the Sacrifice of the Mass Christ Is Made Sacramentally Present," the pope teaches that "sacrifice and Sacrament pertain inseparably to the same mystery." The foundational principle of this instruction is that "in an unbloody representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross and in application of its saving power, in the Sacrifice of the Mass the Lord is immolated when, through the words of consecration, He begins to be present in a sacramental form under the appearances of bread and wine" (no. 34). Of the various ways Christ is present in the Church, the Sacrament of the Eucharist "surpasses all the others." To refer to Christ's presence in the Eucharist as "real" does not "exclude all other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too," but is "presence in the fullest sense," that is, "it is the substantial presence by which Christ, the God-man, is wholly and entirely present." It is "wrong to explain this presence by … recourse to the 'spiritual' nature … of the Glorified Body of Christ … or by reducing it to a kind of symbolism" (no. 39).

Part 6, "Christ Our Lord Is Present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist by Transubstantiation," reiterates Catholic teaching on transubstantiation: "the voice of the teaching and praying Church…. assures us that the way Christ is made present in this Sacrament is none other than by the change of the whole substance of the bread into His Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into His Blood, and that this … change the Catholic Church rightly calls transubstantiation." As a consequence of this substantial change, "the species of bread and wine … take on new meaning and a new finality, for they no longer remain ordinary bread and ordinary wine, but become the sign of something sacred, the sign of a spiritual food." Thus, transformed bread and wine "contain a new 'reality' which we may justly term ontological." Transubstantiation alters the "objective reality" of the bread and wine, "since after the change of

the substance or nature of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, nothing remains of the bread and wine but the appearances, under which Christ, whole and entire, in His physical 'reality' is bodily present" (no.46).

Part 7, "Latreutic Worship of the Sacrament of the Eucharist," recalls that the Catholic Church "has always offered and still offers the cult of Latria to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving Consecrated Hosts … exposing them to solemn veneration, and carrying them processionally" (no. 56). The pope highlights the feast of Corpus Christi as a testimony to this veneration, which continues to give rise to inspirational Eucharistic pieties. Through them, the Catholic Church strives "to do homage to Christ … to thank Him … and to implore his mercy" (no. 63).

The concluding section, "Exhortation to Promote the Cult of the Eucharist," exhorts persons entrusted with the care of believers "to preserve this faith in its purity and integrity" and to "promote the cult of the Eucharist" (no. 64).

4. "Ecclesia de Eucharistia"

The fourteenth Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II is intended to offer a deeper reflection on the mystery of the Eucharist in its relationship with the Church. The document is relatively brief, but significant for its theological, disciplinary and pastoral aspects. It will be signed on Holy Thursday, during the Mass of the Lord's Supper, within the liturgical setting of the beginning of the Paschal Triduum.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice, "the source and summit of the Christian life", contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth: Jesus Christ, who offers himself to the Father for the redemption of the world. In celebrating this "mystery of faith", the Church makes the Paschal

Triduum become "contemporaneous" with men and women in every age.

The first chapter, "The Mystery of Faith", explains the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist which, through the ministry of the priest, makes sacramentally present at each Mass the body "given up" and the blood "poured out" by Christ for the world's salvation. The celebration of the Eucharist is not a repetition of Christ's Passover, or its multiplication in time and in space; it is the one sacrifice of the Cross, which is re-presented until the end of time. It is, in the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, "a medicine of immortality, an antidote to death". As a pledge of the future Kingdom, the Eucharist also reminds believers of their responsibility for the present earth, in which the weak, the most powerless and the poorest await help from those who, by their solidarity, can give them reason for hope.

"The Eucharist Builds the Church" is the title of the second chapter. When the faithful approach the sacred banquet, not only do they receive Christ, but they in turn are received by him. The consecrated Bread and Wine are the force which generates the Church's unity. The Church is united to her Lord who, veiled by the Eucharistic species, dwells within her and builds her up. She worships him not only at Holy Mass itself, but at all other times, cherishing him as her most precious "treasure".

The third chapter is a reflection on "The Apostolicity of the Eucharist and of the Church". Just as the full reality of Church does not exist without apostolic succession, so there is no true Eucharist without the Bishop. The priest who celebrates the Eucharist acts in the person of Christ the Head; he does not possess the Eucharist as its master, but is its servant for the benefit of the community of the saved. It follows that the Christian community does not "possess" the Eucharist, but receives it as a gift.

These reflections are developed in the fourth chapter, "The Eucharist and Ecclesial Communion". The Church, as the minister of Christ's body and blood for the salvation of the world, abides by all that Christ himself established. Faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, united in the discipline of the sacraments, she must also manifest in a visible manner her invisible unity. The Eucharist cannot be "used" as a means of communion; rather it presupposes communion as already existing and strengthens it. In this context emphasis needs to be given to the commitment to ecumenism which must mark all the Lord's followers: the Eucharist creates communion and builds communion, when it is celebrated truthfully. It cannot be subject to the whim of individual or of particular communities.

"The Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration" is the subject of the fifth chapter. The celebration of the "Mass" is marked by outward signs aimed at emphasizing the joy which assembles the community around the incomparable gift of the Eucharist. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, literature and, more generally, every form of art demonstrate how the Church, down the centuries, has feared no extravagance in her witness to the love which unites her to her divine Spouse. A recovery of the sense of beauty is also needed in today's celebrations.

The sixth chapter, "At the School of Mary, 'Woman of the Eucharist'", is a timely and original reflection on the surprising analogy between the Mother of God, who by bearing the body of Jesus in her womb became the first "tabernacle", and the Church who in her heart preserves and offers to the world Christ's body and blood. The Eucharist is given to believers so that their life may become a continuous Magnificat in honor of the Most Holy Trinity.

The Conclusion is demanding: those who wish to pursue the path of holiness need no new "programs". The program already exists: it

is Christ himself who calls out to be known, loved, imitated and proclaimed. The implementation of this process passes through the Eucharist. This is seen from the witness of the Saints, who at every moment of their lives slaked their thirst at the inexhaustible source of this mystery and drew from it the spiritual power needed to live fully their baptismal calling.